

Song Cycle

Brian Ellis
2017

For Violin and Typist

Featuring Poetry of Riley Welch

Song Cycle

Performance Instructions

Preparation:

The typist should prepare to use a computer on stage live during performance. Download “Chuck” computer sound software from the website below, and download the chuck programs from github.

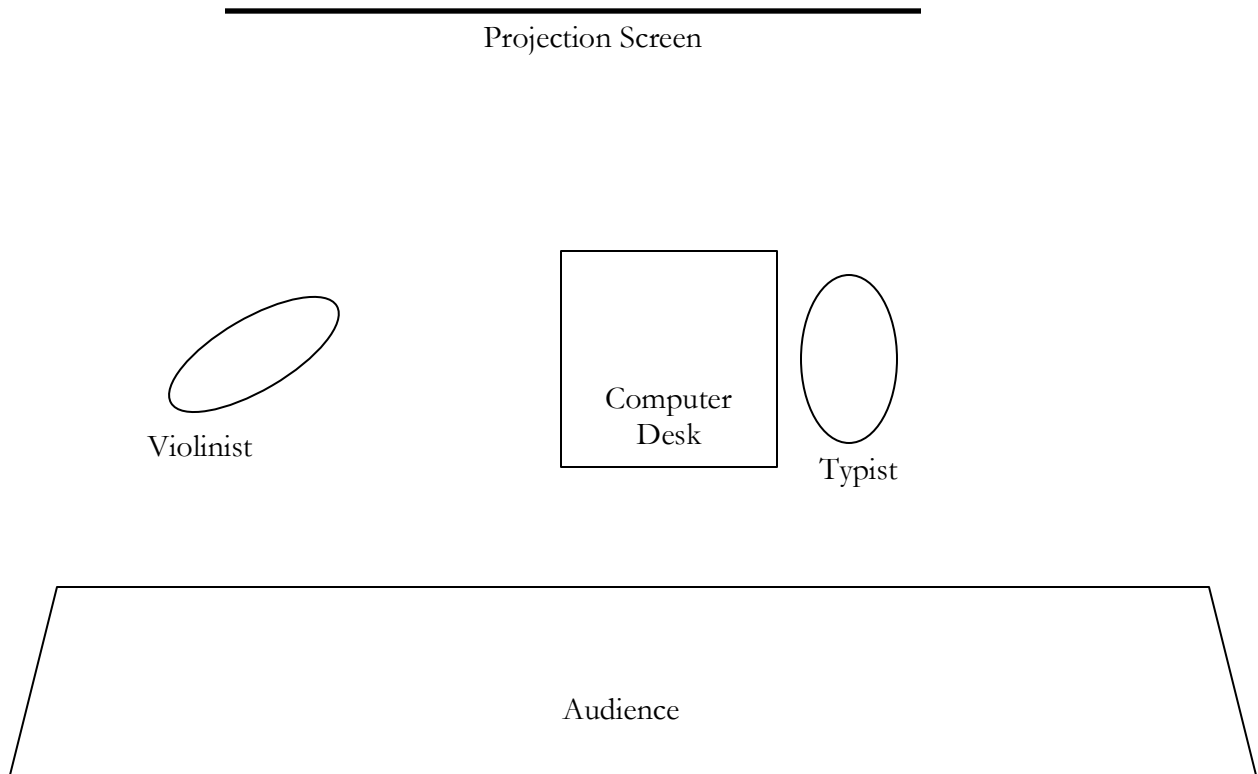
Good speakers should be used for amplification of the computer’s sounds, but no amplification should be made of the sounds of keys clicking. As a violin bow scratches the string or guitarist’s nails click on contact, key sound is integral to the way we perceive this instrument, but it should not be an overwhelming force.

To perform the work, the Chuck programs should be opened, the virtual machine (VM) started, and the Chuck thread for the specific movement added to the VM. At this point, every keystroke is being fed to the VM, and typing creates sounds. To have the performance aspect of typing, use TextEdit (or some alternative minimalist word processing software) to type into for the duration of the performance. Be sure after each movement to remove that movement’s thread from the VM and to add the thread for the new movement.

<http://chuck.cs.princeton.edu/>
<https://github.com/kitchWWW/SongCycle>

Setup:

The typist should be seated at a desk or table on stage, oriented as a pianist would be, so the audience may see the performer’s fingers. A projector should be utilized so the audience may see the poem being typed out as the typist creates.



Performance Notes for Typist:

I. Too High Up

Overall, this movement is the lament. Lyrical and improvisational, this movement does not have defined rhythms for the typist. Some suggestions are made with cue notes in the violin part to indicate how to sync up for climactic moments, but otherwise, the typing should be aleatoric. First entrance should be brisk and fluttering: Start light, then slowly decrease pace until “moon”, which should be at the speed of the violin’s eighth notes. In the second line of the poem, spend time on the high “s” notes, attempting to mimic the violin’s high G note. Make eye contact for the “s” in “sweet” and “c” in “cried” as these changes should be made simultaneously. Type the space at the end of the words “tears”, “straight” and “to” promptly afterwards so that they do not overlap with the d – g motion in the violin. “What is left unanswered” should be mostly in time with the violin, eighth note for eighth note, accelerating to be faster than the violin by the “w” in “wind”. Hold the “s” at the end of “like this” until the violin reaches the high a. “God” and “, the air is so” should sit in the middle of the held violin notes. Eye contact should be made for the “c” in cold to facilitate that transition. The word “cold” should be typed in the same rhythm as the opening notes of the piece.

II. LFE

As this movement deals with more blunt and direct topics and emotions, the typist’s section has been well defined here. A note: in this movement, the space bar does not produce an audible pitch in the computer’s speakers. As such, place the space key wherever it is necessary to produce correct textual output, but it does not matter where in time the key is placed.

III. UWT

Continuing the decent from expectation established in the first two movements, UWT paints the most outlandish and unforgiving landscape of the three movements. Again, fully dictated typist parts provide necessary direction. In this movement the space key produce a pitch, and as such, should be placed where indicated by the ^ mark. The return key however is still non-voiced, and, as in the previous movements, should be placed to make the typed poetry appear on screen as it does in the text provided.

Program Notes

The poetry of Riley Welch is brought to life in a never before scene manner. Through computer electronics, noisy keyboards, and an exceptional violinist, a new style of work emerges in this song cycle. The violin takes on the role of both lyrical soloist as well as accompaniment duty to surround and envelop the conveyer of text, expression, and tone, the typist. Here, Riley’s words spin forth from the typist’s hands creating a world of sound as they work away, transporting you into the realm she has created.

Too High Up

The clouds filtered over the moon.
Sung songs so sweet I cried tears straight to God.
Do you hear me now?
What is left unanswered when the wind blows over and out like this?
God, the air is so cold.

2/6/2017
Riley Welch

LFE

Maybe you should focus
on being sad
or being right
or being wrong
about all the choices
I've ever had.

2/7/2017
Riley Welch

UWT

I think all could be solved with a shot of caffeine.

A perk.
Suppress some sleepiness.

Or other unworldly things.

2/2/2017
Riley Welch

Song Cycle

- I. Too High Up
- II. LFE
- III. UWT

Song Cycle

I. Too High Up

Brian Ellis
Poetry, Riley Welch

Violin

lento

mp

5 *harsh* *f* The clouds filtered over the moon *echoing* *mp*

11 *harsh* *lighter* Sung songs so sweet I cried tears *meek* *mp* *cresc...* *1*

19 *straight* *to* *God* *reflective* *mf* *mp*

The musical score is written for a violin in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time. It is divided into four systems. The first system begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a common time signature (C). The tempo is marked 'lento' and the dynamics 'mp'. The second system starts with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 3/4 time signature. It includes the lyrics 'The clouds filtered over the moon' and 'echoing'. The third system starts with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 3/4 time signature. It includes the lyrics 'Sung songs so sweet I cried tears' and 'meek'. The fourth system starts with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 3/4 time signature. It includes the lyrics 'straight to God' and 'reflective'. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, beams, and dynamic markings.

25 *smaller still* *anxious* Do you hear me now?

mp *p* *pont.* *f*

31 *mechanical* *poco a poco accel...*

is left unanswered when the wind blows over and out

W h a t *simpre.*

36 *like this* *lento* God

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

40 , the air is so cold

pp

Song Cycle

II. LFE

Brian Ellis
Poetry, Riley Welch

Call to Action (♩ = 110)
harsh, pont.

Violin

Typist

f *mf* *mp* *thin*

7 *broad* *sf* *mp* *shift to dolce*

M a y b e y o u

14 *pont.* *natural* *f*

s h o u l d f o c u s

19 *p* *mf*

o n b e i n g s a d

25

p *f* *decresc.*

o r b e i n g r i g h t

31

pp *f* *p* *ff* *sf*

o r b e i n g w r o n g

38

mf *p* *sf* *sf* *sf* *sf* *sf*

a b o u t a l l

46

mf *mp* *p*

t h e c h o i c e s I ' v e e v e r h a d.

Song Cycle

III. UWT

Brian Ellis
Poetry, Riley Welch

Forboding (♩ = 60)
like drums

Violin

Typist

p

I ^ t h

9

mf *p* *mf* *f*

i n k ^ a l l ^ c o u l d ^

17

accel... *vivace!*

Choral (♩ = 65)

b e ^ s o l v e d ^

25

accel... *f*

³ w i t h ^ a ^ s ³ h o t ^ o f ^

32 **Forboding** (♩ = 60)
drums

p *legato* *push faster* *f fast*

c a f f e i n e a ^

41

harsh *sweet* *harsh*

p e r k s u r p p r e s s ^ s o m e ^ s l e e p i n e

47 **Choral** (♩ = 65)

natural *decel...*

s s o r ^ o t h e r ^ u n w o

55 **Unease** (♩ = 60)
dying

ppp

r l d l y ^ t h i n g s