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PORTFOLIO OF COMPOSITIONS

Alex Pozniak

Volume Two

COMPOSITIONS

A portfolio submitted in partial fulfilment of requirements for the degree of Master of Music (Composition)

Sydney Conservatorium of Music
University of Sydney
2008
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Strung Metal Lines

for solo violin

by

Alex Pozniak

2007
Strung Metal Lines responded to the request of Sydney violinist Thomas Talmacs for a virtuosic violin work. I have catered the character of the piece to suit Thomas’ love of death metal music. Therefore it is a generally intense exploration of the violin as a sounding mechanism, combining trembling figuration, grinding overbowed sounds, accented strokes and extended lines of riffing. The title refers to the anatomy of the violin, with its four strings of wound metal, while also suggesting a musical character of tension, a material nature of density/heaviness, and a strong linear drive.

* * * *

Duration: c. 9’

First performance: 13 December 2007 in ‘Chronology’ presented by chronology arts, performed by Thomas Talmacs.
Strung Metal Lines

Alex Pozniak

\[ \begin{align*}
& \text{\emph{With Intensity}} \\
& \text{(tremolando, III)} \\
& \text{\emph{flessante}} \\
& \text{\emph{with intensity}} \\
& q = 66 q = 66 q = 66 q = 66
\end{align*} \]

\begin{align*}
& \text{\emph{molto vib}} \\
& \text{\emph{overbow}} \\
& \text{\emph{overbow}} \\
& \text{\emph{overbow}} \\
& \text{\emph{poco a poco decresc}} \\
& \text{\emph{poco a poco cresc}}
\end{align*}
\[q = 116\]

*Agitato*

IV (until m.41)

\[\text{to m.41}\]

\[\text{sempre IV}\]

\[\text{(sempre IV)}\]

\[\text{(sempre IV)}\]

\[\text{ff}\]

\[\text{sfz}\]

\[\text{p}\]

\[\text{ord.}\]

\[\text{SP}\]

\[\text{poco a poco cresc}\]

\[\text{I}\]

\[\text{II}\]

\[\text{III}\]

\[\text{IV}\]

\[\text{mp}\]
(vary LH finger pressure randomly, to access both natural harmonics and stopped pitches)

\[ \text{poco a poco accelerando} \]

gradually merge from ord. to MSP

\[ \text{A tempo} \]

\[ \text{SP} \]

\[ \text{overbow} \]
Strung Metal Lines
Cloud Sketch

for string quartet

by

Alex Pozniak

2008
A short musical sketch on metaphorical clouds, *Cloud Sketch* provides an outline for amorphous sound objects, scored in a relatively flexible manner for string quartet. Opening from a closed-position cluster chord, the musical material is activated incrementally (fades--glissandi--tremolando--open intervals--arpeggios) to create musical shapes. I liken this piece to the artist’s practice of sketching, an outline by which the essence of something is conveyed. In musical terms I’m testing the efficacy of notational fragments and ensemble coordination when these fragments are loosely assembled. The resultant sound draws on my interest in free improvised music and the mutational possibilities of electronic music. Through various degrees of looping, transformation and perspectival shifts, the observance of ‘clouds’ alternates between moments of density and lightness, harmonic grey and colour, stasis and motion, by turns suspended and fleeting.

**Performance Notes:**

*Cloud Sketch* is durationally indeterminate. The tempo - *(Slowly)* – is suggested, but not enforced due to the use of brackets. If ‘slowly’ is chosen, the degree of how slow is at the discretion of the ensemble. When specific note or rest lengths are used, these are used as a guide to help stagger certain events. Due to the degree of durational indeterminacy in *Cloud Sketch* I have used dashed bar lines rather than conventional bar lines to delineate new bars as I do not want to suggest fixed metrical time. The length of each bar is therefore indeterminate, and the succession of events requires for each performer to follow the score in full to judge their entries or when to progress to new material. The alignment of certain moments, in some cases notationally clear though in others ambiguous, is left to the discretion of the ensemble. In some cases, due to each performer’s duration independence, convergence onto vertically aligned moments will occur gradually, as each player arrives at the respective bar in their own time. (Temporal alignment is suggested on the ‘downbeat’ of m.58 to increase the effectiveness of this climactic gesture).

* * * *

Duration: c. 7’

First performance: 22 June 2008 in ‘Counterparts’ presented by chronology arts, performed by Victoria Jacono (Vln I), Joanne Toouli (Vln II), Luke Spicer (Vla), Eleanor Betts (Vlc).
Dream Space No. 2

for electronics

by

Alex Pozniak

2007
Dream Space No. 2 is a revised version of the electronic work Dream Space used for the Triptych ’06 Music-Poetry-Art Concert at UNSW in November 2006. The original version was a standalone electronic work in which I included sampled material from Sydney composers Stela Solar and Peggy Polias, also involved in the Triptych concert. The aim of the work was simply to create a ‘dream space’ (each item in Triptych worked around a certain theme of ‘space’). The version of Dream Space heard at Triptych was an extension of the original structure, designed for collaboration with the Sydney hip-hop poet Tom Keily who recited poetry during its performance.

For Dream Space No. 2, I revisited the structure of the original work, altered and extended it in parts, and dreamt, so to speak, other threads through it. The central part of the original Dream Space used a sampled vocal and percussion loop created by Peggy Polias. This extract from reality is used to represent a dream object, or a surreal object – a kind of readymade invested with surreal functionality, processed into a dream-like state. In revisiting the work, I rendered it as a space for further dream, like an open structure to catalog other objects or ‘persistent memories’ (a la Dalí), a waking dream site. Notably I included scraps of discarded source material from the electronic part of another work of mine, Waveforms (2007), and briefly joining Peggy in the work’s middle is the voice of Brisbane composer Joseph Twist singing from Bach’s Singet dem Herren. In troping on ‘dream’, Dream Space No. 2 explores different speeds and densities of information, which in turn distort, congest and open the flow of time.

* * * *

Duration: 7’22”
Waveforms

for quintet and electronics

by

Alex Pozniak

2008
The main inspiration for Waveforms stems from the world of electronic music, where the music’s sound world is a constantly flexible parameter, able to be shaded and manipulated. With this in mind, I structured Waveforms as an interplay between the ensemble and electronics, using both to compliment each other and embellish each other’s trajectory.

The work begins by exploring the notion of proliferation, the outward growth of sound from a single source, whereby a single sustained pitch gives rise to an active harmonic field. Throughout the piece I have drawn upon the metaphor of the wave, it’s rising and falling motion represented on various levels of the musical surface. These range from the trilled figures in the instrumental parts (rising and falling on the micro-level), to the moments of accumulation and surging that emulate a wave’s path at sea. All the while we hear the oscillating sound waves of the electronic part. This electronic part was forged from the sound waves of single pitches which are combined together and to which I have at times applied processes such as pitch bending, vibrato, distortion and granulation. Aside from these purely electronic sounds, towards the end of the work I draw upon some actual recordings I made using various metal objects, including a toy glockenspiel and a teaspoon in a glass jar (though these are used as subtle textural elements rather than emphasised by any means in the mix).

The music gravitates towards a harmonic field grounded by the ‘C’-pitch, and a coda of immersive electronic sound actualises the metaphor of the ‘sea’, into which these sound waves ostensibly flow.

**Performance Note:**

Waveforms is to be performed through using a click track, and preferably a conductor, to align the ensemble to the electronics track. The electronic track begins on the downbeat of bar 1 and the ensemble waits in silence at the end of the work until the electronics fade out.

* * * *

Duration: 9’40”

Commissioned by Father Arthur Bridge for Ars Musica Australis.

First performance of original 2007 version: 16 June 2007 in ‘Second Viennese School Meets Modern Australian’ by Kammer. Lisa Osmialowski (Fl), John Lewis (Cl), Scott Taggart (Vln), Daniel Yeadon (Vlc), Alan Hicks (Pno).

First performance of current 2008 version: 9 May 2008 in ‘Sui Generis’ presented by the Fellowship of Australian Composers, performed by Jennifer Bradstreet (Fl), Toby Armstrong (Cl), Christina Morris (Vln), Eleanor Betts (Vlc), Ying Ho (Pno), conducted by David Griffin.
Waveforms

Alex Pozniak

A $\mathbf{\frac{\text{d}}{\text{b}}} = 76$

### Flute

```plaintext
(pitch bend)
```

### Clarinet in Bb (transposed)

### Piano

### Violin

### Cello

```
poco a poco cresc.
```

```
poco a poco cresc.
```

```
poco a poco cresc.
```

---

Fl.

Bb Cl.

Pno.

Vln.

Vc.
Waveforms

Fl.

Bb Cl.

Pno.

Vln.

Vc.

(C) slow - - - - - fast

(C) slow - - - fast

poco a poco cresc.

natural harm. gliss. Sul A

sul pont.

cresc.

fl.

b. fl.

mf

(pitch bend)

decel. trill

(breath sound can replace the pitched sound)

\( \text{natural harm. gliss. Sul A} \)

\( \text{sul pont.} \)

\( \text{cresc.} \)

\( \text{ord.} \)

\( \text{sense vib.} \)
Fl.\[\text{p}\]

Bb Cl.\[\text{mf}\]

Pno.\[\text{poco decresc.}\]

Vln.\[\text{start slow and accel.}\]

Vc.
Waveforms
Waveforms

\[ \text{Fl.} \quad \text{Bb Cl.} \quad \text{Vln.} \quad \text{Vlc.} \quad \text{Pno.} \]

\[ \text{fls.} \quad \text{flz.} \quad \text{sul pont.} \quad \text{p} \quad \text{sul C} \]

\[ q = 66 \quad q = 66 \quad q = 66 \quad q = 66 \]

A little faster

\[ \text{fls.} \quad \text{flz.} \quad \text{sul pont.} \quad \text{p} \quad \text{sul C} \]

\[ \text{fls.} \quad \text{flz.} \quad \text{sul pont.} \quad \text{p} \quad \text{sul C} \]

\[ \text{fls.} \quad \text{flz.} \quad \text{sul pont.} \quad \text{p} \quad \text{sul C} \]

\[ \text{fls.} \quad \text{flz.} \quad \text{sul pont.} \quad \text{p} \quad \text{sul C} \]

\[ \text{fls.} \quad \text{flz.} \quad \text{sul pont.} \quad \text{p} \quad \text{sul C} \]

\[ \text{fls.} \quad \text{flz.} \quad \text{sul pont.} \quad \text{p} \quad \text{sul C} \]
Waveforms

Fl.

Bb Cl.

Pno.

Vln.

Vc.

(use lips to bend pitch between C & C#)

ppc flz.

pp

p

ppp

mf

(let resonate)

ord.
sul G

p

poco decresc.

p

pp

(pp)

(mp)

natural harm. gliss. Sul C

(overblow ad lib. to sound harmonics)

Gliss.

(sotto voce)

(move bw highest poss. nat. harmonics)

pp

pp

- 27 -
Construction

for five a cappella voices

by

Alex Pozniak

2007
Construction is a five part a cappella vocal setting of a poem by the same name by Blaise Cendrars written in 1919, the final poem from Cendrars’ Dix-Neuf Poèmes Élastique (Nineteen Elastic Poems). Cendrars’ Construction encapsulates the excitement of the early twentieth century Parisian artistic circles, which included the rise of abstract art, the birth of cinema and of the burgeoning machine age. The terse visual language of the poem illustrates the fragmentary and simultanist aspects of Cubist art, as well as the techniques of close up and montage from film. Specifically, Cendrars takes as his subject the Cubist artist Fernand Léger and projects through the poem the painting of a portrait.

I have treated the poem in two halves, the first of which presents the material nature of paint and colour, and the process of paint in flux as it dries. In the second half, the painting suddenly comes to life, infused with the locomotive energy of ‘la machine’. The reference to a 75mm. cannon recalls the recent memory of the war in which both Cendrars and Léger fought. As Léger noted with keen hyperbole, ‘the breech-block of a 75mm. cannon lying out in the sun did more for my development as a painter than have all the museums in the world’. A musical setting seemed a fitting supplement to a poem whose subject matter is visual art: a way of constructing through the cross-pollination of aesthetic lines.

Construction by Blaise Cendrars

De la couleur, de la couleur et des couleurs . . .
Voici Léger qui grandit comme le soleil de l’époque tertiaire
Et qui durcit
Et qui fixe
La nature morte
La croûte terrestre
Le liquide
Le brameux
Tout ce qui se ternit
La géométrie nuageuse
Le fil à plomb qui se résorbe
Ossification.
Locomotion.
Tout grouille
L’esprit s’anime soudain et s’habille à son tour comme les
animaux et les plantes
Prodigieusement
Et voici
La peinture deviant cette chose énorme qui bouge
La roue
La vie
La machine
L’âme humaine
Une culasse de 75
Mon portrait

* * * *

Duration: 8’

First performance: 29 September 2007 in Modart07 by the Song Company.
Construction

Text: Blaise Cendrars

Alex Pozniak

Senza Tempo - Slowly
Dry; Freely

Still with rhythmic freedom
(not strictly metrical yet)

\( \text{Soprano 1} \)

\( \text{Soprano 2} \)

\( \text{Tenor} \)

\( \text{Baritone} \)

\( \text{Bass} \)

\( \text{\( \dot{q} \) c. 96} \)
De leur, la, et, couleurs,

De leur, leur, couleurs,

cou, De, couleurs,

la, la, cou, des,

de couleurs

comme le soleil,

voici Leger qui grandit comme le soleil

voici Leger qui grandit comme le soleil
leil comme le soleil de l'époque tertiaire
durcit, et qui durcit,

et qui durcit, qui durcit,
durcit, et qui durcit, qui durcit,
poco accel.

\( \text{A tempo} \quad \frac{\text{q} = 44}{\text{q} = 44} \quad \frac{\text{q} = 44}{\text{q} = 44} \quad \frac{\text{q} = 44}{\text{q} = 44} \)

\[
\begin{align*}
dur\text{-}cit, \quad et \quad qui \quad fi\text{-}xe \\
\quad \quad \quad \text{la nature morte}
\end{align*}
\]

\( \text{A tempo} \quad \frac{\text{q} = 56}{\text{q} = 56} \quad \frac{\text{q} = 56}{\text{q} = 56} \quad \frac{\text{q} = 56}{\text{q} = 56} \)

\[
\begin{align*}
l\text{a croute terrestre} \\
\quad \quad \quad \text{la,}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
l\text{a croute terrestre, le, le li-\text{quide, le li-\text{quide} la}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
l\text{a croute terrestre le, le li-\text{quide, le li-\text{quide}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
terrestre
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
terrestre
\end{align*}
\]
la nature morte, la croute terrestre, le liquide, liquide,

la nature morte, terrestre, liquide, liquide,

le liquide, liquide, terrestre

le brumeux

le brumeux terrestre

le brumeux tout c’qui se termine là,

le brumeux tout c’qui se termine là,
poco a poco rit.

le fil à plomb qui se ressorbe

Construction
**Senza misura, senza tempo**

Ab Lib., exaggerated, non-aligned
descending in pitch, into croaking

Even Slower;
Deathly
repeat syllable
three times, ad lib.,
non-aligned,
croaking  x3  G.P.  \[ \frac{4}{4} \]

Agitato; With Precision

\( \mathcal{J} = 108 \)

lo-co-motion

lo-co-motion

lo-co-motion

lo-co-motion

lo-co-motion

lo-co-motion

lo-co-motion

lo-co-motion

lo-co-motion
ouille, lo-co-mo-tion, tout grr-ouille,

ge-rro-ouille, lo-co-mo-tion, tout grou (rolled R)

grr-ouille, lo-co-mo-tion, tout grr-ouille,

ouille, lo-co-mo-tion, tout grr-ouille

grr-ouille, lo-co-mo-tion, tout grr-ouille,

ouille, lo-co-mo-tion, tout grr-ouille

ouille, lo-co-mo-tion, tout grr-ouille,

---

Slower

\( \frac{J}{J} = 96 \)

ge-r-o-ouille, tout grou (Gb)

grr-ouille, tout grou

grr-ouille, tout grou

---

Construction
Broadly

\[ \text{mm} \]

\[ d = 72 \]

et s'habille a son sprit

s'a-nime

sou-dai-n

et

(\text{change vowel})

a - - - ou

(\text{change vowel})

i - - a - - - ou

\[ \text{ppp} \]

\[ mf \]

\[ f \]

\[ poco cresc. \]

\[ \text{et les plan-} \]

\[ \text{et le son tour comme,} \]

\[ \text{et,} \]

\[ \text{et les plan-} \]

\[ \text{et les plan-} \]

\[ \text{et les plan-} \]

\[ \text{et les plan-} \]
Exaggerated

\( \mathbf{j} = 126 \)

\[ \text{p poco a poco cresc.} \]

pro-di-gi-euse-ment, pro-di-gi-euse-ment, pro-di-gi-euse-ment, pro-di-gi-euse-ment,

p poco a poco cresc.

pro-di-gi-euse-ment, pro-di-gi-euse-ment, pro-di-gi-euse-ment, pro-di-gi-euse-ment

p poco a poco cresc.

pro-di-gi-euse-ment, pro-di-gi-euse-ment, pro-di-gi-euse-ment

pro-di-gi-euse-ment, pro-di-gi-euse-ment

p poco a poco cresc.

pro-di-gi-euse-ment, pro-di-gi-euse-ment, pro-di-gi-euse-ment, pro-di-gi-euse-ment,

\( \text{mp} \) pro-di-gi-euse-ment, \( \text{mf} \) pro-di-gi-euse-ment, \( \text{f} \) pro-di-gi-euse-ment, \( \text{ff} \) pro-di-gi-euse-ment, pro-di-gi-euse-ment, pro-di-gi-euse-ment, pro-di-gi-euse-ment,

\[ \text{mp} \] pro-di-gi-euse-ment, \[ \text{mf} \] pro-di-gi-euse-ment, \[ \text{f} \] pro-di-gi-euse-ment, \[ \text{ff} \] pro-di-gi-euse-ment, pro-di-gi-euse-ment, pro-di-gi-euse-ment, pro-di-gi-euse-ment,
poco a poco rit.

Broadly

Construction
Precise; Machinic

\[
\sum_{\text{norme}} f \]  

La machine, la machine, la machine, la roue, la machine,
chine, l'âme hu

l'âme hu

machine la machine la roue la machine la roue

machine la machine la roue la machine la roue

machine la machine

machine la machine

maine, la.

maine, la.

la ma-chine la vie,

la ma-chine la vie,
Construction

lo-co-mo-tion, lo-co-mo-tion, lo-co-mo-tion,

la ma-shh,

chine, la ma-shh,

ma-chine, ma-chine, ma-chine, la ma-chine, la ma-chine, la ma-chine, - - -

lo-co-mo-tion, lo-co-mo-tion, lo-co-mo-tion, lo-co-mo-tion, lo-co-mo-

shh, shh - shh, shh -

la ma-chine, - - - la ma-chine, - - - la ma-chine, ma-chine, ma-

machine, - - - la ma-chine, - - - la machine, la ma-chine, la ma-chine, la
Construction
soi-xante quinze de soi-xante quinze
soi-xante quinze de soi-xante quinze, de soi-xante quinze
soi-xante quinze cu-lasse de soi-xante quinze
soi-xante quinze cu-la-rosse de soi-xante quinze
soi-xante quinze une cu-la-rosse de soi-xante

soi-xante quinze mon portrait
soi-xante quinze mon portrait
soi-xante quinze mon portrait
soi-xante quinze mon portrait
soi-xante quinze mon portrait
Crush

for solo piano

by

Alex Pozniak

2008
Crush, written for Zubin Kanga, is a virtuosic work for solo piano whose short and sharp title and flamboyantly complex music both convey a crushing force. The title however also suggests the other type of ‘crush’, an intense though short-lived romantic infatuation. The work therefore takes on, musically and metaphorically, those large and inexplicable issues of passion, desire and love in the face of musical abstraction. Contrasting the opening’s impulse towards the more violent aspect of passion, a ‘love serenade’ emerges where the two hands, presenting unrelated material, float around one another’s trajectories, in perhaps a more peacefully negotiated coexistence. This tendency towards counterpoint motivates all aspects of the work, presenting dense textures that maximise the piano’s wide range, treating the instrument to some extent like a noisemaker of immense crushing power.

* * * *

Duration: c. 9'

Recorded by Zubin Kanga on 27 August 2008.
Crush

Intense, violent

for Zubin Kanga

Alex Pozniak
Eerily; somewhat expressive

\( \mathcal{d} = 80 \)

**pp** resonant use of pedal

Expressively

\( \mathcal{d} = 60 \)

(roll chord prior to rhythmic value)

\( \xi \)
use palm of hand and fingers to smear notes between given pitches for a continuous random swarming effect

use swivelling palm motion to gradually move to middle of keyboard
Polychroma

for five keyboards

by

Alex Pozniak

2008
Polychroma written at the end of my Masters candidature is something of a retrospective piece engaging with a number of my earlier musical interests. In this mode of representation and within a hybrid musical context, the idea of portraiture came to mind while preparing the piece and furthermore the analogy of painting, of engaging with many colours and painterly effects on a canvas. Motivating the musical material then were notions such as the subject of a portrait (the opening’s direct statement of musical cells, deriving from three adjacent chromatic pitches), sketching (lines rapidly executed in the exchanges between harpsichord and piano), impasto (the thick application of paint on a canvas), and chiaroscuro (the contrast of light and dark in broader structural terms).

Through the limited number of musical cells which generate much of the work’s material, Polychroma is a study of the presentation of material in various guises, governed at different times by alternate musical impulses – ie. rhythm, melody, harmony, texture. The hybrid musical context includes influences from rock music (rhythmically syncopated riffs), improvised music (quasi-improvised gestures), ambient synth/drone music, and in a less direct manner the accumulation of texture and looping of material found in Noise music. Scored for the unusual combination of piano, harpsichord, accordion, organ and synthesiser – keyboards drawn from across the centuries - Polychroma presents a surreal musical landscape where musical shapes are given to hyperbole, vivid colours and a range of intensities and affects.

Instrumentation:

- **Piano** (preferably grand piano)
- **Harpsichord** (or electric keyboard with a preset harpsichord sound). Registration of harpsichord remains uniform throughout.
- **Accordion** (chromatic button accordion). Registration is up to the discretion of the performer.
- **Organ** (or electric keyboard with a preset organ sound). Registration (or different electric organ timbres) is up to the discretion of the performer. A single organ timbre may be used for the entirety of the work.
- **Synthesiser** (an electric keyboard with two different synthesiser sounds: a more strident ‘lead’ sound and a softer ‘pad’ sound. The alternation between these two sounds is specified in the score with the type of sound appearing in a rectangular box. The exact nature of these two sounds is up to the discretion of the performer).

* * * *

Duration: 18’30”

First performance: 19 September 2008 in ‘Quintessential’ presented by chronology arts, performed by Nathan Carruthers (Pno), Alex Pozniak (E.Hpschd), Elizabeth Jones (Acc.), Bethany Cook (E.Org), Elias Constantopedos (Synth), conducted by David Griffin.

(A note of the first performance/recording: The harpsichord part was performed on an electric keyboard with a preset harpsichord sound. Though not preferable, this is an option for performing Polychroma should a harpsichord or harpsichordist be not available.)
Polychroma