

jef chippewa

“... unless he senses when to jump”

for alto sax, accordion, violin, cello, piano and drumset

SPUR (score)

“... unless he senses when to jump” (2011, rev. 2012)
for alto sax, accordion, violin, cello, piano and drumset
chamber ensemble
duration: ca. 10'00

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HBC, berlin GERMANY
LUX:NM — ruth velten (sax), silke lange (accordion), ines hu (violin), jacob shaw (cello),
małgorzata walentynowicz (piano) and lucía martinez (drums)

première of the revised version 23 november 2012
heilig kreuz kirche, berlin GERMANY
LUX:NM — ruth velten (sax), silke lange (accordion), benedikt bindewald (violin), beate altenburg (cello),
małgorzata walentynowicz (piano) and matthias engler (drums)

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“... unless he senses when to jump”

under the quirky title “*effervescent powder*” oder “*spuren des populärmusikalischen in der neuen musik*” [“effervescent powder” or “traces of pop musicality in new music”], berlin-based LUX:NM contemporary music ensemble framed a concert in which this work, commissioned by the group, was to be premiered. not having a clue what was meant by the first part of the title, i began composing the work by interpreting the second part of the phrase in various ways, confident the first would eventually also become clear.

in *spalt* (german for “fissure” or “cleft”), the musicians try (successfully as often as not) to play in time with a metronome played by an assistant at a tempo of 15 bpm (i.e. one click every 4 seconds). the entire performance of each musician is a choreography of sounds, gestures and actions, some of which are not meant or likely to be heard in “normal” playing circumstances. then, *eleven* different materials or objects chosen by each musician are used to make their instruments sound in as many different ways. *spur* — a track (recording) or a groove (record), a trace or residue, a path or a lane... the final section is a musical conglomerate (not a collage!) built almost exclusively of citations and stylistic paraphrases from classical, popular, rock and folk music literature — mostly “western” cultural references — played in the character of the source, except where contrary indications appear (e.g., the indication to “swing” debussy’s *violin sonata* “like a drunk cowboy at the end of harvest”)... richard strauss high-fives john bonham while michael jackson sulks in the corner during a punk-ass bavarian beer garden frenzy. feel free to sing along.

i suppose i never did really come to understand what was meant by “effervescent powder”, nor do i suppose it actually matters.

instruments

alto sax	played with a jazz embouchure
accordion	a small accordion is best for <i>spalt</i> ; a free bass accordion is needed for the remaining pieces
violin	a carbon fibre bow works wonders for the bow whip actions in <i>spalt</i>
cello	a carbon fibre bow can be used
piano	must be a grand with sostenuto pedal
drumset	see below for details
metronome	played by an assistant (<i>spalt</i>)

each musician must also find and prepare 11 unique materials to be used in *eleven*. see below for details.

drumset

a standard jazz setup can be used as basis for the kit:

- large thick ride (60s jazz ride)
- heavy sizzle cymbal (rivets, not chain!) – some of the rivets can be removed if the sound is too strong in *spalt*
- crash cymbal
- splash cymbal (or very small crash)
- hi-hat
- cowbell
- snare drum (tuned very high)
- tom
- floor tom
- 18" bass drum (very resonant, thin skin)

spalt – eleven – spur

this three-piece “set” is not a group of individual “movements” of the larger work. the three titles can be included in programmes in one of the forms given below, or similar (do not use “i, ii, iii” or such). all spelling and punctuation, as well as the use of lowercase, is intentional and must remain as indicated.

“... unless he senses when to jump”: spalt – eleven – spur

“... unless he senses when to jump”:
spalt (the delicious residue of the imperfect)
eleven (effervescent powder)
spur (7 frivolous & somewhat incompatible encounters
of the sacred & the profane)

between *spalt* and *eleven*, a brief pause is needed for the accordionist to change instruments; *spur* is played *attacca*.

score and parts

<i>spalt</i>	no score exists, only individual parts
<i>eleven</i>	all have the same score, no parts
<i>spur</i>	score and individual parts exist

performance

notation

- ↓ ↑ downwards / upwards action
- ♯ dampened with the finger or other (as indicated)
- extreme bow pressure (violin, cello) causing a violent rough noise (“scratch tone”) rather than pitch
- ✕ typically used to differentiate from non-standard playing
- [∅] dynamics used for actions performed where no sound is expected to result
- “*sfz*” dynamic of the *intensity* of the action; the actual resulting sound may diverge greatly
- ↓ ⇅ heavy / light pressure, of the finger, bow or other
- ⇅ ↑ set or place finger or object downwards / upwards
- SET a silent action which serves to prepare the following action
- HOLD! unless otherwise indicated, always remain in position after performing any action. “HOLD” is a *security measure*, a reminder in cases where the performer might be inclined to continue movement

spalt (the delicious residue of the imperfect)

assistant — metronome

the assistant plays the metronome manually at a tempo of 15 beats per minute (i.e. one click every four seconds). *only* the assistant may use a stopwatch, or a silent visual metronome (set to play 4/4 at 60 with a different flashing colour on the downbeat) to help play “accurately” — with mechanical precision.

the assistant sits at a distance of at least 3 metres from and facing the musicians, either in the frontmost section of the audience or at the mixing

console. this distance contributes slightly to the inaccuracy of the musicians trying to play “on the beat”; the assistant may *not* sit on the stage with the musicians.

the metronome used in the performance must be one of those wooden metronomes with a nice and clear sound. modern plastic makes of this classic model sound cheap and **MUST NOT** be used. the metronome can be positioned over a wooden box (or similar) to slightly amplify (acoustically, do not use electronic amplification!) the clicks.

notation

unless otherwise specified (or obvious), in the sax, violin, cello and drumset parts, stems up indicate right hand actions, stems down left hand actions. for the accordion and piano, as is customary, the upper staff is for the right hand, the lower for the left.

actions notated as a short duration (usually a sixteenth note) should be performed very quickly (but not aggressively); quarter note durations span the entire measure and end either just before or right on the next “beat”. a held note going through a repeat bar indicates that the action continues over the number of resultant repeats indicated.

performance

always play “on the beat”. there will be discrepancies due to the imprecision of playing the very slow tempo and because some of the actions are more difficult to control than others. such discrepancies are essential to the piece but should not be made intentionally; let them occur naturally.

all sustained actions should be played with extreme fluidity, as if they were rapid actions played back in slow motion. similarly, play the entire piece as if the individual actions were all connected parts of a single, fragile, broad phrase. much of this piece is more a choreography of musical action than musical phrasing.

the cello part is slightly longer than the others and is likely to play “solo” with the metronome at the end of this piece.

[dur. ca. 3:30 min.]

eleven (effervescent powder)

11 materials

each musician individually selects 11 materials or objects of greatly varying manufacture that are used to “play” the instrument by rubbing, rolling, scraping them over, around or through the various surfaces and parts of the instrument body.

examples of materials/ objects: styrofoam, chopsticks, comb, sandal, tealight candles, hair ball. avoid paper, aluminium foil or other materials that make sound just by moving them; there should only be “audible” sound when a selected material comes into contact with the instrument surface(s).

particularly encouraged are “sound actions” related to the maintenance of your instrument, e.g., wipe/clean the violin/cello strings with a cloth, causing difficult-to-control squeaks; drag a duster along the tuning pins/keys/buttons; wipe the frame of the instrument; lovingly caress a portion of your instrument; etc.

11 times

each musician uses each of their materials once only, without pre-determining the order. start the piece using any material and choose the next material ad lib., possibly in reference to something just played by another musician.

performance

while playing, listen to all other parts and balance your sound accordingly. the sustained sound can vary slightly in dynamic, or even be slightly fragmented, so that other more delicate sounds are able to come through. think more about complementing and helping other sounds to come through than making sure your own sound is heard.

because of the extremely low dynamic, certain pre-cautions should be taken, such as:

- violin / cello: dampen, no open strings should sound
- piano: no pedal (except possibly when strings are otherwise dampened)

begin and end each sound more or less individually but nonetheless as a group, playing the sound more or less constantly over the indicated duration. the sustained sound can of course be reiterative (rattling, vibrating, rubbing back and forth).

always play extremely softly, with small variations around the more or less constant *pppp*.

this conglomerate “chord” is played 11 times. near the end of the 11th reiteration, the accordion slowly and imperceptibly brings in the C-drone to lead into *spur*.

in order to maintain balance with the surrounding pieces, do not go (excessively) over the durations indicated.

enjoy the imperfections of the individual and composite sounds.

[dur. ca. 4:00 min.]

spur (7 frivolous & somewhat incompatible encounters of the sacred & the profane)

performance

musicians are encouraged to make individual contributions – supplements – to the music notated in the score. think of this piece as a pop or jazz chart and add your own personal flair as you see fit!

drumset

the recurring drum beat should be played as heavy and sexy as possible, obsessively in tempo but with imaginative yet relevant variants, such as sporadic and irregularly occurring snare accents, cymbal and/or bass drum accents, but no chops or fills (well, maybe one good and cheesy spinal tap toms triplet could be nice). the few intervening styles that do occur should be played in character, with a slight punk rock character, but always rigidly in tempo.

others

spur is composed almost exclusively of citations and stylistic paraphrases from classical, pop, rock and folk music literature, predominantly from “western” cultural references. the citations should be played *in character* except where contrary indications appear (e.g. the indication to “swing” debussy’s *violin sonata* “like a drunk cowboy at the end of harvest”).

[dur. 2:30 min.]

“... unless he senses when to jump”

spur (7 frivolous & somewhat incompatible encounters of the sacred & the profane)

jef chippewa

1 ♩=69 SEHR BREIT

alto sax

approx. 10"

accordion

[strauss — also sprach zarathustra]

violin

[strauss — also sprach zarathustra]

cello

[strauss — also sprach zarathustra]

decisively pizz. somewhat jazzy

arco

piano

[strauss — also sprach zarathustra]

[ACCORDION]

the drums play through the entire section with rock solid time-keeping — solid but not stiff! — even when others play “out of tempo”. all direct and stylistic quotations (except the recurrent rock beat) are to be played very freely, with humour; the drummer is expected to contribute to the performance as a pop / rock musician would.

drum set

[led zeppelin — when the levee breaks]

steady, pounding, full-on COCK ROCK BLOWOUT

CRASH

poco

5

sx *p* ————— *ff*

["hendrix chord" (e.g. foxy lady)]

acc *sub. mf* ————— *f*

BASS CHANGER
secco, forzato mechanically ↓
"ffz"

oh wow, tooooooootally! i mean it's just like, "fuck man, what thuh fuck!" so like, my friend, she's like a total val, y'know? like... blond and armed with a hair dryer, i'm suuure *f*

[spoken] i comb my

[michael jackson — beat it]
raw

vln *sub. f* ————— *fff*

(increasing bow pressure...) ↓

vc *p* ————— *ff*

barely surviving the monotonous bane of day-to-day living (in a low voice) *f*

[spoken] i comb my

die aufklärung (yeah, maybe comp out a chord or two to celebrate...) *f*

poco gejazzt

pno *mp*

staccato, extremely dry and analytical, but somehow sexy in its own way *p*

[webern — variationen op. 27]

dr [♩] ♩ ♩

2 BANAL GEEK POP

3

SEHR BREIT

8 [t] > slap [t] > [t] > [t] >

ff sfz ff sfz ff sfz

[wagner – tristan chord]

pp

“sfz” “sfz” “sfz” “sfz” “sfz”

ha - ye r'i brush my teeth, put on my make-u p'and start my week.

poco IV. s.p. flaut. V (sim.)

“sfz” f

hair. i brush my teeth. i drink my cof - fee, and start my week.

mf

as tight and impenetrable as michael jackson's buttocks ca. 1983; or as square as a devo (or other 1980s new wave band) beat, if you prefer

sub. f

cock rock

ff

3

habanera

loose and slutty, like the desperate crooning of
an aged whore who thinks she's still "got it"...
ord. (frilly ornaments are certainly à propos!)

11

sx [bizet – carmen: habanera] *mp* *mf* 3 microtonal gliss. *molto* ∅

acc [bikini kill – rebel girl] **punk** *ff* more a yell than singing
[sing] re - bel gr - rl, re - bel gr - rl, re - bel girl you are the queen of my world

vln [bikini kill – rebel girl] **punk** *ff* more a yell than singing
[sing] re - bel gr - rl, re - bel gr - rl, re - bel girl you are the queen of my world
poco sul pont.; IV. molto al tallone *fff* extremely krass & drrrrty: with lots of bow pressure *sffz* *port.* *gliss.* *sffz*

vc **doom** lots of bow, sempre sul IV (♯ V) lots of pressure *fff* dirty & angst-ridden *extreme vib.* (♯ V)

pno hard and really hot modal jazz
Dm G#13 b9 b5

dr habanera (with a little cowbell and hoopcrack)
f

SEHR BREIT

4

independent tempi (sx acc vln pno)

starting sort of on the downbeat, play several very short but immediately recognizable fragments (fade-in/out) of "popular" works, songs, tunes etc. for your instrument; play "out of tempo" according to each fragment...

... and quickly fade out or stop immediately as the rock beat returns

14

sx

acc

vln

vc

pno

dr

pppp

pp

pppp

mp

pp

ff

sub. ppp poco cresc.

ff

p

in tempo (with drums) despite others

überausdrucksvoll

[bizet – carmen: habanera]

[wagner – tristan und isolde]

cock rock

martial

tight

SNARE RIM

[ravel – bolero]

5 DOUBLE TEMPO

19

SX

tr
f

acc

[bier her] *feirlich*
ff
E $\flat$ B $\flat$ 7 E $\flat$

vln

überausdrucksvoll
molto rubato! [V]
f *cresc.*
[debussy – violin sonata]

stretto
gliss.
ff
swing like a drunk cowboy at the end of harvest!
V stretto
5 6 3

vc

feirlich: der maestro groovt mit seinen kumpeln beim hofbräukeller völlig aus
[beethoven – symphony no. 5] *pizz.*
[festive: the maestro grooves out wildly with his buddies down at the hofbräukeller biergarten]
fff

pno

dr

[the people united...]
cock rock with a bit of backbeat groove
p
(*ff*)

CRASH

mp

punk-ass bavarian blowout
more cowbell than necessary
COWBELL
ff [saturday night live – "more cowbell"]

TEMPO PRIMO

6

driving, post hard bop (sx+dr)

23

ff

crazy gypsy music (or sexy tango)
independent tempo

f

schmalz, independent tempo (vln/pno)
vln + pno play brahms' *hungarian dance* no. 5 together (independent of the tempo and other musicians), starting at the 2nd repeat (m. 33) and ending just before the *sf* a tempo, and of course with all the necessary schmalz...

f

(sub. in tempo)

lyrical, sensuous; like the elevator music that reminds you of your first dry hump

arco V

[michael jackson – beat it]

mf

heavy V

ffz

schmalz, independent tempo (vln/pno)
vln + pno play brahms' *hungarian dance* no. 5 together (independent of the tempo and other musicians), starting at the 2nd repeat (m. 33) and ending just before the *sf* a tempo, and of course with all the necessary schmalz...

f

cock rock

driving, post hard bop (sx+dr)

mf

acc

Bb7 Eb

vln

vc

pno

dr

8

TEMPO PRIMO

7

DOUBLE TEMPO

german beer hall in a romanian village

28

fade-out / stop individually

rip!

ff [pachelbel / beer tune / village people & pet shop boys]

fade-out / stop individually

sing along with the pianist! (*giocososo*)

like a church organ at a marriage

[pachelbel canon]

mp *molto*

fade-out / stop individually

sing along with the pianist! (*giocososo*)

lyrical

[pachelbel canon] *mf* *ff* *mf* *ff*

sing along with the pianist! (*giocososo*)

poco sul pont.; molto al tallone

extremely krass & drrrty: with lots of bow pressure

ff carmen & adorno's punk-ass love-child struggles with his bastard mixed heritage [pachelbel canon]

(or 4/4 in double tempo) *giocososo!* 3

[sing] Gio - vi - nez - za, Gio - vi -

fade-out / stop individually [giovinezza]

ppp *ff* jovial, schmalzy 3

D A

cock rock

martial

sing along with the pianist! (*giocososo*)

speed, death, thrash metal

ff

31 all trills extremely fast

Sx

acc

[village people / pet shop boys – go west]

fff

mf

ff

fff

poco sul tasto (as needed), to be able to bow all three strings simultaneously

vc

- nez - za, Pri - ma - ve - ra di bel - lez - za!

pno

Bm F#m G D G A

dr

(or small crash)

SPLASH

TEMPO PRIMO

G.P.

34

sx

acc

vln

vc

pno

dr

cock rock

ff

stop abruptly,
remain frozen

The musical score is arranged in a system of six staves. The staves are labeled on the left: 'sx', 'acc', 'vln', 'vc', 'pno', and 'dr'. The first five staves (sx, acc, vln, vc, pno) are empty, with a single note on the first line of each staff in measures 34, 35, 36, and 37. The sixth staff (dr) contains a drum part. In measure 34, it is marked 'cock rock' and 'ff'. The drum part consists of a series of eighth notes and rests. In measure 37, it is marked 'stop abruptly, remain frozen'. The system is enclosed in a large rectangular box.