

PERFORMANCE SCORE



FOR ALTO SAXOPHONE, COLOR VIDEO,
AND ELECTRONIC SOUND

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NOTATION

The notation used in this work should be clear and familiar to those accustomed to performing contemporary music. Others are invited to follow the score with a recorded performance of the work, and also with a recording of the tape part alone (both are available on audio cassette from the publisher). This will afford a more complete understanding of the notational concepts than written explanations.

A thorough survey of current notation may be found in Music Notation in the Twentieth Century by Kurt Stone (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1980).

PAGE TURNS

Some pages must be turned before the last few notes on a page, requiring a brief amount of memorization. If this is inconvenient, the pages may be cut across the page between staves, forming two smaller pages that may be turned at different times.

PERFORMER TO PERFORMER

by Marshall Taylor, Saxophonist

Faculty, Temple University and Philadelphia College of the Arts

My initial acquaintance with Reynold Weidenaar was made in the Summer of 1984 at the Yellow Springs Institute for Contemporary Studies and the Arts in Chester Springs, Pa.: a week-long residency during which we rehearsed, videotaped, and performed an experimental version of his "Music for the Spheres," a multi-tracked video double trio for soprano voice, alto saxophone, and piano.

Near the end of the week we found a free hour and a wonderful acoustic space down the road, a former barn, now rehearsal space and potters' workshop, the Yellow Springs Studio. Ren set up his PZM microphones and portable Nagra tape deck and I began exploring such extended techniques as multiphonics, air and spit sounds, palm-keys in their fundamental octaves, etc., on both alto and soprano saxophones. We got a beautiful tape, although we were a bit concerned about some faint sounds of mowers and other farm machinery we seemed to be picking up part of the time.

About Thanksgiving I got a call from Ren saying he wanted to record "Music for the Spheres" with Judith Blegen, the Met soprano, and her sister Barbara Blegen, who had been the pianist during the week at Yellow Springs. He also said he was working on a new piece for alto saxophone and color video using the taped soprano saxophone sounds, processed and combined with subway sounds (which incidentally masked the distant machinery noises).

A premiere of the new piece, to be called The Stillness, was scheduled for February 22, 1985 at the Zukor Theater of the American Museum of the Moving Image in Astoria, Queens, as part of a retrospective of Ren's film and video works.

As the weeks went by I got progress reports, bits of the score, a few pages at a time, and eventually a cassette of the audio track. About a week before the premiere I received a copy of the video, which immediately struck me as a major breakthrough in

Ren's work--a stunning combination of human warmth (Christine Meyer, the actress on the subway platform, waiting for the train, and the saxophone sounds) and an alienating but fascinating mechanistic environment (transformer hum, brake squeals, doors closing, wheels clattering).

When I finally got the last third of the score, two days before the premiere, I saw that it was to be improvised from there almost to the end, which suited me fine. Too late to learn anyone else's notes anyway.

Since some of the improvisations are played against a three-part canon of soprano saxophone slowed down to half speed, I had the very special experience of improvising my part in a saxophone quartet in which the other players were--myself! Easy for me, I am used to the way I play, but now I will try to help you find your way into the piece too.

The written part is not technically difficult, and studying the score while listening to a performance on tape will give an idea of cues and timing, though some specific things to listen for will help the latter. I'll try, as well, to help with certain fingerings and playing techniques. However, the main task of the performer, beyond the specifics, will be to identify with and imitate the particular timbres and styles of intonation on the tape, i.e., to find your way into the piece's sonic landscape. In part, these timbres are a result of slowing down the recorded soprano saxophone sounds, which makes them sound less bright, as well as lowering their pitch by one or two octaves.

The instruments and set-ups used were: a Selmer Mark VI soprano, with S-80E mouthpiece and #3 Vandoren reed, and, for the solo alto track, a Selmer made in 1931, popularly known as the "cigar-cutter" model, with, as I recall, an S-80** mouthpiece and #3 Vandoren reed.

Now, some playing specifics. Since the piece has no measures, references are to the staves, which are numbered consecutively at the left.

On staff 12, put some spit under the reed for the Eb to D, and finger palm Eb and high E (no octave key, then take off the E); suck the spit clear for the next passage; then put more spit under the reed for the last phrase.

On staff 14, the high D should sound mechanical, *senza espressione*, as marked, in time with the subway squeal that soon enters.

The improvisation that begins on staff 15 should create a counterpoint with the soft, initially non-pitched air and tongue percussion sounds on the tape. I anticipate the half-step melodic dyads on staves 21 and 22 so it sounds as if the tape is imitating me.

The short rocking multiphonic on staff 23, like the high wail on staff 11, is to be played as closely parallel to the recorded saxophone track as possible, the embouchure as well as the fingers following the recorded part.

On staff 24, the low C# is played with lots of octave overtone, and enters precisely on the seventh slow wave of the recorded concert B.

On staves 33-35, the low notes are the ones fingered, the octaves above are blown without the octave key, then the fundamentals are allowed to creep back in.

For the long improvisation that begins on staff 35 and goes almost to the end, some suggested pitches are given which are merely the ones I used in the composite version recording, partly pre-composed and partly improvised on the spot. (The composite version is an alternate, non-performance edition of the piece, with a recorded alto saxophone performance included on the video soundtrack.) I have changed them in successive performances. The main thing is to be sensitive to the sounds on the tape and, particularly at the climax on staves 48-50, to the visual images, which at that point move from slow motion into real time.

Just as the video concludes as it began, peacefully and with unprocessed images of Christine still waiting for that train, I settle back into the tradition, ending quietly with an almost Bach-like cadence on staff 56 in counterpoint to the tape, then fold my arms and let the final credits roll by without competition.

In general, despite the close integration between video and audio (for example, the musical score is characterized by abrupt cuts, keyed to the video cuts, rather than the smooth transitions or movement breaks of music without images), the saxophonist in concert performance can work entirely off hearing the audio track, without needing to see a video monitor. In any case, each performing situation is different. I've been next to a projection screen, in front of a bank of monitors, and with monitors between me and the audience. The only time I've been able to actually see a screen while playing was in the Sound Shop studio in New York where we recorded the composite version.

Since the visual aspect of the saxophonist is important to the composer, I always stand in front, face the audience, and present my part of the work as an element that is visually equal to the video image, as well as a sound partner to the audio track.

One of the real strokes of genius in the piece, I think, is the using and shaping of technology for an artistic end, rather than allowing it to take over and impose a mechanistic, anti-human, and ultimately alienating tone, as in so many aspects of our high-tech society, from medicine to the arts. One such means of control used by Ren in making The Stillness is in the use of a "ghost piano." Musical phrases were written and then performed on an acoustic piano by Barbara Blegen. Then their recorded sounds, with pitches transformed into voltages, and in some cases with an electronic trigger that only picked up sounds above a certain dynamic level, were used to control the visual image processing (color change, key clip, window motion, raster scan deflection). The result is an organic and natural flow to the images, whose contours of movement and change result from skilled and artistic human articulation, rather than just from the geometric, simplistic, mechanistic motion programs typical of many computer video graphics systems. Incidentally, in an interesting parallel to the use of recorded piano music that is seen but not heard, the subway train heard throughout the piece is never seen.

The video images themselves are stunning, complex, and linger in the mind. Christine Meyer, the young woman waiting on an otherwise deserted subway platform for a train that never arrives, is featured throughout. Her unprocessed image behind the opening title quickly breaks up as the image transformations begin, and only clarifies

and calms again as the closing credits go by. In between one has impressions of fleeting scenery seen from a fast-moving train, strangely-shaped beings floating by and dividing, ghostly images superimposed on their out-of-sync real counterparts, and a host of other elements forming an awesome new universe, both abstract and representational, that is as compelling to the eye as the work's rich sonic landscapes are to the ear.

January 29, 1986

A FINAL NOTE

To minimize page-turn noises during performance, remove the plastic comb binding and thread a red ribbon through the holes at the edge of the score.

THE STILLNESS

FOR ALTO SAXOPHONE, COLOR VIDEO, AND ELECTRONIC SOUND

REYNOLD WEIDENAR (1985)

ALTO SAXOPHONE IN E

1

TIMELINE:

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

SUBWAY TRAIN, ORIGINAL SOUND

DISAPPEARING

WITH ANOMIE

mp

SPIT SOUNDS

DO

TAPE IN C

ff

UNPITCHED SOUNDS

f

CLATTERS

mf

SOPRANO SAXOPHONE, HALF SPEED, DDL S.R.2, B^b COMB

mp

f

00:11:12

MOTOR

VIDEO EDIT 00:00:00—VIDEO TIMECODE—MINUTES:SECONDS:FRAMES (30 FRAMES PER SECOND). THIS IS NON-DROP-FRAME TIMECODE, WHICH RUNS SLIGHTLY SLOWER THAN REALTIME (29.97 FRAMES PER SECOND). TO CONVERT TO REALTIME, MULTIPLY TIMECODE BY 1.00099895.

SAX

2

4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20

mf

p

mf

TAPE

mp

f

SAX

3

20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36

f

p

mf

n

TAPE

R. CHANNEL

mf

p

SUBWAY STATION, DDL S.R.2, B^b COMB

SOFT VOICES

TRANSFORMER BUZZ

HUM

PPP

SOFT CLIKKS X/X/X

LOW RUMBLE

SAX

4

36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52

TAPE

f $\text{sub. } p$

SOFT VOICES

ff

LOW RUMBLE

TENSE

SAX

5

52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 1:00 01 02 03 04 05 06 07 08

TAPE

mf ff

CROSSFADE TO DDL (HARMONICS LOUDER)

LET GO!

L. CH. ff
R. CH. fff ff

SAX

6

THINK BETTER OF IT

sub. *mf* *mp* *mf* *mp* *p*

08 09 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24

TAPE

f *mf* *f* *mf* *p* *pp* *n*

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

CLANKS

SAX

7

24 25 0

TAPE

TT *pp*

SAX SUBWAY TRAIN, ORIGINAL SOUND

pp *mf* *f* *ff* *f* *mf* *pp*

MOTOR

01:37:00

ESPRESSIVO CON VIBRATO

SAX 8

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16

SUBWAY STATION, DDL S.R.4, B^b COMB, FULL ECHO

VOICE RESONANCES

f ff mp

< mf > mp < f > mp < mf > mp

SHARPER BUZZ

VOICES

TRANSFORMER

BUZZ

HUM

01:46:17

SAX 9

16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32

mf sub ff n ff

< f > mf < f

(b)

(b)

(b)

SAX

10

IMPROVISE KEY SLAPS, LOW RANGE-----

mf

32 33 34 35

SOPRANO SAXOPHONE, HALF SPEED, 400-630 PEAK EQ.

TAPE

KEY SLAPS

AIR SOUNDS

ff

f mf mp f fff f ff fff f

02:21:26

(b0)

(b0)

(b0)

PAINFUL (MIMIC TAPE SAX)

SAX

11

mf

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16

SAX

SPIT

TAPE

SUBWAY TRAIN, ORIGINAL SOUND, TUNED TO B^b

SOFT CLATTERS

SOFT SQUEAL

SHARPER

BUZZ

HUM

p

mp

cresc.-----

02:36:13

SAX

12

PALM KEYS
THIN SPIT SOUND

ORD.

CANTABILE

mp

f

16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32

TAPE

SOUND

ORD.

SOPRANO SAXOPHONE, AIR & SQUEEZE-EMBOUCHURE SOUNDS

CHUGS

VOICE "ss"

CLACKS

(b)

(b)

--- (cresc.) --- mf --- ff ---

02:58:16

SAX

13

SPIT SOUND

mf

32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48

TAPE

SPIT SOUNDS

IN

HISS

SSSSSSSS

DOORS OPEN

MOTOR IDLE

mp

p

f

p

mf

SAX

14

SENZA ESPR.

ORD.

p

48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 1:00 01 02 03 04

TAPE

VOICE "DESTINATION"

DOOR CLATTER

p f p mp

SAX

15

TURN PAGE

IMPROVISE AIR

04 05 06 07 08

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

SOPRANO SAXOPHONE, HALF SPEED

BEAT WEAVER

f mf f mp

03:44:21

SOUNDS: CHUGS, FAST TONGUED FIGURES, LONG WHEEZES — NO PITCHES — — — — —

SAX

16

SOPRANO SAXOPHONE, HALF SPEED — AIR & SQUEEZE-EMBOUCHURE SOUNDS

CHUGS

AS ABOVE — MONO

AS TRACK 1 — REVERSED STEREO CHANNELS, OCCASIONAL DDL (RM. 4,

p

03:54:11

mf

SAX

17

CHUGS

TAPE

255 MS ECHO WITH 60% FEEDBACK)

CHUGS

f

ff

SAX

18

32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48

INC ←

TAPE

fff *f*

INC ←

INC ←

SAX

19

48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 1:00 01 02 03 04

TAPE

SAX

20

04 05 06 07 08 09 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20

TAPE

ff

SAX

21

WITH AIR SOUND

mp

SLOWLY

20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36

TAPE

fff > ff

< fff > ff

< fff > ff

CLIPPING & SATURATION DISTORTION

f

SAX 22

ORD. *mf* SLOWLY

36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52

TAPE

STRONG BEATS

STRONG BEATS

STRONG BEATS

n

SAX 23

52 53 54 55 56 57 58

TAPE

TACET

IMITATE TAPE PART

SOPRANO SAXOPHONE, HALF SPEED

p *f* *p*

n *mp* *mf* *f* *ff* *> p*

05:52:28

SAX 24

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16

ISOLATED, DISTANT

mp #

SLOW LIP WAYER

TAPE

SUBWAY TRAIN, TUNED TO B \flat

HISS & DOORS SQUEAL

BUZZ

HUM

VIRTUALLY INAUDIBLE

WHEELS ACCEL.

STEADY

ppp < p

06:02:23

pp

SAX 25

16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32

STEADY

mp

p

n

TAPE

SOFT CLATTERS

MUFFLED

ppp

pp

SAX 26

TAPE

06:41:06

TACET

ppp

n

32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

SAX 27

TAPE

06:51:27

GRAZIOSO, NOT TOO JAZZY

SUBWAY STATION, ORIGINAL SOUND, TUNED TO B \flat

ff

f

ff

SLAM

CLATTERS

VOICES

BUZZ

LOW RUMBLE

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

SAX

28

8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16

f *ff* *ff* *f* *mp*

D (NO O.K.)

LOWER C KEY SLOWLY

D (NO O.K.)

C

JINGLES

HIGH SOFT BOOM

TAPE

SAX

29

16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24

f *f* *ff* *f*

TAPE

SAX

30

24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32

ff *f* *mf*

LOWER F# KEY SLOWLY

TAPE

fff *ff*

TO RIGHT CHANNEL

(b0)

(b0)

SAX

31

32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40

f *ff* *f* *mf*

TAPE

SNAPS

SAX

32

40 41 42 43 44

f *ff*

TAPE

FOR RIGHT CHANNEL

HARD TONE

SOPRANO SAXOPHONE, HALF SPEED
KEY SLAPS, DDL S.R.A., 255MS ECHO WITH 45% FEEDBACK,
400-630 HZ PEAK EQ

ff *mf* *f* *mp*

07:35:28

SAX 33

COMING INTO THE STATION

SLIGHT MIXTURE WITH FUNDAMENTAL

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16

SUBWAY TRAIN, DDL S.R. 2, REVERB

TAPE

MOTOR & WHEELS

RUMBLE

mf

mp mf mp

07:43:07

SAX 34

LET FUNDAMENTAL SOUND

16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32

ff (4-)

p

mp

mf (4-)

DOORS

TAPE

p mp p pp

SAX 35

TURN PAGE

IMPRO- VISE

32 33 34 35 36 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

ppp

TACET

TAPE

n

08:18:23

SLOW FIGURES: WITH PALM KEYS (NO OCTAVE KEY), IMITATE TAPE PART - - - - -

SAX

36

TAPE

$\sharp 0$ etc.

SOPRANO SAXOPHONE, HALF SPEED, DDL (S.R. 2, 120MS ECHO):

mf

08:30:16

SAX

37

TAPE

18

SAX

38

16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24

TAPE

GLISS.

SAX

39

24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32

TAPE

SAX

40

SUGGESTED PITCHES: (mp)

32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40

TAPE

b0 WITH SPIT SOUNDS

b0 WITH SPIT SOUNDS

b0 WITH SPIT SOUNDS

SAX

41

40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48

TAPE

SAX

42

48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56

TAPE

PEACEFUL

mf

f

SAX

43

56 57 58 59 1:00 01 02 03 04

TAPE

mf

SAX 44

IMPROVISE

TAPE

Handwritten musical notation for measures 44-49. The Saxophone staff has a melodic line starting on a whole note, followed by a series of eighth notes. The Tape section has three staves with various notes and slurs, including a crescendo line at the bottom.

SAX 45

AIR SOUNDS: INHALE, EXHALE — UNSTEADY, FLUSTERED ———— ADD SPIT AND/OR TONGUE ———

SPIT SOUNDS ONLY

TAPE

Handwritten musical notation for measures 45-50. The Saxophone staff has a melodic line with slurs and a crescendo line. The Tape section has three staves with various notes and slurs, including a crescendo line at the bottom.

-----FAST TONGUED FIGURES, SLIGHTLY PITCHED (LOW NOTES)-----

SAX 46

20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28

TAPE

SPIT SOUNDS ONLY

pp

-----GRADUALLY INCREASE INTENSITY, TENSION — PITCHES GETTING HIGHER-----

SAX 47

28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36

TAPE

mp

-----LOUDER, FASTER----- INSISTENT, ACTIVE, INTENSE - SOMEWHAT FRANTIC: VERY

SAX

48

36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44

TAPE

10:13:17

HIGH NOTES, TRILLS, SQUEALS, FAST FIGURES -----

SAX

49

44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52

TAPE

24

10:22:23

-----GRADUALLY SLOW DOWN---EXHAUSTED---

SAX

50

52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 2:00

TAPE

40

40

40

TURN PAGE

RELIEVED
AIR HUFFS

SAX

51

2:00 01 02 03 04 05 06

TAPE

40

ECHO

IMPROVISE RHYTHMIC AIR SOUNDS; MIMIC TAPE PART-----

SAX 52

TAPE

SOPRANO SAXOPHONE, HALF SPEED

HUFFS

SPIT RATTLES

mf f mp fff f p mp f n

10:37:01 10:47:21

WITH QUIET, CONTEMPLATIVE REPOSE

SAX 53

TAPE

SOPRANO SAXOPHONE, QUARTER SPEED

SLOW LIP WAVER

SUBWAY TRAIN, TUNED TO B \flat , HALF SPEED

HISS & DOORS SQUEAL

WHEELS ACCEL.

n pp p f

SAX

54

AIRY VIB.

mf

n mp

16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32

TAPE

STEADY

< ff > f < ff > f

SOFT CLATTERS

SAX

55

NON VIB.

TURN PAGE

n

mp f

32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48

TAPE

ff

SAX

56

48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 1:00 01 02 03 04

mf *f* *mf*

TAPE

MUFFLED

mf

SAX

57

04 05 06 07 08 09 10

TAPE

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

SUBWAY STATION, DDL S.R.4, B^b COMB, FULL ECHO, HIGHER EQ PEAKS THROUGHOUT

f *ff* *mp* *<mf>* *mp*

VOICES

BUZZ

HUM

11:58:21 12:04:11

SAX

58

9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25

TAPE

f *>mp* *<mf* *>mp* *<f*

SHARPER BUZZ

12:10:11 12:16:11 12:22:11

SAX

59

25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42

TAPE

f *<ff* *>ff* *mf* *n*

KEY SLAPS

SUBWAY TRAIN LEAVING

NEW YORK:
AUDIO - JANUARY 30, 1985
VIDEO - FEBRUARY 15, 1985
SCORE - MARCH 10, 1985

12:28:11 12:35:03 12:39:26 12:40:24 TIMECODE
12:41.56 REALTIME