



Formations

for piano and cued samples

by Marc Evans

The Main Idea(s)

The sounds of extended piano technique are some of my favorite sounds in the world, but they generally present two significant obstacles when composing for them: they are cumbersome to play, and some of the most delicate techniques are barely audible. Also, piano technicians tend not to be too hot on the idea.

This composition, therefore, makes use of a foot pedal to trigger a sequence of 27 short samples of extended piano techniques throughout the piece. The performer is free to create his or her own setup for doing this, or to use an application provided by the composer (requiring a MIDI foot pedal). At first, the sounds coming from the piano and from the speakers feel as though they come from two separate worlds, but over the course of the piece the sound worlds fuse into one.

As for the actual material of the piece, it was assembled with some thought to the “gamut” technique employed by Cage in his String Quartet from 1950. A number of short, self-contained musical gestures were collected, somewhat like shells on a beach, and then combined to make slightly longer gestures. These longer gestures were themselves combined, and through iteration this process creates a kind of form.

Some Notational Considerations

The score includes a staff representing the cued samples: boxed numbers indicate when the foot pedal is to be pressed to cue the respective sample, and the general shape and rhythm of the sample is represented. Dashed arrows are used to coordinate between the samples and the piano during more freely timed sections.

On the subject of timing: the score has three gradations of rhythmic organization: some sections of the score are in a free, quasi-proportional notation (e.g. the first system of page 3, or the end); other sections (e.g. “Fractured” on page 2) are metered. The majority of the piece, however, is somewhere in between, with standard rhythmic notation floating somewhat amorphously within “measures” of constantly varied length.

Max Evans

Formations

For Piano and Cued Samples

Marc Evans
Summer 2014

Crystalline

♩ = 40

Piano

pp *lunga* *pp*

Cued Samples

Ped. *

This musical score for 'Crystalline' is set at a tempo of 40 beats per minute. It features a piano part with a treble and bass staff. The piano part begins with a half note, followed by a triplet of eighth notes, and then a half note. The piano part is marked *pp* (pianissimo) and *lunga* (long). The cued samples part is marked with a half note and a half note. The piano part is marked with a half note and a half note. The piano part is marked with a half note and a half note.

More Agitated

♩ = 86

5

sub. mp *mf* *p secco*

8va 8va 8va

8vb *

Ped. *

1 *

This musical score for 'More Agitated' is set at a tempo of 86 beats per minute. It features a piano part with a treble and bass staff. The piano part begins with a half note, followed by a triplet of eighth notes, and then a half note. The piano part is marked *sub. mp* (subito mezzo-piano) and *mf* (mezzo-forte). The piano part is marked with a half note and a half note. The piano part is marked with a half note and a half note. The piano part is marked with a half note and a half note.

accel.

rit.

9

mp *mf* *p*

8va 8va 8va

7 3

Ped. *

This musical score for 'More Agitated' continues from the previous section. It features a piano part with a treble and bass staff. The piano part begins with a half note, followed by a triplet of eighth notes, and then a half note. The piano part is marked *mp* (mezzo-piano) and *mf* (mezzo-forte). The piano part is marked with a half note and a half note. The piano part is marked with a half note and a half note. The piano part is marked with a half note and a half note.

Tenderly

3

12 ♩ = 50

p

3

Ped.

* *Ped.*

8^{va}

Fractured

14 ♩ = 100

mp

pp

f

7

Ped.

* *Ped.*

8^{va}

8^{vb}

2

3

4

>

< *sfz*

rit.

17 ♩ = 50

sfz

6

L.H.

L.H.

p

mf

Ped.

* *Ped.*

8^{va}

5

3

6

(8) -----

22

ppp

pp

*

7

Uncertain
♩ = 70

24

p secco

8va

delicately

3

3

Ped.

8

9

*cascading,
molto rubato accel.*

28

** Ped.*

rit. (♩ = 50) **Sparkling, momentarily** ♩ = 66

30

* Ped. * Ped. * Ped. *

10

3

L.H. 8va

33

* *

11

rit.

35

Ped.

Suspended

37

8va

** Ped.*

** Ped.*

12

Wild $\text{♩} = 80$

39

ff

8va

R.H. L.H.

13

7

14

15

f

41

f cresc.

molto

3

3

3

16

17

44

44

ff

ff

8va

sempre ff

Ped.

17 (cont.) (timing and coordination approximate)

ff

This block contains the musical notation for measures 44 and 45. Measure 44 features a piano introduction with a right-hand part in 8va, a left-hand part with a *ff* dynamic, and a bass line with a *sempre ff* dynamic and a *Ped.* marking. A box labeled '17 (cont.) (timing and coordination approximate)' is present. Measure 45 continues the piano introduction with a *ff* dynamic.

45

molto rit.

45

fp

fp

molto rit.

This block contains the musical notation for measures 45 and 46. Measure 45 features a piano introduction with a right-hand part in 8va, a left-hand part with a *fp* dynamic, and a bass line with a *fp* dynamic. Measure 46 continues the piano introduction with a *fp* dynamic and a *molto rit.* marking.

46

ff

ff

18 *pp*

19

20

47

pp

8^{va}

3

3

48

sub. f

pp

8^{vb}

f

pp

p

3

Ped.

8va

5/4

5/4

5/4

50

poco rall.

5/4

pp (*all staves*)

Ped.

poco rall.

21*

* with pedal so as to provide resonance,
but without obscuring the counterpoint.

56

5/4

22

*The samples here are long, containing several gesures separated by rests. This makes coordination with the piano part more unpredictable, and intentionally so.

poco accel. **poco rall.** . .

64

poco cresc., poco accel.

Musical score for measures 64-73. The score is written for three staves: Treble, Bass, and Piano. The Treble staff contains a melodic line with a fermata at measure 64. The Bass staff contains a melodic line with a sharp sign at measure 64. The Piano staff contains a melodic line with a fermata at measure 64. The score includes dynamic markings: *poco cresc.* and *poco accel.* above the Treble staff, and *poco cresc.* and *dim.* below the Bass staff. A box containing the number 23 is located below the Piano staff. The score ends with a double bar line and a fermata.

74 . . .

Musical score for measures 74-83. The score is written for three staves: Treble, Bass, and Piano. The Treble staff contains a melodic line with a fermata at measure 74. The Bass staff contains a melodic line with a fermata at measure 74. The Piano staff contains a melodic line with a fermata at measure 74. The score includes dynamic markings: *ppp* below the Bass staff. A box containing the number 24 is located below the Piano staff. The score ends with a double bar line and a fermata.