

amaize'infrills

for solo Bb Clarinet & MP3 Shuffle

Graham Flett

(2007 – 2008)

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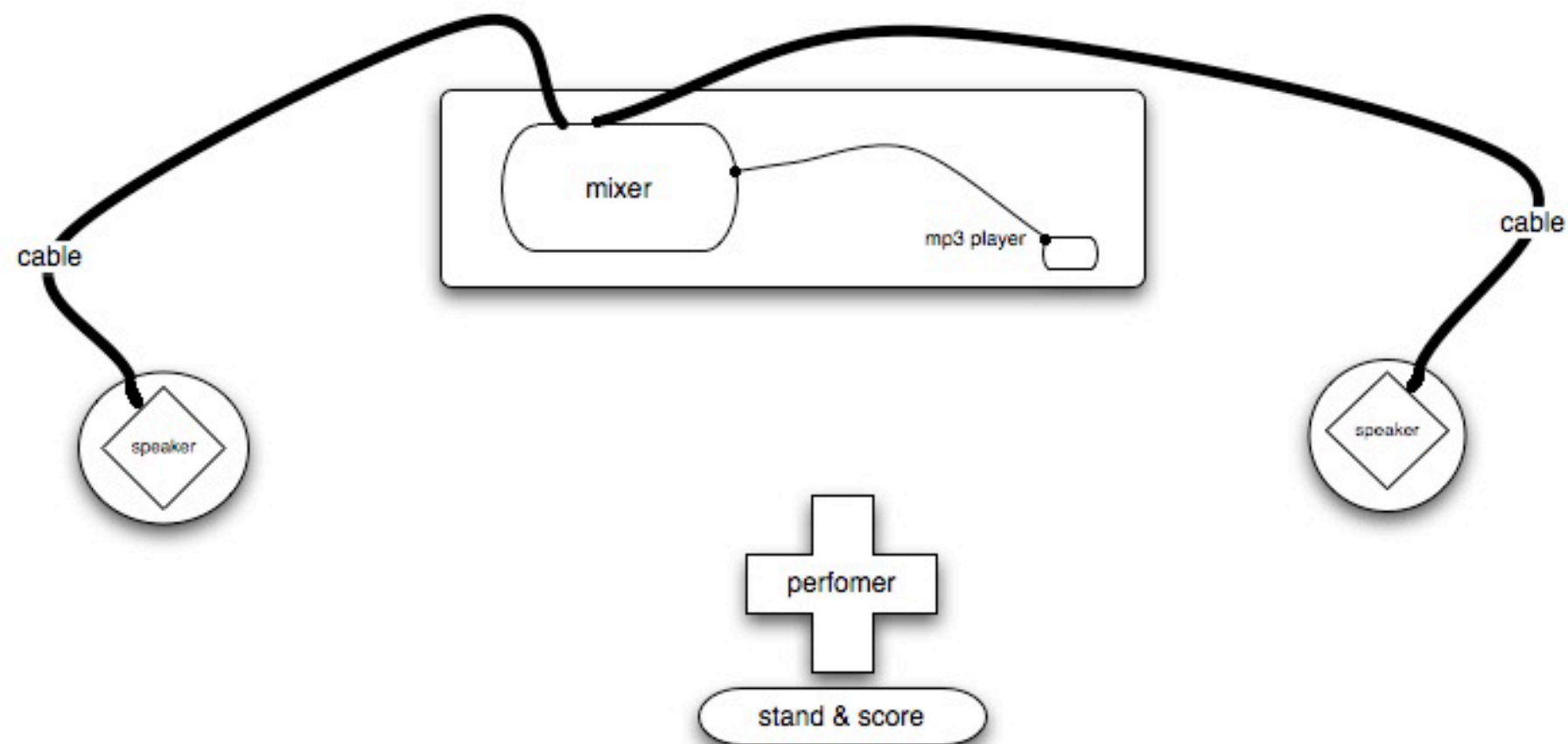
for Bb Clarinet and MP3 style electronics

Duration — 8'27

Graham Flett, 2007 - 2008.

Setup:

The setup is fairly standard. The performer should start the mp3 player on its shuffle sequence and then walk towards the stand during the 12 second introduction. Alternately the MP3 player could be on a stand beside where the performer intends to play and could then be connected to the mixer as illustrated in the diagram. The angle of the speakers should be adjusted slightly so the performer can hear a balanced stereo sound.



Premiere. Holland, 2008.



because the composer didn't ask the performer if he could use this photo; he has chosen to respect their identity.

Equipment:

2 speakers: Their size is dependent on the venue, but they should match the average dynamic of the clarinet. Placement should be done in such a way so the speakers are angled towards the performer while still allowing the audience to hear both sounds (the clarinet, and the audio from the speakers) equally. Ideally, I envisioned simple computer speakers for the performance and these would work if the performance is in a small room. However, in a bigger space, larger speakers will need to be used.

Mixer: With standard audio inputs and outputs, necessary cables to connect the mp3 player.

mp3 player: Or whatever device is currently fashionable during the time of performance. Basically, a device capable of playing a random selection of 20 mp3s (or whatever code of audio fidelity is most popular) is needed to execute the piece as it was originally envisioned.

Cables: Naturally, you will need cables (to go from this to that...and that from this), connectors, extensions and of course things that make electricity work.

Explanation of the Score

1) Rhythm

Rhythmic events are often written in a proportional manner. That being that the performer has to relate a certain amount of measured time to the visual proportion that a note(s) occupies in a particular bar. But essentially, the composer wants the rhythm to be approximated in time in relation to the duration of the bar (which can be deduced by taking the tempo at that point in the piece into account). This will create a 'looseness' and a large amount of interpretive freedom, but it will also create an overall adherence to the tempi, allowing the performer to synchronize with a varying degree of accuracy to the pre-composed mp3 tracks.

An example of the proportional rhythm: (♩ = 150 bpm)



There are also a few sections in the piece when the composer felt it better to notate the rhythm of a particular musical gesture in standard notation. It is therefore, the desire of the composer to hear these particular sections of the piece played as accurately as possible.

An example of a phrase requiring strict interpretation.

(as written)



The image shows a musical score with two staves. The top staff is in treble clef and the bottom staff is in bass clef. The time signature is 9/8 for the first measure and 4/4 for the second. The first measure contains a complex rhythmic pattern with many notes, some with accents (>) and a slur. The second measure contains a similar complex pattern with a triplet of notes indicated by a '3' under a bracket.

2) Selection of musical line(s):

Here, in this example, the performer can choose a musical line to play. (This will be explained in more detail further on).

The image shows a musical score for three staves. The first staff is in 6/4 time, the second in 4/4 time, and the third in 3/4 time. The music is written in a single key signature with one sharp (F#). The score consists of six measures. The first measure is in 6/4, the second in 4/4, the third in 3/4, the fourth in 5/4, the fifth in 6/4, and the sixth in 4/4. The notation includes various note values, rests, and a dynamic marking 'p' in the third measure of the second staff.

3) Accompanying mp3s are randomly determined out of an array of 20 different versions?

Yes. Along with this score there are two CDs (or one single DVD - or some other technological variant) which contains all the versions of the accompanying track. These mp3s should be uploaded onto an mp3 player which is either empty or able to make a random selection of these specific audio files.

Every audio file is exactly 8 minutes and 27 seconds in duration. However, the audio files are significantly different in content from version to version. According to the feelings of the composer, this will allow for a wide variety of unique performances with an engaging element of challenge and spontaneity.

Furthermore, the accompanying mp3s all have specific titles related to products derived from corn. The reason for this becomes more apparent when one looks at the historical conditions governing food production, specifically in North America, during the early 21st century. Some of the titles are as follows: zea mays / xanthum gum / MSG / unmodified starch / fructose / ascorbic acid, etc. The diligent performer, or slightly obsessive one, could theoretically familiarize themselves with all of the nuances of each track over several hours of easy-listening. The more typical performer will likely not go to this amount of trouble.

With the exception of the recorded clarinet, the content of the audio files is derived almost exclusively from two main sources. These are as follows. A "No Frills" grocery store in Toronto, Ontario (Canada) and a corn field somewhere in Hastings County, which is also in Ontario (Canada), (the composer at this time would like to mention, that he too, is originally from Ontario, Canada). At first, the audio from the grocery store is highly processed but eventually it reveals itself as the rich audio source that it naturally is, without any modification. However, the scratchy audio from the corn field remains unprocessed throughout the entire duration of all the accompanying mp3s. Both of these sound sources were recorded with a hand held digital camera and the audio was then transferred to hard disk.

* Please note: In the future, mp3 players will not be as cool as they are today, therefore, due to certain economic truths it may be possible for the composer to supply individual mp3 players with each purchased copy of "amaize'infrills". But until this historical period is reached, the method discussed in the chapter above must still be endured.

4) Tempo:

The tempo (quarter note = 150) is almost always constant, (there is a *rallatando* at 249). The performer essentially interacts with the randomly chosen mp3. Also, due to the fast tempo of the piece, a performer may also feel the need to use a flashing metronome (silent) throughout the performance, but PLEASE NOTE that the theatrical appearance of this element should be nil.

Further Information Regarding Performance

1) Sections — Orientation and Musical Decisions

Over the duration of 8 minutes and 27 seconds, *amaize'infrills*, is divided into numerous sections. Due to the original source pertaining to much of the audio in this piece, sections have been given titles to reflect this original acoustic origin, for instance: aisle # 1 to #5, meat and poultry, canned goods, deli-counter, cereals and grains and finally, the checkout.

The beginning of these sections is marked in the score, allowing a performer to collect themselves and decide what musical line they may embark on playing during the next impending section of the piece. Furthermore, beside the title of these sections, there also appears a time-indication corresponding to the accompanying track — this allows a performer to orient themselves in relation to the fixed timeline of the entire composition (which is also necessary while rehearsing the piece). See example below:

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— Cereals and Grains — 3:08 *

A performer may decide to play bits and pieces of the various lines or they may proceed more methodically through an entire line of music in one section. The composer only stresses that performers observe sections that are indicated to be played accurately. This is explained in further detail below.

2) Multiple Lines of Music: (interpretation)

- The performer, when faced with multiple musical lines, should actually see this as a musical choice informed partly by intuition or by sheer spontaneous whim.
- The performer can choose a line of music and continue to play this same line throughout a section or for as long as he/she wants.
- The performer may choose not to play sometimes. Actually, the performer may choose to be a complete charlatan and "air play" — thus embarrassing the composer as well as themselves.
- The performer should generally respect the dynamic levels that are marked in the score.

Theatrical Performances:

The playful nature of this piece would lend it to be realized in an even more theatrical manner than already described. The composer would like to specify two different types of performances that would enhance the theatrical affect and further elucidate the premise of the extra-musical ideas that the piece is based upon.

1) Theatrical Performance #1 — video

Accompanying the mp3s of this piece is also an 8 minute video. This video is a documentation of the composer walking through a corn-field. It was recorded in August of 2007. The edited version matches the length of the composition and could be used by a performer to make a multimedia type performance. The idea is simply this: the video would begin in conjunction with the accompanying mp3. It would be played on a television screen facing the audience and the performer would organize themselves beside or just slightly to the left or right or a bit behind the television. Alternately, the video could be projected in some manner and could even be enlarged to a gigantic or very discreet and minimal size. However, the composer does not want to put limitations on this element of interpretation and therefore only writes these ideas as suggestions.

2) Theatrical Performance #2 — grocery store, guerrilla-style.

The political overtones of this composition, that being a critique of corn's ubiquitousness in the food supply, might be taken to a more active level by a more adventurous performer. The composer would like to suggest that by either through memorization, (or through the investing in a lyre and reduced version of the score) a performer could make an activist type of performance of this piece in a grocery store, a feedlot, or any other place where refined corn products are ubiquitous. Two small battery operated speakers attached to a belt (somehow?) could be worn by the performer, thus facilitating the performer's ability to walk while playing. This theatrical version finally utilizes the mp3 player, albeit in a rather inverted way, as the portable music playing device it was so cleverly fashioned to be.

Graham Flett, 2008