

subak

for four or more performers clapping body parts

Bill Alves

Performance Notes

Subak may be performed entirely as a clapping piece but works best when parts 1, 2, and 3 are distinguished by differently pitched sounds -- clapping with cupped hands, hitting one's legs, even making unpitched vocal sounds are all possibilities that performers may want to experiment with. The notes shown above or below the staff line should represent different sounds (types of claps, for example). In particular, the performers may want the low note on the downbeat of part three to be unique and immediately clear (stomping a foot, for example) because it can serve to orient all the parts to the downbeat.

One performer is designated as the leader. During the blank measures in the leader's part, the leader may clap along with one of the other parts or may improvise a part that fits within the polyrhythmic fabric. The other performers continue to repeat the sections shown until the leader loudly claps the part marked "cue." At that point other performers respond by getting loud also and going on to the following section. The number of repetitions is therefore at the discretion of the leader. The leader is also responsible for leading the acceleration at letter F.

If the group so desires, the part between rehearsal letters C and F may be repeated. The part between letters H and I may also be repeated. Parts should be memorized if possible.

Program Note

A subak is a small Hindu temple or shrine on the island of Bali set at forks in rivers and irrigation canals and dedicated to spiritual significance of water. Water is, of course, of much more than spiritual importance, as the Balinese depend on its optimal distribution in order to feed their population. This job is given not to engineers, but to the priests of these water temples. When I lived in Bali subaks were to me a symbol of the depth of importance the Balinese felt for close community cooperation, which is also reflected in their music. Most Balinese music features not soloists, but a group playing highly rehearsed, intricate interlocking patterns. A leader, usually a drummer, signals points at which there are breaks in the pattern or when to move on to the next section. Players must therefore listen very carefully and ensure that their parts precisely "lock in" to the overall fabric of the texture as they do in traditional Balinese society. Similar interlocking parts can even be found in musical play, such as in the cupped hands of children splashing against the water as they play and bathe in the rivers of this tropical island.

Subak

Part 1 $\frac{6}{4}$ *f*

Part 2 $\frac{6}{4}$ *f*

Part 3 $\frac{6}{4}$

Leader $\frac{6}{4}$

1 $\frac{6}{4}$ *f*

2 *p*

3 *p*

Leader *p*

1 $\frac{6}{4}$

2

3

Leader *f* Cue

D

13

1 *p*

2 *p*

3 *p*

Leader *p* **Cue** *f*

E

17

1 *p*

2 *p*

3 *p*

Leader *p*

21

1 *f*

2 *f*

3 *f*

Leader **Cue** *f*

25 **F** *accel.*

1 *p* *f* $\frac{4}{4}$

2 *p* *accel.* *f* $\frac{4}{4}$

3 *p* *accel.* *f* $\frac{4}{4}$

Leader *p* *f* Cue $\frac{4}{4}$

29 **G** **H**

1 *Fast* *p*

2 *Fast* *p*

3 *Fast* *p*

Leader *Fast* *p*

33 **I**

1 *f* *p*

2 *f* *p*

3 *f* *p*

Leader *Cue* *f* *p*

39

1 *f*

2 *f*

3 *f*

Leader *Cue* *f*