

**Portfolio of Works: Text and Controlled Improvisation as a Vehicle for Musical Development**

by

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## Abstract

This portfolio of works consists of three original compositions, each drawing from text and/or improvisation as a primary source of musical development. Instrumentation is for four performers or fewer, consisting of a saxophone quartet, open-instrumentation solo, and an organ and percussion duo.

The first work, *Duality*, stands apart from the other two in that it does not draw from the musicality of text to generate musical content. Instead, it draws its form from a musical conception of duality, two opposite musical ideas presented in full before they are mixed, matched, and morphed into one another. Controlled improvisation is employed as a means of musical development, offering previously established motifs as a basis for hectic and climactic improvisation.

The second work, *Pages for Solo Instrument*, is written entirely in text, yet forgoes any sort of written instruction. Instead, the text is written figuratively, hoping to draw the performer's attention to the rhythm, grammar, and punctuation as a means of generating musical ideas. Musical development is then explored through the manipulation of language and text, including the use of rhymes, changes in punctuation and grammar, and word painting.

The final work, *Syntax*, takes the same approach to text as used in *Pages* with a figurative source of controlled improvisation for the percussion part, while the organ part is traditionally notated. Through both notated music and text, I explore the concept of the phrase. Instead of using the minimalist presentation of text found in *Pages*, I utilize parameters like font size and various forms of visual distortion to assist in creating a sense of musical development in the text part.

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## **Introduction**

The evolution of a piece of music – its structure, form, and development – is my primary interest as a composer. Every work discussed in this document was first formulated by conceptualizing its destination and the path needed to get there.

Over the past two years, I have used controlled improvisation and text as a means of facilitating musical development. Many questions have arisen during this time. How can words translate to music without using overt instructions? How can I structure and develop text in a way that mimics musical development? In what situations does controlled improvisation find a place in the development of musical structure? How much freedom can I allow performers while maintaining the structural integrity of the work? How can I best communicate to performers the results that I wish to hear from their controlled improvisation? Most importantly, how can I explore these questions while maintaining an engaging composition?

While I end my degree with more questions than answers, this thesis represents the avenues of experimentation that I have taken as I have developed as a composer.

CHAPTER ONE

*Duality*

*for saxophone quartet*

## Summary of Method

*Duality for Saxophone Quartet* is a musical conception of the almost myth-like concept of duality.

*Duality* explores this in a musical context, consisting of an introduction, an A section, a B section (the musical ‘opposite’ of A), and a C section which combines the material of the previous two parts. I focused my efforts towards thinking of duality on a purely musical level, tailoring the idea to fit what a saxophone quartet can best produce. Physical movement is prescribed to the performers in an effort to add a representation of the work’s duality that would be visually seen.

The first half of this duality, beginning at rehearsal letter A, is based entirely on two-note oscillations, with an improvised ebb and flow. Changes are gradual, the eighth note pulse is steady without silence; and the saxophone’s ability to produce *bisbigliando*, timbral change by adding air to the sound, and dynamic control are explored. Complementing this is a physical rocking back and forth from the performers, visually coinciding with their independent crescendos and decrescendos, serving not only the audience, but assisting the performers in their task to crescendo out of sync with one another.

The second section, starting at letter E, consists primarily of short, unpredictable stabs of sound, organized in three-note figures. Physical movement from the performer is now violent and jerky, and the use of silence is prominent. The percussive capabilities of the saxophone are explored, from the use of key-clicks to slap-tongues.

Section C, starting at letter M, is written as the climactic coda of the work and combines musical elements from both halves of the duality. Rather than striving for a “middle ground” between the two, I wrote section C to combine previous material in a way that explores new musical territory. Both leaning back-and-forth and jerky movements are employed throughout. In this section, the four performers are often “split” in two to represent another layer of duality, whether it’s three against one, or two against two. Finally, controlled improvisation is used to close the piece, in hopes of generating a climactic free-for-all mashup of previous motifs, the work’s destination point that has been in the making since the first bar.

# Duality

## For Saxophone Quartet

### Performance Notes

Duality must be played with all players standing, one foot in front of the other. Physical movement plays a key role throughout the piece.

All movement described in the score is meant to feel intuitive to the performer and the music. When in doubt, move in a way that feels natural to the music.

Movement details:

"Leaning" - shift weight from one foot to the other. This is generally done in accordance with changes in dynamics, shifting weight to the front foot during a crescendo and the back foot during a decrescendo. No vertical displacement of the saxophone or bending at the waist is necessary.

"Jerky Movements" - any short, small, and sudden movement, preferably from the head/shoulders. The louder the dynamic, the more 'violent' the motion.

"Dips" - involves bending over while shifting weight to the front foot. The saxophone is displaced vertically.

### Additional instructions for rehearsal letter "A"

Use of a stopwatch is necessary.

Modules written with the same pitch notated with 1s and 2s are to be played with alternating fingerings. Fingerings are left to the discrepancy of the performer but should result in a noticeable change in sound.

The first dynamic in any dynamic pair is the dynamic with which the performer begins that module.

With each crescendo, lean forward - with each decrescendo, lean backwards. All weight should be on the back foot when the quieter dynamic of the pair is reached. All weight should be on the front foot when the louder dynamic is reached.

Watch other performers carefully - avoid reaching the apex of the crescendo (the point at which performers re-articulate and have all weight on their front foot) at the same moment as the other performers.

The number of 8th notes provided in a module represents suggested slurs/phrase lengths before re-articulating;

8 notes suggests very long phrases - 8 to 40 notes before a cresc./decrec. completes and there is a re-articulation.

6 notes suggests long phrases - 6 to 30 notes before a cresc./decrec. completes and there is a re-articulation.

4 notes suggests medium phrases - 4 to 20 notes before a cresc./decrec. completes and there is a re-articulation.

2 notes suggests short phrases - 2 to 10 notes before a cresc./decrec. completes and there is a re-articulation.

Upon re-articulation, performers have the option to repeat their previous pitch/fingering, thus displacing their oscillation by an 8th note. This is to avoid extended "locking" of intervals between players.

Air is added and subtracted to the sound to create an airy tone in accordance to dynamics, gradually changing with cresc./decrec.;

ppp = ~100% air

pp = ~75% air


p = ~50% air


mp = ~25% air


mf and above = 0% air





# Legend


 Indicates a throaty growl sound, not flutter-tongue.

 X noteheads indicate key-clicks.

 Square noteheads indicate indeterminate pitch.

 Triangle noteheads denote slap-tongue articulation. Specific slap-tongue technique is given individually.

 Numbering indicates alternating fingerings, as in bisbigliando.

 Indicates improvisation. More specific instructions are given in the score and parts.

Below is a transcribed example of what material from letter A to E may look like when performed - for the sake of simplicity, only two players are used for this example passage.

Phrase length is varied, and excluding the beginning, tenutos/re-articulations never line up between the two players.

Noted with an asterisk, the second player in this example chooses around the halfway point to repeat the B natural upon re-articulation, as discussed in the performance notes. This changes the intervallic oscillation between the two players from parallel motion to contrary motion.



The image shows a musical score for two players. The top staff is in treble clef and the bottom staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). Both staves contain a series of notes with dynamic markings *p* and *mp* alternating. The notes are grouped with slurs and have varying phrase lengths. The second staff has an asterisk (\*) above a note, indicating a specific performance instruction.

# Duality

## For Saxophone Quartet

Brendan Bevan

♩ = 164

All performers lean back and forth in accordance with crescendos/decrescendos.\*

Musical score for Soprano Sax (In Bb), Alto Sax (In Eb), Tenor Sax (In Bb), and Baritone Sax (In Eb). The score is in 4/4 time. It features dynamic markings such as *fp*, *f*, and *p* across four staves. The Soprano Sax part has a *fp* marking. The Alto Sax part has *fp* and *f* markings. The Tenor Sax part has *fp*, *f*, and *p* markings. The Baritone Sax part has *fp*, *f*, *p*, and *f* markings.

All performers quickly shift weight to back foot following the *fp*.\*

"Explosive" slap-tongue

Musical score for Soprano Sax (S. Sx.), Alto Sax (A. Sx.), Tenor Sax (T. Sx.), and Baritone Sax (B. Sx.). The score is in 4/4 time. It includes performance instructions such as "Explosive" slap-tongue and dynamic markings like *ff*. The Soprano Sax part has *f*, *p*, *fp*, and *ff* markings. The Alto Sax part has *p*, *fp*, and *ff* markings. The Tenor Sax part has *f*, *p*, *fp*, and *ff* markings. The Baritone Sax part has *p*, *fp*, and *ff* markings. There are also annotations for "Explosive" slap-tongue in the Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Baritone parts.

\*See Performance Notes for more details.

\*\* Triangle noteheads denote a slap-tongue articulation

♩ = 164 - all players leaning in accordance with their cresc./delesc.\*

**A**

**Soprano Sax**  
*pp - mp* w/ airy tone throughout\*  
 Staying in tempo, cresc./delesc. between the 2 dynamics given ad. lib. Upon reaching either dynamic, rearticulate.\*

**Alto Sax**  
 ~25"  
*pp - mp* w/ airy tone throughout\*  
 Staying in tempo, cresc./delesc. between the 2 dynamics given ad. lib. Upon reaching either dynamic, rearticulate.\*

**Tenor Sax**  
 ~15"  
*pp - mp* w/ airy tone throughout\*  
 Staying in tempo, cresc./delesc. between the 2 dynamics given ad. lib. Upon reaching either dynamic, rearticulate.\*  
 ~45"

**Baritone Sax**  
 ~40"  
*pp - mp* w/ airy tone throughout\*  
 Staying in tempo, cresc./delesc. between the 2 dynamics given ad. lib. Upon reaching either dynamic, rearticulate.\*

**S. Sx.**  
 ~50"  
*pp - mp*

**A. Sx.**  
 ~1' 10"  
*pp - mp*

**T. Sx.**  
 ~1' 00"  
*pp - mp*  
 ~1' 15"  
*p - mf*  
 ~1' 40"

**B. Sx.**  
 ~1' 25"  
*p - mf*  
 ~1' 45"

\*See Performance Notes for more details.



**B**

S. Sx.  $\sim 1' 50''$   
*ppp-p*

A. Sx.  $\sim 2' 10''$   
*ppp-p*

T. Sx.  $\sim 2' 45''$   
*ppp-p*

B. Sx.  $\sim 2' 20''$   
*ppp-p*

S. Sx.  $\sim 3' 20''$   
*pp-mp*

A. Sx.  $\sim 3' 00''$   
*pp-mp*

T. Sx.  $\sim 3' 15''$   
*pp-mp*

B. Sx.  $\sim 3' 10''$   
*pp-mp*

S. Sx.  $\sim 3' 45''$

A. Sx.  $\sim 3' 40''$   
*pp-mp*

T. Sx.  $\sim 3' 50''$   
*pp-mp*

B. Sx.  $\sim 3' 35''$   
*pp-mp*

**C**

S. Sx.  $\sim 3' 55''$   
*p-mf*

S. Sx.  $\sim 4' 40''$   $p - mf$   $\sim 4' 50''$   $mf - p$

A. Sx.  $\sim 4' 00''$   $\sim 4' 25''$   $pp - mp$   $\sim 4' 45''$   $mf - p$   $\sim 4' 53''$   $mf - p$

T. Sx.  $\sim 4' 30''$   $\sim 4' 35''$   $p - mf$   $\sim 4' 55''$   $mf - p$

B. Sx.  $\sim 4' 15''$   $pp - mp$   $\sim 4' 37''$   $\sim 4' 42''$   $p - mf$   $\sim 4' 58''$   $mf - p$

S. Sx.  $\sim 5' 02''$   $mf - p$   $\sim 5' 18''$   $\sim 5' 21''$   $mf - p$   $mf - p$   $\sim 5' 33''$   $f - mp$   $\sim 5' 38''$   $f - mp$   $\sim 5' 40''$   $f - mp$

A. Sx.  $\sim 5' 10''$   $mf - p$   $\sim 5' 22''$   $mf - p$   $\sim 5' 32''$   $f - mp$  Watch for cue from Sop.

T. Sx.  $\sim 5' 00''$   $mf - p$   $\sim 5' 12''$   $mf - p$   $\sim 5' 35''$   $f - mp$  Watch for cue from Sop.

B. Sx.  $\sim 5' 05''$   $mf - p$   $\sim 5' 25''$   $f - mp$  Watch for cue from Sop.

**D**

~5' 45" Cue other players - arrive exactly together.

S. Sx. *fp, pp - mp\** ~6' 15" *pp - mp*

A. Sx. ~5' 45" *fp, pp - mp\** ~6' 05" *pp - mp*

T. Sx. ~5' 45" Do not repeat a pitch upon rearticulation *fp, pp - mp\**

B. Sx. ~5' 45" Do not repeat a pitch upon rearticulation *fp, pp - mp\**

S. Sx. ~6' 40" *pp - mp* ~7' 00" Cue other players - arrive exactly together. *mf*, fade to key clicks then al niente ~7' 20"

A. Sx. ~6' 30" Watch for cue from Sop. ~7' 00" *mf*, fade to key clicks then al niente ~7' 20"

T. Sx. Watch for cue from Sop. ~7' 00" *mf*, fade to key clicks then al niente ~7' 20"

B. Sx. Watch for cue from Sop. ~7' 00" *mf*, fade to key clicks then al niente ~7' 20"

The score consists of four staves, each representing a different saxophone part. Each staff begins with a dynamic range of *fp, pp - mp\** and a timing cue of ~5' 45". The Soprano and Alto parts include fingerings (1 2 1 2 1 2 1 2) and a dynamic shift to *pp - mp* at ~6' 15" and ~6' 05" respectively. The Tenor and Bass parts include the instruction "Do not repeat a pitch upon rearticulation". The second system of the score, starting at ~6' 40", shows a dynamic shift to *pp - mp* for all parts, followed by a cue at ~7' 00" to arrive together and play *mf*, then fade to key clicks and finally *al niente* by ~7' 20".

\*All players arrive w/ all weight on front foot at the forte-piano simultaneously. Immediately shift weight to back foot, and resume the regular, out-of-sync rocking-back-and-forth between *pp* and *mp*.

S. Sx.  $\sim 10''^*$   
Freeze

A. Sx.  $\sim 10''^*$   
Freeze

T. Sx.  $\sim 10''^*$   
Freeze

B. Sx.  $\sim 10''^*$   
Freeze

All performers using jerky body movements w/ each entrance in accordance to dynamics.

**E** = 164

S. Sx.  $\sim 8''$

A. Sx.  $\sim 8''$

T. Sx.  $\sim 8''$

B. Sx.  $\sim 8''$

19

S. Sx.  $\sim 3''$

A. Sx.  $\sim 3''$

T. Sx.  $\sim 3''$

B. Sx.  $\sim 3''$

23

S. Sx.

A. Sx.

T. Sx.

B. Sx.

*mp*

*mf*

*mp*

*mp*

~4"

~4"

~4"

~4"

~4"

28

S. Sx.

A. Sx.

T. Sx.

B. Sx.

*p*

*p*

~6"

~6"

~6"

~6"

~6"

F

Stay still, stand normally

35

S. Sx.

A. Sx.

T. Sx.

B. Sx.

~2"

~2"

~2"

~2"

2/4

2/4

2/4

2/4





41

S. Sx.

A. Sx.

T. Sx.

B. Sx.

*mf*

Stay still, stand normally

*p*

Jerky movements

*mf*

48

S. Sx.

A. Sx.

T. Sx.

B. Sx.

*p*

*f*

*mp*

Jerky movements

*mp*

*p*

*mf*

G

S. Sx.

A. Sx.

T. Sx.

B. Sx.

*mf*

*mf*

*mf*

*mf*

Stay still, stand normally

60

S. Sx. *f p mp p f p*

A. Sx. *mp f mp mf p mf*

T. Sx. *f p mp p f mf*

B. Sx. *p mf mp f mp mf*

65

S. Sx.

A. Sx.

T. Sx.

B. Sx. *mp*

S. Sx. *mp* Jerky movements

A. Sx. *f* Growl

T. Sx. "Woodblock" slap-tongue, percussive

B. Sx. "Woodblock" slap-tongue, percussive *mp*

~6" H ~6" ~6" ~6"

\*x noteheads are key-clicks, denoting a pressing down of all keys (the Bb) followed by a loud release of all keys (the C#)

78

S. Sx. *mp* *f*

A. Sx. *p*

T. Sx. *mp* *p*

B. Sx. *f* *mp*

84

S. Sx. *mp*

A. Sx. *mp* "Woodblock" slap-tongue, percussive

T. Sx. *p*

B. Sx. *f* *p* Growl

~4" □

~4" □

~4" □

~4" □

90

S. Sx. *pp*

A. Sx. *p*

T. Sx. *p* *f* Growl

B. Sx. *mp*

95

S. Sx.

A. Sx.

T. Sx.

B. Sx.

*mp*

~6"

~6"

~6"

~6"

I Jerky movements

S. Sx.

A. Sx.

T. Sx.

B. Sx.

*mp*

*f* 3

*pp*

Jerky movements

*p*

Jerky movements

*mf*

Jerky movements

*mf*

Jerky movements

*mp* 3

107

S. Sx.

A. Sx.

T. Sx.

B. Sx.

*p*

*mp*

*mf*

*ff*

*p*

*mf* 3

*pp*

*ff*

*p*

113

S. Sx. *mp*

A. Sx. *mp* *mf* *f* *mf*

T. Sx. *f* *f* *mf* *mf*

B. Sx. *mf* *p* *f*

117

S. Sx. *f* *mp*

A. Sx. Stay still, stand normally *mp*

T. Sx. Stay still, stand normally *p* *pp*

B. Sx.

**J** Jerky movements

S. Sx. *mf* *mp* *f*

A. Sx. Jerky movements *mf* *mf* *mp*

T. Sx. Jerky movements *mf* *f* *p*

B. Sx. Jerky movements *mf* *f* *f*

130

S. Sax. *p mp mf f fp mf* Lean forward Growl ~6"

A. Sax. *f mp mf f fp mf* Lean forward Growl ~6"

T. Sax. *mp mf f fp mf* Lean forward Growl ~6"

B. Sax. *mf mp mf f fp mf* Lean forward Growl ~6"

**K** Any short sound made w/ saxophone (jerky) ~4"

S. Sax. *p* ~4" *f*

A. Sax. Any short sound made w/ saxophone (jerky) ~4" *mp*

T. Sax. Any short sound made w/ saxophone (jerky) ~4" *mf*

B. Sax. Any short sound made w/ saxophone (jerky) *f* ~4" *mf*

S. Sax. ~2" ~1" *mf*

A. Sax. ~2" ~1" *ff* Squeak ~1" *mp*

T. Sax. ~2" *p* ~1"

B. Sax. ~2" ~1"

*mp*

147

S. Sx.  $\sim 5''$

A. Sx.  $\sim 5''$  *mf* *f*

T. Sx. "Wind-up" as if to play *fff* Freeze  $\sim 5''$  *p* *mf*

B. Sx.  $\sim 5''$  *mf*

152

S. Sx.

A. Sx.

T. Sx. Stay still, stand normally

B. Sx. Stay still, stand normally

S. Sx.  $\sim 4''$   $\sim 10''$

A. Sx.  $\sim 4''$   $\sim 10''$  *mp* *p* *f*

T. Sx.  $\sim 4''$   $\sim 10''$  *mp*

B. Sx.  $\sim 4''$   $\sim 10''$  *mf*

L

S. Sx.

A. Sx. Stay still, stand normally  
*mp non vib.*

T. Sx. Stay still, stand normally  
*mp non vib.*

B. Sx. Stay still, stand normally  
*mp non vib.*

S. Sx. *mp non vib.*

A. Sx. *mp*

T. Sx. *mp*

B. Sx. *mp*

180

S. Sx. Jerky movements *mf*

A. Sx. Jerky movements *mf* Stay still, stand normally  
*non vib.*

T. Sx. Jerky movements *mf* Stay still, stand normally  
*non vib.*

B. Sx. Jerky movements *mf* Stay still, stand normally  
*non vib.*





M

$\text{♩} = 172$

From now until the end, all performers incorporate both jerky movements on accents and staccato entrances, as well as leans/sways in accordance with cresc./decresc.

S. Sx.

A. Sx.

T. Sx.

B. Sx.

Jerky movements

*mp*

208

S. Sx.

A. Sx.

T. Sx.

B. Sx.

Open slap-tongue, percussive

Open slap-tongue, percussive

Open slap-tongue, percussive

Jerky movements

Jerky movements

Jerky movements

214

S. Sx.

A. Sx.

T. Sx.

B. Sx.

3

3

3

3



219

S. Sx.

A. Sx.

T. Sx.

B. Sx.

223

S. Sx.

A. Sx.

T. Sx.

B. Sx.

Lean forward

*mp*

*mf*

*sffz mp*

As crisp as possible

Jerky movement w/ each sfz

Lean forward

*mp*

*sffz mp*

As crisp as possible

Jerky movement w/ each sfz

Lean forward

*mp*

*sffz mp*

As crisp as possible

Lean forward  
Open slap-tongue,  
percussive

*mf*

*sffz mp*

As crisp as possible

Jerky movement w/ each sfz

N Jerky movement w/ each sfz

227

S. Sx. *sfz* *sfz* *sfz* *sfz* *sfz* *sfz*

A. Sx. *sfz* *sfz* *sfz* *sfz* *sfz*

T. Sx. *sfz* *sfz*

B. Sx. *sfz* *sfz* *sfz*

232

S. Sx. *sfz* *sfz* *sfz* *sfz* *sfz*

A. Sx. *f mp* *f mp* *sfz*

T. Sx. *sfz* *f mp*

B. Sx. *sfz* *sfz* *sfz* *sfz* *sfz*

237

S. Sx. *sfz* *sfz* *sfz*

A. Sx. *sfz* *f* *mp*

T. Sx. *sfz* *sfz* *f* *mp* *sfz* *f*

B. Sx. *sfz* *sfz* *sfz* *sfz* *sfz* *sfz*

243

S. Sx. *sfz* Slowly lean forward

A. Sx. *sfz* *f* *mp* Slowly lean forward

T. Sx. *mp* *sfz* Slowly lean forward

B. Sx. *sfz* Slowly lean forward



**O** Move freely/intuitively

S. Sx. *f*

A. Sx. *f*

T. Sx. Strong, jerky movements  
Growl

B. Sx. "Dips", bending at the waist  
Growl

252

S. Sx. Strong, jerky movements  
Growl

A. Sx.

T. Sx. *mf* *ff* *f*

B. Sx. Stay still, stand normally

*ff* *mp*



257

S. Sx.

A. Sx.

T. Sx.

B. Sx.

Jerky movements

*mf*

262

S. Sx.

A. Sx.

T. Sx.

B. Sx.

*ff*

Growl

"Dip", bending at the waist

Jerky movements

*mf*

**P**

S. Sx. *ff* Jerky movements Growl

A. Sx. *ff* Jerky movements Growl

T. Sx. *f* *ff* Lean in accordance to cresc./delesc.

B. Sx. *ff* Strong, jerky movements "Dips", bending at the waist Growl

272

S. Sx. *mp* *f* *mp* *ff* *mp*

A. Sx. *mp* *f* *mp* *ff* *mp*

T. Sx. *mp* *f* *mp* *ff* *mp*

B. Sx. *mp* *f* *mp* *ff* *mp*





Q

Lean in accordance to cresc./delesc.

S. Sx. *mp* *ff*

A. Sx. *fp* *ff*

T. Sx. *fp* *ff* *mp* *ff*

B. Sx. *fp* *ff* *mp*

Lean in accordance to cresc./delesc.

Lean in accordance to cresc./delesc.

282

S. Sx. *mp* *ff* *mp* *ff*

A. Sx. *mf sfz* *sfz* *sfz* *sfz* *sfz* *sfz* *sfz* *sfz*

T. Sx. *mf* *ff* *mf*

B. Sx. *ff*

Jerky movement w/ each sfz  
Resonant slap-tongues

Stay still, stand normally



295

S. Sx. *fff*

A. Sx. *fff*

T. Sx. *fff*

B. Sx. *fff* Solo *ff*

**S** Jerky movement w/ each sfz  
Resonant slap-tongues

S. Sx. *sfz mp sfz* simile

A. Sx. *mp sfz sfz sfz* simile

T. Sx. *mp sfz sfz* simile

B. Sx. Move freely/intuitively

Improvise w/ high intensity. Dynamics between mf and ff. Any and all articulations/extended techniques.  
Put emphasis on 2-note oscillations and/or 3-note groupings. Maintain sense of pulse. Frantic and chaotic.

304

S. Sx.

A. Sx.

T. Sx.

B. Sx.

Move freely/intuitively

Improvise w/ high intensity. Dynamics between mf and ff. Any and all articulations/extended techniques. Put emphasis on 2-note oscillations and/or 3-note groupings. Maintain sense of pulse. Frantic and chaotic.

Jerky movement w/ each sfz  
Resonant slap-tongues

*mp sfz sfz sfz simile*

308

S. Sx.

A. Sx.

T. Sx.

B. Sx.



312

S. Sx.

A. Sx. *Move freely/intuitively*  
  
*Improvise w/ high intensity. Dynamics between mf and ff. Any and all articulations/extended techniques. Put emphasis on 2-note oscillations and/or 3-note groupings. Maintain sense of pulse. Frantic and chaotic.*

T. Sx. *Jerky movement w/ each sfz*  
  
*sfz mp sfz simile*

B. Sx.

317

S. Sx. *Move freely/intuitively*  
  
*Improvise w/ high intensity. Dynamics between mf and ff. Any and all articulations/extended techniques. Put emphasis on 2-note oscillations and/or 3-note groupings. Maintain sense of pulse. Frantic and chaotic.*

A. Sx. *Jerky movement w/ each sfz*  
  
*mp sfz sfz simile*  
*fp f*  
 "Explosive" slap-tongue

T. Sx.   
*fp f*  
 "Explosive" slap-tongue

B. Sx.   
*fp f*  
 "Explosive" slap-tongue

T

Stay still, stand normally

Musical score for measures 321-326. The score is in 4/4 time and features four staves: S. SX., A. SX., T. SX., and B. SX. The S. SX. staff contains a melodic line with a fermata over the first two measures and a sharp sign over the final measure. The A. SX., T. SX., and B. SX. staves contain rhythmic accompaniment with various dynamics and articulations.

**S. SX.**  
*mf dolce*

**A. SX.**  
*mf sfz sfz simile*

**T. SX.**  
*sfz mf sfz simile*

**B. SX.**  
*sfz mf sfz sfz simile*

Musical score for measures 327-332. The score is in 4/4 time and features four staves: S. SX., A. SX., T. SX., and B. SX. The S. SX. staff contains a melodic line with a fermata over the first two measures and a sharp sign over the final measure. The A. SX., T. SX., and B. SX. staves contain rhythmic accompaniment with various dynamics and articulations.

**S. SX.**  
327

**A. SX.**

**T. SX.**

**B. SX.**

332

S. Sx. *Move freely/intuitively*

A. Sx. *Frantic improvisation into altissimo register*  
*ff*

T. Sx. *ff*

B. Sx. *Squeak*  
*ff*

Teeth-on-reed - any approximate pitch, as harsh as possible.  
Lean in accordance to cresc./delesc.

U

S. Sx. *ff* > *mf* < *ff* > *mf* < *ff* > *mf* < *ff* > *mf* < *ff* > *mf* < *ff* > *ff*

A. Sx. *ff* > *mf* < *ff* > *mf* < *ff* > *mf* < *ff* > *mf* < *ff* > *mf* < *ff* > *mf* < *ff* > *ff*

T. Sx. *Move freely/intuitively*


B. Sx. *High intensity, ugly improvisation. Focus on longer notes in the low range. Maintain priority on 2-note oscillations. Looser sense of pulse.*


*Move freely/intuitively*

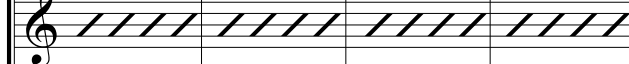
*High intensity, ugly improvisation. Focus on longer notes in the low range. Maintain priority on 2-note oscillations. Looser sense of pulse.*

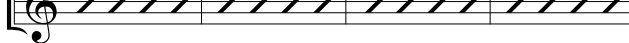
344

Move freely/intuitively

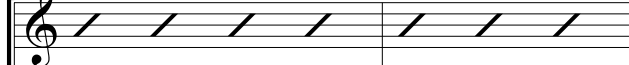
S. Sx.  *Extremely fast, chaotic improvisation. Alternate wildly between 2-note oscillations and 3-note melodic groupings. Looser sense of pulse.*

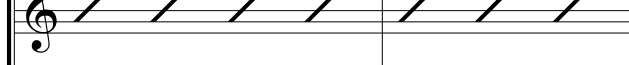
A. Sx.  *Move freely/intuitively*  
*Extremely fast, chaotic improvisation. Alternate wildly between 2-note oscillations and 3-note melodic groupings. Looser sense of pulse.*


T. Sx. 


B. Sx. 

353

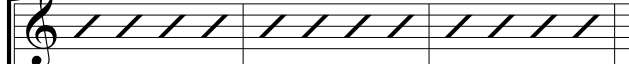
S. Sx. 

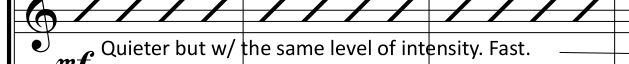
A. Sx. 

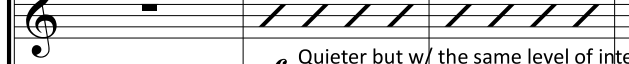
T. Sx. 


B. Sx. 

357

S. Sx. 

A. Sx.  ***mf** Quieter but w/ the same level of intensity. Fast. Rigid sense of pulse. Extremely short articulation* ***p***

T. Sx.  ***mf** Quieter but w/ the same level of intensity. Fast. Rigid sense of pulse. Extremely short articulation*

B. Sx.  ***mf** Quieter but w/ the same level of intensity. Fast. Rigid sense of pulse. Extremely short articulation*



V

Dip in accordance with cresc./decresc.

S. Sx. *p* *ff* *mf* *ff*

A. Sx. *ff* *mf* *ff* *mf* *ff* *mf*

T. Sx. *p* *ff* *mf* *ff* *mf* *ff*

B. Sx. *p* *ff* *mf* *ff* *mf* *ff* *mf*

371

S. Sx. *mf* *ff* *subito p* *fff*

A. Sx. *ff* *mf* *ff* *subito p* *fff*

T. Sx. *mf* *ff* *mf* *ff* *subito p* *fff*

B. Sx. *ff* *mf* *ff* *subito p* *fff*

Growl

"Explosive" slap-tongue

Release saxophone from mouth, return body to upright position

CHAPTER TWO

*Pages*

*for solo instrument*

## Summary of Method

*Pages for Solo Instrument* marks my first experiment into the world of text-based scores. Each page is conceptualized to be a separate piece, and it is worth noting that on the recording, only the first three pages of the score are performed (these were chosen by the performer). Each page is constructed to explore a unique idea or theme, and can be played in any order with as many or as few pages as desired.

The physical page being two-dimensional, I assigned time to the longer, vertical axis, and register to the horizontal axis. This allowed for the structural control that I desired, and I experimented with various ways to mimic musical development via text alone. Examples of this include rhythmic consistency with a gradual succession of related word painting (as in the first page), foreshadowing future text fragments within different material (as in the second page), and use of rhyming patterns (as in the third page). Assigning the horizontal axis to register allowed for a degree of musical control while ensuring the piece still fit any instrumentation.

Given my focus on form and development, I chose to write for solo voice. Structural coherency might have been damaged if performers arrived at different parts of the page at different times. Prescribing exact timings would be artificial.

My visual presentation was purposefully as minimal as possible. The hope was to draw all attention to the words, letters, and symbols themselves, and to distance myself from the realm of graphic notation. This was not done out of dislike of graphic notation practice, but simply as an experiment into how much musical suggestion could be crammed into language alone.

Writing in this fashion was a somewhat “solitary” process. Despite researching many text scores and sound poets, I was unable to find any works which could provide a template for inspiration to draw upon or artists that had left traces to explore. I feel this work more strongly relates to graphic notation than text notation after all, given the abstract nature of its depiction.

## *Pages for Solo Instrument*

### Performance Notes

*Pages for Solo Instrument* explores the musicality of language; from its rhythm, to its word painting, to its grammar and more.

Each Page is its own separate piece and should be interpreted musically from top to bottom in the amount of time designated. The vertical placement of each idea is correspondent to time and the order of events. Horizontal spacing corresponds to the register in which the text is interpreted, with the left side of the page being low, and the right side being high.

Punctuation suggests how to “move” from one idea to the next. Think of it as if speaking out-loud; periods resolve and end an idea, commas denote a kind of continuation, a dash interrupts, and ellipses fade away.

Pay special attention to the form and structure of each page. Try to bring out the musical connections between different phrases; their meanings, their rhythms, and their punctuation.

White space does not necessary mean silence. It is space to develop an idea and lead it into the next.

A current

of cloying nebulae...

(drip... drip...)

A ripple

of muddied decadence...

(drip... drip...)

A cascade

of crystalline purity...

...stut..ter....ing.....

...stut- ter- ing...

stam. mer- ing.....

-stut. (Velv...ety)tering...(pe- dals...)

..stut(full of-)....ter(...gra)-ing...(ce.....)

stam... mer. ing-

...st(so-)utt-(ar...)er- ing...

stut-(so...ar-)ter...ing

Stut- ter-(..soar)ing.....!

Soaring!

Velvety pedals, in the air,  
full of grace, prancing,  
a sprightly aria, on the breeze,  
beams of sun, blinding,

To new vistas,  
new beginnings,  
Beyond the horizon  
beyond the heave-

stut...ter.....ing..

..stut- ter...ing....

...st..ut...te.....ri.....ng.....

*Squawk!*

Tick-tock, tick-tock,  
running makes the click-clock.

Squueeeeeaaaak...

Pitter-patter, pitter-patter,  
nothing really mitter-matters.

...swoosh?

Ding-dong, ding-dong,  
let's play ping-*SHRIEK!*

Splat.

Pulsing

Red,

Throbbing

Red,

Seething

Red!

*Oh...*

Stabs.

Of Red.

Stabs.

Of Black...

Jabbing.

Thrusting!

*SNARL, Oh...!*

Manic streaks of ochre

frenzied smears of crimson-

furor, furor furor furor, *furor*

unbridled outbursts of bloodstained fervor, *OH-*

*for God's SAKE!*



Why?

How?

What who and where?

Because, becau-

And. That. But. Or.

Though...

Going around and around and round, and round, and round,

going around, and round, ound n ound...

und...

Rap... Tap... Cap...

Nap. Map. Lap, slap, sap...

That, rat, bat, cat, fat, hat, pat, vat sat chat gnat stat-

black hack thack pack lack rack whack tack yakbackfracksacktrackcrackCLACKSHACKJACK!

Silver-flecked clarity,

Gold-laced recompense.

Coursing through,  
a sun-kissed canyon,

Languishing under,  
a moonlit canopy.

From the depths  
of a dust-caked nightmare,

The claustrophobic clinging  
of a long-lost dream...

Clarity

And

Recompense.

3'



CHAPTER THREE

*Syntax*

*for organ and percussion*

## Summary of Method

*Syntax* is written for percussion and organ duo, with the percussion part being entirely in text in the same fashion as *Pages*, and the organ part being traditionally notated. By no means is it an improvised percussion concerto however – the percussion and organ parts are equally as important and were approached as if it was a standard duet.

My musical background with the organ is one rooted in the Church, and the idea of plainchant eventually led to me structuring the entire work around the concept of the phrase. In addition to each movement exploring a new variation on the phrase, each movement is, in turn, “phrased” differently. Movement one features a simple build from low to high intensity, movement two falls from high to low, movement three builds to the middle and fades away, four stays relatively flat throughout – and so on.

The percussion part, performed by Mark Segger, was the perfect medium to further explore text-based improvisation for a couple of reasons. Firstly, percussion is an incredibly diverse set of instruments and sounds, and I opted to leave all choices of particular instrumentation to Mark and to let the text be the only suggestion. With the majority of percussion instruments being unpitched, there was an exceptional degree of flexibility afforded, even while the organ part plays a passage that is strictly harmonic. Secondly, Mark is an experienced contemporary improviser and is familiar with percussion techniques that would be nothing but a frustration to attempt to conform to traditional notation.

Simultaneously exploring the same musical development through both text and notation was perhaps the backbone of this experiment. For example, the fourth movement, exploring augmented and extended phrase length, sees long-held and free-feeling chords in the organ part, while the text part features ellipses, repeated words, and extended ends of words (“canvasssss”). The text part differs from the minimalist presentation found in *Pages*, employing text size as a means of conveying dynamics, and featuring various sorts of chaotic distortions when words and text would not suffice on their own.

# Syntax

For Organ and Open Percussion

Brendan Bevan

## Program Notes

*Syntax* implores both traditional notation in the organ part, and a more improvisatory text notation in the percussion. The text in the percussion part is meant to be interpreted, often poetically, into music. The experience should be as intuitive as possible – font and word sizes correspond to approximate dynamics, and the vertical spacing of the text can be interpreted as pitch, as would notes on a staff.

Rhythms are left to the discretion of the percussionist, excluding movement II. However, ensure text events “arrive” correctly with the organ. For this reason, the full score is given to both players in place of parts.

Any and all percussion sounds and instruments, pitched and unpitched, are welcome - so long as enough variety can be made to fit the varying demands of the text.

This is NOT concerto. The percussionist is often meant to support the organ.

Score

Sw.: Trompete 8', Gemshorn 8'  
Gt.: Praestant 8', Hohlflöte 8'  
Ped.: Oktave 8' + 4', Gedacktbas 8'

# Syntax

I.

Brendan Bevan

♩ = 68

Percussion ||

vestiges, of... remnants... of..... -

Gt.

stately

Organ

Perc. ||

thun. der. ingggg..... THUNDERING-

Org.

Add Mixtur IV, Subbass 16'



Perc. || Naught but cold a frozen sermon, jaded testament. A dust-caked anthem,

Org. *p* Sw. (both hands)

Perc. || of sin... and recompense. tttthhhhuunnnndddEERRRRINNGGGG- Naught... (Sw)

Org. Add Trompete 8', Mixtur V to Gt. Gt.

Syntax

Perc. || butcold- Fraught, yet, bold? Cold, yetbold- but Naught? und.er.ring.th.und.er.ring.

Org.

Perc. || NaughtbutCOLD NaughtBUTcold NAUGHTbutcoldBUTcoldNAUGHTcoldFRAUGHTyetbold

Org.

ingTHuNDeINGtHuD---

Syntax

Perc. || oh, Naught but Naught but Naught but Naughtbut collllllldddddd....

Org. Gt. (LH - RH)

Perc. || of, vestiges- of, REMNANTS oh..... for God's SAKE!

Org.

Gt.: Trompete 8', Mixtur V  
 Sw.: Oktave 4', Querflöte 4', Offenflöte 8' (closed box)

## II.

$\text{♩} = 136$  ( $\text{♩} = \text{♩}$ )

**E** [cracks, slaps, snaps, clacks]

Percussion

*ff*

Organ

Gt.

**F**

Perc.

Sw.

Org.

Gt.

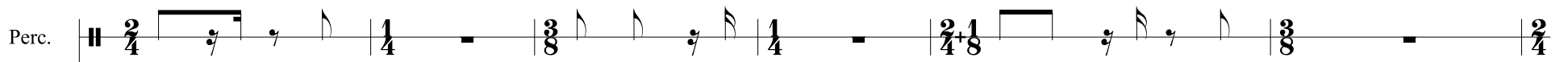
In this movement, the rhythm of the percussion part is prescribed. Exact rhythmic precision in either part is not necessary, but be as precise as possible. Choose percussion sounds for each rehearsal letter from the list in square brackets. Approximate dynamics are notated rather than conveyed through font size.

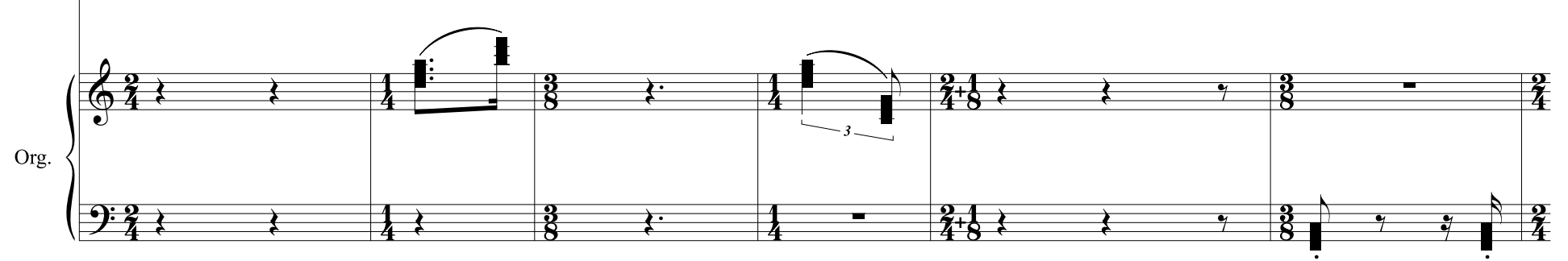
\* Filled blocks denote random clusters of at least 4 notes roughly within the range written.

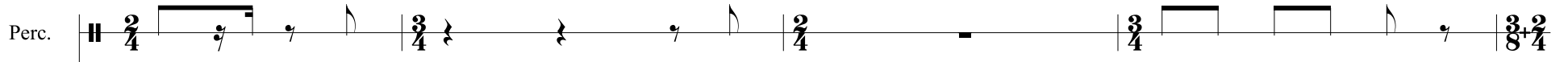
\*\*Unfilled blocks denote a dyad of 2 random pitches at least a perfect 4th apart, roughly within the range written.

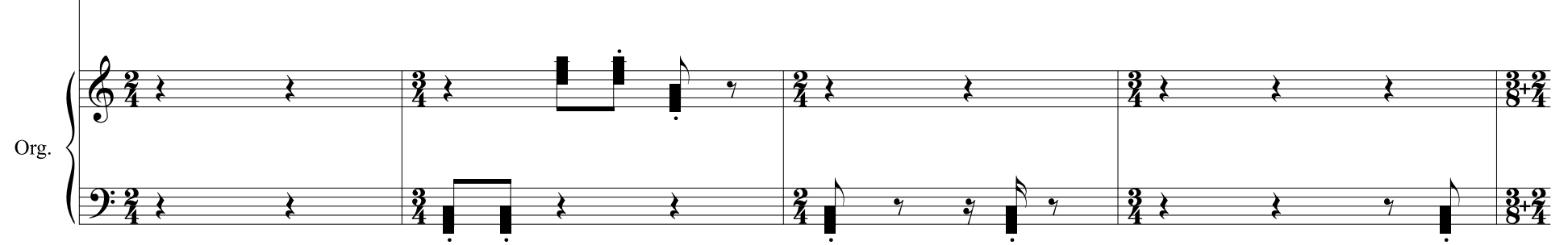


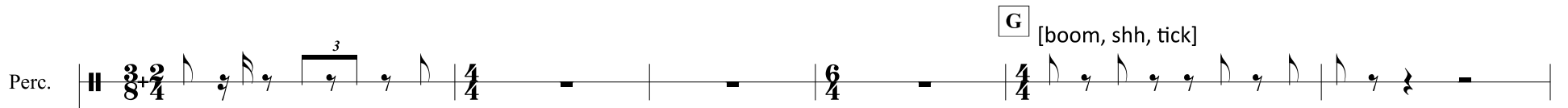
II

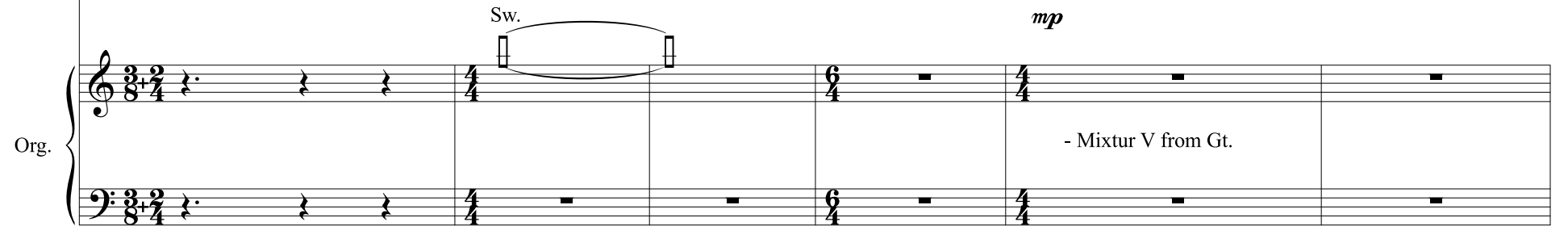
Perc. 

Org. 

Perc. 


Org. 

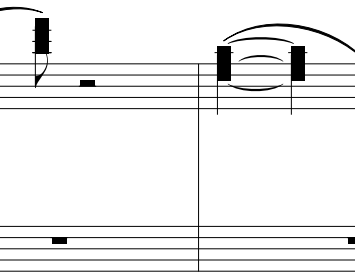
Perc. 

Org. 


G [boom, shh, tick]  
*mp*  
- Mixtur V from Gt.

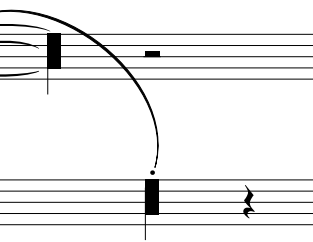
II


Perc. 

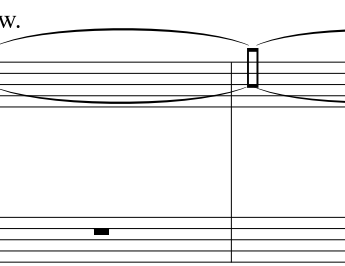
Org. 

Gt.

Perc. 

Org. 

Perc. 

Org. 

Sw.

# III.

Sw.: Oktave 4', Querflöte 4', Offenflöte 8'

Each staff line is ~ 15 seconds. Complete this movement in ~45 seconds.

Percussion ||

...derings..hudde.ringshudde.ringshud..derings..hudderi..ngshu.d...  
...veringquiveringquiveringquiveringquiveringqui...  
...utt-ering...st-utte-r-ing..stutteri..ngstut-terin-gst...utte-ringst...

Sw.

Organ

cresc. and decresc. from box fully closed to fully open throughout

Perc. ||

...meringshimmeringshimmeringshimmeringshi...  
...mblingrumblingrumblingrumblingrumblingrumblingru...  
...underingthundering **THUNDERING** thunderingth...

Org.

Perc. ||

...meringshimmeringshimmeringshimmeringshi...  
...derings..hudde.ringshudde.ringshud..derings..hudderi..ngshu.d...  
...utt-ering...st-utte-r-ing..stutteri..ngstut-terin-gst...utte-

Org.



# IV.

Sw.: Querflöte 4', Tremulant (closed box)  
Ped.: Oktave 4'

I ♩ = 46 (♩ = ♩)

Percussion **||** gentle strokes.... upon a midnight canvas..... ...around and 'round, around....

Organ Sw. *as legato as possible throughout*

*sweetly*

Perc. **||** ripples, of... (cascades, of...) round, around and round again, round 'n round, round....

Org.

IV.

J

Perc.



(ro..un....d)

Paint the stars,

the nebulae....

fleetings, of...

Org.

K

Perc.



silhouettes, of...

gentle, gentle, round, ssssstrokessss....

...upon, a midnight, 'round, midnight, midnight.... canvassssssss.....

Org.

Sw.: Querflöte 4', Tremulant (closed box)

Ped.: Oktave 8' + 4', Gedacktbas 8', Subbass 16'

Treat each system line as ~40 seconds. Complete movement in ~2 minutes

V.

L

pulsing, throbbing, SEETHING, throbbing, pulsing

Percussion

ticktickticktickticktickticktickclickclickclickclickclickclickclickclickflickflickflickflickflickflickflickclickclickclickclickclickclickclickticktickticktickticktickticktickticktickSNAPtickticktick

Organ



Perc.

vestiges, fragments, ripples, cascades, remnants, silhouettes... PushandPull GiveandTake

taptaptaptapSnapSnapSnapSLAPSLAPSnapSnapSnaptaptaptaptSnapSLAPSnaptapSnapSLAPSnapSnaptaptaptapSnapSLAP



Perc.

PushandPull GiveandTake Ebb and OH, FOR GOD'S-- SAKE!! tickticktickBOOM.

Org.



Sw.: Oktave 4', Offenflöte 8', Querflöte 4', Schwebung 8' (open box)  
 Gt.: Trompete 8', Mixtur V  
 Positif.: Praestant 4', Rohrflöte 4', Gedakt 8'  
 Ped.: Oktave 4' + 8', Gedaktbass 8', Subbass 16'

# VI.

**M** ♩ = 68

(Echoes of cold...) (Reflections of midnight...)

**N**

Perc. Naught but ssssstrokessssssss... upon a jaded testament,



# PAINT. THE. NEBUL-

OH, ~~EXUS~~ FOR GOD'S

Perc.

||

(ripples of, cascades of, waterfalls of-)

round and round, round.... around

Org.

Musical score for Percussion and Organ in the first system. The Percussion part has a double bar line and a fermata. The Organ part has a treble and bass staff with complex chords and a triplet in the bass line. A third staff below shows a series of half notes with a slur.

Perc.

||

round and round again, again, round... round again, round round again, round and round, around n'.... around.... ro....un...d....r....o...un.....d

Org.

Sw. (closed box, both hands)

Musical score for Percussion and Organ in the second system. The Percussion part has a double bar line and a fermata. The Organ part has a treble and bass staff with sustained chords. A third staff below shows a series of half notes with a slur.