Frederic Rzewski
## HOLES
### Instructions:

There should be 4 to 8 players.

The music consists of 6 **written pieces**; a number of **improvisation games**, which may be cued by any of the players by means of hand signals; 3 "**black holes**", or general silences, which are also cued by anyone; a "**white hole**", or free improvisation; and a "**worm hole**", or improvised mix of all available material.

**Pieces** appear in numerical order (1 to 6). They may be played as written, or used merely as material for improvisation. They may be interrupted at any time by **games**, which are themselves interrupted by other games.

**Games:** For these a system of **cues** (hand signals, to be given with one hand only) is used to signal a change in the music. Introduce each cue by indicating to whom it is given: one or two people only [point], or [sweeping gesture] everybody. Some cues are gestures, others are letters "**written in the air**" (slowly, taking about one second per letter).

Any player can **give a cue** at any time. A player may **play**, however, only when given a cue. (Having been cued to play, you should play only that game which has been cued. You may, however, stop and start ad lib. **You may include yourself in a cue only when it is for everybody.**)

### Sequence of events:
A. Piece 1→ games (+ piece 2)→ black hole 1
B. Pieces 3 & 4 + games→ black hole 2
C. Piece 5 + games→ black hole 3
D. Piece 6→ white hole→ worm hole→ piece 1

[A.] To start: Everyone plays the first bar of **Piece 1** together.

Everyone except the **Soloist** plays the **accompaniment**, entering one after another, and thereafter starting, changing, and pausing at any time and for any length of time.

The **Soloist** plays the solo part, adding ornamentation and improvising on the melody when it is repeated. Ornaments are made by adding grace notes and tremoli taken from the notes just before and after the note being played. Finally the rhythms disappear, and the **Soloist** plays tremoli like everyone else.

At this point anyone may give a cue to begin the **games**. During the games **piece 2** is introduced. It may be played entirely as written, or only in part, or merely used as material for improvisation. Choose any line, and transpose it to any octave. **Both pieces 1 & 2** may be used in this section, which should take 5 to 6 minutes.

At some point someone cues **black hole 1**. Everything stops, and the players remain motionless for about 15".

[B.] Begin with **piece 3**. This too may be played as written, or immediately subjected to improvised changes. At some point in the games, introduce **piece 4**. Pieces 1 & 2 may also be used in this section, which should be somewhat shorter than section A (3'—4'). Someone cues **black hole 2**, which lasts for about 30".

[C.] Begin with **piece 5**, which should be played as a single unit from beginning to end. Then move to the **games**, using all of the **pieces** so far played as material. Section C is a little shorter than B (2'—3'). Someone gives a cue for **black hole 3**, which should last for 45" to 60". (**Note:** If artificial lighting is being used in the performance, all the lights should go out simultaneously with this cue. The blackout should last for at least 45", after which the lights may be slowly faded up, if this is possible; if not they may simply be switched on again when the music starts.)

[D.] Begin with **piece 6**, which should (like 5) be played as a single unit with an ending. Then go immediately to the **white hole**, a general free improvisation with no rules, which lasts until somebody cues the **worm hole** (explained below). This too lasts for as long as it lasts. Without giving or taking cues, individual players begin to play the tremoli of **piece 1** again; the **soloist** plays **Coda 1**, while the other players arrive one by one at tremolo 4 (C#-A#), and hold it; finally everyone sings **Coda 2** together.

(**Note:** "White holes" and "worm holes" may also occur earlier as part of the games, cued either for individual players or for everybody.)

# GAMES (Cues in brackets):

**1. [1—5 fingers+upbeat]:** Play pieces 1 to 5 as written.

**2. [1—5 fingers + trembling hand]:** Play material chosen freely from a written piece, embellishing, adding to, or improvising upon it. Play in the manner of the piece. Transpose, play in different keys. If you happen to have the music in front of you, read from the score ad lib. Otherwise rely on memory.

**3. Black hole [B]:** Stop and do nothing; stay out of the music, unless a cue is given for everybody. If you are given an individual cue, shake your head or give some other indication that you are out for the time being. **(A black hole must be followed by something different from what preceded it.)**

**4. White hole [W]:** free improvisation.

**5. Grey hole, or: Sh! [finger in front of lips]:** Pause, or interrupt a situation briefly, then continue the same situation from where it was interrupted; or wait for the next cue.

**6. Colored hole, or: Freeze [F]:** Hold, or repeat, for as long as you wish, or until a new cue is given, whatever sound you are making at the moment the cue is given.

**7. Loop hole [L]:** Repeat, as well as you are able, what you did in the last 6 seconds. Repeat as many times as you wish, then stop and wait for a new cue.

**8. Air hole, or: Snatch [snatching gesture]:** Out of the air, play the first thing that comes into your head, with no relation to what came before. You may also recall a previous snatch, or play 2 or 3 snatches in succession.

**9. Key hole, or: "Music" [M]:** Insert any piece of written music of any kind that you have prepared, if possible from memory .

**10. Worm hole, or: Stir [S]:** Play bits and pieces of things you played or heard earlier in the performance, as well as you can remember them, jumping from one to another .

**11. X hole [X]:** Perform some extreme, disruptive, irrelevant, foolish, or childish action, followed by a second action which in some way redeems, or justifies the first.

**12. Holy hole [H]** (*Write "H' in the air, slowly, as though making a sacred sign* ): Play some religious hymn, or sing or play some apparently sacred music.

**13. Riffs [R + gesture]:**
(All of these "riffs" should last for a few seconds only, and in this respect differ from other, similar games with a longer duration.)

**a. points [make points with finger]:** single notes separated by lomg spaces and large intervals.

**b. flutters [vibrate finger]:** tremoli, flutters, trills

**c. repeats [tap several times with finger]:** play a sequence of fast repeated notes

**d. sustain [draw a straight line with finger]:** a long note

**e. scales [run fingers diagonally up]:** play any major or minor scale

**f. tunes [smile]:** any recognizably traditional style of playing, without actually quoting {waltz [beat 3/4 bar], march [beat 4/4 bar], etc.}

**g. "complexity" [point to head]:** play "contemporary music".

**h. out [point towards the ground]:** extraneous, external, or auxiliary sounds

**i. snippets [scissors gesture]:** short fragments, or flourishes of 3-4 notes.  (BF, 15/2/93)

**j. combination & alternation of these [RS].**

**14. Evolution [E]:** Listen for a sound. Lock into, or blend with that sound, then change it progressively in some direction: slower or faster, higher or lower, etc. When several players are playing "Evolution": If you have introduced a change, wait until the others have locked into it before changing further. If this does not happen, lock into someone else's change, and proceed as before.

**15a. Partners: Together [T]:** Choose a partner. Play together, starting and stopping at the same time as your partner. **15b. Partners: Apart [A]:** Choose a partner among any of the players (several players may choose the same partner).  Play in alternation (hocket)with your partner.

**16. Stops & Starts [SS]:** Play only when no one else plays  (If not preceded by a qualifier, play whatever situation you are in already).

**17a. Cut [C]:** Stop playing and make a note of what you were doing when stopped. You may be cued to paste it somewhere later on. **17b. Paste [hand on cheek]:** Go back to what you were doing the last time you were cut off, and play it as well as you can remember. If you cannot remember it at all, or have not yet been cut, go back to anything you were doing earlier.

**18. Emergency Brake (Notbremse) [gesture]:** Everyone stops together and plays *PP* + very high + very fast for 5"; then wait for another cue. (RR, 15/2/93)

**19. Solo [finger to forehead, then pointing to a person]:** Play a solo. (RR, 15/2/93)

**20. Unison [all + 2-5 fingers + letter]:** Play together, or homophonically, a single line of a piece. (TF, 15/2/93)

**21. Marry Me! [gesture of invitation]:** Play in my rhythm, play as my partner, play as his or her partner. (RR, 15/2/93)

**22a. Play in B major [thumb up]; 22b. Play in g minor [thumb down]; 22c. Play in an 8-tone diminished mode [thumb horizontal].** (TF, 15/2/93)

**23. Next! [rotate forefinger forward]:** Switch to the next mode; move to the next scene; change the music in some decisive way.

**24. Echoes [put hand to ear]:** Repeat a sound made by another player a few seconds ago.

**25a. Pulse [P]:** Take any two successive sounds made by other players as a pulse; continue that pulse; then turn it into dotted notes or triplets, as well as more complex rhythmic relationships; then play the original pulse. **25b. Interval [I]:** Take any two different notes played by other players; repeat them; play the same interval transposed and add a third note, making a different interval in contrary motion to the first. Add a fourth note and a fifth. Then play the original two notes.

**26. Knot hole, or: Blip [snapshot gesture]:** A blip is an event so short that little can be said about it, except that it was there; it could be a few seconds full of information, like a fast train speeding by, in which it is possible to make out several recognizable images. Play a short sequence of such fragmentary, unrelated events, each of which is cut off by the succeeding one; as many as come into your head in a single chain: a "knot in time".

**27. Future hole [?]:** Guess what I am going to play next, and play it together with me. (MHC)

.................................................................................................................

## Contributing Authors:

BF = Bill Forman, trumpet, Ensemble Modern
TF = Thomas Fichter, bass, Ensemble Modern
RR = Rainer Roehmer, percussion, Ensemble Modern
MHC = Marc-Henri Cykiert, composer

## Composer's Note:

HOLES is an evolving, participatory work, to which each performance should bring new changes. Groups should add their own games to the repertory, and share these with other groups. Please send your suggestions for such additions to:

Frederic Rzewski
42, rue Coenraets
B-1060 Brussels, Belgium

Write first the title of your game; then the gesture or letter that cues it, in brackets; then the description; and finally, in parentheses, your initials and the date. for example:
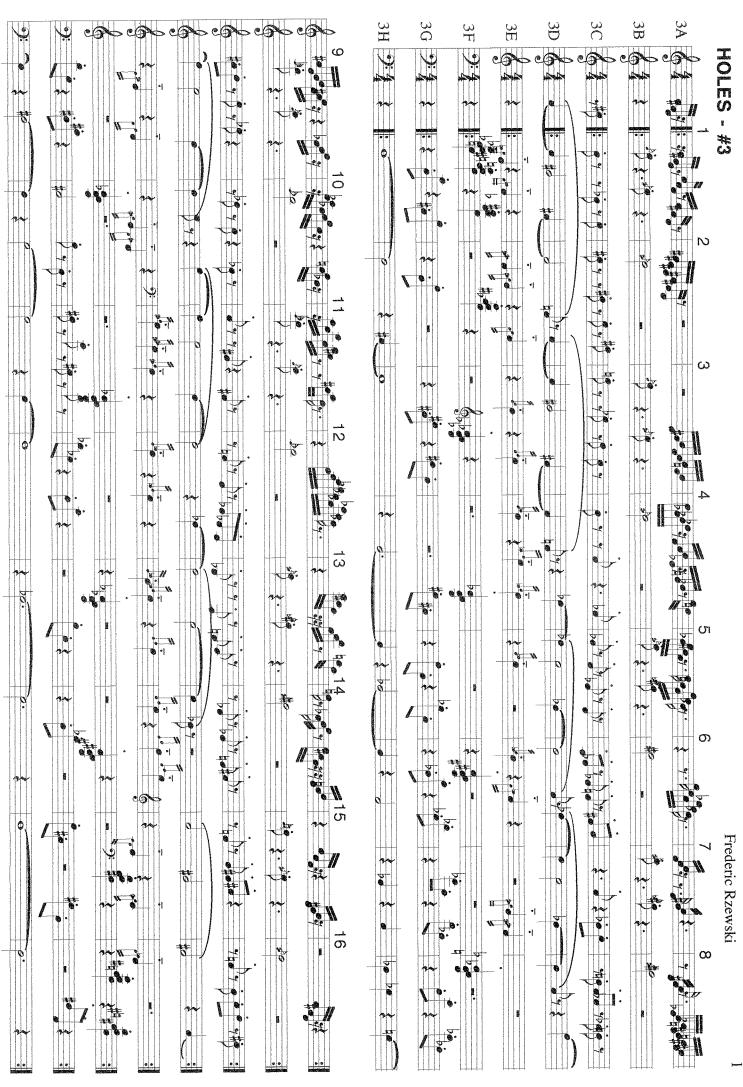
**Holy hole [H]:** Play some religious hymn, or sing or play some apparently sacred music. (FR 18/3/93)
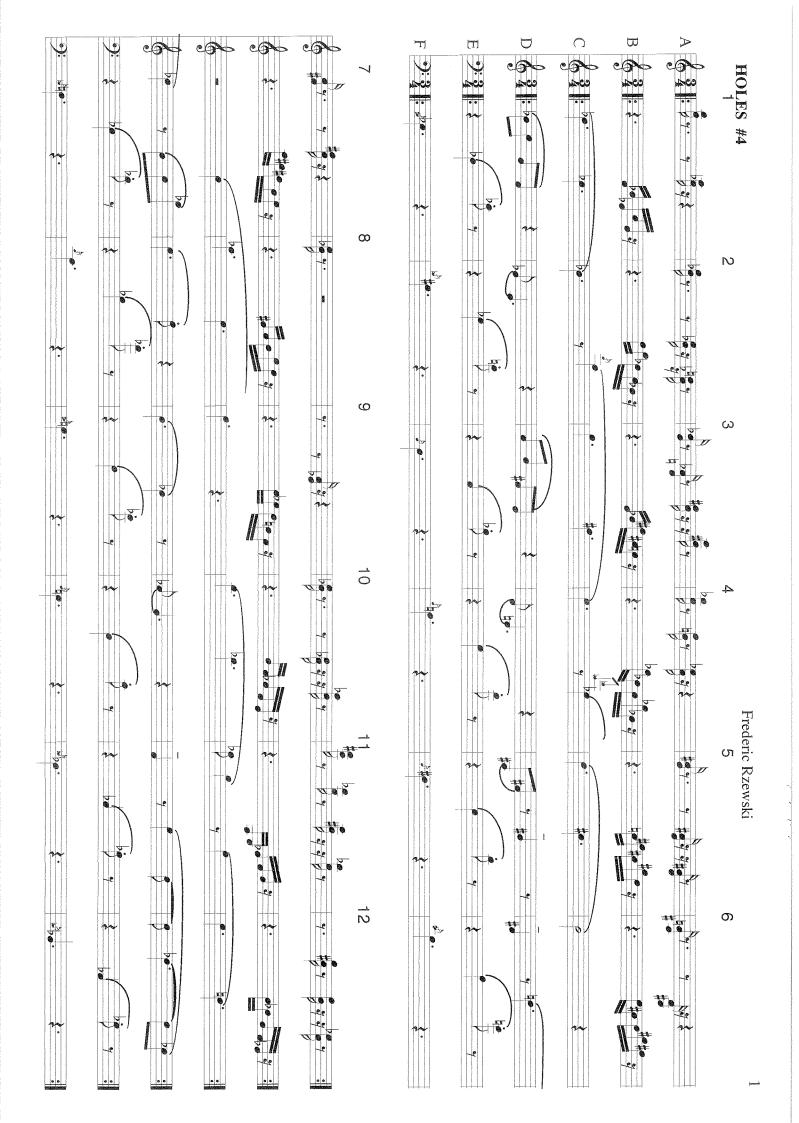
Such additions, which may be edited, merged, or otherwise modified, will be included in later versions of the score, accompanied by identification of their various sources.

(For the Ensemble Modern, March, 1993)

Frederic Rzewski

# HOLES #1

♩= 96

Tutti:

*Accompaniment:*
*Play in your own time, pauses ad lib.*

*f*

*p*

Solo: ♩ = 50 ca., molto espressivo

*p*

#8 (end)

(Répétez avec agréments, toujours plus librement)

**Coda 1 (Soloist):**

**Coda 2**
**(Tutti):**

♩=96

(Sing:)

Na na na na na

(Inhale deeply and hold breath:) X

(Lights up suddenly)

(Lights fade out.............)

holes 2

Frederic Rzewski

Choose any of the five events A — E. Each event may be repeated once or twice before playing another. You may return to an event once or twice after playing another. The piece ends when you have played all the events at least once; or after a long (ca. 10") general silence; or when someone gives a cue for another situation.

A. [Play at any time] Play any note 9x, moderately fast. Wait until at least 3" general silence before proceeding.

B. [Play after 3" silence] Play a note a minor third lower than the last note you played, 5x, slow. Wait for a sound made by another player before proceeding.

C. [Play at the end of a sound made by someone else] Play a note a minor second lower than the immediately preceding sound, either sustained or repeated very fast for at least 3", then continuing until the beginning of a sound made by someone else. Wait at least 6" before proceeding.

D. [Play 1" after the end of a sound made by someone else] Play a note a minor third lower than the last note you heard, once, short. Proceed immediately.

E. [Play as soon as you hear a sound] Play a note a tritone higher or lower than the last note you played, 9x, fast. Proceed at any time.

Rzewski, HOLES #6 (treble)

Hum bars 1 — 17 together. Then play (or rest) any bar from 17 to 30, ≤3x in
succession. Then play bar 32, either a or b. When everyone has played 32b
together, repeat twice, and stop.

1