Dave Soldier

String Quartet
with drums

“Sequence Girls”
opus 1

composed 1985
version from January 26, 2013

7 minutes

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Performance notes for “Sequence Girls”

This was inspired in part by an early rap record, “Simon Says” on Sugar Hill Records featuring The Sequence from 1982, although I started working on this piece in 1984. The producer was probably Sylvia Robinson, who is the unsung hero of rap and hiphop, and The Sequence was to my knowledge the first group of girl rappers. Of course, rap was everywhere in the early 1980’s in New York City.

String techniques

There are a few unusual techniques in this piece. You can refer to our 1988 recording by the Soldier String Quartet as a guide.

Speechpitch is indicated by square boxes on the noteheads. Speechpitch imitates rapping, and is made of microtonal glissandos. It is played by stopping the string with the left hand over rather than under the instrument, to enforce intonation that is only approximate. Pinch the string between your thumb and index finger and slide it around the notes indicated to help you to sound like someone speaking. It helps to think of spoken phrases and to emulate their intonation. The parts are imitating lines in the rap tune like “We bad we know it we got our stuff to show it”.

Scratches are indicated by X noteheads. They emulate the sound of a dj “scratching” a record by spinning a record back and forth under the needle, are made by moving the bow up and down on the string instead of across.

In measures 89 and 93, the first violin strums uses a pizzicato strum across the strings behind the bridge, which is marked by a filled triangle notehead.

Drums

The drum part is written with only some guidelines, including where fills and silences are. These are all skeletal suggestions, made for the drummer to design a part around these indications. My experience is that drummers prefer this kind of notation more than writing out every note. The stems with flags are meant to maintain the grooves the drummer chooses.

The notation uses the snare on the second space from the top with the stem up, and bass drum on the bottom space, stem down. I use an x below the bottom line for a hi-hat. Essentially any kind of drum kit with any drums can work so long as the drummer has worked on the parts. Michael Suchorsky plays on the original, and his part can be a great guide to the styles.

For an acoustic quartet, a cajon with a cymbal will likely work.

-Dave Soldier NYC January 26, 2013
Sequence Girls
for string quartet & drum set

Score
version 1.26.13

Dave Soldier
1985, Opus 1

Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Cello
Drum Set

funky: add other drums at will

pick-up

speechpitch

rap pattern

fill
Sequence Girls
Sequence Girls
Sequence Girls

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

D. S.

106

110

114

D. S.

f

mf
Sequence Girls
Sequence Girls

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

D. S.

speech pitch improvisation

speech pitch improvisation

153

157

153

157
Sequence Girls
Sequence Girls

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

D. S.

189

192
Sequence Girls