

Constantin Basica

Proof of Concept

for sextet, soundtrack, camera operator and video

2017

Dear musicians,

I am excited to present you this new piece and I hope you will enjoy working on it! Here are a few details about how it works.

Performance

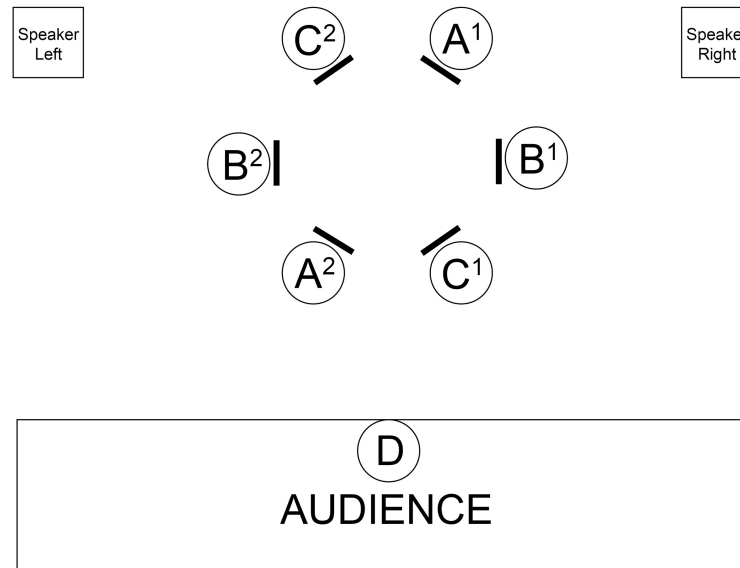
The piece has three distinct stages: *pre-liminal*, *liminal* and *post-liminal*.

The *pre-liminal stage* takes place sometime before the concert, after we rehearse the piece, and it involves recording independent audio channels of each of you separately (wearing headphones).

The *liminal stage* is the actual performance and is to be presented in the first part of the concert. During this part, your instruments will be muted as much as possible, so that when you perform the piece exactly the same as in the *pre-liminal stage*, the instrumental sounds will be almost non-existent—only some inherent noises of the instruments will remain, but they should be mostly covered by the soundtrack. Please find a way to silence your instrument as far as possible.

The *post-liminal stage* is a combination of the prerecorded audio from the *pre-liminal* part and the recorded audio-video from the *liminal stage* (produced by the camera operator). This will be screened in the second part of the concert, using a Max patch that I will provide during the residency, which will automatically crossfade between the audio channels. The result is an illusion: it will appear to the audience as if the real instrumental sounds come into “sonic focus” when the camera operator enters the circle and gradually approaches each instrument.

Each of you will pair with another musician whose instrument is not of the same group (wind, string, percussion, etc.). You have the freedom to choose your part (A, B, or C) and your position in the pair (1 or 2). The following sketch shows the stage arrangement with the six instrumentalists in a circle, facing inward, and the camera operator (D) standing in the audience at the beginning of the performance.



Score

The notation is open to instrumentation and interpretation. The words, textures, and noteheads suggest a way of producing sounds on the instrument, but you should also pay attention to the signified sounds in the soundtrack. Once you assign a specific musical gesture or texture to each segment in the score, you should try to perform it as similar as possible in the *pre-liminal* and *liminal* stages (before and during the performance).

As you can see, the score and the parts for the three pairs (A, B, C) feature the waveform of the soundtrack and a representation of its most important rhythmical elements (mostly the percussion sounds). The soundtrack has two purposes:

- it keeps everything together through its tempo and rhythmical structure, so it is important that all seven of you become very well familiarized with it, since you won't be able to see each other very well throughout the performance (the camera operator will move inside the circle);
- it acts as a generator of ideas for the sounds that you will perform with your instruments—the timings are fixed, but each of you is asked to choose sounds and textures according to the suggestions in the score and the sounds of the audio.

To be clear: you are free to choose your own sounds, but the way they are produced should look as if you were performing the sounds in the soundtrack—this will be apparent to the audience in the *liminal stage*.

Percussion (if any)

Play any instrument that you like, which is easy to mute and does not occupy more space in the circle than the rest of the instruments.

Camera Operator

For the purpose of instrumental diversity, please choose either the violinist or violist to perform the role of the camera operator, since those are the two most similar instruments in the ensemble.

You, the camera operator, will have to memorize the score, so that you may freely move and record each instrument during the performance, according to the score representation of the soundtrack and your instructions. During the *liminal stage*, you will first start the soundtrack, then use your own mobile phone camera (or I can provide one) to shoot the video. The instruction “Video X^x” means that you have to move the camera close to the instrument and shoot close-ups of it. The rest of the instructions show when to move between instruments. During the intermission, you will transfer the video file to the computer and in the *post-liminal stage* you will start the playback.

Miscellaneous

It is important for the visual aspect that all of you are very “romantic” in the way you perform your instrument: please exaggerate your bodily movements.

I am sending you also a second audio file for practicing, which includes the soundtrack and a clicktrack.

If you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions, please let me know: email@constantinbasica.com

I look forward to meeting and working with you all soon!

All the best,
Constantin

0" 2" 4" 6" 8" 10"

$\text{♩} = 120$

A, B, C

Soundtrack

D

Sit on chair in the audience
(front row, central)

synth

bass

percussion



12" 14" 16" 17" 18" 20"

A, B, C

SndTrk.

D

Prepare camera (mobile phone)

Start recording

percussion+reverb

sine-wave-like, bland

f



22" 24" 26" 28" 30"

A, B, C

SndTrk.

D

continue sine-wave-like, but harsher

string-like, airy

f

pp

32" 34" 36" 38" 40"

A
 B
 C
 SndTrk.
 D

percussive
f

cont. string-like
p ————— *ff*

percussive, random
ff

noisy, multiphonic-like
mf

cont. percussive
p

cont. string-like
p ————— *ff*

percussive, random
ff

noisy, multiphonic-like
mf

Stand up and start walking towards the center of the ensemble



42" 44" 46" 48" 50"

A
 B
 C
 SndTrk.
 D

cont.
mf

bell-like
mp

bird-like
mp

percussive
f

cont.
mf

bell
mp

Stop in the center of the circle

Perform a rotation from A¹ to C¹

Rotate to A²

52" 54" 56" 58" 1'00" 1'02"

A bell-like ϕ cont. bell-like, but more echoey ff p pp $fp < mf$

B gritty, continuous mf f bird-like mf p f

C gritty, curvy vary between $p - mf$

SndTrk.

D Perform a rotation from A^2 to C^2 Move to C^2 Video C^2



1'04" 1'06" 1'08" 1'10" 1'12"

A wah-wah-like, strident f cont. f mf f

B bubbly mp ff f cont. bubbly f

C white-noise-like, medium register ff

SndTrk.

D Move to B^2 Video B^2

1'14" 1'16" 1'18" 1'20" 1'22"

A *mf* *p sub.* *f* percussive *f*

B spinning-top-like *f* cont. *ff* cont. spinning-top, but very slow *mp* *f*

C percussive *f* white-noise-like, medium register *f* *fff* percussive *f*

SndTrk.

D bass

1'24" 1'26" 1'28" 1'30" 1'32"

A digital-noise-like, high register *mf* cont. cont. cont. harmonic-gliss.-like, echoey

B *mf* *ff* *mf* *f* *pp sub.*

C digital-noise-like, low register *mf* cont. cont. cont.

SndTrk.

D Move to A² Video A² Move to B¹ Video B¹

1'34"

1'36"

1'38"

1'40"

A

B

C

SndTrk

D

mp

(mf)



1'42"

1'44"

1'46"

1'48"

1'50"

A

B

C

SndTrk

D

percussive

ff

pp

f

percussive

p

ff

percussive

ff

f

3

Move to A²

Video A²

Move to A¹

1'52" 1'54" 1'56" 1'58" 2'00" 2'02"

A windchime-like *f* *pp* *f* *pp* *gliss.* *pp*

B windchime-like *f* *pp* space-choir-like *mf*

C windchime-like *f* *pp* bird-like

SndTrk. sub-bass *f*

D Video A¹ Move to C¹

2'04" 2'06" 2'08" 2'10" 2'12"

A motor-engine-like *f* transition to next texture

B motor-engine-like *f* transition to next texture

C *gliss.* motor-engine-like *f* transition to next texture

SndTrk.

D Video C¹ Move from C¹ to A² in a circle

2'14" 2'16" 2'18" 2'20" 2'22" 2'24"

A extreme, aggressive, random
fff

B extreme, aggressive, random
fff

C extreme, aggressive, random
fff

SndTrk.

D

bass

gliss.

Standing at A², perform a 360° rotation clockwise



2'26" 2'28" 2'30" 2'32" 2'34" 2'36"

A digital-noise-like, low register
mf

B digital-noise-like, medium register
mf

C digital-noise-like, high register
mf

SndTrk.

D

Video A²

Move to C¹

Video C¹

pp sub.

pp sub.

pp sub.

2'38" 2'40" 2'42" 2'44" 2'46" 2'48"

A synth-like *f* *p* percussive *ff* synth-like, clustery *fff* *f* bird-like *gliss.*

B white-noise-like, medium register *f* *p* *ff* synth-like, clustery *fff* *f*

C bird-like *mf* *gliss.* flautando-like, irregular rhythms *ppp* *mf* *ff* synth-like, clustery *fff* *f* percussive

SndTrk.

D Move to C² Video C² Move to A¹ Video A¹



2'50" 2'52" 2'54" 2'56" 2'58" 3'00" 3'02" 3'04"

A, B, C flautando-like, irregular rhythms, not in sync with the others *ppp*

SndTrk.

D Move backwards to the center of the circle Rotate 180° towards the audience Move outside the circle, towards the audience and stop inbetween the ensemble and the first row of seats Cover the camera lens with your hand