

Cecyl Ruehlen

Concretions: In Seventeen Movements

LP / Digital – Early 2026 Release



Concretions : In Seventeen Movements is a collaboration between composer/artist **Cecyl Ruehlen** and the performers that came together for the large ensemble of Dogstar Orchestra's 2025 annual festival in Los Angeles, California. This is an "open score," which unveils itself through each of the performer's responses, envelopment, and space given to one another.

The score calls for sixteen separate instruments taken with liberty as to what those instruments can be. The combination of the instruments that appear in this event shape how ***Concretions*** is perceived. This is the debut performance of this composition, and as such becomes the reference point to what this score can sound like. Each performer's sounds were spread out at various points in the field, shaping the overall treatment to reflect clarity across every little noise and action. However, the last five minutes, or what would have been movement seventeen, has been manipulated in post-production specifically. During the event, movement seventeen was almost completely silent, but for the recorded release a soundscape has been inserted.

Concretions is an iterative composition that was first laid out in 2019 when a friend mailed Ruehlen a mid-20th century textbook and field guide to the Kaibab and Toroweap formations in northern Arizona and southern Utah. These formations began to take structure around 270 million years ago within the shallow sea. It is here where Ruehlen encountered a diagrammatic illustration that felt musical and para-physical, rather than rationally categorized data. Ruehlen reworked the diagram to become a graphic score. While it is nearly impossible to not see the world through the lens of the human, as a human, this piece should be confronted as animistic, and experiencing the Earth, and its long held growing and collapsing formations, as filled with spirit, filled with a life whose trajectory contains its /their own volition-we merely live amongst, in between, together.

This is an open graphic composition in that there are no prescribed notes, pitches, or dynamics beyond the blocked clusters of instruments in each subset -- the player chooses their instruments or objects, and therefore, each time this piece is performed it may sound radically different than the time before. Each section, or movement, is buttressed next to the following section, and may be played as such. They may flow into one another, and they may also jut out or against each other. Each movement may sound nearly the same as the one before or after, it is hard to tell what may happen. While there may be times of quietude, there are no "pauses." There is continuous flow. The sections move from the bottom left (1) flowing up and down and up again to the top right (17). Each section should be imagined as groupings of "things happening" rather than the passage of time.

Compositionally, the size of the concretion may be related to the permeability of the theme and ambient structure in which the rupture occurs: the more permeable the surrounding form, the larger the concretion. Concretions are inner formations within a theme, an exploded, tonal aberration-an action, or body of actions, that embed within a form and crumble with ambiguous materiality.

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Label/Distro/Press:

Ryan J Bruce

2182 Recording Company

P: 520-227-6547

E: 2182recordingcompany@gmail.com

W: <http://www.2182recordingcompany.com>

