.play;

For viola and fixed-media electronics

Michael Lukaszuk

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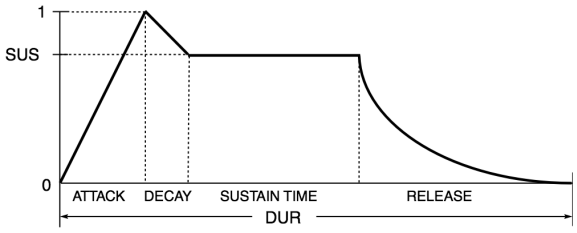
Duration: around 9 minutes
For my friend Jeongeun Park

There are three separate movements:

I – ADSR
II – LFO
III – for

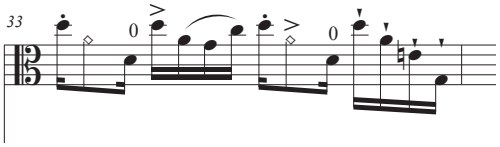
Programme note:

We are now in a golden age where computers are powerful enough to achieve incredibly complex forms of sound transformation with little waiting time. I wrote this piece as both a nostalgic look back and an attempt to recontextualize a few fundamental elements of electronic/computer music within a more contemporary sonic landscape. The first movement looks at the Attack-Decay-Sustain-Release curve -- the standard volume trajectory for notes played on a synthesizer. The ADSR curve was applied to all sorts of components in early synthesizers to create profound drones and exciting events. LFO explores the use of slowly oscillating shapes that cause gestures to continuously ebb and flow within a collage-like texture, and "for" is based on that automatic sound of music that uses repetitive looping and computer-generated randomness.

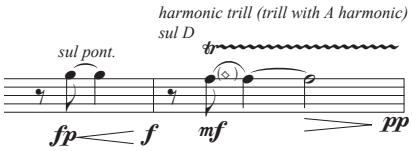


Performance and notation guide:

Unless indicated otherwise using a marking like “sul G” or “sul A”, using an open string is perfectly fine, if it makes a particular passage easier. For example, the G at the end of this measure is fine as an open string.

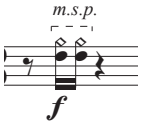


Dynamics are an especially important part of the first movement of this piece (I-ADSR) because you are imitating the dynamics of early electronic music synthesizers.

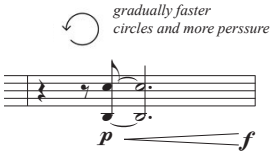


Natural harmonics are shown using a diamond note head. That indicates the place where the harmonic is, not the sounding pitch. This shows to play a harmonic on the D string, it will make the sound of the A one octave higher.

m.s.p. is for molto sul ponticello, m.s.t. indicates molto sul tasto. Molto really means molto, so don't be afraid to go very far in the sul tasto position, even playing over the fingerboard.

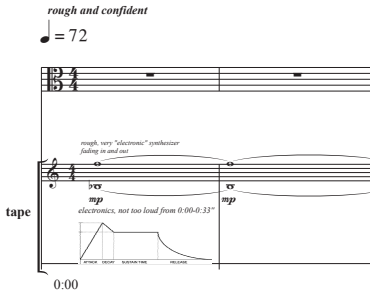


Circular bowing is featured in the second movement. The circle will have an arrow indicating clockwise vs. counterclockwise rotations.



Bow pressure should give a somewhat rougher timbre, but there should still be a fair amount of the pitch itself – i.e. I don't want the gritty sound of a scratch tone.

The tape notation gives a little information about the electronic part. For example, prominent pitches in the electronics or dynamics. Look at it more as a general indication of some parameters, not an exact notation. There are many text indications. I chose to stay away from graphics because I feel that they often clutter the score given the very gestural nature of the electronics. The notation of the electronics might very well evolve with subsequent performances.



About the electronics

The tape part is in 5.1, there is no stereo reduction. I do provide a stereo file from a performance that can be used for reference purposes.

Your copy of the piece should have a folder called "Electronics" containing the following files:

i) A single stereo file with a performance of the entire piece
ii) 6 separate 5.1 .wav files with the electronic part, each labeled according to position (e.g. Lukaszuk_play_LS.wav, Lukaszuk_play_LFE.wav)
iii) 3 separate .wav files with click tracks for each movement

All audio files are 48-kHz/24-bit.

I encourage performers to use amplification and a bit of reverb, especially in the first and third movement. I feel that a more synthetic sounding reverb works well. I used a plate reverb from the Lexicon PCM plugin bundle.

.play;
I - ADSR

Michael Lukaszuk

viola

rough and confident

♩ = 72

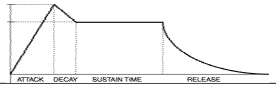
sul pont.

less pressure on open G to sound like both are harmonics

rough, very "electronic" synthesizer fading in and out

tape

electronics, not too loud from 0:00-0:33"



0:00

sul tasto
sul G

sul pont.

less pressure on open G to sound like both are harmonics

gradually slower trem.

0:15

ord.
sul G

brilliant

pleasant drone, rhythmic clicking

louder electronics

steady rhythmic clicking sounds

0:37