Vestiges and dry-erase ghosts.

Isaac Barzso

University of Louisville

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Vestiges and Dry-Erase Ghosts

for two voices and ensemble

by

Isaac Barzso
B.M., Florida State University, 2019

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of the
School of Music of the University of Louisville
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of

Master of Music
in Music Composition

School of Music
University of Louisville
Louisville, KY

May 2021
Vestiges and Dry-Erase Ghosts

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A Thesis approved on
April 29, 2021
by the following Thesis Committee

__________________________
Krzysztof Wolek

__________________________
Katherine Calcamuggio Donner

__________________________
Steve Rouse
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To Krzysztof Wolek, for your guidance, encouragement, and advice in all situations and circumstances, as well as much-needed patience and belief as I followed my rabbit holes of concepts and experimentation —

to Katherine Donner and Steve Rouse, for your assistance and support as members of my thesis committee —

to the many professors and mentors whose willingness to challenge me over the last few years has held such significant influence over the development of this piece of music: Allison Ogden, Matilda Ertz, Matt Ertz, Christopher Brody, Kirsten Carithers, Ladislav Kubik, and Stephen Montague —

to my colleagues and friends at the University of Louisville who have been as equally willing to press me intellectually as they have been to share a drink: especially Bron Karahoda, Tanner Jones, Isaac Smith, Roger Knight, Rachael Smith, and Joshua Baerwald —

to my family for their love and unconditional support of my goals —

thank you.
vestiges and dry-erase ghosts comes heavily from the desire to explore the transfer of information and communication across media, coupled with an interest in focusing on changes over the course of long-term repetitive structures (through both literal repetition and re-inscription of material). A pre-existing semantic text is eschewed in favor of individual phonemes and indistinct vocalisms, balanced by processes of removal, repetitions, and cross-body transfer. Individual vocalisms are analyzed and split into multiple pieces of text, actions are removed aurally yet remain visually, and formal structures are interrupted by processes of repetition, with the long-form structure of the piece ultimately being built through the analysis of the details of which it is comprised.

Throughout the piece, the very idea of individual role and the dynamics of cause and effect are questioned. How do processes decay the whole before becoming re-inscribed? How do individual parts comprise a whole? What remains when we remove something from the whole?
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flute
oboé
clarinet (doubling bass clarinet)
alto saxophone
horn in f
trumpet in c
trombone
two percussionists*
electric guitar
piano
two mezzo-sopranos
two violins
viola
violoncello
double bass

*percussion 1:
bass drum
metal plate
snare drum
medium concert toms (3)
sandblock
tam-tam placed on timpani (20”)

*percussion 2:
bass drum
metal plate
temple blocks (4)
crotales (8; A4, B4) - dipped in bucket of water for pitch bending
shaker
tam-tam placed on timpani (23”)

duration: ca. 24 minutes
performance notes

all instruments

transitions between performance techniques are indicated by an arrow

certain sections of the piece are to be treated as if they have been redacted from the score; these sections will be marked with the direction pantomimed and with the use of x noteheads; this optimally will result in some sound, namely the “silent fingering” of the strings, lightly blowing for the winds and brass, the light touching of the keyboard, etc.; it should be an audible effect in addition to being a significant visual one; these slight sounds should be intentional, but great care should be taken that the “silent fingering” does not become significantly audible.

voices

non-pitched sounds (speaking, etc.):

inhale
exhale

blow air through partially open mouth

aeolian whistle: airy whistle sound with only a light shading of pitch (line indicates pitch contour)

strike hand against lips, interrupting the voice

vocal key (all as in American English pronunciations):

a as in father
i as in see
u as in home
m as in mother

as in x in azure
as in tell
as in done
as in should

s as in sand
sh as in gun

l as in fin
e as in late

w as in water

woodwinds

speak into instrument

blow through instrument with prescribed fingering (flute: blow directly into tube); note: this is separate from pantomime

slap tongue

flutter-tongue (flt.)
imbal trill

clarinet only: spectral overblow
clarinet only: remove head joint and hit opening with palms while fingering pitch

air only, as in pantomime, but without the effort to move action

multiphonic fingerings (concert pitch):

b-flat clarinet:

bass clarinet:

alto saxophone:
percussion

beaters:
- wire brush
- hard mallet
- soft mallet
- superball mallet

piano harmonics: sounding pitch displayed as diamond notehead, depressed pitch displayed below as standard notehead

mute strings with free hand

sweep plastic card on keys

inside the piano, hit strings in general region of indicated pitch with a metal guitar slide

inside the piano, quiver metal guitar slide in general region of indicated pitch

close fallboard: keylid

pluck string with fingernail

brass

mutes:
- horn uses hand-stopping; trumpet uses harmon mute; trombone uses plunger mute

bit mouthpiece with palm while fingering pitch

speak into instrument

blow through instrument with prescribed fingering

air only, as in pantomime, but without the effort to mimic action

percussion instruments needed:

<table>
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<td>snare drum</td>
<td>temple blocks</td>
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<td>medium concert toms (5)</td>
<td>castanets</td>
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<tr>
<td>tam-tam placed on timpani (m&quot;)</td>
<td>tam-tam placed on timpani (m&quot;)</td>
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perc. I

b/d | t.t./timp. |

perc. II

b/d | t.t./timp. | shk | m.p. | t.t./timp. |

beaters:

- wire brush
- hard mallet
- soft mallet
- superball mallet
- sticks

* beyond these indications, the most idiomatic beater should be used for each situation

tam-tam on timpani:

tam-tam should be placed on the timpani face-down; the range of the timpani is represented by a two line staff, the top line representing the highest pitch possible, and the bottom line representing the lower pitch possible

piano

piano harmonics: sounding pitch displayed as diamond notehead, depressed pitch displayed below as standard notehead

mute strings with free hand

sweep plastic card on keys

inside the piano, hit strings in general region of indicated pitch with a metal guitar slide

inside the piano, quiver metal guitar slide in general region of indicated pitch

close fallboard: keylid

pluck string with fingernail
electric guitar

it is preferable that the player use a guitar that is capable of decent sustain (optimally a solid-body, through-neck instrument) along with a tube amplifier when possible. for reference, the composer used a Fender Jazzmaster and a Fender Blues Deluxe (30-watt amplifier).

player will need:
• volume pedal for swells
• natural-sounding distortion (either as a pedal or onboard a high-quality amplifier)
• an Ellbow

\[ \text{gradually overpressuring} \]

bow on tailpiece

\[ \text{bow speed; measured on a scale from } 0.1 \text{ (slowest) to } 1 \text{ (fastest)} \]

cello only: multiphonics (information from cellomap.com)

strings

\[ \text{circular bowing, continuously variable speed} \]

\[ \text{play without pitch} \]

\[ \text{gradual overpressuring} \]

\[ \text{bow on tailpiece} \]

\[ \text{bow speed; measured on a scale from } 0.1 \text{ (slowest) to } 1 \text{ (fastest)} \]

cello only: multiphonics (information from cellomap.com)

amplification

all players should be lightly amplified, with very little compression, and mixed so that the amplification balance is even. the percussionists should each have at least three microphones running throughout their setup.
\[ \frac{\mathbf{3}}{\mathbf{4}} \cdot -50 \]
CURRICULUM VITAE
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BMI

EDUCATION
University of Louisville, Louisville, KY
Master of Music in Music Composition, August 2019 – expected May 2021
Moritz von Bomhard Fellow in Composition
Composition: Krzysztof Wolek

Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL
Bachelor of Music in Music Composition with Honors in the Major, August 2015 – August 2019
Honors Thesis: in a sleepier century, for dancers and chamber orchestra
Composition: Ladislav Kubík, Stephen Montague, Mark Wingate
Guitar: Christopher Mrofchak

FESTIVALS AND CONFERENCES
NYC Electronic Music Festival, New York, NY (virtual, summer 2021)
Summer Institute of Contemporary Performance Practice, Boston, MA (virtual; composer fellow, June 2021)
New Music on the Point, Leicester, VT (postponed in summer 2020; attended virtually in June 2021)
SPLICE Institute (virtual; participant in Kyma workshop, June 2021)
The Loretto Project, Nervia, KY, August 2020 - August 2021
Impulse New Music Festival, Santa Barbara, CA, (virtual, August 2020)
International Clarinet Association ClarinetFest, Reno, NV (postponed in 2020; rescheduled for Fort Worth, TX in summer 2021)
TURN UP Multimedia Festival, Tucson, AZ, (postponed in spring 2020; rescheduled for spring 2021)
University of Louisville New Music Festival, Louisville, KY, 2019
Charlotte New Music Festival Composition Workshop, Charlotte, NC, 2019
Charlotte New Music Festival Max/ MSP Workshop, Charlotte, NC, 2019
Florida State University Biennial Festival of New Music, Tallahassee, FL, 2019
Florida State University Biennial Festival of New Music, Tallahassee, FL, 2017

ADDITIONAL PERSONAL INSTRUCTION
Master Classes
Georg Friedrich Haas, 2019
Lilya Ugay, 2019
Libby Larsen, 2018

Private Lessons
Erin Gee, 2020
Sam Pluta, 2020
Sky Macklay, 2019/2020
Marti Epstein, 2019
Marc Mellits, 2019
Emily Koh, 2019
Kyong Mee Choi, 2018
Panayiotis Kokoras, 2018
Ellen Taaffe Zwilich, 2015-2019

GRANTS, COMMISSIONS, AND HONORS
long_come_vanish_, for percussion duo and video commissioned by Catch XXII/ University of Michigan SMTD, 2021 (upcoming)
New Music on the Point, composer fellow (commissioned new work for JACK Quartet, June 2021)
The Loretto Project, commissioned new work for piano trio, 2020
Equal Sound Scholarship, Impulse New Music Festival, 2020
TURN UP Multimedia Festival, 2019 work Tripod-portrait selected for inclusion, 2019
International Clarinet Association ClarinetFest, 2019 work Tripod-portrait selected for inclusion, 2019
Moritz von Bomhard Fellowship, University of Louisville, 2019 - 2021
Florida Society of Composers, Inc. Mixtape, 2019 work, Kentucky Deeply selected for inclusion on release, 2019
David Ward-Strickman Undergraduate Composition Award, Florida State University, 2018-2019
FSU / UGA Composition Residency, 2017 work, Adolescent Boys at a permutation selected for performance, University of Georgia, 2017
David B. Ford Undergraduate Research and Creativity Award, Florida State University, 2018
Collevoxus Composer Concert, 2017 work, I wandered down to the beach and sprawled out on the sand... selected for performance, University of North Texas, 2017