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something like this but not this and not that either

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jef chippewa

**something like this but
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for cello, 3 mobile musicians, composer and live-composed score

PERFORMANCE SCORE

something like this but not this and not that either (2017)
for cello, 3 mobile musicians, composer and live-composed score
chamber ensemble
duration: 24:00

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commissioned by LUX:NM
with the support of the canada council for the arts

premiere: 10 september 2017
kontraklang series
heimathafen neukölln, berlin GERMANY
LUX:NM — contemporary music ensemble berlin
andreas voss (guest), ruth velten, silke lange and florian juncker
<http://luxnewmusic.de>

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something like this but not this and not that either

Today it is crucial that musicians be implicated in the creative process so that composers can create works that are not only highly personal, but also “belong” to the ensemble they are created for, such that even the personality and experiences of the musicians become integral parts of the work. While working on my third collaboration with Berlin-based LUX:NM ensemble, I encountered William Kentridge’s “Take Off Your Hat” (2014) during an exhibition in Berlin. The documentation of this transdisciplinary artist creating his work on a lengthy strip of rice paper struck me almost as much as the result, and helped catalyze the conception of *something like this but not this and not that either* (2017). Action, text and traditional notation, a preoccupation with unique musical forms that are intimately linked to their musical materials, and the personal input, feedback and involvement of the musicians throughout the creative process converge in this work for 4 musicians, composer and live-composed score.

something like this... was commissioned by LUX:NM with the support of the Canada Council for the Arts.

performance

following musical and staging instructions in the performance score (*leitpartitur*), the ensemble and composer together create the live-composed/-notated musical score from which the musicians play in parallel. a series of “scenes” explores different ways of creating, altering, interpreting and performing the notation created in real time (i.e. during the actual performance).

the stamps used to make the live-composed score are linocuts of music symbols (notes, articulation, etc.), some of which are musically thematized as they appear in the score.

the performance lasts around 24 minutes – some individual processes require several minutes – but it could also possible to compress some sections for a duration of 14–18 minutes, in case programming limitations or artistic decisions prohibit the performance of this length.

choice of mobile trio instruments

the work was composed with the musicians of LUX:NM in mind, but in such as way that would allow for eventual substitutions of instruments in the mobile trio. these parts can therefore be performed by any available instruments as long as the following criteria are met (to be clear, the cello is *not* replaceable):

- players can move about freely while playing their instrument;
- players can work on the score without always having to set their instrument down;
- no flutes or flute-like instruments are used;
- no string instruments are used;
- instrument II. is (ideally) a “harmony instrument” such as accordion or electric guitar;
- no two instruments from the same family are used, i.e. instruments I./III. can be, for example, alto sax + trombone (as in the premiere) or tenor sax + bass clarinet, but not alto sax + tenor sax;
- each trio member plays the same instrument throughout the piece (no doubling).

possible choices for the trio members include, but are not restricted to the following instrument families:

I. – alto, tenor or baritone saxophone; bass clarinet or clarinet

II. – accordion; electric guitar

III. – trombone

instrumental parts in the trio can also be exchanged if desired, but as the score is written transposed (I. is in B♭, II. and III. in C), the musicians will need to work out the transpositions themselves.

staging

to be provided by the venue:

- 1 writing desk, preferably solid wood (not some cheap IKEA crap!)
- 6 chairs
- 6 music stands
- 5 music stand lights
- 1 small and elegant table lamp
- 3 sandbags (or weights)

to be provided by the composer:

- 3-panel live score (each panel 80 x 110 cm) with 3 stands – minimum space required is: 240 cm W x 200 H x 150 D
- paper for live score (3 sheets 72 x 102 cm)

positions

LIVE SCORE positioned so that the audience can see the entire process

CELLIST seated to the left of the live score, facing the trio, but twice joins the trio

TRIO seated (or standing) facing the live score

COMPOSER seated at a desk to the right of the live score, facing the trio;
alternatively seated in the midst of the trio

materials

the composer needs to have these available for the performance:

- writing desk or small table
- glass plate (ca. 30 x 45 cm)
- 1 bottle of black ink (250 ml)
- 1 tube of red ink (35 ml), e.g., carmine red (schminke)
- 2 ink rollers (10 cm)
- 8 linocut stamps (50 x 75 mm) of a 16th-note symbol
- 1 linocut stamp (35 x 50 cm) of a repeat symbol
- 1 linocut stamp (35 x 50 cm) of a square (long) fermata
- 1 linocut stamp of an accelerando beamed figure
- several linocut stamps of various music symbols (articulations)
- various tools (brushes, sticks) to apply ink directly on the score
- clean rags, one of which should be dampened

documentation

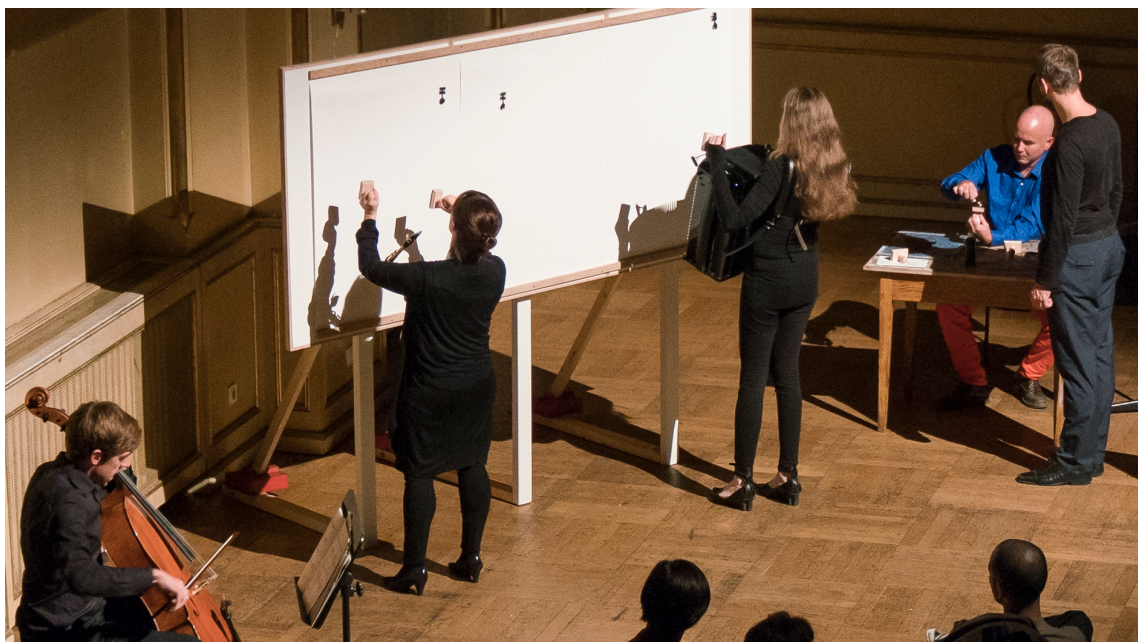
images of the materials and how to assemble the stands for the live score are available from the composer.

a trailer (4:33) of the premiere is available at: <http://youtu.be/aUPslRn-13E>

performance materials are available from the composer.



jef chippewa preparing stamps for the musicians of LUX:NM during the premiere of *something like this but not this and not that either* on 10 september 2017. image © 2017 kai bienert.



LUX:NM during the premiere of jef chippewa's *something like this but not this and not that either* on 10 september 2017. image © 2017 kai bienert.

notation



air sound



variable duration, used with cæsura (breath mark) and for short, medium and long fermati

cello



light / heavy pressure of the bow on the string(s)



dampen string(s) lightly with one or more free fingers or the left palm (or the chin)



play directly on the bridge; notes on lines are played on the bridge between the adjacent strings.
produces no specific pitch.

composer interventions



at each recurrence, play the note the sharp precedes (irregularly) “higher” than the previous time



a sharp and percussive attack, such as a bartók pizz., slap tongue, etc.

(x) anything in parentheses is optional

performance

footnotes are found in some sections of the score to explain aspects of the performance or interpretation for specific sections as needed.

the four instrumentalists play either together (synchronous) or independently (asynchronous); however, the composer is *always* synchronous with the mobile trio, or works around them.



musicians are *synchronized* in their playing, i.e. the “downbeat” of the measures and the measure duration are the same for all.



musicians are *not synchronized* in their playing – any graphic coincidences between asynchronous voices in the score (e.g., barlines, notes, rhythmic positioning) occur only as the result of notational needs and are not meant to be “played” together.

when appearing between the cello and sax in the score (above the staff in the trio parts), these symbols refer to the relation between the cello and the trio/composer. when positioned between the individual trio staves, the trio members play asynchronously, independent of each other and the cellist, or synchronous, as the case may be.

composer interventions

except where indicated (in the performance score or elsewhere), the performance of composer interventions is generally optional, although musicians should nevertheless play them more often than not.

something like this but not this and not that either

jef chippewa
(2017)

01. INTRODUCTION

SOLO POSITION

1. REPEAT (only once) if needed or desired (dur. 0:35)

arco
press bow firmly on bridge and "rip" it off while bowing

cello

sfz

20"

sfz

6"

=

*) voice I. of the TRIO is notated in B $\flat$ (octave + M2); II. and III. are in C. the original instruments (LUX:NM) were alto sax (E $\flat$), accordion and trombone, but other choices are possible (q.v. notes).

I (in B $\flat$ *)

T
R
I
O

II

III

20"

6"

composer

SEATED at DESK/TABLE

(1.)

2. REPEAT (only once) if needed or desired (dur. 0:29)

3. REPEAT if needed
(as often as desired)

press,
release

flautando,
full bow

col legno
battuto

vc

sfz

18"

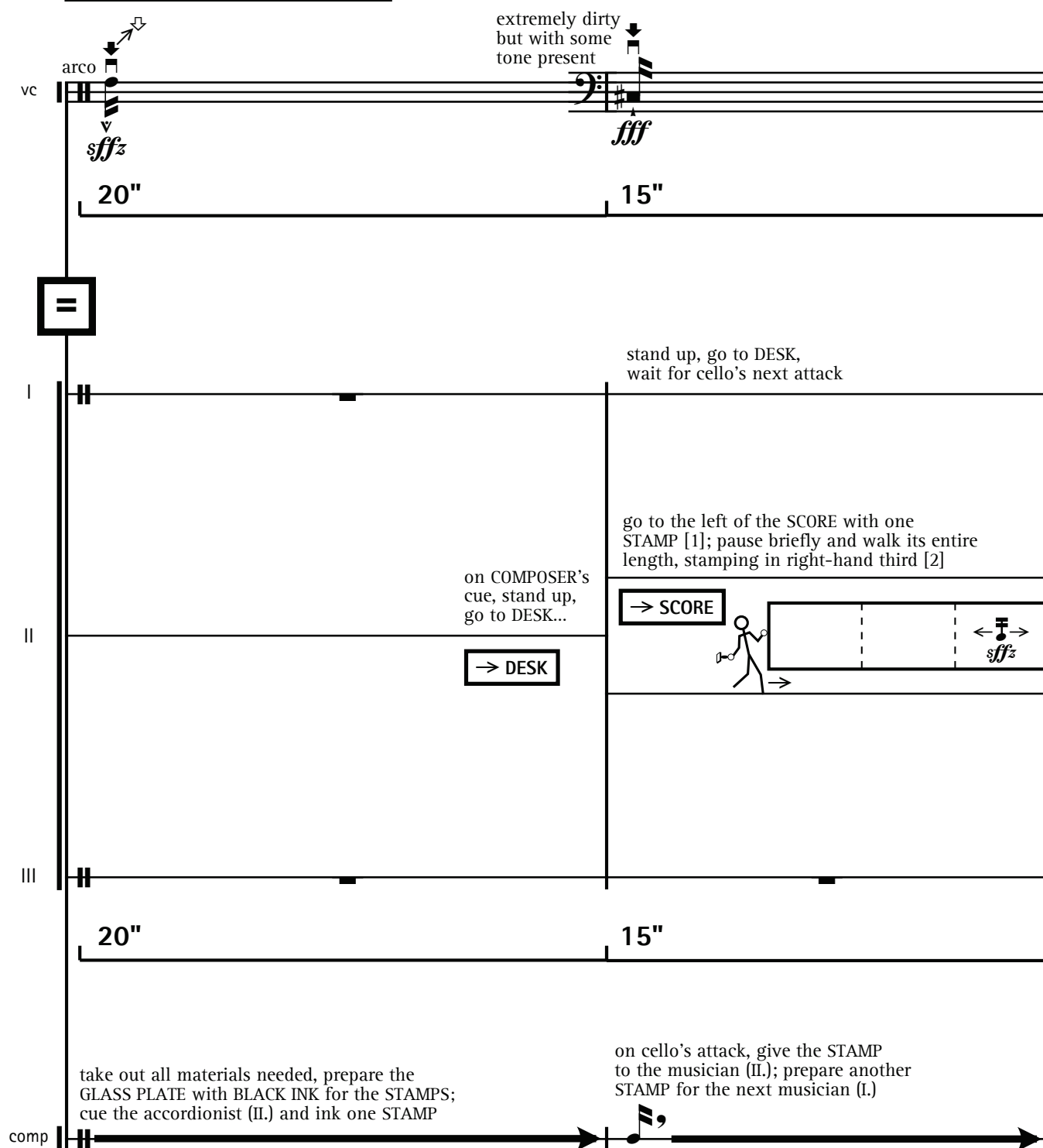
sfz

11"

TRIO

comp

02. A TENTATIVE START



performance notes (02.)

each player in turn:

1. receives a STAMP from the COMPOSER (on the cellist's attack) and proceeds briskly to the left of the SCORE (the walking tempo of the accordionist [II.] sets the tempo for this entire section);
2. pauses and walks rightward the length of the SCORE, stamping in the indicated SCORE portion along the way, and hands the STAMP back to the COMPOSER before returning to the TRIO position;
3. plays a favourite sound on their "own" note, then incorporates airy and pitched sounds on the others' notes, always rhythmically as the notes appear in the SCORE (its total width interpreted as one measure).

no cues! at first, different rhythmic interpretations occur naturally. as familiarity and tempo increase (measure durations decrease over the course of this section), more synchronous playing naturally results.

press, release ↗ flautando, full bow

vc

III. *ffz* press bow firmly on lightly dampened strings and "rip" it off while bowing

IV. *ffz*

15" 15"

go to the left of the SCORE with one STAMP [1]; pause briefly and walk its entire length, stamping in central third [2]

→ SCORE

→ TRIO POS.

favourite sound on stamped note [3]

ppp

→ TRIO POS.

favourite sound on stamped note [3]

ppp

pp

go to the left of the SCORE with one STAMP [1]; pause briefly and walk its entire length, stamping in the left-hand third [2]

stand up, go to DESK, wait for cello's next attack

→ SCORE

15" 15"

on cello's attack, give the STAMP to the musician (I.); prepare another STAMP for the next musician (III.)

on cello's attack, give the STAMP to the musician (III.); clean hands and chill out

comp

vary the measure durations, with significant differences between successive measures

vc

fff *fff* *fff* *fff* *pizz.*

3-9" 3-9" 3-9" 3-9"

≠

I

fave *mf* *f* air sound "ff"

II

ord. fave air sound ord.

ff *ppp* "ff" *ff*

III

→ TRIO POS.
favourite sound on stamped note [3]

ppp *ppp*

10" 9"

comp

upon cello's bartók pizz., begin to prepare six 16th-note STAMPS for musicians, hastily but not rushed

[CELLO]

arco
press,
release

flautando,
full bow

col legno
battuto

vc

3-9"

3-9"

3-9"

ord.

air

ord.

fave

air

[for Eb] *f* [*8^{vb}* for Bb (M2)]

"ff"

f

f

"ff"

air

ord.

fave

air

ord.

fave

"ff"

ff

f

"ff"

p

fave

air sound

ord.

f

"ff"

ff

f

7"

5"

comp

vc

arco

press, release

flautando, full bow

sfz

(3-9")

3-9"

3-9"

≠

I

ord. fave air

più f *p* "*ff*"

ord. fave "*ff*"

air "*ff*" ord. "*ff*" ord. "*fff*"

II

air ord. fave

"*ff*" *più ff* *f*

air "*ff*" ord. "*ff*" ord. "*fff*"

III

fave air ord.

f "*ff*" *più f* *p* *ff* *ff* *più ff* *fff*

3.5" 3.5" 3.5" 3.5"

comp [prepare 6 STAMPS]

03. TRANSITIONS

vc *ff* ∇ (ad lib.) *poco accel.* *ff* ∇ *poco accel.*

VOICE [WHISPER] *pp* [WHISPER] *mf*

≠

I *fff* 5-8x [t] [k] *ff* slowly and continuously change position and direction of bell/speakers increasingly diverse durations of the air sounds and pauses... → DESK

II *fff* *ff* slowly and continuously change position and direction of bell/speakers increasingly diverse durations of the air sounds and pauses... → DESK

III *fff* [k] [t] *ff* slowly and continuously change position and direction of bell/speakers increasingly diverse durations of the air sounds and pauses... → DESK

comp

04. RUPTURE

VC

ff *accel.* *poco* *f* [WHISPER]

I

take 2 STAMPS → SCORE and wait for III.

II

take 2 STAMPS → SCORE and wait for I./III.

III

take 2 STAMPS → SCORE

comp

[prepare 6 STAMPS] clean hands and chill out

raucous!

STAMP 4 times (twice with each hand) – decelerando – in very diverse places in SCORE

[1] *sffz* *f*

STAMP 2 times quickly, then after the others have finished, once more, somewhat *tenderly* and *with patience*

[1] *sffz* *sffz* *pppp* *zart*

STAMP 2 times *rapidly*, step back and – with *élan* – STAMP 3 more times with the one hand: *decisively*, equidistant

[1] *sffz* *f* *ff*

performance notes (04.–05.)

1. wait anxiously for something to happen; don't start until one of the others has begun. ah, but someone has to start! okay, so all begin as soon as someone else has.
2. step back, always studying the SCORE, prepare to play and...
3. synchronously read the SCORE (left to right), vocalizing only *your* notes in time as they appear in the given timeframe: "BANG! BANG! ... BANG!"...
4. TRIO: interpret the LIVE SCORE in a loop starting at the far left and playing only "your" notes – give no cues! repeat over and over again, each

time faster and adding one or more of your colleagues' notes as well.

5. CELLO gradually integrates with the TRIO, at first following only the score, then your colleagues as well – perhaps they will offer help? play a mix of what they are playing, sort of a spontaneous klangfarbenmelodie.
6. integrate some of the composer interventions as you see fit. gradually all four musicians should be playing smoothly (in terms of rhythm) together.
7. intervene in various ways: minimum three grace notes, maybe a sharp or flat, add a beam or a couple duration lines, some articulations, some duration lines or something like that...

05. HOMOPHONY

quite slow at first;
faster each time

once the TRIO has read
the SCORE a few times
(or so), join them

vc

TRIO

comp

study the SCORE [2]... read LIVE SCORE aloud [3] interpret SCORE in a loop: first "your" notes, then also those of the others [4]

→ TRIO POS.

→ TRIO + INSTR.

boisterous!

"BANG! BANG! ... BANG!"

ff *sempre*

pp *sempre*

at an appropriate moment, join the TRIO
in interpreting LIVE SCORE; integrate
composer interventions ad lib. [5,6]

vc

TRIO

comp

pp *sempre*

=

integrate composer
interventions ad lib. [6]

pp *sempre*

→ SCORE interventions on LIVE SCORE [7]

→ DESK let the TRIO
roll a little bit...

06. REPEAT

vc

TRIO

comp

fff

=

ALL: play one of the
most ubiquitous new
music clichés on your
instrument, repeatedly...

ALL: stop playing –
abruptly, but with
some uncertainty –
and *never* play this
again, *ever!!!*

REPEAT STAMP → SCORE with authority → DESK PROHIBITED → SCORE snidely → DESK

prepare the REPEAT STAMP, take
it to the SCORE and stamp it on
a particularly lonely note

remove STAMP
and return to DESK

prepare the PROHIBITED STAMP
with *red* ink, go to the SCORE,
carefully position and press it
over the repeated note in SCORE

remove STAMP
and return to DESK
[ATTACCA]

07. ORNAMENTS; POLYPHONY

synchronous, same tempo
as at end of "homophony"

synchronous start, increasingly
varied and individual tempi

vc

read SCORE in a loop until COMPOSER interruption [1]

read SCORE in an endless loop [2]

pp *ff* *pp* *pp* sempre

I

read SCORE in a loop until COMPOSER interruption [1]

read SCORE in an endless loop [2]

pp *mf* *pp* *sf* *pp* *pp* sempre

II

read SCORE in a loop until COMPOSER interruption [1]

read SCORE in an endless loop [2]

pp *mf* *ff* *pp* *pp* sempre

III

read SCORE in a loop until COMPOSER interruption [1]

read SCORE in an endless loop [2]

pp *pp* *ff* *pp* *pp* sempre

comp

CLAVES

noticeably put CLAVES away

ACCEL. STAMP

prepare the ACCEL. BEAM stamp, go to SCORE and stamp a lonely note [3]

→ SCORE

remove stamp, return to DESK

performance notes (07.)

the COMPOSER plays the recently integrated grace notes in the LIVE SCORE with the CLAVES and the QUARTET plays each clave-initiated iteration, reading the LIVE SCORE in a continuous loop. musicians must play other grace notes as they occur in the loop; other composer interventions remain optional.

1. starting with the leftmost instance in the score, all four musicians begin playing (together) immediately after the CLAVES attack / grace note using *only one* of their prescribed dynamic contours. read through to the end (right side) of the score and without interruption start at the left of the score again until interrupted by the next CLAVES attack. then immediately start playing from the second grace note in the LIVE SCORE. and the third; and so on.
2. once the COMPOSER sets the CLAVES down, each of the QUARTET individually varies their tempo so that they are gradually interpreting the LIVE SCORE asynchronously.

continue until reaching the accel. figure in LIVE SCORE [4]

vc

bursting! I. *sim.*

ff sub.

sul pont.

I.

continue until reaching the accel. figure in LIVE SCORE [4]

I

bursting! 7-11" ϕ slap *sim.*

[for Eb] (σ) *ff* sub.

[8^{vb} for B $\flat$ (M2)]

continue until reaching the accel. figure in LIVE SCORE [4]

II

bursting! 7-11" *ff* sub.

continue until reaching the accel. figure in LIVE SCORE [4]

III

bursting! 7-11" *ff* sub.

→ DESK

comp

3. prepare the ACCELERANDO BEAM STAMP with precision, locate a note that looks particularly lonely in the score (and has sufficient whitespace to its right) and add the feathered beam accelerando to it.
4. each continues playing (reading the LIVE SCORE) independently until encountering the accelerando figure and then plays from the PERFORMANCE SCORE as notated. the order indicated in this SCORE is for graphic design reasons only; in reality the order will vary with each rehearsal and performance.

08. MODEL (exposition)

09. IMITATION

→ SOLO POS.

tempo alla palla [1]

watch the BALL!

rather briskly

III. ϕ *sempre*

once the ping pong ball has died completely, return to solo position

ff

ff *ppp*

ff

ff *pp*

2 PING PONG BALLS

let it fly!

1. *sffz* watch the BALL!

continue as soon as the cellist is ready

2. *sffz*

performance notes (09.)

1) all play absolutely in time with the ping pong ball!

2) each musician continues playing the ping pong rhythmic figure + sustained tremolo ad lib., independently varying the length of both the figure and the sustained tremolo with each iteration. slowly change the direction of the bell or speaker of your instrument during and between iterations.

also feel free to move about the space a little bit, but without exaggeration; the accordionist (II.) should end standing at the desk, ready for 11.

sub. independently [2]

vc

ffff *ff* *ffff*

sempre

I

ffff *ff* *ppp* *ffff*

sempre

II

ffff *ff* *ffff*

→ DESK

III

ffff *ff* *pp* *ffff*

comp

FERMATA → SCORE

prepare the FERMATA STAMP; prepare two NOTE STAMPS (for II.)

10. FERMATA

vc

45"

TRIO

45"

comp

45"

ALL: abruptly (individually) stop playing and listen attentively for sounds in the hall, especially those you or your instrument could reproduce better than the others

STAMP a FERMATA somewhere in an fairly empty area of the SCORE and return to DESK

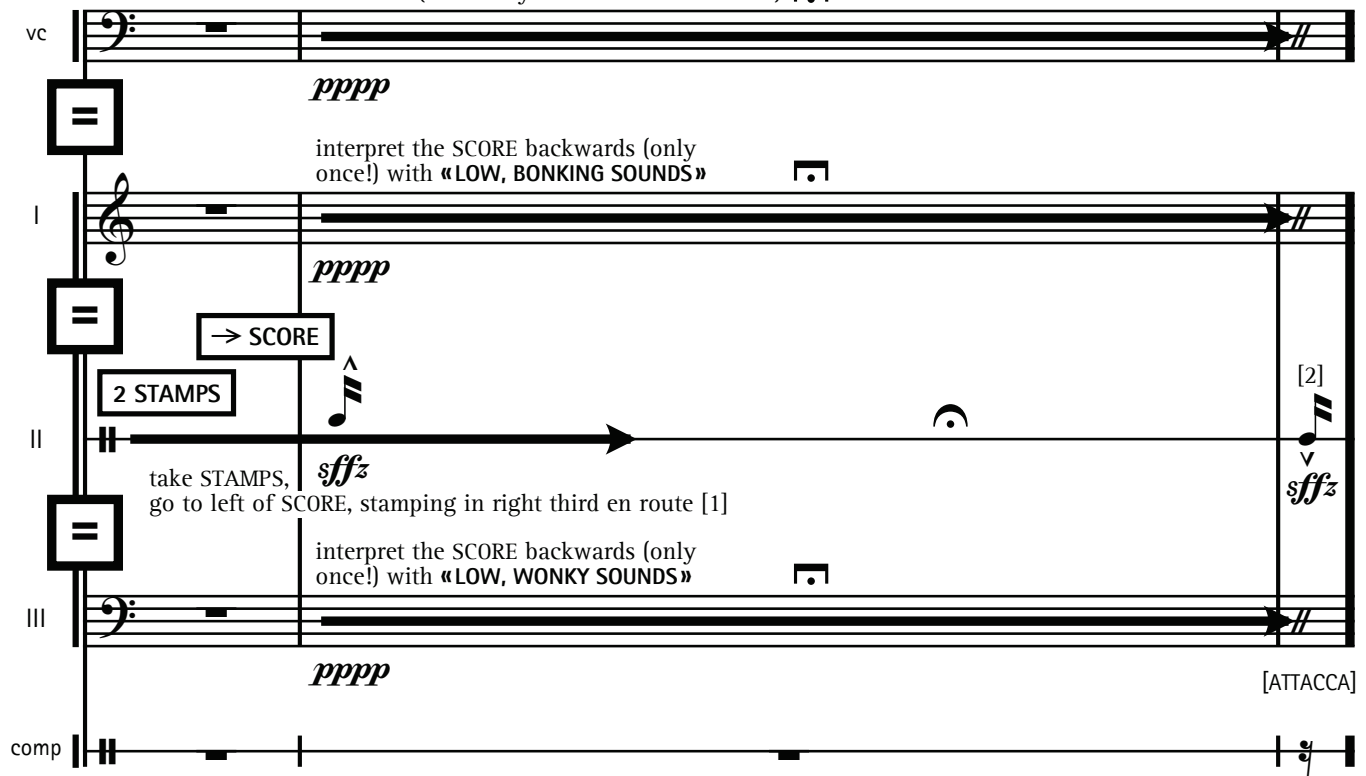
pensively *ppppp*

→ DESK

11. RETROGRADE

really slow, but really steady

interpret the SCORE backwards (only once!) with «LOW, DULL, CLUNKING SOUNDS» (these may have a little resonance) 



vc *pppp*

I *pppp* → SCORE

II 2 STAMPS take STAMPS, go to left of SCORE, stamping in right third en route [1] *sfz*

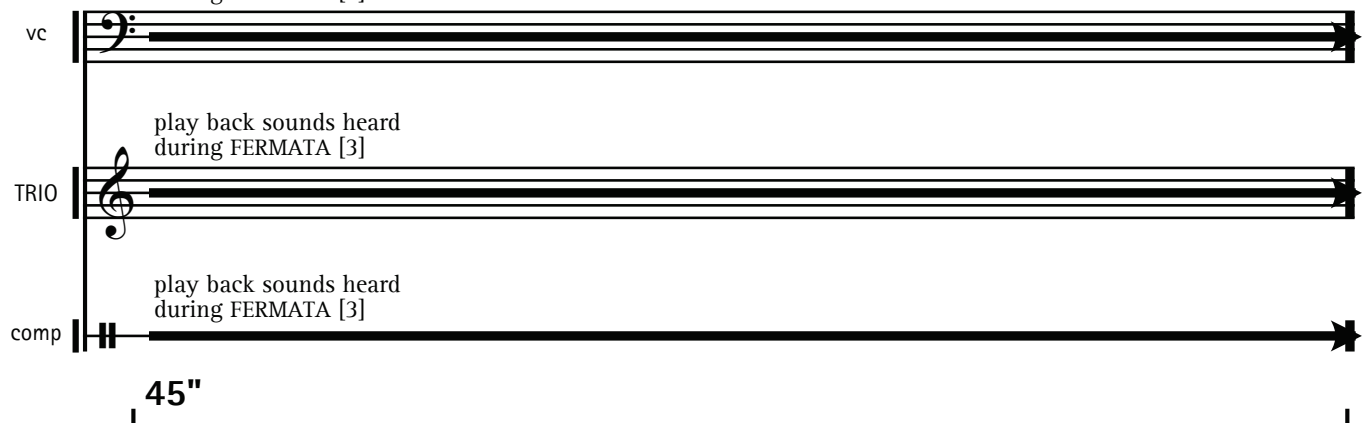
III *pppp* interpret the SCORE backwards (only once!) with «LOW, WONKY SOUNDS»

comp

[ATTACCA]

12. TRANSCRIPTION

play back sounds heard during FERMATA [3]



vc play back sounds heard during FERMATA [3]

TRIO play back sounds heard during FERMATA [3]

comp play back sounds heard during FERMATA [3]

45"

performance notes (11.–12.)

1. receive 2 STAMPS from the COMPOSER and, somewhat briskly, walk the length of the SCORE leftwards, stamping somewhere in its right-hand third as you pass. continue apace towards the left side of the score and wait for the others to (almost) “catch up” to you.
2. as soon as the others are almost done reading the SCORE, interrupt them with the second STAMP.
3. play back sounds you recall hearing during 10. FERMATA using notes in the SCORE as attack or start points. feel free to integrate sounds heard presently – or sounds not heard but that might be interesting to play (for you) or hear (for the audience).

vc

comp

mf

pppp

f

pppp

5+ PING PONG BALLS

mf

pppp

mp

pppp

vc

comp

pizz. *maestoso!*

fff

pppp

[ATTACCA]

wiggle bow screw between strings

pp vigorously

col legno batt., punto

pizz. 2

3-finger pizz. "arpeggiati", extremely high, all strings dampened with left hand

ff 3

after opening with the initial pizz. figure, alternate randomly between variations of the 4 figures, becoming increasingly obsessed on the multi-pizz. figure

in general spasmodically, but with periodic abrupt and awkward (short!) pauses

continue (as above), keeping several of the balls in constant motion from around 8–10 cm above the desk surface, periodically slamming one of the balls on the surface and letting it fly until none are left

14. TRANSFORMATION

vc

TRIO

comp

$\text{♩} = 15$

[ATTACCA]

13:15

ppp sempre

«A COMPLEX, DULL CLICK SOUND» that undergoes a clearly defined but subtle teleological variation into another nearby state

13:15

ppp sempre

REPEAT STAMP

→ DESK

prepare the REPEAT STAMP, take it to the SCORE and stamp it on a particularly lonely note

remove STAMP and return to DESK