

Animals in Distress

Animals in Distress is composed for animal distress calls, which are used by human hunters to mimic an injured animal and thereby attract and kill another. The work is a kind of Fluxus-style “anxious object” music – confronting the performer with the interpretive task of being an animal in distress, and “luring” the audience towards discomfort regarding the relationship between humans and other animals. While we can’t know exactly what other animals feel and think, it is certain that our activity continues to put them in greater and greater distress.

Premiered at HERE, NYC, July, 1995
For Michael Pugliese

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For four players, each with two differing animal distress calls:

Player A - Moose and Raccoon
Player B - Coyote and Deer
Player C - Rabbit and Squirrel
Player D - Fawn and Fox

Substitutions may be made depending on what calls are available or found at one’s local outdoorsman shop. All calls should be distress calls or predator calls; that is, not imitative mocking calls such as duck or turkey calls, but calls which indicate an animal is in a state of injury, estrus, rut, or other form of distress.

Interpretation of the condition indications, with experimentation in the range of sounds available with one’s calls, should guide one’s performance. Literal imitations of animals described in the instructions for the calls is discouraged; exploration of the distress available with one’s calls is preferred.

Chronometers are used as time referent and are started together. Time not indicated in one’s part is silent. Time indicated should be filled from start to finish with sound, within which a player may insert rests for breath and interpretative design.

- John Kennedy
NYC, 7/95