Title: *Xylocyclos*

ALYSSA WIXSON, University of California, Irvine
OLIVER GEORGE-BROWN, University of California, Irvine

1. PROGRAM NOTES / PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Our project *Xylocyclos* features desiccated native branches (*Juniperus californica, Yucca schidigera, and Cylindropuntia bigelovii*) collected during field research in the Mojave Desert. We attach inexpensive transducers and homemade piezo microphones to create feedback loops within the timber itself. The signal is minimally processed: there are no pre-recorded or synthesized sounds, only the natural frequencies of the wood reinforcing themselves and being amplified through a hand-made cajon.

Xylocyclos is a portmanteau deriving from the Greek *xylo* (wood) and *cyclos* (cycle). Thinking carefully through the provenance, treatment, and materiality of our salvaged timber, we activate physical and poetic resonances across multiple cyclical scales. The sonic feedback operates at the scale of audible sound-waves. Moving the contact microphone mere millimeters can effect a profound shift in the overall sonic texture. We conceive of this as a sonic reimagination of microfluctuations within the natural environment, where minute variations in desert topology determine the way a rivulet chooses its course; where the play of sun and shadows determines the capacity of a plant to photosynthesize; where a pollinator's peregrinations determine which plants propagate. At this broader ecological scale, we are also thinking about cycles of life and death: our branches are all biologically dead, all in a transitional phase between aliveness and total decomposition. Transplanted into a foreign environment, we practice an ethics of care in preparing the timber for performance. When reanimating the branches as sonic beings we emphasize their roles as co-performers. They are sonically unpredictable: even adorning them with the target-practice cans we found buried in the desert can generate a profusion of new sonorities and overtones. Rather than attempting to control the branches and their sonic output, we instead afford them a degree of agency, performing a non-hierarchical act of creative collaboration with these organic entities.

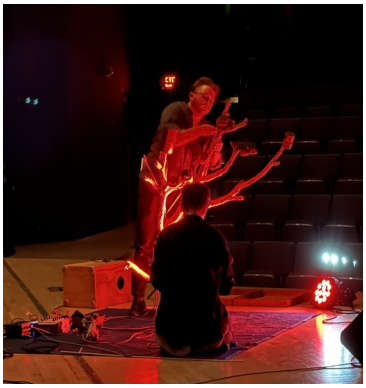

Figure 1: Performing *Xylocyclos*

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2. TECHNICAL NOTES

Our setup is completely self contained; we do not need to output audio to the main mixer or speakers in the hall. In the past, performances of this piece have been about 18 minutes; however, the performance duration is flexible and can shrink or stretch according to the needs of the event. Our gear list is as follows, and all of it sits on a 6'x6' square mat on the stage floor (stage diagram below).

- 3 branches
- 1 cajon
- various small implements
- 1 6'x6' mat
- 4 transducers
- 3 homemade contact mics
- 2 portable amps
- 2 interfaces
- 1 laptop running Max/MSP

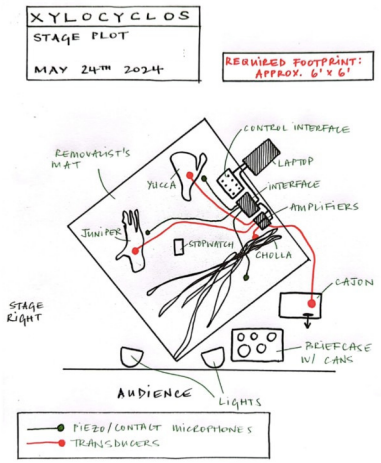

Figure 2: *Xylocyclos* stage plot

3. MEDIA LINK(S)

- A video recording is available here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=32oAYLdbGbI.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Xylocyclos has been developed on the ancestral lands of the Serrano, Cahuilla, Chemehuevi and Mohave (Mojave) communities; and the Kizh, Acjachemen and Payómkawichum communities. We respectfully honor and recognize the original and current caretakers of this land, water, and air.

ETHICAL STANDARDS

Not applicable to this project.

REFERENCES

Not applicable to this project.