Ping Pong Piano

For 2 players, ping pong balls and modular synthesizer.

Performance Notes

Player 1

Player 2

Player 1 operates inside the piano, manipulating ping pong balls and plucking the strings.

Player 2 operates the sustain pedal, plays conventional notes and also uses ping pong balls and creates sounds inside the piano.

Microphones are sent to a modular synthesizer, operated by a third performer.

These (and possibly other) sounds are to be used in the piece:

Player 1
Drop ball(s) on the strings and catch immediately
Drop balls(s) and allow to bounce freely
Roll ball along strings
Strike the stings with ball(s)
Pluck strings
Strum strings

Player 2
Play conventional notes
Use ping pong balls as above
Play notes while muting the strings
Pluck strings

The piano is divided into 5 areas (see photo) based on the metal bars in the frame. Area 3 is dampened with a cloth placed over the strings.

Example setup for Modular Synth

Envelope follower to interact with the piano
Physical Modelling synthesis
Filters
Envelope shaping
Delay
Ring Modulator
Reversed reverb effect

A possible strategy: Simply follow the structure of the performance score. Or go against the score. The key is variety, of density, texture and colour.

PERFORMANCE SCORE

A performance of the piece should last around 7 minutes, although other durations are possible.
Each section should last around 1 minute.

A
Area 1
Sparse texture (1/2 balls in play)
Quiet
Slow tempo
Dry
SIngle events, mainly dropping
Occasional notes

B
Area 2
Slightly busier texture (2/3 balls)
Sustain pedal throughout
Quiet
Moderate tempo
Some rolling
Repeated soft chord

C
Area 3
Denser texture (4/5 balls,)
Louder
Faster tempo
Staccato percussive sounds (dampened)

D
Areas 1-5
Dense Texture, with some pauses
All dynamics, mainly loud
Fast tempo
Some notes, full range, with sustain pedal sometimes.
Rolling, plucking, strumming

E
Area 4
Medium texture (4/6balls)
Sustain pedal
Rolling
Moderate tempo
Quiet mainly

F
Areas 1-5
As in section **D**

G
Area 5
Sparse texture
Slower tempo, fading
Single events
Dampened notes and plucked strings