

**UCLA**  
**Contemporary Music Score Collection**

**Title**

Place

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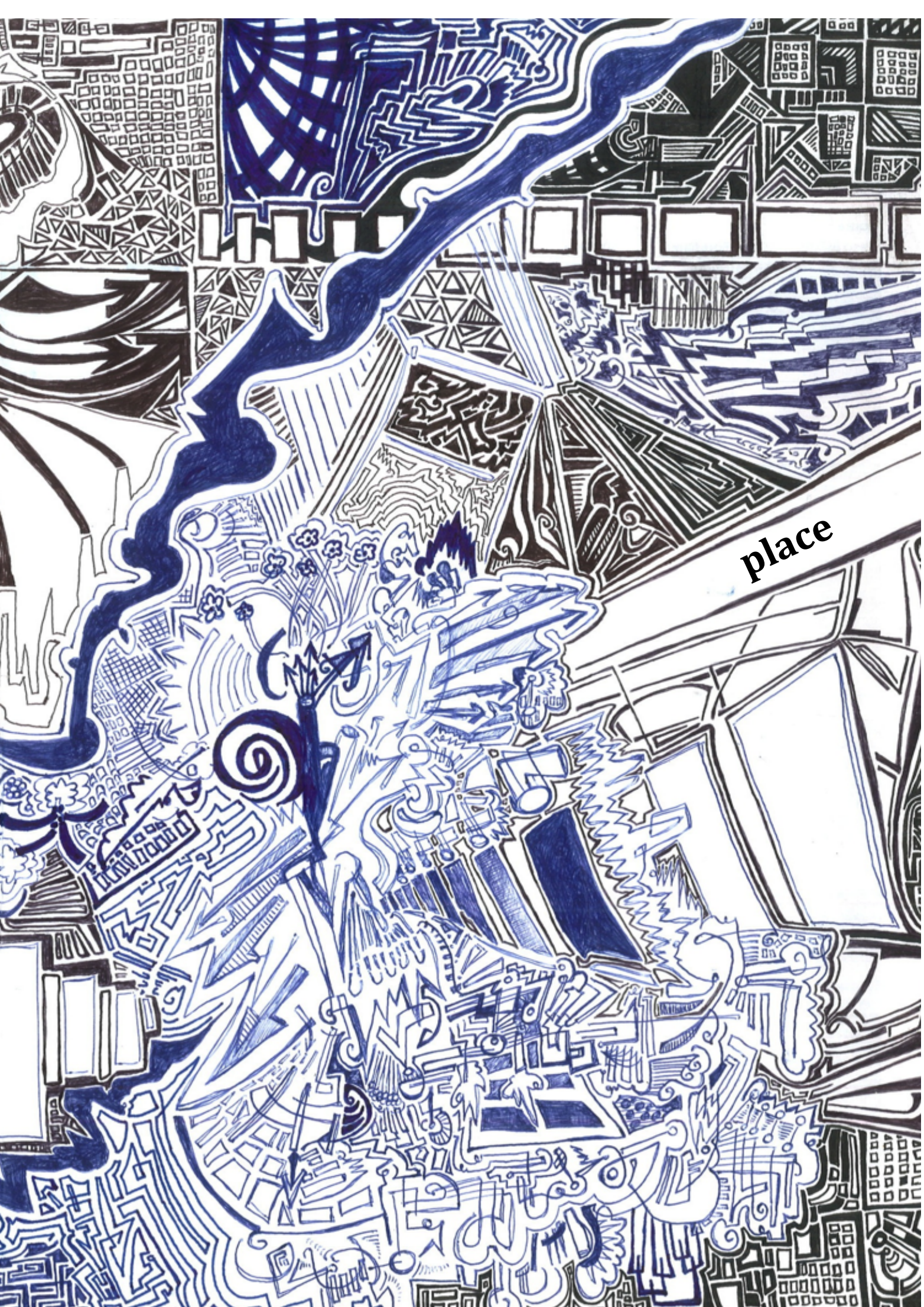
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place



*James Alexandropoulos – McEwan*

**place**  
for small ensemble

composed for  
Birthday Present

*January 2016*

## **About the piece:**

*Place* was composed for Birthday Present, an ensemble I was part of and which performed a mixture of open and improvisation-based scores. As such, the instructions given are tailored to the group's instrumentation and performance practice. The piece can be adapted for other instrumental lineups, and potentially for larger ensembles, but must be performed without a conductor. The rules can be tweaked. Players should rely on their ears and intuition.

## **Instrumentation:**

Electric Guitar (with volume pedal)  
Accordion  
Bb Trumpet (with harmon mute throughout)  
Alto Saxophone

[ doubling instrument for one of the players:  
Electronic Keyboard (with soft infinitely sustaining sound)  
*or* Loop (whose volume can be altered onstage) ]

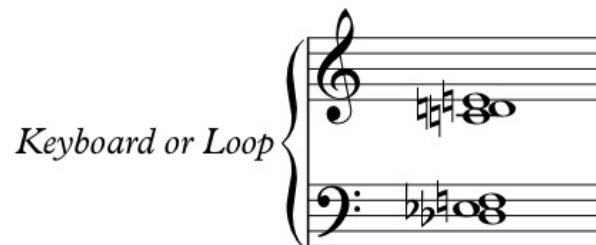
*The piece works best in reverberant spaces. If the ensemble is amplified, use a generous amount of digital reverb on all instruments.*

## **Possible Duration:**

8 – 12 minutes

### **Preparing the Keyboard:**

Prepare the keyboard so that the following notes stay depressed for the duration of the piece:



*Depending on the keyboard, notes could potentially be held depressed with tape, by pressing down on one of the keys and placing card between that key and one adjacent to it, or by weighting down a key with a suitable object.*

Keep the volume on the keyboard turned to silent, so that the notated chord can be faded in and out of silence as directed in the score.

### **Using a loop as an alternative:**

Create a seamless loop of the notated chord, that creates the impression of a keyboard with infinite sustain, and that can be faded in and out of silence as directed in the score.

# Instructions

## **PART 1:**

### **Sustained Overlapping Dyads**

One of the performers (or the duo of trumpet and saxophone) starts the piece by fading in one of the given dyads from silence, and holding it for as long as possible, before fading it to silence. When the first dyad begins fading out, a second dyad should be faded in by another instrument (or the duo of trumpet and saxophone). Continue this process for the duration of Part 1, whilst adhering to the following rules:

- Aim for a quiet dynamic, getting slightly louder as the section progresses.
- Aim for a delicate, smoothly sustained sound.
- Focus primarily on the first of the notated dyads.
- Play given notes at the notated octave.
- Saxophone and Trumpet must always play as a unit by cueing each other.
- Dyads should fade in and out of silence, but occasionally start a dyad/note with clearer attack.
- As part 1 progresses, stuttering sustained sounds can be used occasionally on given dyads.
- As part 1 progresses the guitar and accordion can change the octaves of the given notes.
- *Transition into Part 2: When it feels right, start introducing the material of Part 2 (as described below) in the rests between dyads. Start with just a few notes, and gradually add more. Eventually the whole ensemble should abandon Part 1 so as to create the impression that the dyads of Part 1 have morphed into the vague chordal texture of Part 2.*

## **PART 2:**

### **Vague Chordal Texture**

- Play given notes sparsely and slowly. Play in such a way so that the ensemble as a whole creates a shimmering chordal texture with elements of Klangfarbenmelodie hidden within.
- Guitar and accordion should start with just one note at a time and slowly play more notes at a time as the section progresses, to create a denser ensemble texture.
- As Part 2 goes on, create a busier and fuller texture, getting slightly louder.
- When it feels right, slowly morph into Part 3.

## **PART 3:**

### **Sustained Chord, Slightly Shifting**

- The ensemble should create a full-sounding continuous but timbrally shifting chord, using the given notes.
- Play given notes at the notated octave.
- Notes in parentheses should be played only sparingly.
- Once the texture begins to settle, one of the players should fade in the keyboard or loop, so that it underpins the ensemble sound.
- Build up to a big crescendo. Then as a collective become quieter and fade to silence, leaving only the keyboard or loop sounding. Eventually fade it out to silence, ending the piece.

# place

James Alexandropoulos - McEwan

## PART 1: Sustained Overlapping Dyads

(when sax cues) (when trumpet cues) or

Trumpet (Bb)

Alto Sax.

El. Guitar

Accordion

## PART 2: Vague Chordal Texture

Whole Ensemble

Whole Ensemble

## PART 3: Sustained Chord, Slightly Shifting

Whole Ensemble

Whole Ensemble



