

jef chippewa

“... unless he senses when to jump”

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

[VIOLIN]

“... 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)

[edition: june 2013]

“... 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

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)

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.

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

spalt no score exists, only individual parts
eleven all have the same score, no parts
spur 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 precautions 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.]

VIOLIN

“... unless he senses when to jump”

spalt (the delicious residue of the imperfect)

EACH PLAYER ENTERS INDIVIDUALLY after approximately 6-13 clicks of the metronome; always play “in time” with it, although slight divergences are expected / desired

jef chippewa

The score consists of three staves. The top staff is for the right hand (RH) and includes a metronome marking of 15. It features various dynamics such as *ppp*, *sfz*, and *sffz*, along with performance directions like "ON the tip", "slip pizz.", "release", "rotate bow", "STOP! al tallone", and "wide arc". The middle staff is for the left hand (LH) and includes instructions like "dampen", "ON ferrule", "swish-off", "whip", "hammer-on", "gl.", "thumb", "bend + raise neck", and "STOP!". The bottom staff is for the violin and includes instructions like "HAND", "set bow... down", "grab violin across ribs", "set violin... on lap", "release strings + freeze!", "RH to rest", "calmo", and "LH to rest". A box at the bottom right of the score states: "once the last performer has come to a resting position, ALLOW ANOTHER 7 (or so) CLICKS OF THE METRONOME BEFORE IT IS STOPPED UNCEREMONIOUSLY".

[1] RH sets the tip of the bow on I. for a lightly (*pitched*) TINKLE sound, bow hairs almost in contact with edge of vln body / LH fingers lightly dampen the strings

glide the bow along its tip (on the ivory) with normal pressure, getting “stuck” at the joint of the bow hairs; imperceptibly increase the pressure on the bow tip

with the bow tip pressed hard into the crook where the hairs are attached to the ivory, the bow suddenly releases and explodes in a “slip pizz.” SQUAWK (stopped immediately)

imperceptibly lessen the pressure of the bow contact

rotate the bow so that only the edge of the hairs remain in contact with the strings (*quasi col legno*)

[2] “white noise” transition: with extremely light pressure and absolutely constant speed, bow the string as close as possible to being inaudible; slowly add the rib of the instrument and fade out the string sound (sound is difficult to control but should be held as stable as possible)...

... and stop abruptly (no accent) at frog

[3] lift bow abruptly from the strings (no sound!), pause slightly 3-4 cm above them and begin a long, large circle, in extremely slow motion and continue the circle over approx. 4 measures, as if preparing for your entry in brahms’

violin concerto... or some other equally vomituous, *über-romantik* piece...

[4] ... *ach*, but your entry is completely emasculated! simultaneously place frog (ferrule) with moderate pressure on IV. (audible pitch) and set the mother-of-pearl inlay delicately on III.

RH slides the ferrule just so slightly that it “plucks” down off the string and the bow hairs stop the string (the length between the bow and the scroll vibrates); a small and very rapid bow-pressure vibrato on the string causes tiny metallic squeaks; just before “pluck”, LH releases IV. but continues to dampen I.-III.

“swish” the bow towards your face and and up and off the strings (the bow hairs caress them!) with a slight twist of the wrist (also ca. 1-2 mm downbow to avoid the ferrule touching the strings), abruptly freeze arm with RH ca. 5 cm off the strings; release III. just before “swish”, continue to dampen I.-II.

[5] whip the bow rapidly, so the hairs WHISTLE through the air as your arm sweeps in a wide circle down, outwards, upwards and coming to rest with index on III., as if prepared for a pizz.

[6] LH index finger “hammer-on” (guitar) and immediately gliss. (audible); upon arrival, the thumb knuckle KNOCKS against the curve of the neck; an undulating vib. slowly dies out...

with extremely heavy pressure on the fingerboard, slowly pull IV. towards III. (guitar bend); simultaneously, lift the scroll slowly up and away from your body, slightly grimacing as if something were about to snap [*it seems the almost invisible raising of the instrument causes the ragged audible gliss.*]; if unshaven, allow scratching noise from whiskers on body to be heard; stop abruptly

[7] jerk the finger off the strings and slowly move the bow towards and set it down noiselessly on your music stand

[8] both hands suddenly grab the instrument: RH across the narrowest part of the ribs, straddling the bridge with the fingers outwards, thumb close to chin, palm dampening the strings; LH (same position as before) dampens the strings

remove the violin abruptly from beneath the chin and set it down on your lap in a calm motion (strings still dampened)

[9] release the strings and move the LH to a resting position in a natural manner

RH quickly releases the strings (let vibrate) and freezes just above them

slowly move to a complete resting position in a natural manner and wait for the end of the piece while staring calmly and expressionlessly at the audience

eleven (effervescent powder)

new material each time

change materials quickly, pause only long enough to cue entry and continue

10x

ppp poss.

ppp poss.

ATTACCA

acc

ca. 10-15"

ca. 10-15"

$\emptyset < pppp$

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

1

approx. 10"

$\text{♩} = 69$ SEHR BREIT

[ACCORDION]

[DRUM enters]

fff

sub.f

fff

2

oh wow, tooooootally! 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

BANAL GEEK POP

[spoken] i comb my ha - ye r'i brush my teeth, put on my

poco s.p. IV.

flaut.V

(sim.)

"sfz"

f

3

SEHR BREIT

9

make - u p'and start my week.

3 *more a yell than singing*
12 punk *ff*
 [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 & drrrty: with lots of bow pressure
sffz *port.* *sffz* *gliss.*

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 SEHR BREIT **16**
pppp *f cresc.*

5 DOUBLE TEMPO
überausdrucksvoll molto rubato! [V] *stretto* swing like a drunk cowboy at the end of harvest!
20 *gliss.* *stretto*
ff *f*

6 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...
23 (sub. in tempo) **24** **26** TEMPO PRIMO
f

7 DOUBLE TEMPO
 fade-out / stop individually sing along with the pianist! (*giocoso*) lyrical
28 [DRUM beat returns] *mf* *ff* *mf* *ff* *mf* *ff*
mf *ff* *mf* *ff*

33 *fff* **34** **36** TEMPO PRIMO G.P.
fff

