

# From Elemental Singularities to Unified Complexities:

a microcosmic journey

## Instrumentation:

For two to five string players, and live electronics.

## Software:

The work can be performed on-location or remotely via Sonobus/Zoom.

GUI download link: [https://github.com/eclmmon/new\\_music\\_for\\_strings](https://github.com/eclmmon/new_music_for_strings)

## Duration:

When downloaded, the duration is set to be approximately 10' long. However, performers familiar with python are welcome to select and set alternative durations no shorter than 7'30".

The variable to set the duration can be found near the bottom of the `main.py` file with the `DURATION` variable. The duration is calculated in seconds.

## Program note:

The piece was commissioned by the New Music for Strings Festival as part of a 3-part collaborative composition under the theme "remote connections". As composers, we were challenged due to the pandemic to think of new ways of collaborating remotely. From the beginning, we wished to explore aspects of communication, how it evolves through the development in society, and how it breaks down due to polarization and conflict. Inspired by writings on systems theory and telematic approaches, we ended up creating a sonic simulation of a microcosmos—arising from the elements and evolving to life forms, individuals and collectives—where communication develops autopoietically. The piece is a result of that process.

## Player instructions:

For all instructions, a condensed version of each instruction set is presented in the GUI.

Players will be presented by the score GUI with a series of notated and graphical cells. Each cell represents one of five elements (earth, wind, water, fire, ether) or various aggregates of the elements. The graphical cells can be interpreted freely by performers, when the score instructions below allow for it. During the course of the work, performers will be presented formal sections by the score GUI. The instructions for each sections are written below, and players must choose from and incorporate the following actions in each of the respective sections (all actions and musical gestures should be short in duration, with improvisatorial attention open for engagement with the other players):

## Actions and Anti-Actions Definitions:

The following actions and anti-actions can be found throughout the formal overview in italicized text. When understanding the instructions of the formal section, refer to these definitions below.

### “Actions”

These types of responses represent cosmic co-creation

- **Imitate action:** player imitates some other musical idea extant within the musical texture.
- **Embellish action:** player embellishes some other musical idea extant within the musical texture; embellishments can be thought of as extensions of the idea that generated them.
- **Improvised response (can be in agreement or disagreement):** player improvises in response to another musical idea extant within the musical texture; improvised responses can be thought of as independent from the idea that generated them.
- **Align:** this can be taken in two senses; 1) the player follows another performer, matching contour of musical gestures in pitch and time, or 2) the player adds something to the texture that is in agreement with the whole or part of the musical texture.
- **Harmonize:** this can also be taken in two senses; 1) the player adds materials to the texture that creates harmonic resonance from an acoustic perspective, 2) the player attempts, in concordance with the texture or another performer, to create something that is more than the sum of its parts.

### “Anti-actions”

These types of actions block other types of creation

- **Obfuscate action:** player takes an action from the texture and makes it unintelligible.
- **Contrast:** player takes an action from the texture and explicitly does the opposite.
- **Improvised response (can be in agreement or disagreement):** player improvises in response to another musical idea extant within the musical texture; improvised responses can be thought of as independent from the idea that generated them.

## Formal overview

### Cosmic

Electronics introduction. Creation of the microcosmos.

### Element Introduction

Electronics introduces materials for 30”, after 30”, players enter and *imitate* materials by ear.

## Life Forms

Players introduce cells that are served to them by score GUI by performing them as written. Players can choose to play the whole or part of the cell, but must introduce them rarely to start and then increase their presentation in frequency over the duration of the section.

## Emergence of individuals

Players can begin *imitating* the written out score cells, or original electronics materials, or embellish on either.

Players may *obfuscate* cells or original electronics materials by making them unintelligible in some way. These *imitations* or *obfuscations* must be short in duration.

Electronics part begins to take in elements of performers for manipulation.

## Emergence of collective

Players begin to *imitate* each other.

Electronics part begins to play back recorded elements with live-manipulation. Over time the number of channels that are output to, increases. Manipulate parameters of choice over time.

Electronic samples of first element aggregates are introduced.

## Conflict between collective and individual→|INCISION|

Players may perform an '*anti-action*' (see above).

Increase rate of *actions/anti-actions*.

Electronics also *responds* directly to *actions/anti-actions*.

## INCISION:

Cosmos interjects and players *respond* with panic or calmness

## Transcendence=COSMIC Re-framed

Electronic samples of second element aggregates are introduced.

Players move from initial incision *response* to *harmonizing* with cosmos.

Pick a response that is in *agreement* with the cosmos.