

all-forgetting-is-retrieval

FOR THE TACETI ENSEMBLE

Commissioned by the TACETi Ensemble
For the 2019 Thailand New Music and Arts Symposium
Bangkok Art and Culture Centre (BACC)

by

JASON THORPE BUCHANAN

Premiere: July 7, 2019


GENERAL/ALL


PERFORMANCE NOTES:


Many of the techniques in this work are employed explicitly to destabilize or distort the timbral qualities of each instrument, and thus require quite detailed notation. Once the performers understand the character and intent of these techniques and their context within the work, it may be possible (and preferable) to play more freely within this syntax with a more organic, or even improvisatory character. The performance should not be constrained or adhere too rigidly to what is written on the page, but rather flow fluidly and naturally.


PITCH NOTATION:


Series of quarter-tones (one semitone = 100 cents (ct), one octave = 1200 cents):


Three-quarter-flat
(-150 ct)


Flat
(-100 ct)

Quarter-flat
(-50 ct)


Natural
(0 ct)


Quarter-sharp
(+50 ct)


Sharp
(+100 ct)


Three-quarter-sharp
(+150 ct)


Series of sixth-tones: (arrows may also be used in conjunction with quarter tones to approximate smaller inflections):


6th-tone lower
(-133 ct)

6th-tone higher
(-66 cents)


6th-tone lower
(-33 cents)

6th-tone higher
(+33 cents)

6th-tone lower
(+66 cents)

6th-tone higher
(+133 cents)

TEMPORAL NOTATION:

A relatively short fermata.

DYNAMIC & TEMPORAL INDICATIONS: All dynamic markings should be considered relative, indicating the extremes of each instrument while utilizing a given technique. For example, the maximum amplitude (dynamic level) possible with an artificial harmonic is lower than that of a normally fingered pitch. Similarly, lateral bow motion is much softer than vertical (up/down) bow motion; some multiphonics are softer than others, air tones and other extended techniques might be softer or louder, etc., so it should be understood that the dynamics indicated apply to the upper and lower dynamic range of whichever particular technique or context within which it exists. In the same way, all temporal indications, such as accel. or decel. markings (below), are completely relative to the rate of rearticulation directly preceding or succeeding the indication. If there is no rate specified, it is left up to the discretion of the performer to determine a musically appropriate interpretation.

CLARINET/BASS CLARINET

MULTIPHONICS: Nearly all of the multiphonics utilized in this work (with the exception of 84b), are taken from Harry Sparnay’s book “The Bass Clarinet” (Periferia Music, ISBN: 978-84-938845-2-9) and are numbered accordingly. The fingerings shown are the same as are given there, though the pitch material notated is a product of my own sampling and spectral analysis of each of these multiphonics. “Multiphonic Fades” begin from the fundamental and gradually add the additional pitch content before fading back, as fluidly as possible.



CLARINET ARTICULATIONS:

Unless otherwise indicated, slap tongue should always be molto secco, extremely dry and percussive, with almost no definite pitch content. Exhalation through instrument should typically be executed with the lowest fingering, all holes closed.

BRASS

Slap tongue should always be extremely dry and without explicit pitch.

PERCUSSION

bass drum, 2 bongos, 5 graduated wooden beams (or bowls), low tom, metal plate (or pipe), ceramic cup, vibrator, comb, bass bow, plastic box

STRINGS

Electric Guitar:

Solid or semi-hollow body electric, (humbuckers preferable to single-coil). Electro-harmonix “Big Muff” or comparable distortion/drive/fuzz pedal, DigiTech Whammy pedal, Noise Suppressor, Delays Volume Pedal, (or comparable multi-effects pedal), Amp.
Bass bow, rosin, wooden honey spoon (dipper)

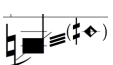
Guitar should lay flat on a table of suitable height to play with fingers, bow, and various objects. The above pedals should be accessible and visible.
Transposition & Scordatura Tuning: The electric guitar sounds one octave lower than written. Strings should be tuned to the following:

64.5Hz (C♯), 77.8Hz (E♭), 103.8Hz (G♯), 120Hz (B♯), 196Hz (G♯), 329.63Hz (E♯, standard pitch).

NOTEHEAD TYPES:


Diamond noteheads indicate harmonics (natural or artificial).

and




STRINGS: Trill between a “normal” pitch (pictured: open string, semi-pitched, low bow speed) and a “half-press” (finger pressure between norm. harm.), producing a multiphonic or split-tone, not necessarily on a harmonic node.


May




Trill between a harmonic and “half-press” by lightly changing finger pressure while remaining in the same location on the string. also be between “normal” pressure and harmonic, or “normal” and “half-press.”

BOW PRESSURE/LOCATION:

Semi-scratch tones, medium bow pressure, very little definite pitch.

Full-scratch tones, high bow pressure, no definite pitch whatsoever.

Gradual increase of bow pressure to scratch, followed by gradual decrease of bow pressure.

Violin Scordatura: IV = E♭ Cello Scordatura: IV = A♭

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for the TACETi Ensemble

July 2 2019

July 2019
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moisture w/reed

A. Sax *(mf)* poss.

B. Cl. *port.*

B. Tbn. *tongue ram/slap, secco*

Cond. **DRAMATIC CUTOFF**
c.10" ③ freeze! QUASI-SOLO, small, random movements w/hands
c.3" ④ "PUSH-BUTTON" cue, both hands

Elec. ①4 "this patient has suffered brain damage..." sensor-driven granulation
①5 "notice how he fails even the simplest..." crescendo button-sound
①6 "his name is Dr. Christopher Ryan..." plastic/wood screeching
①7 "how do you remember this..." low buzzing
①8 "her first name is Kathy" nummm, what's her last name?" sensor-driven granulation
①9

E.Gtr. *damped*
w/fingernails (or pick) laterally along strings
II or III molto vib, wild
'pinch' harmonics, Metal bend, vib., sustain

(ped)

Perc. **c.10"** palatal click
(f) poss. scratch wood w/fingernails rapidly
(f) poss. **PLASTIC BOX** scrape across wood
LOW WOOD

Vln. *bow body of instrument*
mp
(f) poss. lateral friction, granulation, at frog very slow bow speed, very little pitch

Vc. *clb damped*
pp
Multiplonic IV [4+11+7+3]
half-press harmonic trill
half-press, scratchy xSP
clb damped

14 15 16 17 18 19

subito
= c.84
> teeth on reed, wild

A. Sax *f* *subp*
wildly
slap, secco
flatt. air only
moisture w/reed
slap tongue, secco

B. Cl. *f*
slap, secco
wildly, soloistic
tongue ram/slap, secco

B. Tbn. *tongue ram/slap, secco*
air only

Cond. ① Gestures ad libitum
① Gestures ad libitum

Elec. ②0 "now I'm afraid that's lost me too..."
②1 "my mind has slipped..." knock, click, electrical
②2 "her last name is Montgomery" camera click
cup/glass
②3 "how 'bout this-Chris Ryan" "and what's this lady's name?" "Kathy" "Kathy is right, and what's her last name?" flickering, text sensor-driven granulation
②4 low elec, thumping
②5 timnitus, free jazz
②6 "I don't remember a last name" asymptotic flux sample

E.Gtr. *snap string against fingerboard*
damped
I & II, pitch bend
damped
bowed V & VI "honey spoon multiphonic" V
hammer-on L.H., ad lib. 7

(ped)

Perc. **LOW WOOD LOW TOM**
HIGH WOOD HIGH BONGO
CUP l.v.
VIBRATOR on wood
CUP l.v.
LOW WOOD LOW TOM
LOW WOOD
HIGH WOOD MID WOOD

Vln. *clb damped*
f
damped
lateral brushing, I & II
on bridge, I & II
(V)
scratch tone, at frog almost no pitch

Vc. *lateral friction, granulation, at frog very slow bow speed, very little pitch*
mp
mp
xST
laterally, to bridge at frog
(V)
Multiplonic IV [4+11+7+3]
cross strings to II & III

20 21 22 23 24 25 26

slap tongue, secco 6 6 *mf* 5 *p* *mf* *poss.*

slap, secco 5 *f* *port.* *mf* *moisture w/reed* *mf* *slap tongue, secco* 6 6 *mp*

slap, secco *ff* 5 *mp* *wildly, soloistic* *mf* *pp* *air only* *f* 3 *senza tempo* c.4-5" *SCRATCH HEAD* look around as if confused or lost *reverse cup* *3* 4 "PUSH-BUTTON" cue, both hands (continue 3 pattern) *mf* 2 4 10 4

slap, secco *f* 3 *Cond.* *Elec.* 106 107 108 109 moisture w/reed sensor-driven granulation 110 scratch wood w/fingernails rapidly guitar vib. sustain reverse fade in 111 (continue 3 pattern) 112

hammer-on L.H., ad lib. 7 *mp* (DIST. ON) *PITCH: 41 OCTAVE* *bowed V & VI "honey spoon multiphonic" V* *mf* *w/fingernails (or pick) laterally along strings* *mp* *PITCH OFF: loco* *hammer-on L.H., ad lib.* 5 *mp* (DIST. ON) *bowed V & VI "honey spoon multiphonic"* 6 *mf* (DIST. ON) *PITCH: 41 OCTAVE*

ped *4* 4 *2* 4 *(2)* 3 4 1 *Gestures ad libitum* 1 *senza tempo* c.4-5" *3* 4 *2* 4 *10* 4

PERC. *4* 4 *2* 4 *(2)* 3 4 *PLASTIC BOX* scrape across wood *mf* *mp* *5* 4 *CUP* *HIGH WOOD MID WOOD* *mf* *ff* 6 6 *on bridge, I & II* *mf* *scratch tone, at frog almost no pitch* *5* *LOW WOOD* *mf* *scratch* *LOW WOOD LOW TOM* *mp* *damped* *lateral brushing, I & II* *bow on body* *trigger * Event 111 before downbeat* *scratch tone, at frog almost no pitch* *6* *mf* *on bridge, I & II*

Vln. *ff* *pp* *(mp)* *(f)* *poss.* *mp* *6* *f*

Vc. *ff* *p* *f* *ff* *mp* *(mf)* *f* *pp* *mp* *6* *f*

73 *74* *75* *76* *77* *78* *79*

molto rit. *mf* 3 *mf* *mf* *mf* *ppp* *pp* *ppp* *air only* *p* *pppp* (r.l. beat right side)

Cond. 10 4 1 QUASI-SOLO, jerky, robotic, symmetrical hands 3 8 9 4 1 freeze! 2 R.H. fast rotation 2 8 1 7 4 1 L.H. out to side 1 freeze! 1 2 (r.l. beat right side)

Elec. 113 114 115 brushing 116 117 switch, clicks, geiger, freewheel 118 119 cuts off electronics * 120

E.Gtr. *stop bow on strings (V)* *mf* *DIST. OFF* *PITCH OFF: loco* *mp* *damped* *VIBRATOR* on low strings *mp* *DIST. ON* *DIST. OFF*

ped *10* 4 *3* 8 *9* 4 *2* 8 *7* 4 *Pla.* *CUP* *CUP* *HIGH WOOD MID WOOD* *f* *mf*

PERC. *METAL PLATE* *LOW WOOD LOW TOM* *MID WOOD* *f* *f* *f* *f* *mf*

Vln. *pp* *f* *damped* *clb* *damped* *clb* *damped* *f* *damped* *clb* *damped* *f* *damped* *clb* *damped*

Vc. *mp* *f* *ff* *ff* *mf* *damped* *f* *damped* *f* *damped* *f* *damped*

80 *81* *82* *83* *84* *85* *86*

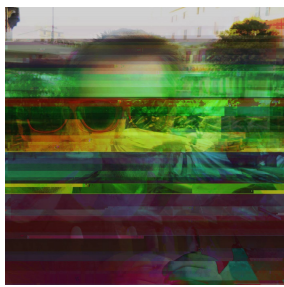
SOLO (V) (stop bow) *slow lateral motion, creaking, granulation at frog, increased bow pressure* *lat., to bridge at frog* *xSP* *xST*

July 2 2019 - Bangkok

all-forgetting-is-retrieval was commissioned by the TACETi Ensemble for the 2019 Thailand New Music and Arts Symposium at the Bangkok Art and Culture Centre (BACC) in Bangkok. This work explores the formation of human memory, retrieval, and failure, drawing from two sources. The first was a passage titled “Myth of Permanent Memory” from Richard A. Chechile’s book *Analyzing Memory: The Formation, Retention, and Measurement of Memory*: “There is a common belief that forgetting is strictly due to a retrieval failure. It is curious why this idea of a permanent memory is so appealing...the storage of information is not perfect. Storage as well as retrieval is subject to failure. Thus, the hypothesis that **all-forgetting-is-retrieval** is incorrect. For information in this state of permanent [long-term] memory, all subsequent forgetting is assumed to be caused by a retrieval failure. Yet...there is no known biological mechanism to stop the adaptive changes in memory from continuing and thereby possibly destroying the prior learning record. If the learning environment changes, the same adaptive mechanisms that created the memory in the first place will continue to rearrange the structure of memory and potentially destroy the former memory representation.”

The second source is dialogue from a 1978 ephemeral film, *Human Memory*, by Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, used as sonic material for the electronics throughout the work, written for eight musicians including a conductor and percussionist who have been augmented by contact microphones and wearable electronics to trigger and govern the behavior of temporal events and media, manipulated through the use of wrist-worn sensors and gestural tracking mapped onto discrete musical parameters. The title is both perplexing and quickly disproven in the above passage, reflecting the strange and unfamiliar space that, for me, the piece inhabits, with “failures” both large and small. Artistically, my apprehension toward falling into familiar patterns and relying on my past compositional work shares a similar cognitive and emotional space as “lost” experiences—the inability to be truly present in a moment, or failure to commit to memory experiences that are simultaneously both formative and fleeting. The rapid loss of their fidelity is staggering, and this work attempts to confront that impermanence and decay. To reflect this, I was interested in both paraphrasing and sampling elements of my past work, alongside the recontextualization of “found” media and sonic material deeply familiar to me. How can we be certain of things we have experienced, and that the events that took place were not, in fact, radically different than what we remember? These inaccuracies and discrepancies that form over time through internal repetition, how information storage and retrieval may be influenced by context, and what kind of experience might interrupt a memory from being formed, are explored.

“The subject of our film is memory. Imagine what your mental life would be like if you had no memory at all.” A man, facing away from the camera, is introduced as “Mr. M.” to Dr. Christopher Ryan and Kathy Montgomery. He claims to recall encountering them before. Immediately following their introductions, Mr. M is asked if he remembers this gentleman’s name, to which he responds “Yes I do.” “What’s his name”...[a long silence]... “No I don’t.” The film’s narrator explains “this patient has suffered brain damage which destroyed his memory. Notice how he fails even the simplest memory test.” He is encouraged to practice reciting their names. The narrator elaborates that “such amnesiacs provide us with a dramatic illustration of the role that memory plays in keeping us in touch with the changing world around us. You might think of your short-term memory as a workbench or countertop onto which you place a box corresponding to each chunk as you attend to it. There’s only a limited amount of space on the counter, so eventually adding a new chunk onto the counter causes some other ones to fall off...”



Jason Thorpe Buchanan is an American composer of operatic, orchestral, chamber, electroacoustic, and intermedia works. Artistic Director of the [Switch~ Ensemble], Lecturer in Composition, Music Theory, and Electronic Music Composition at the College of Music, Mahidol University in Thailand. His works have been described as “an unearthly collage of sounds”, “sharply-edged”, and “free jazz gone wrong—in a good way”, commissioned and performed internationally by conductors, ensembles, and organizations such as Brad Lubman, James Baker, Alan Pierson, Jean-Philippe Wurtz, Jeffrey Means, Marc Lowenstein, Ulrich Pöhl, Alarm Will Sound, Talea Ensemble, Interface (DE), Nikel (Israel), Linea (FR), Insomnio (NL), EXAUDI (UK), Slagwerk Den Haag (NL), Eklekto (Switzerland), Mivos, Iktus Percussion, the [Switch~ Ensemble], Royaumont Académie Voix Nouvelles Ensemble (FR), wild Up, OSSIA, Blue Water Chamber Orchestra, NY Virtuoso Singers, Mizzou, International Horn Society, Tzllil Meudcan Festival (Tel Aviv), Chamber Music Campania (Italy), the German/American Fulbright-Kommission (DE), and the Eastman Musica Nova Ensemble. Nominated for the 2015 Gaudeamus Prize, three works were presented by Insomnio, New European Ensemble, and Slagwerk Den Haag at Gaudeamus Muziekweek.

Scenes from his multimedia opera *Hunger* have received performances at Darmstadt (2014) with Ensemble Interface, The Industry’s FIRST TAKE in L.A. (2015) with wild Up, and the MATA Interval Series in New York City (2015) with the [Switch~ Ensemble]. “*Hunger* is a kind of training session in mental disintegration... An ungodly opera needs ugly music, singers who produce primal sounds, an electric guitar that sounds scraped raw, a wailing orchestra effects, cuts the ear like a knife. Buchanan delivers.” – *L.A. Times*

Honors and awards include a Fulbright Fellowship (2010-11) at the Hochschule für Musik und Theater in Hamburg (DE) as a visiting scholar, a fellowship and commissions from Royaumont Académie Voix Nouvelles (2016 & 2017), a commission from the Earle Brown Music Foundation for the Talea Ensemble & Time Spans Festival (NYC, Aug.2017), Artist-in-Residence USF Verftet/City Council of Bergen, Norway (2015), an American-Scandinavian Foundation Grant (2015), a commission from the International Horn Society (2014) and an ASCAP Morton Gould Award (2015) for *Double Concerto* (2014), written for the Eastman Musica Nova Ensemble and conductor Brad Lubman, an ASCAP Morton Gould Award (2014) & Howard Hanson Orchestral Prize (2014) for *Asymptotic Flux: Second Study in Entropy* (2013), commissioned by the Mizzou International Composers Festival for Alarm Will Sound, a commission from the Blue Water Chamber Orchestra as winner of Iron Composer (2014), winner of newEar Composer’s Competition, and 2018 Artist-In-Residence at the Embassy of Foreign Artists in Geneva, Switzerland.

Primary mentors have included Pierluigi Billone, Chaya Czernowin, Steven Takasugi, Raphaël Cendo, Ricardo Zohn-Muldoon, David Liptak, Virko Baley, Peter Michael Hamel, Jorge Villavicencio Grossmann, Pablo Furman, and Georges Aperghis. Jason served for three years as Executive Director of the Valencia International Performance Academy & Festival (Spain), for two years as a Curator for the San Francisco Center for New Music, and founding Director of the TICF Academy for Young Composers, as well as course instructor in electronic music and composition, board member of OSSIA, and assistant conductor for the Musica Nova Ensemble with conductor Brad Lubman at the Eastman School of Music.

He is widely sought internationally as a guest composer and lecturer at institutions including Chamber Music Campania (Italy), the University of Virginia, San Jose State University, the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Queens New Music Festival, MATA, University of Texas at Austin, Hamilton College, Portland State University, TRANSIT Festival Belgium, University of Richmond, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, Michigan State University, University of Northern Colorado, the Bergen Center for Elektronisk Kunst (BEK) in Norway, the University of Chicago, and Stanford University. He holds a Ph.D. in Composition from the Eastman School of Music, and degrees in Composition and Music Technology from San José State University and the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, where he taught courses in composition and theory (2008-2010). Current projects include the multimedia opera *Hunger*, a commission for the TACETi Ensemble in Bangkok, and a large work for the Hong Kong New Music Ensemble, commissioned by the MATA Festival in NYC (2019).

For more information or to contact the composer, please visit
www.jasonthorpebuchanan.com

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