

John Pax

Save Only the Expectation

for string trio and electronics

(2017-2018)

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first performance

Harvard University, April 14th 2018

Linda Jankowska, *violin*

Emma Richards, *viola*

Alice Purton, *violoncello*

Madison Greenstone, *recorded voice*

John Pax, *live electronics*

James Bean, *audio engineer*

Instrumentation

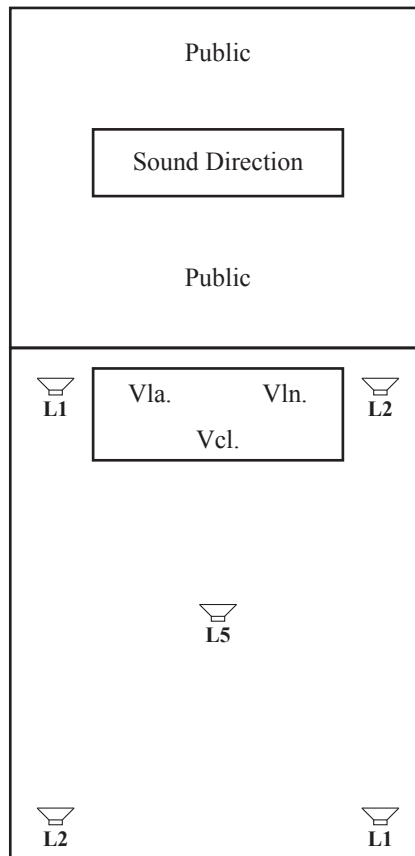
Violin

Viola

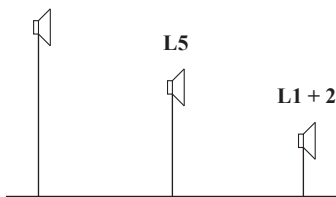
Violoncello

Live Electronics

Arrangement



L3 + 4



NOTES

The first performance of this work took place following extensive rehearsal, conversation, and adaptation, most of which is not represented in this score. As such, performers are *highly encouraged* to take liberty with regard to their individual parts. For example: bowing (constantly wandering between pont. and tasto, or constantly varying the speed of ones bow), harmonic fingering (substitute a natural harmonic for an artificial and vice versa), the stability of double stops, ones dynamic relationship with the surrounding musical situation, etc. This is required for ones individual parts to unfold and as such all such decisions should be made in light of the work as a whole.

STRINGS

All notes should come from and return to silence, unless otherwise indicated.

SOUND DIRECTION

GENERAL:

Approach the directions in the score as *general instructions* toward a performance. As different software and hardware may be available, those responsible for the sound direction must take consideration of the general performance and interpretation of the composition in relation to this new technological infrastructure. As such, diagrams contain only the essential components and not all used those in the first performance.

Similarly, as the acoustic space and performer arrangements may vary, one *must always* strive for a balanced and seamless relationship between all electronic layers with any such acoustic circumstances ones point of reference.

ARRANGEMENT:

Careful consideration must be taken with regard to speaker placement as to create three distinct layers.

L1 + 2: place in line with the performers, all sounds must seem to be part of the trio.

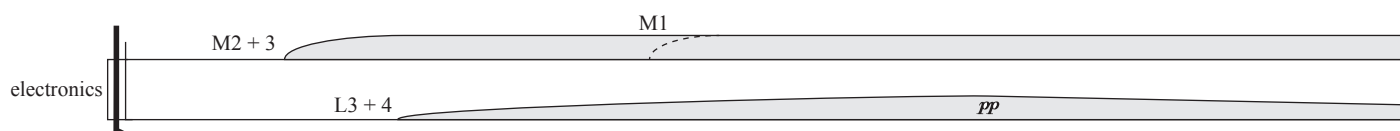
L3 + 4: place at the very rear of the stage area, sounds must seem to come from far away.

L5: place between 1 + 2 and 3 + 4 such that the voice seems to bridge these two distances.

NOTATION OF ELECTRONICS:

The notation concerning electronics is divided into four parts, above and below the instrumental notation:

- the top stave referring to the opening and closing of microphone inputs *into* programs,
- the bottom stave referring to the opening and closing of loudspeaker outputs (note dynamic indications),

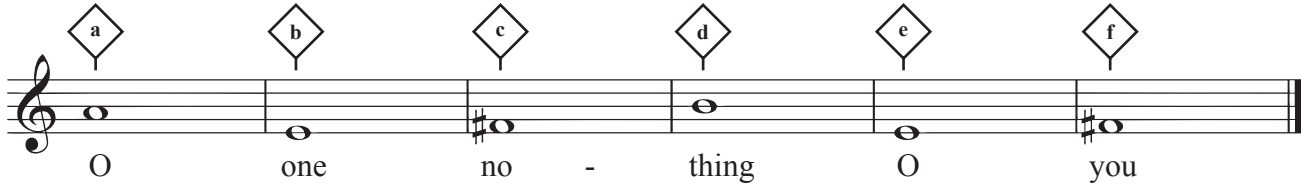




- c) lettered cues indicate the precise moment that the pre-recorded soprano part should sound,
- d) the numbered cues indicate the precise moment that a new program should be initialised.

PRE-RECORDED VOICE:

Six pre-recorded vocal samples are needed for this work. The samples required are:



REVERB:

The particulars of each reverb employed should be carefully considered with regard to the sonic field as a whole; the acoustic properties of the space itself, the arrangement of speakers, etc. For example, the reverberation used throughout to reinforce and assist the string trio (L1 + 2) should differ from that used to help smudge and characterise the sounds in L3 + 4, however these two reverberations *must* also be thought of as creating one single ‘whole’ within the space. The following percentages of ‘wet’ and ‘dry’ were used in the first performance:

L1 + 2: 10% wet, 90% dry L3 + 4: 100% wet, 0% dry L5: 20% wet, 80% dry

PAN:

The ‘pan’ converts a mono signal into a stereo signal by delaying the original signal to a second speaker at a rate continuously and randomly alternating between 0 to 100 milliseconds, the rate of this alternation should also move between ever 100 milliseconds to 500 milliseconds. The resulting effect of this in isolation should be that of a ‘wandering’ sound and, when multiple instances are used simultaneously, that of a constantly shifting mass.

DELAY:

In total 12 delays are needed (four set at 2.5 seconds, four set at 6 seconds, and four set at 9 seconds) with a feedback variable between 0 and 100%. In the first performance the feedback variables were set to:

2.5 seconds: 90% 6 seconds: 80% 9 seconds: 60%

TRANSPOTION:

In total 5 transposers are needed and must output the transposed sound *only*. They should be set as follows:

a: -1000 cents b: -800 cents c: +150 cents d: +1240 cents e: +2480 cents

The electronic notation throughout mm. 46 – 79 concern three aspects of the transposer execution:

- 1) the opening of M2 allowing the sound of the violoncello to enter the transposers,
- 2) the opening of each individual transposers, a through e,
- 3) and the opening of the summed transposer signal through L1 + 2

Each of these three directions should be seen as the one gesture resulting in a simultaneous growth of foreign pitches and timbres in the filter loops, as well as a growing presence of the transposed signal in L1 + 2 gradually masking that of the amplified violoncello.

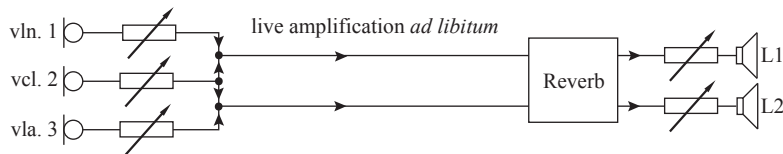
FILTER BANK:

Two banks of resonance filters are needed, each with a gain of 20db and Q factor randomly moving between 10 and 500 at a changing interval between 100 milliseconds and 500 milliseconds. The filter banks should be set to the following frequencies:

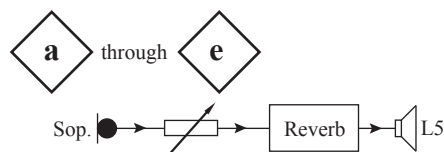
Bank 1		Bank 2	
Filter	Frequency (Hz)	Filter	Frequency (Hz)
1	32.7	1	98
2	49	2	196
3	110	3	392
4	164.81	4	783.99
5	246.94	5	1567.98
6	369.99	6	2349.32
7	554.37	7	3135.96
8	830.61		
9	1244.51		
10	1864.66		
11	2793.83		

DIAGRAMS

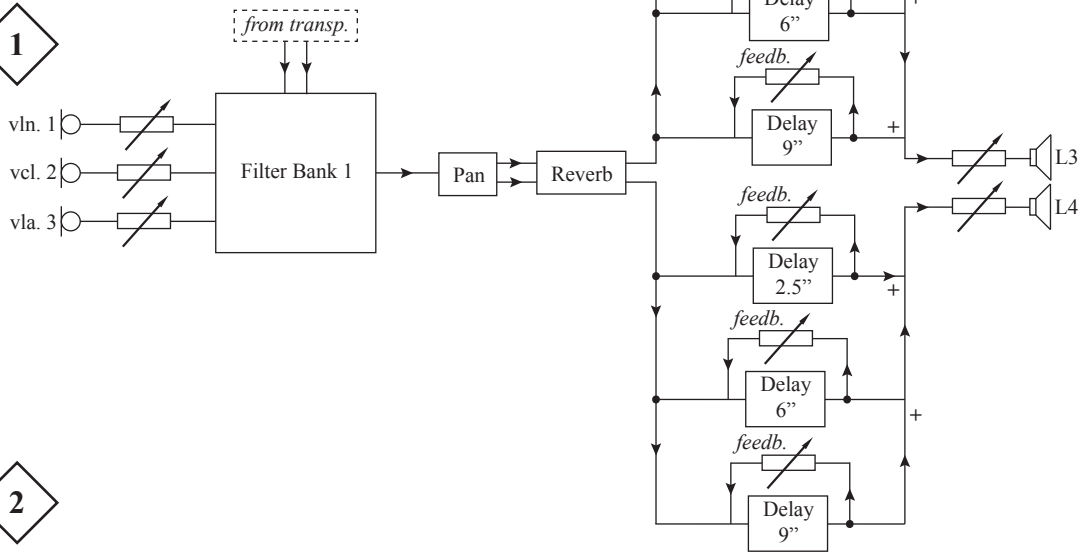
THROUGHOUT:



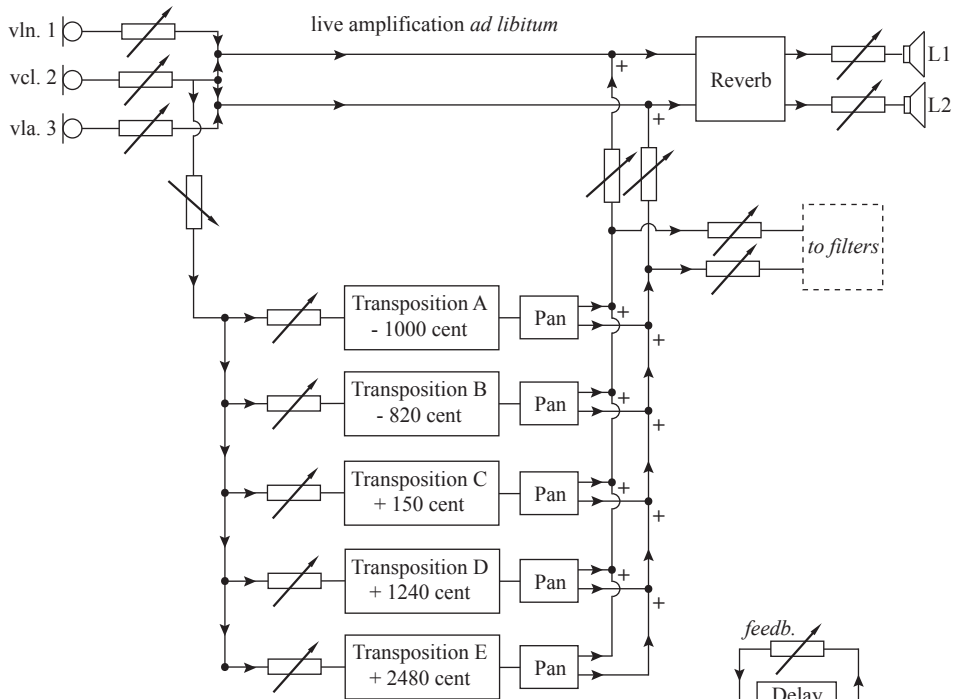
VOCAL CUES:



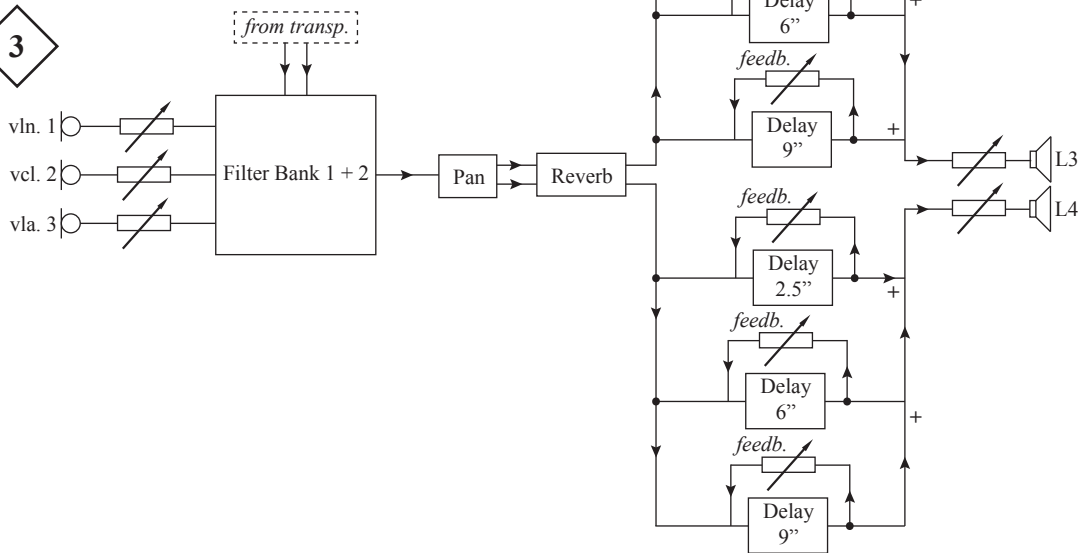
1



2



3



Save Only the Expectation

Violin, Viola, Violoncello, and electronics score for measures 1-9. The tempo is marked $\text{♩} = 60$ don't rush. Measure numbers 8, 16, 5, 12, and 12 are indicated above the staves. The electronics part includes markings M2 + 3, M1, L3 + 4, and *pp*.

Violin: $\text{♩} = 60$ don't rush. Measure numbers: 8, 16, 5, 12, 12. Electronics: M2 + 3, M1, L3 + 4, *pp*.

Violin, Viola, and Violoncello score for measures 10-15. Measure numbers 10, 15, 4, and 15 are indicated above the staves. The electronics part includes markings M1 + 2 + 3, L3 + 4, and *ppp*. Performance instructions include *IV tasto* and *tasto*.

Violin: Measure numbers: 10, 15, 4, 15. Performance instructions: *IV tasto*, *tasto*. Electronics: M1 + 2 + 3, L3 + 4, *ppp*.

Violin, Viola, and Violoncello score for measures 20-25. Measure numbers 20, 25, 4, and 25 are indicated above the staves. The electronics part includes markings M1 + 2 + 3 and L3 + 4. Performance instructions include *tasto* and *pont.*

Violin: Measure numbers: 20, 25, 4, 25. Performance instructions: *tasto*, *pont.*. Electronics: M1 + 2 + 3, L3 + 4.

12 30 **b** *tasto* → *pont.* → 35 *tasto* **c**

M1 + 2 + 3

L3 + 4

f *pp* *p*

tasto *tasto*

pp

III / II **d** 40

M1 + 2 + 3

L3 + 4

ppp *pp* *pp*

ppp *pp* *pp*

ppp *pp* *pp*

ppp

2

pont. *f* *ppp* *pont.* *f* *ppp* *pont.*

45 12 12 50 8 55

12 12 8 8

behind the bridge, *molto flautando*, with little bow hair

→ *pont.* *tasto*

M2

L3 + 4

trans. a *trans. b* *trans. c* *trans. d* *trans. e*

L1 + 2 *trans.*

4 90 8 95

M1 + 2 + 3

L3 + 4

tasto 100 pont. pont. pont.

M1 + 2 + 3

L3 + 4

105 norm. 12 110 e f

M1 + 2 + 3

ppp

114 115 116 117 118 119

M1 + 2 + 3

L3 + 4

120 121 122

M1 + 2 + 3

L3 + 4

“O one, o none, o no one, o you:
where did the way lead when it lead to no where?”

Die Niemandrose
Paul Celan

“Save only the expectation that I’ll die,
in my weary heart no hope remains.”

Fors seulement l’attente
Johannes Ockeghem