

SPIRIT - CATCHERS

Annea Lockwood (1974)

4 microphones each mixed to an individual loudspeaker. Loudspeakers arranged in the corners of the space.

Four people have been asked to bring with them an object which they have had for many years - an object such as one would never throw away in a move - something which seems to have attached to itself something of the owner's self or history, a spirit-catcher. (Shamanistic term for an object, e.g. a stone, in which ally spirits are stored or exorcised spirits held.)

Choose people who have feelings like these about objects and are easily articulate in a performance situation.

Four chairs or cushions are arranged N S E W; in front of each is a microphone on a stand. Each performer chooses a chair, and seating him/herself with the object between his/her hands, begins to remember aloud all its associations, all the events connected with it, gradually uncovering all the accessible layers of feelings and memory accumulated around the object.

The four people are talking to themselves, thinking aloud, introverted and should aim to become oblivious of everything but the memory process, oblivious of audience, amplification, the other speakers. Remembering has an ebb and flow to it, a shifting momentum which is the focus of this piece. Words come slowly, spaced out, until an image has crystalized, when the voice changes, is charged with energy, and the pace of the talking increases and the density of imagery with it.

The person mixing brings up the amplification for each speaker successively, in the consistent order NWSE NWSE. Cross fade from speaker to speaker. Overlaps should not go beyond a minute - not aiming for simultaneous multiple voices, just for smooth transitions from one speaker to the next. Spend at least 3 minutes with each speaker each time. Keep amplification levels high enough for the audience to hear easily, but no higher.

The duration of Spirit-Catchers is open. Each speaker simply stops talking when no more memories/images come to mind. When the last speaker has ended, the piece has ended.