

Palimpsest (After Feldman)  
for 3-9 performers

by Bill Sallak

### Instructions

There are nine sheets that make up the score. Each sheet has a 3x3 grid excerpt from Morton Feldman's *King of Denmark*.

The piece has as many movements as there are performers. For each movement, the ensemble will need to choose one of the nine Feldman excerpts to use as the "score" for that movement. (I.e., a performance for sextet will have six movements and use six of the nine sheets.)

The instrumentation for each movement will consist of one ensemble member speaking, and the others performing on instruments of their choice. Each ensemble member will be the speaker for one movement; none may speak in more than one, and none may abrogate their speaking responsibilities.

The speaker will choose one of the numbers from the score for the movement in which they speak, and relate a memory from when they were [the chosen number] years old. The memory will be recounted using language and syntax appropriate for the remembered age, and delivered with as little inflection and affect as possible-- as plainly as the speaker is able. The speaker should not announce or divulge their remembered age in their talk. (Particular care should be taken, then, if the memory involves one's own birthday party.)

The other members of the ensemble will each choose a number or symbol from the score and use that number or symbol as the basis for an improvised accompaniment. The ensemble members are free to choose the degree to which their accompaniment relates constructively to the speaker and the other ensemble members. The overall volume of the accompaniment should not drown out the speaker for any extended passage of time. (To that end, if the balance between the speaker and ensemble is aided by amplifying the speaker, feel free to do so.)

During a movement, if one member of the accompanying ensemble hears that another member of the ensemble (besides the speaker) is using the same number or symbol that they are, that member must immediately choose a different number or symbol and continue their improvisation with minimal interruption (i.e., the audience and other ensemble members should not necessarily be aware that an ensemble member has changed their chosen number or symbol.) Err on the side of changing rather than staying put; if you think you're hearing the same number or symbol, then you are, and you should change.

The movements may be performed *attacca* or with small pauses between.