

Performance Notes

“Men At Work” is a percussive spoof on construction workers. For the best effect, it should be performed with a boisterous attitude. If the means are available, the players should be dressed appropriately. The foreman should be dressed a little better than the other workers, but still in construction-type clothing. For maximum authenticity the sanding block player should be dressed as a painter (lots of paint on their pants). For all, hard hats are a nice touch and can be purchased at a Lowe’s or Home Depot for \$7.00 to \$10.00 each. The piece should begin with the workers appearing to be on a break.

Gear - You’ll need (2) saw horses to perform this piece. You can make them or buy them pre-constructed (I bought the ones we used for the recording at Home Depot for \$12.00 each). To extend the life of your saw horses, nail a 2x6 to the top them, so the top of the saw horse has a flat surface. This gives the saw player alot of area to saw, and the hammer player a nice sized area to hammer. Also, if you wear out or break the 2x6, you’ll only have to replace the 2x6 instead of the entire saw horse. For maximum life, have the saw player use both sides equally when rehearsing. You will probably want to use fresh 2x6’s for performance. A good option would be to buy a 12’ long 2x6 and cut it into (4) 3’ lengths. Use (2) for rehearsal time and the other (2) when you’re ready to perform.

The hammer player should become comfortable starting a nail into one end of the 2x6. For added visual interest, a new nail should be started every few bars in sections **B**, **C** & **D**. The hammer solo is modeled after “quad” technique. You’ll need (4) 20d nails, and they should be nailed into the 2x6 on a straight line 6 - 8 inches apart, in the center of the board. It’s a good idea to dull the ends of those nails so they won’t continue to go deeper into the board if they’re lightly hammered. You may want to fashion a separate board in this configuration for the hammer player to practice on. A firm but light touch is needed so that nails won’t always be hammered in deeper and deeper.

The saw player needs to always keep in mind that they’re not actually trying to saw through the board. What you want to accomplish is the “sound” of the sawing. The player need only apply a little bit of pressure when sawing to achieve this.

Saw Key

The musical notation for the Saw Key section consists of a single staff with four notes. The first note is a quarter note with an upward-pointing triangle above it, annotated with "push broom forward" above and "hit broom bristles on floor" below. The second note is a quarter note with a downward-pointing triangle above it, annotated with "pull saw back" above and "hit board w/ saw teeth" below. The third note is a quarter note with an upward-pointing triangle above it, annotated with "saw stroke (down)" above and "saw stroke (back)" below. The fourth note is a quarter note with a downward-pointing triangle above it, annotated with "foot stomp" above.

The foreman has the most diverse job in the piece. At the beginning of the piece his conversation on the cell phone should be worried and quite animated. On every construction site there is a dedicated “saw man”. One person makes all the cuts so they’ll be consistent. If the saw man is out for the day it can greatly affect the overall ability for the crew to work effectively, so the forman needs to expresas great concern for being without his saw man for the day.

Once the “saw man” dilemma has been solved comes the foreman’s tape measure solo. You’ll have to experiment but when the tape measure is released it should take exactly 3 beats to recoil so it lands with the rest of the ensemble on beat 3 in measure 42. (The tape measure I used was extended to 9 feet 6 inches to recoil in 3 beats).

The broom should be used as one of the most visual instruments in the piece. There are a few places marked for visuals, but the foreman should embellish the part as much as possible. Where “spin broom” is denoted, this means to hold the broom upright and spin it so the head of the broom is spinning in a circle. As for the throw in measure 72, a little experimentation as to how high to throw it will be required.

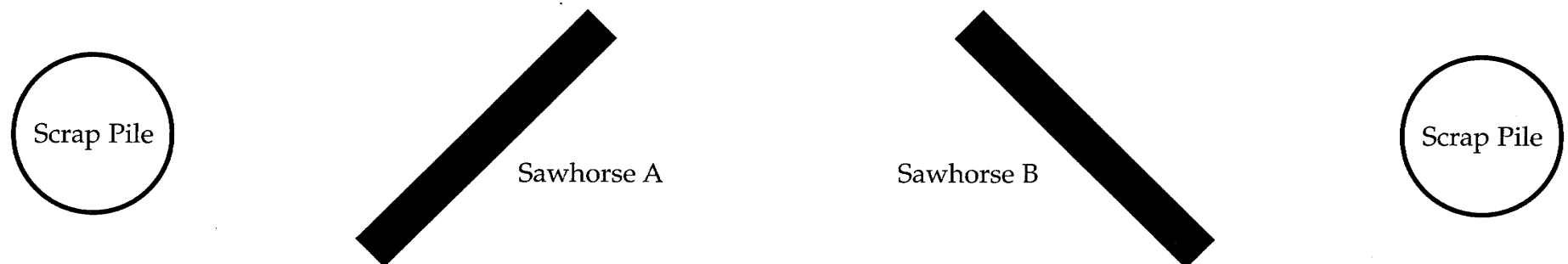
The sanding block part is self-explanatory, however, use one of your most theatrical players for this part. The interaction between this part and the foreman will really spice up the piece. The blocks can be 2x4’s 6”- 8” long with sandpaper stapled at the ends, or regular painters sanding blocks.

The 2x4 block parts are the easiest in the piece. Therefore, these guys can afford to really ham it up. Try to get lots of theatrics, but make sure these parts stay rhythmically accurate. Always lock into the sanding block 16ths.

The crowbar should be played like a triangle. “o” is for open and “+” is muted. I used a fairly large crowbar (3” long) and a large screwdriver. It should be a big sound but not overshadow the rest of the ensemble.

Set-Up

For those of you that have seen “Stomp”, you know that a set can greatly enhance a piece like this. You can make a good set for this piece for little or nothing with tools, buckets, scrap wood, or any kind of construction paraphernalia you can find. However, depending on your performance venue, you may want to keep it simple. One important thing is a couple of piles of scrap 2x4’s (8”-10” long), for the block players to retrieve their blocks from. Two or three 2x4’s cut into scraps will make a couple of nice piles.



Men At Work

pg 10

46 47 48 49 50

Broom / Saw

Sanding Blocks

Hammer & Nail

2 X 4 Block 1

2 X 4 Block 2

Crowbar

Foreman

f

Move to front

Broom Head Slam

f

Detailed description: This musical score is for the piece 'Men At Work' on page 10. It consists of seven staves, each representing a different role or instrument. The measures are numbered 46 through 50. The *Broom / Saw* staff has a continuous rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The *Sanding Blocks* staff is silent in measure 46 and then plays a series of accented eighth notes with 'x' marks below them, starting in measure 47. The *Hammer & Nail* staff features a rhythmic pattern of quarter notes with 'x' marks. The *2 X 4 Block 1* and *2 X 4 Block 2* staves have similar rhythmic patterns with 'x' marks. The *Crowbar* staff has a pattern of quarter notes with a single eighth note with an accent in measures 47-50. The *Foreman* staff is silent until measure 47, where it has a single accented eighth note labeled 'Broom Head Slam', followed by a similar note in measures 48-50 labeled 'Move to front'. Dynamic markings include a forte (*f*) in measure 47 and another in measure 48.

Men At Work

pg 17

J

81 82 83 84 85

Broom / Saw

Sanding Blocks

Hammer & Nail

2 X 4 Block 1

2 X 4 Block 2

Crowbar

Foreman

p

f

Side of block