

MARIMBA SOLO  
(DUAL PREPARED-  
PIANO AMPLIFIED)

AMPLIFICATIONS (2023)  
1. MARIMBAideefixe  
Sebastian suarez-solis



A massive thank you to Tim Feeney, whose help in conceptualizing this piece was integral.

# PERFORMANCE NOTES

## NOTATION

### Accent Notation

Accents in this composition correspond to a spectrum of accent notation: tenuto (half-accent), accent, and marcato (heavy accent).

### Dynamics

In this score, each staff has its own dynamic markings to differentiate between right and left hand playing. At times, dynamics can be specified at the per-note level.

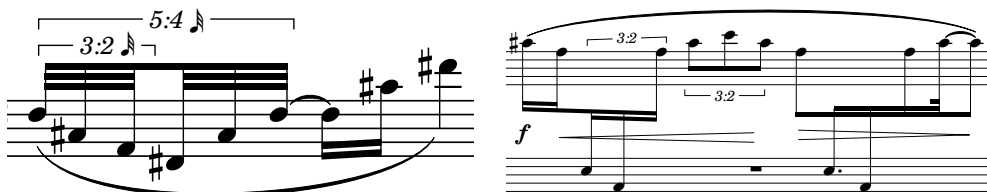
### Extended techniques

#### Split Roll and Split Playing

All right hand rolls in this score, unless otherwise notated, are split rolls. Split rolls are performed by turning the hand clockwise and slotting the mallets between the bars, so that one mallet is above a bar and another is below it. I recommend to play on the edge of the bar so as to avoid the bar's node. Sometimes, specific notes are written using this technique, such as playing grace notes to end a split roll on specific notes. Other times, you may encounter split rolls on two notes, or split rolls immediately preceding a note played ordinario. Changes to and from ordinario and split roll` playing (such as an ord. sign) are not provided as all rolls, unless otherwise marked, are split rolls.

#### Triple laterals (moving notes)

Some triple lateral strokes will feature movement of the notes, or extensions of triple laterals with the left hand reaching over or around the right.



#### Resonator sounds/body sounds

Resonator sounds are specified using a diamond-shaped note head and will be accompanied by text.

#### Backstick

Backsticking, or playing with the back end of the mallets, is specified using cross-shaped heads on notes and a text description.

#### Stick clicks

Stick clicks, when the shaft of the stick clicks with a bar, are specified using cross-shaped heads and no text description. It should sound the same as a backstick, but there will not be time for you to flip your mallets.

#### Fingernail

Playing with the fingernail is marked with a cross-shaped heads and a description.

### Dead strokes

Dead strokes are specified using an x on the note's stem.

### Measures & Measure Numbers

Each staff has independent barlines (see Early Music Notation vs New Music Notation), and thus, each staff also has independent measure numbers.

#### Measure 7 (top staff)

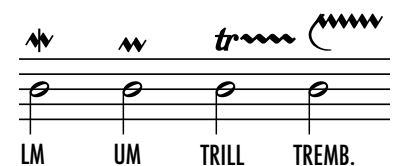
The only double lateral roll in the piece is at rehearsal marking B (measure 7/6). Roll with mallets 2, 3, and 4. Mallet 4 comes in 2 beats late, and mallet 2 exits 2 beats early.

### Notes Inégales

At times, straight rhythms are marked "notes inégales", requiring the player to play each rhythm with a 3:2 or 5:2 swing. This is a gross simplification, and this playing style has extra rules for relations between primary and secondary note value designations. For more information on notes inégales, please consult the links at the end of the front matter.

### Ornaments

There are a couple ornaments utilized in this work that are left up to the performer to interpret. There are the lower and upper mordents, the trill, the turn, and the tremblement.



The lower and upper mordents start from the principal note, move to their respective lower and upper neighboring tone (context dependent on local tonal center), and move back to the principal tone. This is usually at a 32nd note rate, but you may of course adjust this as needed.

The trill begins on the upper neighbor, and oscillates between the upper neighbor and the principal tone. It may begin slower and end faster and vice versa. Consult the recording.

For the purposes of this composition, a tremblement is a trill, which may include additional upper and lower neighboring tones, which is dotted such that the principal tone lasts at least 2 times as long as the upper neighbor,

## PERFORMANCE NOTES, CT'D (ORNAMENTS)

leading to a very pointed-sounding trill. Be sure to accent the principal tone.



## Polyrhythm ratio notation

Polyrhythms are specified using ratios. Whenever it is unclear what rhythmic unit the ratio is referring to, the ratio will be accompanied by a note value representing that unit. Beware, there are many nonstandard nested tuplets, and there is no time signature to fall back on. If unsure, be sure to listen to the official recording of this work.

## STAVES

### Early Music Notation vs New Music Notation

This piece is constructed in two voices which move independently. For this reason, barlines are modified to preserve the nature of the voices.

You will see that, often, barlines do not match up until the end of a phrase. This might make more sense when listening to the recording. Visually, it aims to help the performer notice distance, silence, and the space between instances, where more traditional notation may not.

The phrases played, though disjunct, are imitations of a baroque style, extemporized in a baroque fashion.



## Key Signature

There is no set key, and accidentals reset after each (staff) barline.

## RH/LH piano style notation

For the most part, the staves are specific to the left and right hands; they do not act as a mere function of range, but also contextually indicate which hand is playing which phrase. This becomes important as some phrases (like certain lateral strokes) do not show any clear sticking. NB Some phrases may not correspond to this rule, for visual or logistical concerns; these phrases will always be rhythms which are played with natural sticking between close notes. Phrases like these will be kept on one staff.

## Time Signatures

This composition is scored without time signatures but with a constant pulse; it is in marked free time. This piece is all about silence and space; at the same time, it acknowledges that sounds are almost always ringing long after their initial impulses. By using free notation which locally preserves rhythm, this is visually acknowledged by the composition's score and engraving. It is my hope that this helps you achieve a better integration with the instrument.

## Fermati

This score utilizes a very narrow definition of the term fermata, and uses two symbols for fermati. Symbol no. 1 is the standard fermata symbol, which is defined as "wait until all sound has faded to proceed", and symbol no. 2 is the standard symbol for a short fermata, defined here as "take a small pause, anywhere from a breath to 5 seconds." See example above.

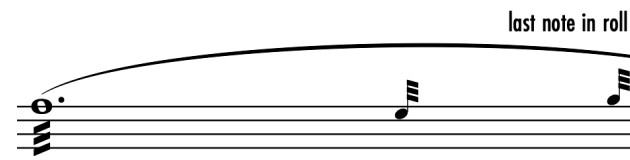
## Performing the Split Roll

This is a three step process: first, slot your mallets into the bar(s) to place your hand correctly. Then, play the roll, taking care to ensure the same sound quality as usual. Stop playing by ending the last stroke before immediately before your left hand strikes. You may think of your left hand as the final stroke of the right hand split roll.

## Grace Notes

Grace notes during a roll indicate specific neighbor tones to be played while rolling on the principal note. Their position within the bar connotes a rough estimate of when to play the stroke. Think of it as a note-per-note specification of tones within a trill.

During a roll, assume that any grace note close to the end of a bar is to be played as the final note of the roll. This will be accompanied by a text description.



## On Polyrhythm and Hyperrealistic Notation

Performers should strive to play polyrhythms to the best of their ability, though ultimately, these polyrhythms are more of a distillation of the rhythmic structure of early music playing and performers should recognize that facet of this composition. That these polyrhythms imitate French and German music of the 17th & 18th century is not happenstance, you are playing the exact metrical values as old-world baroque phrases, down to the microrhythm.

## PIANO PREPARATION & AMPLIFICATION



### **Dampers**

The dampers should be jammed. Jam them as much as you can to replicate a full foot's-worth of force on the sustain pedal. This can be done with a rubber or wooden wedge, a pencil, a weight (not recommended), or a person's foot. If performing for an audience, this should be done prior to performance.

### **Piano Strings**

Experiment with placement of preparations on strings. Plein wire (upper strings) are ok to experiment with. Bass wire, on the other hand, may unravel with too much vibration/excitement from another object, so please use sparingly and handle with care. Consider not placing items on the bass wire.

### **Keyboard**

The piano keyboards should be covered, for safety and aesthetic concerns.

### **Metals Preparation**

The pianos should house several brass objects like bells (light and heavy) crotales (lower pitch is better), and almglocken. Be sure to use brass objects, as these are less hard than steel, which therefore won't damage plein

wire strings while inside the piano. Anything with the pitches B, F#, D, A#, C#, and G# are preferred, as well as C and G.

### **Lids**

Lids should be at full stick, and angled so that they trap incoming sound from the marimba into the body of the piano for reverberation.

### **Tuning**

If at all possible, pianos should be tuned the same as the marimba (12TET EQ at A=442Hz).

### **Recording/amplification**

If recording, microphones should be submerged fully into the body of the piano, completely inside the piano's sound holes. You may use room mics beyond this but the primary microphone pairing **MUST** be the sound hole mics. I feel so strongly about this that if you record this piece without primarily recording the sound of the piano that I'd say you'd be recording an entirely separate piece. This composition is as much about the pianos as it is the marimba.

Amplification/reinforcement of sound is ok and may even be desired; same rules as above.

## MISC.

### **Recommended Implements**

There are three possibilities: (1) exact match: Pius Cheung Graduated Set in Rattan; (2) similar mallets: Jean Geofroy Graduated Set, Robert van Sice mallets (personal stock, made with alpaca yarn); (3) general match: graduated set of alpaca yarn mallets. I highly recommend the first option for sake of clarity and dynamics (rattan allows for added flexibility, which might be necessary for some phrases/motions). I understand I can't and shouldn't make you buy a specific set of mallets, but this really does make a difference in terms of overall sound production, bite, and clarity. In any case, alpaca yarn mallets cut through the mud of the piano amplification and provide a substantial increase in clarity over traditional yarn-wound mallets.

### **Silence and Stillness**

This piece is long and slow, mainly because of the incredibly long resonance trails the prepared-piano amplification provides. Embrace the silence, the notes you didn't play, the ghostly chamber ensemble that you lay witness to, etc...

### **Resonance Concerns**

This overall effect of this composition is ultimately dependent on the acoustics of the room in which you are playing. Choosing a suitable environment for this kind of activity is a large part to the success of an attempted performance of this piece.



## PERFORMANCE NOTES, CT'D (RESONANCE CONCERNS)

### Gloves

Gloves may be needed for section L, when playing on the bars with the fingertips. Leather gloves are recommended for best sound quality.

### Setup

Onstage, you may orient yourself how you see fit. The diagram below is a setup guide intended to help with properly installing the piano-amplifiers. The pianos may be positioned side-to-side with the keyboard facing parallel to the accidentals-side of the marimba, or with a slight angle outwards (the center, or inner edges, of the two pianos now more forward, further away from the player, as shown on page ii.

## PROGRAM NOTES

### --AMPLIFICATIONS--

a series of improvised compositions, utilizing multiple pianos as resonating bodies to extend the sustain of various instruments. with various metal implements scattered throughout the piano bodies, the strings sympathetically reverberate along to the improvisatory sounds of each instrument, at times a whisper, at times a roar.

microphones are placed inside the body of the piano capturing a large, harmonious reverberation, a ghostly chamber ensemble of one.

credits

released October 16, 2023

marimba, viola da gamba, music box, multiple percussion, desk bells, sebastian suarez-solis

audio, sebastian suarez-solis

photo, sebastian suarez-solis

recorded at California Institute of the Arts on Oct. 13-15, 2023.

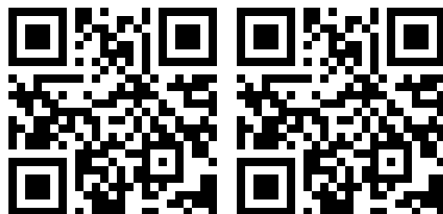


### LINKS

Audio Recording (left)

Inégales example (right)

Inégales playlist (middle)



*amplifications (2023) available on Bandcamp at [chassuarez.bandcamp.com](https://chassuarez.bandcamp.com)*

### --MARIMBAideefixe--

2 prepared pianos + 5.0 octave marimba

with the marimba, i found that the pianos were quite receptive to many of the notes and harmonies i would play. even though the marimba is tuned to 442, or maybe because of it, notes would pop out and rattle metal discs and bells inside the piano, sometimes the same note, sometimes a more distant one. the marimba makes the pianos roar, swell to life, a sort of homunculus, a marionette. a bell swirls around inside the body of the piano, providing a rounded, tumbling ostinato. a ghostly chamber ensemble. i describe the track as an *idée fixe* as the main motivating phrase is such a focus of my playing. the piano seems to like it very well.

# AMPLIFICATIONS

I. MARIMBA *Aideefixe*

sebastian suarez-solis

**Slow** (♩ = 40)  
always strictly **a tempo**

**A**

5

4

Resonator 5:4

*mf*

*mp*

*f*

*mp*

**B**

7

6

*f*

*f*

*f*

*mf*

*mf*

*mf*

gliss.

\* **AT B**: Double vertical roll between mallets  
2,3,4, with mallet 2 lifting off two beats early

11

*p* *f* *mp* *mf*

3:2

**C** meno mosso ♩ = 72

15

*p* *mf* *f* *p* *mf*

3:2

19

*f* *mp*

**D** tempo primo

22

*ff* *mp* *f* *mp*

5:4

6:4



27

*ff*

*f*

*mf*

*f*

25

*mf*

*f*

30

*f*

*f*

*p*

*f*

5:4

3

3

5:4

3

3

29

*ff*

*f*

*p*

*f*

last note in roll

35

*f*

*f*

*mf*

33

39

*mp*

3:2

*sffz*

*mf*

*p*

36

Same note mordent (no upper neighbor)

43

*f*

39 *f*

5:4

3:2

*p*

45

6:4

3:2

*ff*

*mf*

**E** Exalted ♩ = 96

3:2

3:2

*f*

3:2

*f*

tenuto on mallet 3 only

40 b.5 *ff*

49

*ff*

3:2

3:2

*f*

44 *ff*

52

*mf*

3:2

*mf*

*p*

54

49 *mp*

3:2

*f*

*f*

56

50

*ff*

*f*

*f*

*mp*

*mp*

rit. ----- a tempo

61

53

*p*

*p*

*f*

*ff*

*ff*

64

56

*fff*

*mp*

*f*

*f*

*mf*

*mp*





89 *mf* *p* *mp* *mf*

76 *mf*

95 *f* *mf* *f* *mf* *f* *mf* *f*

78 b.3 *f*

98 *f* *mf* *f* *mp* *mp* *f* *f*

80 b.5 *mf*

102 **G** ♩ = 96 *f* *mf* *f* *f* *f* *f* *ff*

81 b.3 *mf*

103

82  $b_{15}$  3:2 3:2

104

*mp* *f* *mf* *mf*

108

*ff* *mf* rit.



**a tempo**  
*play feathered beam for as long as you wish*

**H** Slower ♩ = 84

111  
 92  
*f ff mf p pp*

114  
 95  
*mp pp mp p mf p*

118  
 99  
*f mp f mp*

120

3:2

mp

ff

101

3:2

f

5:4

6:4

123

p

mf

f

mf

3:2

104

mp

p

mf

f

126

nat. sticking

p

107

130

mp

mp

p

f

mp

3:2

3:2

109

mp

mp

135 8 3:2 3:2

*pp* *mp* *mp* *mf* *mp*

*rit.* *a tempo*

*gliss.*

**I**

114

141 6:4

*mf* *mf* *f*

118

145 **Faster** ♩ = 116

*ff* *mp*

122

150

*f* *mp* *mp* *mf*

125



rit. -----  $\text{♩} = 104$

154

*f* *f* *mf* *mp*

127

Detailed description: This system contains measures 127 to 154. It begins with a piano introduction in the bass clef, marked *f*. The right hand enters with a melody in the treble clef, also marked *f*. The tempo is marked  $\text{♩} = 104$ . A 'rit.' (ritardando) marking is followed by a dashed line. The system concludes with a *mp* (mezzo-piano) dynamic.

158

8

*f* *mp* *pp* *mp* *mf* *mf*

129

Detailed description: This system contains measures 129 to 158. It features a complex texture with multiple staves. Dynamics range from *f* (forte) to *pp* (pianissimo). A bracketed section of 8 measures is indicated. The system ends with a *mf* (mezzo-forte) dynamic.

164

3:2 3:2

*f* *f* *ff* *ff*

131

Detailed description: This system contains measures 131 to 164. It includes a melodic line in the right hand with a triplet of eighth notes marked '3:2'. Dynamics include *f* and *ff* (fortissimo). The system concludes with a *ff* dynamic.

168

5:4 3:2 5:4

*mp* *mf* *mp* *mf* *mp* *p* *mp* *p*

136

Detailed description: This system contains measures 136 to 168. It features a complex texture with multiple staves. Dynamics range from *p* (piano) to *mf* (mezzo-forte). Brackets indicate sections of 5:4 and 3:2 measures. The system ends with a *p* dynamic.

173

*mp* *mf* *f*

140

*mf* *f*

177

*mf* *mp* *mf* *f*

144

*mf* *mp* *mf* *f*

182

*f* *ff* *f* *mf* *mf* *f* *mp*

146

*f* *ff* *f* *mf* *mf* *f* *mp*

187

*mp* *mf* *mp*

149

*mp*

191 **J** Fast ♩ = 120

151 *mf* *f* *mf* *ff* *mp* *f*

197

157 *mp* *f*

202

160 *ff* *f* *mf* *f*

207

163 *ff* *p* *mp* *mf* *f* *ff*

3:2

212

*p* *mf*

168 *f*

215

LH: approximate groupings using both pitches

*mf* *mf* *mp* *sffz* *sffz* *p*

*molto rit.* *a tempo*

171

219

*mp* *mf* *sffz* *f*

5:4 3:2

175

222

*ff* *mf* *mf*

178 *mf* *ff* *mf*

**REPEATS:** Play until bars are fully resonant, and then play a little beyond that (hairpins correspond to entire repeat).

226  
183  
227  
228  
229  
230  
fff  
mp  
mp  
mp  
fff

**K** Faster Still ♩ = 152

230  
187  
231  
232  
233  
mf  
mf  
mf  
f

233  
234  
235  
236  
f  
mf  
f  
mf

236  
237  
238  
239  
240  
f  
f  
f  
f  
f

240  
241  
242  
243  
244  
f  
f  
f  
f  
mp

rit. (to bar before L)

244

*f* *mp*

3:2 3:2 6:4

(♩≈146)

249

*mp* *mp*

3:2 3:2 5:4 3:2

206

254

(♩≈136)

*f* *f*

3:2

210

259

*ff* *ff*

3:2 3:2

215



266 (♩=120)

222

**L** Play with fingertips (gloves optional)  
♩ = 60

271 (♩ = 80)

227

rit. ----- ♩ = 80

accel. -----  
Notes inégales (16ths)

♩ = 100

277

233

283

239

288

244

294

250

*mf*

300

256

$\text{♩} = 200$

*p*

304

263

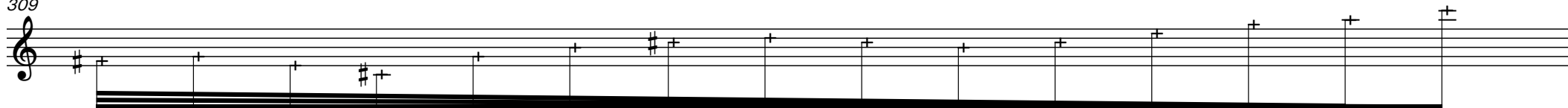
**M**  $\text{♩} = 92$   
Straight 16ths

*mp*

3:2

5:4

309



310

310

rit. ----- a tempo

Improvise, ca. 30"

312



♩ = 82

**N**

REPEATS: Open repeats, play at least a couple times.

Bar 328, play C first time only. Bar 329, begin on C every repeat.

313

313

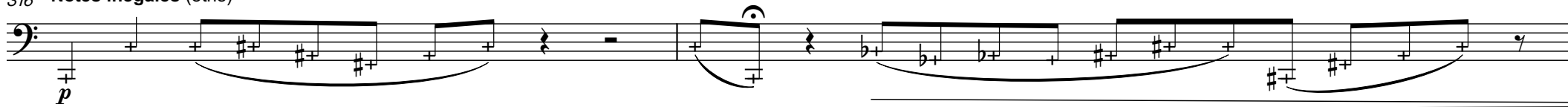
**PLAY PLAY PLAY PLAY PLAY PL**

282

any dynamic

316

Notes inégales (8ths)



318

