

Alexander Wu

July 2025

Concert Score

disturbingly lively, frighteningly inert

for flute, bass clarinet, violin, cello, percussion, piano, and electronics

duration: 8m30s

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disturbingly lively, frighteningly inert

Concert Score

Alexander Wu

duration: 8m30s

Instrumentation

flute (piccolo, C flute, alto flute)

bass clarinet (with preparations)

violin

cello

percussion

snare drum

medium tom

bass drum

vibraphone

footswitch to trigger electronics

piano (with preparations)

electronics (see tech rider on next page)

Notation and Preparations

General

Extended techniques are explained inline or in the footnotes.

Fingering diagrams for microtones or multiphonics are included in the transposed score.

Always play grace notes on the beat.

Bass Clarinet

Place a marble inside an aluminum can, and place the can in the bell. Keep it in the bell throughout the performance; it should only affect the lowest note.

Program Note

In her seminal work “A Cyborg Manifesto” (1985), Donna Haraway writes of the increasingly ambiguous difference between organism and machine, “Our machines are disturbingly lively, and we ourselves frighteningly inert.” Forty years after its publication, Haraway’s observation has almost become banal. The cyborg is now taken for granted, and we are so irrevocably fused with our machines that we cannot tell our bodies apart from them. Everything is at once disturbingly lively and frighteningly inert, but we still find it difficult to embrace partial, fluid identities, and to dream of kinship between boundaries. In this piece, neither the human performers nor the crushed cans (which act as speakers) hanging in front of them dominate. Instead, each part stubbornly speaks imperfect translations of other parts, reveling in contradictions, false memories, and the strange union of six humans and two crushed cans.

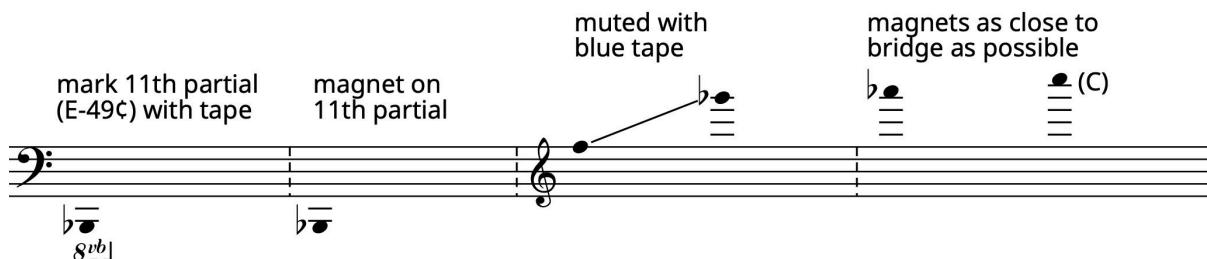
Three tremolo lines indicate unmeasured tremolo.

Play rubato passages with a drunken rhythm uncoordinated with other players. The following example shows one possible interpretation of alto flute in m. 98:

The musical example shows two measures of an alto flute part. The first measure begins with the instruction "rubato" above the staff and "flz." below it. The measure consists of a series of eighth-note grace-like strokes followed by a quarter note. The second measure begins with "flz." above the staff. It contains numerical markings "5" and "3" under specific notes, likely indicating fingerings or performance techniques. The music is in 2/4 time.

Notation and Preparations (continued)

Piano



See tech rider below for more details.



Tech Rider

(Similar products may be used.)

2 x Dayton Audio 25mm Exciters 24W 4Ohm (DAEX25FHE-4)

1 x Fosi Audio Class D Amplifier 50W (TPA3116) (with power supply)

2 x 16AWG Speaker Wires

Optionally, use banana plugs to connect wires to the amplifier and female disconnect tabs to connect wires to the exciters (Gardner Bender Female Disconnects 15-153F). Crimp the disconnect tabs.

1 x 3.5mm Aux Cable

1 x Computer With Max/MSP Installed (with power supply)

1 x USB MIDI Footswitch

A nonzero-to-zero transition (lifting the footswitch) sent through any MIDI control will trigger the next event.

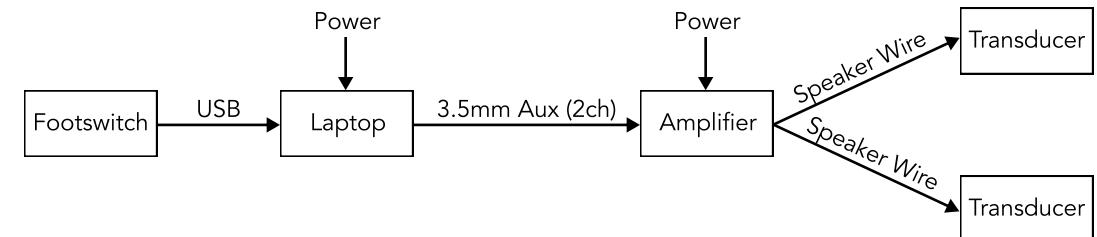
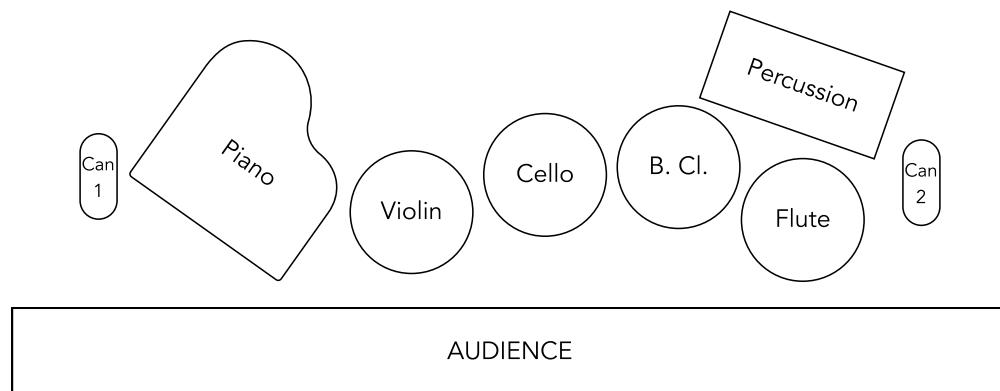
3 x Aluminum Cans (1 for bass clarinet, 2 for playback of electronics)

Hang cans on opposite sides of the stage, not too far from the players.

1 x Blue Painter's Tape (for piano)

15 x Round Neodymium Magnets (diameter = 0.39in, thickness = 0.08in) (for piano)

Three notes need to be prepared with magnets. Use 3 to 5 magnets for each note to ensure a loud attack would not move the magnets.



Concert Score

disturbingly lively, frighteningly inert

Alexander Wu

Sometimes fidgety $\text{♩} = 50$

click +
unvoiced
articulation* no click click only

To Picc.

Alto Flute

tu ku tu ku tu ku tu ku tu ku
f

with aluminum can (and
one marble inside) in bell

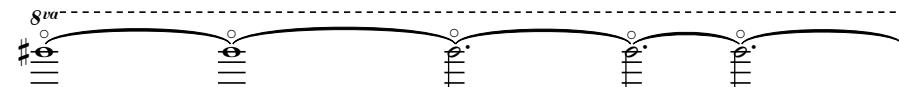
whistle tone, quickly breathe when necessary

Piccolo**ppp unstable**

Bass Clarinet

always with very little vibrato

Violin

**ppp**

always with very little vibrato

Violoncello

Medium Tom

soft mallet
grace notes always
on the beat

To Vib. take bow

Vibraphone

Percussion

electronics (aluminum cans)

arco

(01)

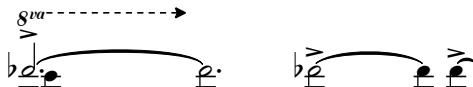
(02)

(03)



(both clefs 8va until m. 37)

Piano

Sometimes fidgety $\text{♩} = 50$ Abs: **f** (l.h.&r.h.)G: **p**

8va →

f**p**

8va →

* (a. fl.) For notes written on a one-line staff, use a variety of arbitrary fingerings that can produce fast, loud clicks.

observe pedaling as closely as possible

11

Picc.

B. Cl.

(can in bell)

15 To Fl.

slap

slap

(8)

Vln.

I.h. mute
sul A

air gliss.*

p

Vc.

Perc.

f

f

f

f

take soft mallets

04

05

Pno.

improvise with notes within the range as fast as possible
(or decelerating according to feather-beams);
number of notes not exact;
hands not synchronized;
play accented notes in approximate written locations

Abs:f
G:p

f

mf

Abs:f
G:p

f

15

* (vc.) air gliss: Produce a slightly pitched glissando by gliding up or down the string with multiple fingers lightly touching the string.

17

Fl.

B. Cl.

Vln.

Vc.

Perc.

19 Flute (ord.)

flz.

p

color gliss.*

pizz.
l.h. mute
I
II
III
IV

“f” arco
(l.h. mute)
sul A

mp

“f”

hit resonators w/ soft mallets; improvise with white notes between C5 and F5 as fast as possible with slight rhythmic fluctuations

p

f

p

f

⑥

19

8va

p

8va

f

⑦o

* (b. cl.) color gliss: With the A-flat hole covered, finger the diamond notes to produce a glissando spanning a semitone or less.

21 (ord.)

Fl.

B. Cl.

Vln.

Vc.

Perc.

Pno.

flz.

spectral m.p. gliss.*

pizz. (l.h. mute)

arco sul A

arco

mf

ff

8va

pizz.

sul C

mf

scrape resonators with mallet handle

hit resonators w/ soft mallets

scrape resonators with mallet handle

as fast as possible with slight rhythmic fluctuations;
the three notes must always sound at once (not arpeggiated)

07

f

p

f

p

f

p

f

* (b. cl.) Diamond notes indicate the highest sounding notes in the spectral multiphonics (they are technically another octave higher but written lower for legibility).
The timing for overblowing to the next multiphonic is always flexible, but make sure to start and end with the written multiphonics in time.

flute mm. 25-37: always end a little early
to leave roughly a 16th rest between attacks

Wu, Concert Score

5

25

Fl. *pp* (non cresc.) *fpp*

B. Cl. *mp* (*mp semper*)

Vln. *pp*

Vc. arco flaut. sul G *p rubato until m. 34* (*but keep downbeats in time*)

Perc. take bow (88) (89) (90) *pp* (11) (12) (13) *arco f* (14)

Pno. 8va *Abs: f* *mf* *G: p* 8va *8va* *8va* *8va*

Fl. 30 (non cresc.) *fpp* (non cresc.) *fpp*

B. Cl.

Vln. (8)

Vc.

Perc. take soft mallets hit resonators w/ soft mallets hit bar with mallet (normal playing) *mp*

Pno. *f* *mf* (as before, repeat whole chord) *f* Abs: *f* G: *p* *f* (number of notes not exact) Abs: *f* G: *p*

This page from the Wu Concert Score contains six staves of musical notation. The instruments are Flute (Fl.), Bassoon (B. Cl.), Violin (Vln.), Cello (Vc.), Percussion (Perc.), and Piano (Pno.). The score is numbered 6 at the top left and includes a title 'Wu, Concert Score' at the top right. The music consists of several measures of notes and rests, with various dynamics and performance instructions. The Flute and Bassoon staves begin with a measure of sixteenth-note patterns. The Violin and Cello staves feature sustained notes with grace notes. The Percussion staff includes instructions for using soft mallets to hit resonators and a bar with a mallet. The Piano staff shows a series of chords and specific dynamic markings like *f*, *mf*, *f*, *mp*, *f*, and *p*. There are also performance notes such as '(non cresc.)' and '(as before, repeat whole chord)'.

37 Warm, fragile, haunted
by what came before

To A. Fl.

Alto Flute

Fl. (Measures 34-35): Measures 34 show eighth-note patterns on the G and A strings. Measure 35 starts with a bassoon solo (B. Cl.) in *f*, followed by a violin solo (Vln.) with various muting techniques (I.h. mute, pizz. I.h. mute sul G, arco s.p. sul C) and dynamics (f, pp). The piano (Pno.) has sustained notes throughout.

B. Cl. (Measures 34-35): Bassoon part, starting with a dynamic *f*.

Vln. (Measures 34-35): Violin part with various muting techniques and dynamics (I.h. mute, pizz. I.h. mute sul C, arco s.p. sul C) and a dynamic *f*. The piano (Pno.) has sustained notes throughout.

Vc. (Measures 34-35): Cello part with eighth-note patterns and a dynamic *f* non rubato.

Perc. (Measures 34-35): Percussion part featuring a vibraphone playing (scrape resonators) and a medium tom.

Medium Tom: (Measures 17-19): Dynamics *f*, *mp*, *f*. The piano (Pno.) has sustained notes throughout.

Snare: (Measures 17-19): Dynamics *f*, *mp*, *f*. The piano (Pno.) has sustained notes throughout.

Piano (Pno.) (Measures 34-35): Sustained notes. Measure 36: Dynamics *f*, *pp*. Measure 37: Dynamics *pp* unstable, *pp*. The piano part includes instructions: "do not lift pedal here! wait until resonance fades".

Text Annotations:
 * (vln.) air gliss.: Produce a slightly pitched glissando by gliding up or down the string with multiple fingers lightly touching the string.
 37 Warm, fragile, haunted by what came before
 do not lift pedal here!
 wait until resonance fades

* (vln.) air gliss.: Produce a slightly pitched glissando by gliding up or down the string with multiple fingers lightly touching the string.

42

A. Fl.

B. Cl.

46

pp

pp unstable

Vln.

pp blend w/ woodwind

arco

ppp unstable blend w/ vibraphone tail

s.t., bow very lightly

ord.

s.t., bow very lightly

pp

ppp unstable blend w/ vibraphone tail

Vc.

pp blend w/ woodwind

Perc.

(vibraphone)

arco

pp blend w/ woodwind

(20)

f

randomly placed clicks
loud but sparse (notation not exact)

(21)

(22)

with occasional trem.

46

(loco)

ppp as a shadow, dry (do not pedal or let ring)

Pno.

52

A. Fl.

B. Cl.

61

Vln.

Vc.

Perc.

Pno.

s.t., bow very lightly
ppp unstable (non cresc.) ord. (ord.) (pp) *ppp* *pp*

(pp)

(23) (24) (25) (26) (27) (28)

precisely placed clicks

$\Gamma^3 \bar{\Gamma}$

mp (mp) *ppp*

10

click +
unvoiced
articulation
(as before, use
any fingerings)

Wu, Concert Score

click +
unvoiced
articulation

click +
unvoiced
articulation

A. Fl. 62 
tu ku tu ku tu ku
mp pp

B. Cl. 

Vln. 
pizz. l.h. mute
arco l.h. mute sul A
grace notes always on the beat
pp
arco
pizz. l.h. mute
f

Vc. 

Perc. 
Medium Tom
soft mallet
mp
(still bowed vibraphone)
pp
mp
(medium tom)

Pno. 

68

A. Fl. B. Cl.

click + unvoiced articulation
tu ku tu ku tu ku
mp *pp*
air

Vln. Vc.

arco
l.h. mute
s.p.
sul A
air gliss
pp
arco
pizz.
l.h. muted
"f"
arco, s.t., bow
very lightly
ord.

Snare
(vibraphone)
slowly scrape resonators
(stop)
arco
(38) (39) (40) (41) (42) (43) (44) (45)

Pno.

p still dry
ppp

79 Exposed

A. Fl. click + unvoiced articulation *tu ku tu ku tu ku* *mp pp*

B. Cl. *pp* *pp unstable*

Vln. s.t., bow very lightly *pp* ord. (gently lift first finger to mute) *air* *s.p.* highest poss. *air gliss* *mp* arco (grace notes on the beat) *s.p.* l.h. mute sul E

Vc. pizz. l.h. mute *f* *pp* arco *pp* s.p., sul D, slow bow thumb*—0 thumb (grace notes always on the beat) 0 thumb 0 thumb

Bass Drum **Snare** rim click *mp not too loud* *p* turn snare off (no actual playing) turn snare on (no actual playing)

Perc. (46) (47) (48) (vibraphone) scrape resonators

Pno. *p* *mp not too loud* *p* (11) *pp* 8va 8va

keep pedal down until m. 92 (Bb)

* (vc.) thumb: Produce air sound by pressing left thumb against the string below where the bow touches the string. Release the thumb as indicated for a brief open string sound. Do not coordinate bow changes with timbral changes (i.e., do not force a bow change when you press/release the thumb; treat it as one long note).

85

(grace notes always on the beat)

A. Fl.

B. Cl.

Vln.

Vc.

Perc.

Pno.

turn snare off
(no actual playing) turn snare on
(no actual playing)

Medium Tom

Snare rim click

turn snare off turn snare on turn snare off turn snare on

scrape resonators

49

50

8va

Cs: f (l.h.&r.h.)
D: pp

92 With repressed energy

A. Fl. *mf ff* (non rubato) *flz.*

B. Cl. *mf ff* *slap* *p* *rubato* *flz.*

Vln. *(C)* *ff* *as fast as poss.* *mp* *air gliss.** *highest poss.* *air gliss.*

Vc. *pizz. l.h. mute sul C* *0 thumb* *0 thumb* *sul G*

Perc. *mp f* (51) *ppp* (52) (53) (54) (55)

Pno. *8va* *Cs: f D: pp* *f* *mp* *(loco)*

* (vln.) air gliss between boxes: Play arpeggiando as fast as possible while gliding up all four strings to as high as possible with multiple fingers lightly touching the strings.

95 rubato

A. Fl.

B. Cl.

Vln.

Vc.

Perc.

Pno.

rubato

do not coordinate!
rubato _____ (non rubato)

98 *ff*
do not coordinate!
rubato _____ (non rubato)
ff

as high and fast as poss.
p

repeat

air gliss.

(C) *ff* *fp* < *f* *mp*
pizz. arco
l.h. mute
sul C *fp* < *f* *mp*
arco s.p.
sul D thumb

ff *ppp*

56 57 58 59

ff *8va* 1

98 *Cs: f* *D: pp* *f* *mp*
8va 1
(*loco*)

100 flz. rubato flz. flz. rubato

A. Fl. *p*

B. Cl.

Vln. air gliss.

Vc. 0 thumb sul G 0 thumb sul C 0 thumb

Perc. (60) (61) (62) (63)

Pno.

→

107

(non rubato) To Picc.

A. Fl. flz. rubato

B. Cl. slap slap

Piccolo ff ff ff

Vln. (C) ff pizz. l.h. mute sul C pp arco, s.t., bow very lightly ff arco, s.t., bow pp very lightly pizz. l.h. mute sul C pp unstable

Vc. 0 thumb 0 thumb ff pp unstable

Perc. 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 f fppp

Pno. 8va 107 8va Cs:f Db:pp mp Cs:f Db:pp 8va Cs:f Db:pp

Wu, Concert Score

111

Picc. whistle tone *p unstable*

B. Cl. (highest poss.)

Vln. (s.t.), norm. pressure rubato

Vc. *pp*

Perc. (71) (72) (73) (74) (75) (76) (77)

Pno. *mp* (loco) 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

Wu, Concert Score

(whistle tone) 3 3 3

(whistle tone) 3 3 3

(whistle tone) 3 3 3

rubato ord. flz. (non rubato) 114

ff rubato flz. (non rubato) *ff*

repeat dyad as fast as possible; number of notes not exact; do not coordinate! *ff* repeat dyad as fast as possible; number of notes not exact; do not coordinate! *ff*

f

114

ff 8va

Cs: *f* Db: *pp* ff 8va

rubato flz. (non rubato) (non rubato) flz. flz. flz. flz. flz.

116 118 fff (non rubato) flz. slap flz. slap flz. slap

Picc. B. Cl. Vln. Vc. Perc. Pno. Red.

rubato flz. (non rubato) (non rubato) flz. flz. flz. flz. flz.

slap 3

ffff mf

ffff

(78)

8va 8va 8va 8va 8va 8va

ff sempre