

***Thomas DeLio***

*space* / *image* / *word* / **sound III**

*inents*

sound installation

(5.0 reduction of 10 channel sound installation)

text by P. Inman

# *inents*

Thomas DeLio

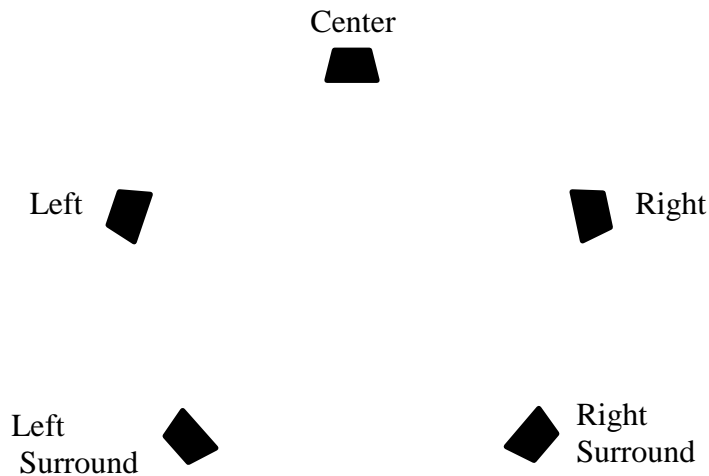
*inents*, 10 channel sound installation, presented on this disc reduced to 5.0 surround sound.

Spatialization is an essential component of the composition on this DVD. **It is to be played in 5.0 surround sound only** (five channels, full range; no subwoofer).

Variable start times at ID #s 1 – 18. Listener may start at any ID# and turn off at any time. Start times may be accessed via ID # either using the screen menu or on the DVD player directly (see discussion below for information on variable start times for this recording).

The DVD is set to auto repeat. (This will ensure that, if one of the last ID#s is chosen the piece will continue until the listener wishes to stop play.)

Speakers should be arranged in a circle as follows:



## *inents*

Thomas DeLio

...by multiplication a reduction to one...  
William Carlos Williams, *Paterson*

Over time, I have come to realize that my music is about the *possibility* of experience; this is also true of my theoretical writings. I hope these all convey, in one way or another, an understanding that events cannot be subsumed within hierarchies or systems, or other modes of conceptualization. Experience is immediate and irreducible.

*inents*, is a ten channel sound installation (2018). This recording contains a five channel reduction of the ten channel installation. In no way is it a substitute for the experience of the installation itself, but rather a representation of its sonic materials presented in five fixed dimensions rather than ten variable dimensions.

This work is based upon a text by the poet P. Inman entitled “aengus” (reprinted below). I have been an admirer of Inman’s poetry for many years, precisely for his intense focus on language as substance in and of itself. For me, his poetry vivifies the interconnection of language as it is engaged, and meaning as it is shaped. I have presented my thoughts about this remarkable poet’s work on many occasions: within the liner notes of numerous recordings, and, more recently, in an essay co-authored with the poet entitled “(ex)Congruities” (*The Contemporary Music Review*, Vol. 34, Nos. 5-6, 2016), pp.478-492).

The installation *inents* is the latest example of what I have called an installation/opera. It was drawn from recordings of the Inman text read by six different people, three male and three female. These provided all of the source material for the work. The composition consists primarily of moments and surfaces. Prior to *inents*, in my electroacoustic work with text, I typically broke up words and phrases to the point where they were generally unintelligible. My impetus for *inents*, however, was to create an electroacoustic setting in which the text would be apprehensible at times on the surface of the composition. I wanted the text, as spoken by the various readers, to be heard within the context of fragmented and transformed elements drawn from language. I feel that, in this context, the result renders those moments where we simply hear people reading the text as music. We become aware of the timbre of each individual voice, the timing of each reading, pauses, breathing... I wanted the listener to experience even a “straightforward” reading (if there is such a thing) as itself, first and foremost, a sonic event. (Perhaps this is a sonic reflection of the linguistic variability that is present in Inman’s poetry.) Even normal speech becomes a musical event when placed in the context of the chopped up, filtered phonemes and stretched, attenuated consonants which create the sonic framework within which these straightforward readings are often heard (and, hopefully, now recognized as, in fact, not at all simple).

Both my treatment of text and my preference for installation over performance comes from my view of language and literature. It has always seemed to me that the substance of literature never lies in ‘what’ is said, but ‘how’ it is said. Language, not story or character, conveys meaning. The use of language is what changes from era to era, shedding new light upon, and revealing new facets of our experience. This has evolved to such an extent that it

seems to me that the very concept of a framework (story, mood, character...) to be transformed by language is itself no longer viable. From such early modern masterpieces as James Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake*, Gertrude Stein's *Mexico*, through Samuel Beckett's *Ping*, to such extraordinary recent works as Leslie Scalapino's *Defoe* (to name but a few) we discover the true substance of literature, *language as thought enacted*. It seems clear to me that opera should follow this same path; to acknowledge the priority of an author's treatment of language as the accompanying music's true subject.

Unlike traditional opera, *inents* is to be presented as a sound installation in a large room in a museum, art gallery, or similar venue. Given the aforementioned focus on language as subject, it seemed clear to me that any attempt to employ a traditional theatrical staging would be inadequate. The particular focus that both Inman and I place upon our materials situates the listener/reader/viewer squarely in the center of the experience of the work; not as an outsider looking in (a member of the audience) but as a participant. It became necessary to find a way for each listener/viewer to feel that he/she was the catalyst for engagement with text and music. In this regard, the sound installation seemed particularly appropriate. The installation itself is, in a sense, the opera's staging (though perhaps to refer to it as a form of 'staging' is itself regressive; rather to think of staging as perhaps achieving a new kind of immediacy as 'installation.')

The installation plays continuously, all day, every day, for as long as it is scheduled for presentation. Listeners are invited to enter the room at any time and, as they walk through the space, experience the text/music from multiple, ever changing perspectives. There is no single vantage point from which one can experience the complete sonic design with all its dimensions. This is essential, as each experience in life is part of an ongoing process of discovering perspectives, not simply living through one, singular viewpoint.

One cannot know when a listener will enter the space, nor for how long he/she will stay and listen. For me this is one of the exciting challenges involved in creating such a work. In order to give a sense of the experience of walking into a museum space in which the installation already has been playing continuously for some time, and then leaving at whatever moment one chooses, I have added eighteen ID#s to this sample disc. The listener may begin from any ID# chosen randomly, and stop at any time. Each time the listener comes back to the piece he/she may start at a different ID#.

With my earlier installations I tended to create structures which recycled materials continuously, albeit with constant variation. In those works I tried to ensure that, on some level, each listener would have a generally similar experience whenever he/she entered the room. But with *inents* I changed my approach. I created a work that would seem different depending upon when the listener happened to enter the room. I would like to think that each listener would leave with a very different impression of the piece.

*“aengus”*

**P. Inman**

a.  
noft.  
bluff.

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pith.

n'owl.

vowel.  
soddbble.

laced.

\_\_\_\_\_ief.

neapl.

croft.

veteen.

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length.

anissette.

pages.

ocean.

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inents.  
evasp.

a.  
quo.



inents, sound installation, score (abridged)

Equipment

Ten mono .wav files (ten channels of sound).

Ten speaker stands; black, curved, (preferably Bell'o brand curved speaker stands or similar stands with dimensions as close as possible to the following:



- 2 Large (36" H x 13-1/2" W x 11" D)
- 4 Medium (30" H x 13-1/2" W x 11" D)
- 4 Small (24" H x 13-1/2" W x 11" D)

Ten speakers; black, matching design (as close as possible), and dimensions; as close as possible to the following:

- 2 Large (ca. 19H x 9W x 11D )
- 4 Medium (15H x 7W x 9D )
- 2 Small (12H x 6W x 8D )
- 2 Very Small (9H x 5W x 7D )

**Audio Channel / Stand / Speaker assignments (see diagram next page):**

<u>Channel</u>	<u>Stand</u>	<u>Speaker</u>
I	small	very small
II	medium	medium
III	large	large
IV	medium	medium
V	small	small
VI	small	small
VII	medium	medium
VIII	large	large
IX	medium	medium
X	small	very small

**Room Layout**

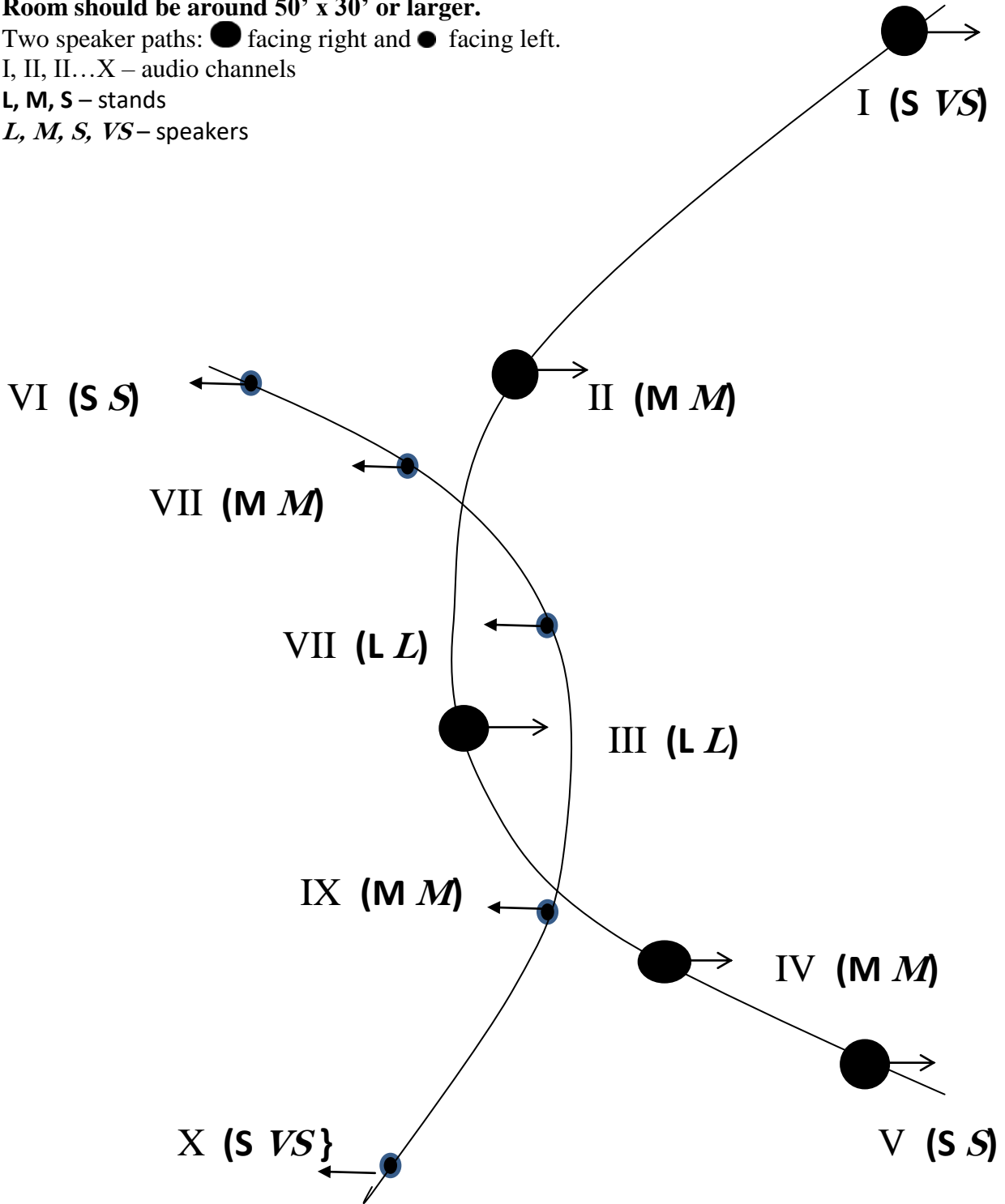
Room should be around 50' x 30' or larger.

Two speaker paths: ● facing right and ● facing left.

I, II, II...X – audio channels

L, M, S – stands

L, M, S, VS – speakers



**THOMAS DELIO** (b. 1951) is a composer and theorist. He has written music for a variety of solo instruments, chamber ensembles and orchestra, and is especially noted for his work in computer music. His compositions have been performed worldwide and are recorded on numerous labels including Wergo (Germany), 3D Classics (France), Neuma, Centaur, Soundscape, Capstone, ERMMedia and Spectrum. He has published over thirty essays in such journals as *The Journal of Music Theory*, *Perspectives of New Music*, *Interface*, *Sonus*, *Artforum*, *The Computer Music Journal*, *Contemporary Music Review* (London), *Revue d'Esthetique* (Paris) and *MusikText* (Cologne). A number of these essays have been anthologized and several have been translated into German, French and Italian. He has also published numerous books about contemporary music, most notably *Circumscribing the Open Universe* (University Press of America; Italian translation, Editore Semar, Rome), *The Music of Morton Feldman* (Greenwood Press), and *The Amores of John Cage* (Pendragon Press). The book *Essays on the Music and Theoretical Writings of Thomas DeLio*, edited by Thomas Licata, was published by The Edwin Mellen press in 2008. It contains essays by leading composers and scholars from Europe and the United States about DeLio's work. The first volume of his collected essays (1980-2000) was published by the same press in 2017. A second volume is forthcoming. In 2011 The University of Maryland Special Collections Division established a new archive, *The Thomas DeLio Papers*. This archive holds sketches and manuscripts for his music, books and essays; master tapes from numerous recording sessions; journal articles, books, CDs and DVDs. In addition it contains his correspondence, including, letters from such composers, poets and artists as Iannis Xenakis, John Cage, Alvin Lucier, Morton Feldman, Elliott Carter, Sol LeWitt, Peter Inman, among others. Eventually all his teaching materials will also be held in this collection as well as work by his students in both theory and composition.

**P. INMAN** was born in 1947 in Bronxville and grew up on Long Island, NY. He has been a practicing poet since the 1970's. His work has been published in Canada, France, Great Britain, Spain and the U.S. His books include: *Ocker* (Tuumba, 1982), *Platin* (Sun and Moon, 1979), *Uneven Development* (Jimmy's House of Knowledge, 1984), *Red Shift* (Roof Books, 1988), *Vel* (O Books, 1995), *Criss Cross* (Roof Books, 1994), *amounts. to.* (Potes and Poets Press, 2000), *ad finitum* (if p then q, 2008) and *per se* (Burning Deck, 2012). His collected works, entitled *written*, was published by *if p then q classics* in 2014. In addition, his work has appeared in such anthologies as *In the American Tree* (National Poetry Foundation) and "*Language*" *Poetries* (New Directions). Since 1997 his work has served as a sound/text source for several of Thomas DeLio's compositions.

### **Readers:**

**TINA DARRAGH** is one of the leading poets in America today. Her work has been widely published and anthologized. **LINDA DUSMAN** is a distinguished composer and Professor of Music at the University of Maryland Baltimore County. **TOM GOLDSTEIN** is a renowned percussionist and director of the University of Maryland Baltimore County Percussion Ensemble. **BENJAMIN LEVY** is a leading music theorist, and Associate Professor of Music on the faculty of the University of California Santa Barbara. **ZACHARY MASLANIK** is a percussionist and an active performer of contemporary music. **SUSAN MCCULLY** is a scholar of feminist theatre, playwright, and performer. She is a Professor in the Department of Theater at the University of Maryland Baltimore County. **THOMAS MOORE** is a pianist who specializes in the music of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as well as the Director of Arts and Culture in the Office of Institutional Advancement at the University of Maryland Baltimore County