

Throw away your sheet music and your instruments. Instead, make sounds with stones. Draw sounds out of stones. Use a number of sizes and kinds (and colors). Strike stones with stones or stones on other surfaces. And please: *do not break anything*.

This might sound like the way the first humans probably made most of their music, but *Stones* is one of the fourteen instruction-based scores in Christian Wolff's *Prose Collection*, from 1968-74. It came at a time when musicians like Cornelius Cardew were creating graphic and text-based scores, and artists like George Brecht were writing instructions as art. They were finding ways to be precise and open at the same time. They wanted a composition to also be an improvisation.

But Wolff's *Prose Collection* is not an argument for ecstatic poetic genius. Prose, in this case, is short for prosaic, not poetic—these scores are mundane, modest, and down to earth, available to musicians and non-musicians alike. Right after *Stones* is *Sticks*. You get the idea.

When performing the piece, some tap stones together, some throw stones around, some play stones with a bow, or some even make drawings on stones. It's a percussion piece, with short discrete sounds

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separated by longer stretches of silence. Performers listen to the stones and listen to each other. What's unclear is whether we're hearing the human's or the stone's point of view.

Stones is mostly silent because stones are mostly silent. But while they're mostly silent, they're not always silent, and for those who are patient enough, there is music in what they have to say.

David Grubbs has assembled six other musicians to join him in a performance of *Stones* on November 13th, 2011. The performers include Natacha Diels, Miguel Frascóni, Nick Hallett, Nina Katchadourian, Jessie Marino, and David Watson.