

A NEW SPACE (NEW)
FOR MIXED JAZZ CHAMBER ENSEMBLE

A DISSERTATION IN
Music Composition

Presented to the Faculty of the University
of Missouri-Kansas City in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree

DOCTOR OF MUSICAL ARTS

by
DAVID JAMES WITTER

B.M., University of Missouri-Columbia, 2010
M.M., University of Missouri-Columbia, 2012

Kansas City, Missouri
2020

© 2020

DAVID JAMES WITTER

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

**A NEW SPACE (NEW)
FOR MIXED JAZZ CHAMBER ENSEMBLE**

David James Witter, Candidate for Doctor Musical Arts Degree

University of Missouri-Kansas City, 2020

ABSTRACT

A New Space (new) is scored for a mix of chamber orchestral instruments and jazz instruments, and unfolds in three movements. They progress from a celebration of intentionality and traditional composition in the first, to an exploration of a rigorous improvisation through conducted gestures in the second. The final movement is the proposition of mixing the elements of the first and second movements together in some new predetermined/organic hybrid. As referenced in the score, this piece is also an homage to many of the people on whose shoulders I try to stand, such as Earl Brown and his open form orchestral innovations, Butch Morris with his ©Conduction improvisation techniques, and Walter Thompson and his ©Soundpainting method. The inspiration for the scoring and directions for rehearsing and conducting improvisation in this work owe their synthesis to these and many other important figures in my life. It's my hope that this piece projects an

imperative for gratitude, for all the things in life we may have or are striving for, or just for the people we love.

The faculty listed below, appointed by the Dean of the UMKC Conservatory, have examined a dissertation titled “A New Space (new),” presented by David James Witter, candidate for the Doctor of Musical Arts degree, and certify that in their opinion it is worthy of acceptance.

Supervisory Committee

Paul Rudy, D.M.A., Committee Chair
Music Studies Division

Andrew Granade, Ph.D.
Music Studies Division

David Thurmaier, Ph.D.
Music Studies Division

Chen Yi, D.M.A.
Music Studies Division

Zhou Long, D.M.A.
Music Studies Division

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vii
A NEW SPACE (NEW)	1
PROGRAM NOTE	2
PERFORMANCE NOTE	4
PERFORMANCE INSTRUCTIONS	7
CONDUCTOR'S INSTRUCTIONS	12
SCORE NOTES AND NOTATION KEY.....	22
MVT. 1 MAPS	
NOTE ON STRUCTURE.....	23
ROUTE	24
MVT. 2 FRONTIER	
NOTE ON MEMORIES	25
MEMORIES.....	26
MVT. 3 THE HOME	
NOTE ON ASSEMBLAGE.....	27
INSTRUMENTATION/STAGE SETUP	28
SCORE PAGES.....	29
REFERENCE LIST	37
VITA.....	38

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My friends and family have had a huge role in supporting my path: my mom Brenda, Blake, Kyle, Owen, Olivia, Dave, and Lindsey, I wish to deeply thank them all. The completion of this doctorate is an especially meaningful connection with my dad Dan, as he and I will share this terminal degree status unique in our family (so far!), and it's a legacy I'm proud to carry on.

I want to thank Dr. Dori Waggoner and my colleagues at Central Methodist University for helping me dive into a new teaching career this past semester, lending me an incredible amount of support and guidance, and fashioning my teaching load at this outset to accommodate the dissertation. I am so proud to be an Eagle, and grateful for the wonderful Music Ministry Education program I lead, and I wouldn't have been able to complete the piece without their generous support.

Finally, I wish to thank Drs. Zhou Long, Chen Yi, Andrew Granade, and David Thurmaier for their mentorship and guidance while at UMKC and for their membership on my defense panel, and especially to Dr. Paul Rudy, whose example has informed my own musical directions in so many invaluable ways. The classes and lessons I've been able to take advantage of have given me a breadth of perspective that has a deep impact on every part of my life, and I've forever grateful. Being able to call such distinguished artists and academics my mentors and friends has been the greatest gift my experience at UMKC has given me, and it's with much humble reverence and love that I offer this piece as my dissertation project.

David Witter

A New Space (new)

for mixed jazz chamber ensemble
(2020)



PROGRAM NOTE

With this piece, I wanted to take a step towards creating a composed chamber music which could exist in a framework alongside conducted improvisation, by utilizing open form and graphic notation to augment traditional orchestral writing. During the course of my journey as an artist, I've sought to learn different disciplines of improvisation in tandem with the study of music composition, and to find ways to make the two activities converge. The intention is, through leaning into the differences between practices, and having illustrated elements of the two sides, to bring them together in a personal proposal to a solution, or the creation of a new space in the concert environment.

A New Space (new) for mixed chamber ensemble is a culmination of my work in composition and improvisation up to the present. It also represents the first in a series of prospective improvisatory works originating from my conducted improvisation vocabulary and pedagogy project *Ether Organ*. This latter work, consisting of a codified sign language for improvising, provided the bedrock upon which the present work is based. As I was formulating this piece, the coronavirus was sweeping across public consciousness; the Zoom app, which had become ubiquitous in all our lives, conveniently solved a logistical hurdle, in a slightly bizarre but fortuitous way. This piece about planning and improvisation was born by adapting an artistic concept with an available means we all use. It is about balance. The music contains aspects of almost all the performance and notation practices I have come to adopt along my journey as an artist; there is a mix of traditionally notated material (written without stems in rhythmically proportional notation), graphic notation, open score structure, and conducted improvisation. I hope to have used the musical traditions I draw inspiration

from to create a piece that is easily communicable as a concept to the conductor and ensemble, provides a refreshing artistic engagement for the players and the audience, and maintains the complexity, spontaneity, and mystery that are hallmarks of all the art I love.

PERFORMANCE NOTE

There is an element of risk involved on everyone's part when undertaking the performance of an improvisatory work; my goal with this piece is to embrace and indeed to seek those moments when, during the most thoughtful effort in performance, a "mistake" happens. These specific areas of the process, when performers are put in a position to make up for whatever new and unexpected elements have been introduced, are the most fraught times in an improvisation. I see them as moments when the quantifiably positive, transformative work that can be derived from this type of music can be realized. Those paths we follow when presented with an unexpected twist, despite our best intentions to execute and to continue following through with a plan in good faith, are what excite me the most about music and art. I hope to better understand, and perhaps foster a better understanding of, this phenomenon through my work.

The work is in three movements: *Maps*, *Frontier*, and *The Home*, each lasting approximately 7 minutes. It is in open form, with the notated component scored on eight pages, each page dedicated to an artist who directly inspired the aesthetic, formal, and notation directions I adapted for the piece. The three movements do not correspond to the pages in the score, but are rather routes through those pages. Six of the pages contain cells of musical material to be played by the performers upon indication from the conductor, while the other two outline events to be played in a tutti manner. The conductor should have the score laid out on three music stands, as well as an iPad Mini or equivalent device on a separate music stand, for the open form directives of movements 1 and 3. The players should have their parts on stands, as well as an iPhone or equivalent device. The conductor indicates

which page and cell they want the performers to get ready to play on the conductor's iPad, whose screen is shared with the ensemble via Zoom, or equivalent, software. The players then execute that page and cell on a downbeat gesture from the conductor. An optional configuration would be the conductor having two or more devices, such that they could share different screens with different groupings of the ensemble; coordination of independent groups could be enabled ostensibly infinitely, depending, of course, on physical logistics.

These pages make up only part of the piece; the other element involved is conducted improvisation. Movement 2 explores this area; and movement 3 introduces a new element, with a combination of the pages and the conducted improvisation.



The first movement, *Maps*, is a proscribed route through the pages and cells, which can be rigorously adhered to or rewritten by each conductor, but it needs to be intentional and rehearsed. It is intended to represent the performance tradition of adherence to the page, and to orthodoxy in general. The procedure of this movement is detailed on pp. 20-21. It is in praise of the mighty legacies we inherit from all corners of our experiences, especially the classical traditions of the many cultures of the world.

The second movement, *Frontier*, is a conducted improvisation. Certain cells from the score are designated as "Memories" that can be called upon in the course of the conducted improvisation, such that, at the conductor's design, music from the notation can inform the otherwise ideally entirely spontaneous affair. The rehearsal techniques for preparing an ensemble for this kind of adventurous playing is part of the pedagogy of *Ether Organ*, and is also detailed below. The nature of the Memories in this movement is detailed on pp. 22-23.

This movement is intended as a love letter to the group improvisation experience.

The final movement, *The Home*, is either an attempt at the reconciliation of these two aspects of my life, composition and improvisation, or the musing on, and celebration of, the irreconcilability of all things. The conductor shall choose a sequence of pages and cells through which to navigate (pages 4 and 8 are considered individual cells for these purposes). In addition, the conductor is to employ the conducted improvisation techniques from movement 2 to augment the notated material; the nature of the integration of the conducted improvisation gestures with the page and cell conducting are outlined below. The route through the score that the conductor generates should be improvised on the spot, with the addition of the conducted improvisation adding a level of resistance that results in the new thing I am after.




PERFORMANCE INSTRUCTIONS

Each page is a combination of traditional notation with graphic representations, organized in novel ways intended to aesthetically impact the conductor's choice of route. Pages 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, and 7 have numbered cells with various types of notation; in the case of traditional noteheads, the notes are to be played literally, with a proportional rhythm dictated by part specification, intuition and conductor indication. X-shaped noteheads either signify approximate pitch (maintaining adherence to contour), or the meaning is specified in the score. Additionally, above each number in the cell (with the exception of pages 4 and 8), there is an indication as to whether the cell is to be repeated () or not ()¹. The length of each player's part is determined, in part, by the graphic on the score page, so some players' parts are longer than others etc. In the case that a cell repeats, these misalignments create a phased phrasing effect that is desirable. In cases where there is no repeat, players simply stop after their phrase is complete and await a new directive. Pages 4 and 8 contain a tutti sequence of events, with the progression rate determined by the conductor through numbered cues.

Page 1

This page is in honor of trombonist and composer George E. Lewis, who has dedicated a large part of his career to the furtherance of group improvisation pedagogy and practice. It consists of set of phrases with various dynamic registers with spiderweb-like lines dividing the score page into different orchestral combinations and phrase lengths. The parts






¹ The cell numbers and the repeat marks over them in the score overlay the music in the cells for the most part, to ease visual negotiation for the conductor. The marks are transparent so that the notation shows underneath.

for this page contain each player's individual information, as well as a general indication on the proportion of their part relative to the others in their cells, so informed decisions can be made as to individual pacing (this is generally how the parts for all the pages are organized). There are graphic "drawn" lines of various intensities in certain cells ( ,  ,  , etc.); these suggest a general contour and phrasing, as well as an intensity to match the angularity or width of line.

Page 2

This page is dedicated to saxophonist and composer Anthony Braxton, a mentor and friend of Lewis, and another pioneer of group improvisation. His example is a constant reminder to be true to oneself, and to work! Many of the gestures in these cells have a rainfall pattering nature to them, and their use might be thought of as evoking that atmosphere.

Page 3

Composer and saxophonist John Zorn is the dedicatee of page 3, and it can't be overstated what a profound influence Zorn's work has been for me over the years, not least his innovations in the area of group improvisation. The instrumental groupings on this page are of a chamber nature, but also reflect an angularity and gestural sort of musical phrasings. Drawn lines of various thicknesses and angularities denote varying lyricism, and drawn stars ( ) convey a twinkling idea, to be played according to the size and stroke width of the star. Thin spirals like water ripples (  ) are used to represent air noises in cell 4, and their proportional placement in the music is likewise reflective of how they are to be executed in performance. Zorn's experimentation with sound-object improvisation led to the various approaches I was inspired to take on this page.




Page 4

This page is dedicated to composer and percussionist Tyshawn Sorey. It is a set of specifically notated pitches for the entire ensemble, to be read from left to right. The conductor designates different parameters with which the notes are to be played with numbered cues at the top of the page. The conductor can restart the page at any time with a new indication, at which point the ensemble returns to the beginning of the lines and begins again. The page is not repeated once it's done, so like any of the cells/pages that do not repeat, it is incumbent on the conductor to indicate what is to happen next in timely manner (or to let the silence set!). Sorey has shown that the younger generation is more than capable of receiving the mantle of conducted improvisation traditions from the masters.

Page 5

Butch Morris, the composer and trumpeter who first codified conducted improvisation into a bona fide system called Conduction, is the inspiration for this page. His emergence from the loft jazz scene in New York into the “classical” world via conducted improvisation provided a breakthrough for this crucial cross-fertilization of milieus. My musical sensibility, while deeply informed by jazz, only references the explicit sounds in maybe peripheral ways; thus, the jazz sounds this score calls upon are limited to page 5.

Chamber group orchestrations are designated with the cells, and graphic notation further illustrates various texture and playing types; other types of wind sounds than before are suggested by flowing lines, star clusters under fermatas suggest a shimmering suspension,

and violent squiggles () signify a cloud of notes, or unstable timbres. There is also a cell with indications for free jazz soloing () and multiphonics (); the

contour of the line should be referred to in the solos, while the register and thickness of the multiphonic notation should suggest the sounds to be produced.

Page 6

Earle Brown originated the concept of orchestral open form; his formal innovations and textural delicacy has been massively important to my musical concept, and page 6 is dedicated to him. Cells are populated with notations intended to evoke the placid and contemplative nature of his musical voice. While on the other pages x-shaped noteheads are meant to signify approximate pitch, on this page they are meant to portray various small percussive sounds, such as key clicks, or playing the percussion with the mallet handles. Additionally, amidst the clicking sounds are symbols for various wind instruments to play inhalations following by forced tongue stops (◀), which produce back-masked-type noises. Air sounds and sparkling phrasings are illustrated by spirals and stars underneath a sonorous and lyrical solo notated with various sized orbs (• ● ◦), while overall an ascending dyadic long tone theme begins to emerge.

Page 7

This page is dedicated to Walter Thompson, another student of Braxton's and the inventor of Soundpainting, a system for conducted improvisation that has provided the bedrock for my own conceptions of gesture and syntax. His work continues to evolve and grow in a way that provides daily spiritual nourishment to my own pursuits. This page is a collection of cells intended to further explore a "rainfall of notes" atmosphere, this time with specifically notated melodic lines, apportioned in various small group configurations. Certain shapes and alignments of the cells delineate orchestration trajectories, while repeat

instructions further generate various predicaments for the conductor and ensemble to solve in the way of phrase resolution.

Page 8

The dedicatee of this last page in the score is jazz composer Sun Ra. It is difficult to write about his influence on me, the task is incalculable. Something about his music and his life resonates with me in a deep way, and I'm grateful I live in a world where he existed. This page is another collection of events to be read by the tutti ensemble from left to right. In this case, graphic and textual elements make up the events to be navigated in order according to the conductor's cue.² Once again, it is up to the conductor's discretion how long each event should take, and players should be aware of this prerogative when pacing their music.

² Arrows in the score indicate downbeats.

CONDUCTOR'S INSTRUCTIONS

Conducted Improvisation Gestures and Syntax

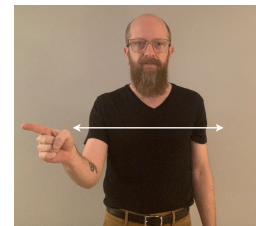
The gestures and syntax for conducted improvisation to be used in this piece are part of the *Ether Organ* project; they derive in large part from practices by Walter Thompson, Butch Morris, and Tyshawn Sorey among others, augmented by my own modifications. I found each of the vocabularies I studied flexible enough to accommodate my own personalization, and I hope that my processes, in *Ether Organ* and in this piece, will prove perhaps inspirational to other composer-conductors in adapting these techniques to their own desires.

The basic idea with conducted improvisation is that the conductor signals a directive, or a set of instructions, then conducts a downbeat, at which point the players play their interpretation of what the directive was (the general agreement on those matters to be settled on at rehearsal). During rehearsal, care should be taken to have the players remember certain ideas as they progress. For instance, while the conductor is signaling a new directive, players should maintain the intensity of whatever they're playing (if they are) while processing what the conductor is asking them to do next. If a player has never tried to improvise intently before, it can be difficult the first few times to process what to play next while continuing to act as though one's playing processes hadn't been interrupted. Entrances and exits also need special care during rehearsal; when attention is paid early on to ensuring an intentionality behind the players' execution of the music, one can avoid common group improvisation problems, such as nebulous trepidation. In addition, fostering a mindfulness about musical details during group improvisation opens up the musical possibilities not only to exacting

turn-on-a-dime sounds, but also to those beautiful cloud-like droning textures that this music invites, should the conductor desire either. Balance through group listening is another important concept to thread throughout rehearsal; good tones at soft dynamics, with an ear for restraint at the loud dynamics. Particularly in this piece, there are few very loud sections, so it's important to have solid sounds at the softer areas, and balance in the fuller spots, whether playing the pages and cells, the conducted improvisation, or the combination of the two. This asks a lot from the players and the conductor, but the result, when mindfully pursued, is truly unlike any other musical or performative experience, and an adventure worth cultivating.

1. "Who" Gestures (Individuals, Groups)

There are 4 gestures in the conducted improvisation syntax, and they always happen in a specific order. The first category is the "Who" gesture, which designates to whom the conductor is giving the directive. This is done with simple eye contact and pointing with the index finger in the case of individuals or small groups, or a gentle sweep across the entire ensemble with the index finger to indicate the whole group. Anyone not addressed by the "Who" gestures should maintain whatever they're doing (including not playing) throughout the ensuing directive and downbeat.

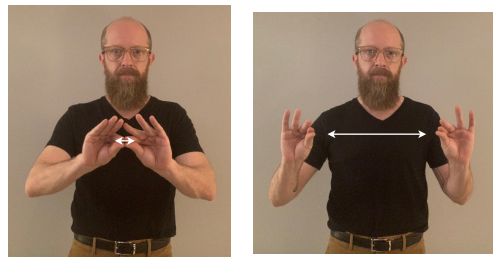


2. "What" Gestures (Long Tone, Pointillism, Hits, Improvise, Memory)

The next category is the "What" gesture, which indicates the nature of the material the conductor is asking for. In every conducted improvisation vocabulary, including mine,

there are a great many signs for certain events; however, it remains true for all that usually the most successful music can often be achieved with a minimum of signs. With that in mind, the only “What” gestures employed in this piece are to be Long Tone, Pointillism, Hits, Improvise, and Memory.

Long Tone means that the player should pick a note and play it as a sonorous long tone, taking care to finesse exits and entrances should stagger-breathing be necessary. The gesture has the conductor’s hands start in the middle of the conducting plane with fingers together and pinched like they’re holding a string, then pulling that string out to either side giving a visual representation of a line, or long tone.

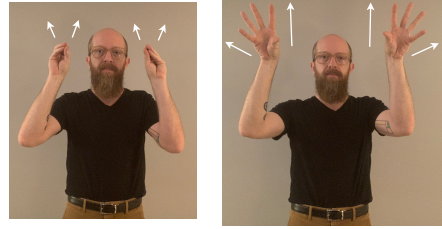


Pointillism should be thought of in terms of *Klangfarbenmelodie*, with groupings of 1-4 notes making up jagged phrases, notes registrally distant from each other and intervallically, rather than diatonically, based. Its gesture has the conductor holding both hands up at the top of the conducting plane, with fingers together as though they’re holding something delicate, the tips facing the ensemble. From there one pokes gently and rapidly, to illustrate the general idea of random-sounding “pointillistic” improvisation.



Hits involve the ensemble playing just one note, usually in a declamatory way, though this can be attenuated. The Hits sign has as its prep gesture the conductor’s hands beginning

at the same place as the Pointillism gesture, but this time the hands draw back in a slight prep and make a gentle “explosion” with the fingers splaying out suddenly and rapidly, to denote the

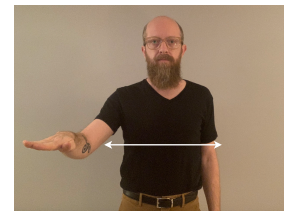


“hit” idea. The Play gesture for Hits is the same as the prep, delivered just afterward.

The Improve gesture is an indication for the player(s) to play soloistically, ostensibly without regard for what others around them are doing (though mindful listening should always be maintained). The gesture for Improve has the conductor forming a triangle in the middle of the conducting plane by holding their hands at a slight angle inward with palms forward, such that the thumbs and index fingers meet.



Memory is a gesture that assigns a number to whatever texture is being played at the time, such that it can be called up in exact detail at any other time in the piece. The gesture for assigning the Memory has the conductor holding the right hand out with palm facing down, and sweeping back and forth from right to left to signal “This is....” Then the conductor holds the left hand index finger up to the left temple, and holds a number of fingers from 1-5 up with the right hand, to signal “Memory #_.” Memories can be difficult for ensembles to recall after extended periods, such that rehearsal time should be taken



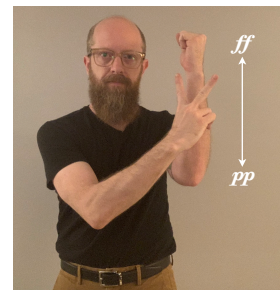
to practice the mental gymnastics required for such proceedings. In the meantime, the conductor should take care not to assign too many memories (2-3 are usually prudent), and to

not let too much time pass between the ensembles' iterations of them, so that their recall stays fresh. In Movement 2, there are 3 cells from Movement 1 which have been preassigned as Memories (see pp. 22-23); in Movement 3 the Memories are to be newly-established.

3. "How" Gestures (Volume Fader, Density Fader, Pitch-Up/Down)

After the "What" sign is given, there is an optional "How" gesture. While not required, "How" gestures can greatly nuance what the conductor is going for, and they can be used as preparatory gestures as part of the directive as well as in real time to inform proceedings, so their use by the conductor is encouraged. If players do not receive any "How" gestures, they are to carry out the directive on the downbeat in whatever way they think best serves the atmosphere of the music at the time (this player-reliant style of conducted improvisation can often be the most fruitful, due to that exciting dynamic power balance). "How" gestures give players more information though, and for lesser-experienced ensembles they may be necessary for every directive. For this piece, the "How" gestures are the Volume Fader, Density Fader, and Pitch-Up/Down.

The Volume Fader is an indicator for dynamics, and the gesture is a raised left forearm, fist up, with the right hand forming a peace-sign style V with the index and middle fingers (but facing inward towards the conductor), which runs up and down the left forearm from top (fist) to bottom (elbow). The top represents *fortissimo*, and the bottom represents *pianissimo*. Care should be taken during



rehearsal to ensure consistent and balanced extremes of these dynamics, as well as the ability as an ensemble to shift to and from those extremes at both slow and rapid rates. This fader is

used during directives to dictate the volume of the following events, but it can also be used during the event to change the volume in real time.

The next “How” gesture is the Density Fader; this illustrates the relative density of the following event, which may be quite literal, as in the case of Pointillism or Improvise, or more conceptual, as with Long Tone, or again, Improvise. The

gesture has the conductor holding their hands fingers up and flat next to their ears; this indicates the densest texture, while pulling the

hands away from the ears in a straight line outward to either

side indicates lessening density. The farthest point out,

where the arms are fully outstretched with palms and

fingertips facing upward, indicates the most thin texture

possible. Care should be taken to establish the same sort of parametric exactitude with this

gesture as should be achieved with the Volume Fader; in rehearsal the thickest possible

texture, including balance, should be established for different directives, as well as the

thinnest textures, and how to balance those textures at different extremes of volume. Care

should also be given to teaching the ensemble to separate all parameters, so that they can be

manipulated independently; for instance, moving from a soft thin texture immediately into a

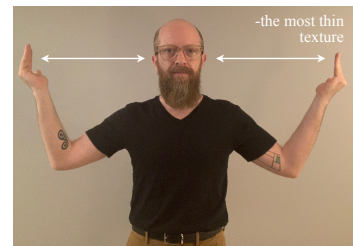
thick texture should not include a volume change, even though the general impulse for

players is to play louder when playing thicker. The same is true the other way around. If these

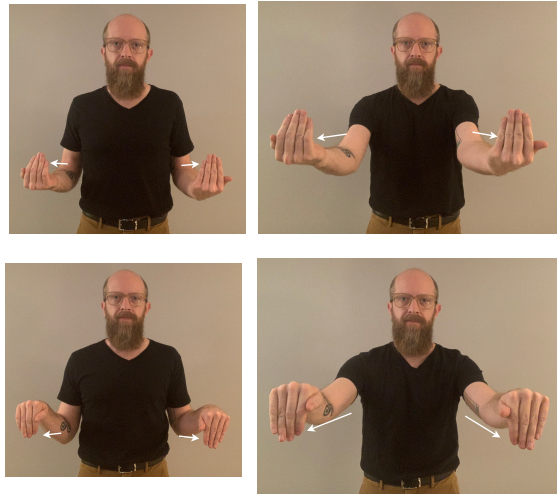
parameters are established in rehearsal such that the ensemble has a fluency with them in

performance, the most startlingly dramatic music can emerge from the most contemplative

soundscapes, and vice-versa.



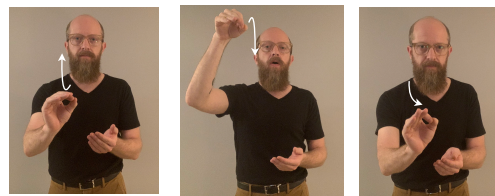
The last “How” gesture in this piece is the Pitch-Up/Down gesture, which indicates to the player that they should move either a whole-step or half-step in the direction indicated on the downbeat. The gesture for Pitch-Up has the conductor’s arms in front of them, bent at the elbow, with hands like they’re carrying a bundle of firewood, palms and fingertips upward. The sign for



Pitch-Down has the conductor’s arms in the same position, but the hands turned 180° inward with palms and fingertips facing down. The downbeat in this gesture has the conductor giving a slight prep motion, then pushing the fingers, hands and arms forward, so that the gesture is closer to the player. This is mostly used in real time to move the pitch (and can be randomized by holding the hands in different directions indicated at different players, as well as by randomizing the different hands’ downbeat gestures), but can also be used as part of a prep gesture to indicate in what general register the following event is to be.

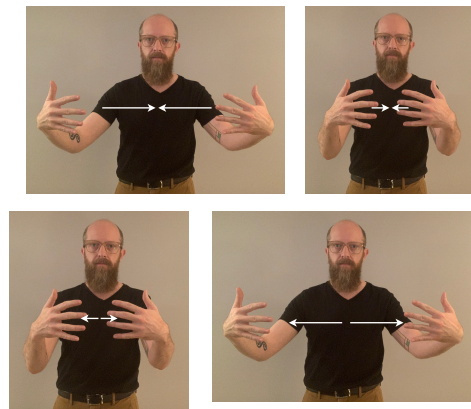
4. “When” Gestures (Downbeat, Enter/Exit Slowly, Off)

The final category in the syntax is the “When” gesture, the first of which is the Downbeat and initiator of the event. This is a very slightly modified traditional conductor’s downbeat, thumb and fingertips touching gently at the center of the conducting plane, with preparatory gesture (and breath), and graceful but solid ictus to motivate the players’



investment. For the purposes of this piece (and *Ether Organ*), this gesture can be made with both hands (most likely favoring the right in this case), or with either hand, depending on the most ergonomically efficient choreography. It should be noted that the Play gestures for Pitch-Up/Down and Hits are different, but enough tied to their prep gestures that they're intuitively grasped.

There is also an Enter/Exit Slowly gesture, which defers the start of the directive to the players discretion, and creates a mysterious aleatoric effect in the midst of a rather controlled environment. The gesture for Enter Slowly has the conductor with hands held in front of them on either side of the conducting plane, with palms facing inward and fingertips facing



towards each other, with the ictus being a motion of the hands inward. The players then enter at their leisure, usually waiting at least several seconds after the ictus to enhance the mystery. The Exit Slowly gesture has the conductor starting at the last position and moving back outwards, at which point the players should stop playing in a very gradual, staggered fashion.

The last gesture in the “When” category for this piece is the Off sign, which can be employed with either one or two hands, and is best described as pantomime of a gentle tearing-off of wallpaper in front of the conductor. It is as though the conductor is



taking away the sound from the ensemble (an orthodox conducting “off” gesture looks too

similar to the conducted improvisation sign for Long Tone, so this slightly more extroverted gesture is used instead). Care should be given to attenuating the ensemble's sharpness of cut-offs and entrances, such that both sharp clean starts and stops as well as gentle tapers can be accessible during performance.

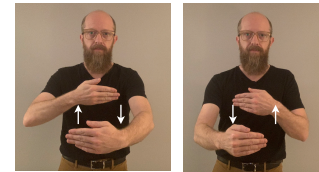
5. Miscellaneous Gestures

Additionally, there are several miscellaneous gestures that are useful for the conductor to maintain attention and momentum when the ensemble may be overwhelmed, or

overstimulated, by their own improvisation. The first of these is Watch Me, which simply tells the ensemble to pay attention; this is signed with the conductor's peace-sign V pointing at their (the conductor's) eyes. Another



is Continue, which reminds the ensemble to maintain their intensity while information is being given. This has the



conductor making a rolling motion with their hands and fingers facing towards themselves, rather like an American football referee's hand signals. Finally, there is the Wait gesture, which could be given



after a directive to tell the ensemble to hold it in mind while the conductor gives another directive to a different group, such that simultaneous directives could be executed on one downbeat. This gesture



has the conductor simply holding out their hand to the ensemble with palm out and fingertips facing up, in a gentle sign of forbearance.

6. Examples of Directives

An example of a directive would be Whole Group (Who), Long Tone (What), Mezzo-Piano (How), Play (When), then Whole Group, Volume Up, Whole Group, Off.

Other more detailed directives might look like this: Whole Group, Pointillism, Thick, High in Register, Pianissimo, Play, Whole Group, This is Memory 1, Whole Group, Continue, Whole Group, Get Louder, Watch Me, Whole Group Long Tone Pianissimo, Play, Whole Group, This is Memory 2, Whole Group, Memory 1 Loud, Play, Whole Group, Memory 2 Soft, Play, Whole Group Pitch-Up (2x), Whole Group Continue, Watch Me, Hits, Loud, Play (several random to finish).

One can see the degree to which both gradual and sudden shifts in texture can be achieved, as well as the endless possibilities for augmenting a player's improvisations with purposeful accompaniment, blurring the lines between composition and improvisation.

SCORE NOTES

A New Space (new)

Score in C

Duration: 18-21 minutes

Mvt. 1: *Maps* (6-7 minutes), p. 23-24
-a proscribed route through the score

Mvt. 2: *Frontier* (6-7 minutes), p. 25-26
-a conducted improvisation with references to the score

Mvt. 3: *The Home* (6-7 minutes), p. 27
-an improvised route through the score, threaded with conducted improvisation

Score Pages 4 and 8 should each be considered one cell apiece. Page 4 consists of Cues that determine playing parameters, while Page 8's cues are downbeats through a progression.

Movement 1 route (see pp. 23-24):

Page 5, Cell 3 → Page 7, Cell 3 → Page 4, Cue 3 → Page 1, Cell 8 → Page 3, Cell 3 → Page 1, Cell 5 → Page 2, Cell 3

Movement 2 Memories (see pp. 25-26):

1: Page 1, Cell 8 — 1.5


2: Page 8 (all cues)


3: Page 3, Cell 3


Movement 3 (see p. 27)

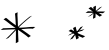
— at the conductor's discretion

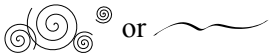
NOTATION KEY


repeat/no repeat: 


soloistic lines of varying lyricism/angularity: 

multiphonics: 

twinkling sounds, or percussive keyclick sounds (as noted): 

air/wind sounds (as noted): 

inhalation/"back-masked" sounds: 

sonorous and lyrical long tone based improvisation: 

Movement 1: *Maps*

Note on structure

This movement is the proscribed route through the score, which can be followed through with as seen here, or can be re-written by the conductor. The point, in either event, is to have premeditated and rehearsed the material. The route I chose is 5.3, 7.3, 4.3, 1.8, 3.3, 1.5, and 2.3, which translates to: page 5, cell 3 → page 7, cell 3 → page 4, cue 3 → page 1, cell 8 → page 3, cue 3 → page 1, cue 5 → page 2, cue 3. Each of these cues has various repeat or no-repeat instructions, and they are to be adhered to at the conductor's discretion.

In performance and rehearsal, the score is to be laid out in front of the conductor so that decisions can be made based on the overall visual impression; the conductor may, however, want to employ any number of shorthand or visual illustration to aid in experimenting with the ways the material can be combined and manipulated. The following page is a visualization of the above proscribed route; this can be one way of conceptualizing a composed path through the pages; another might be the number system referred to above. In any event, if newly composed by the conductor, it should be arrived at through the visual and orchestration pathways they choose to engage. The constituent parts and this organization process are fundamental elements to the intent of this piece; the creation of a process that requires rigorous adherence, with obstacles of different sorts of novelties to invite the flavor of chance.

Movement 1: *Maps*

Route

page 5, cell 3
(no repeat)

page 7, cell 3
(repeat*)

page 4, cell 3
(no repeat)

page 1, cell 8
(repeat)

page 3, cell 3
(no repeat)

page 1, cell 5
(no repeat)

page 2, cell 3
(repeat)

* the number of times a section repeats is at the conductor's discretion. Some cells have different lengths to their parts, as determined by the graphic; this irregular phrase length will result in a phasing that is part of the ideal for these cells.

Movement 2: *Frontier*

Note on Memories

The use of Memories from movement 1 in movement 2's conducted improvisation are meant to thematically tie the movements together. Memories in conducted improvisation are normally established in real time (and this is how Memory functions in movement 3), but for the purposes of this composition, a sequence is proscribed for this movement, which is Memory 1 = 1.8 → 1.5, Memory 2 = 8, and Memory 3 = 3.3. Memory 1 has been assigned to a combination of page 1, cell 8 and page 1, cell 5; the "repeat" aspect of page 1, cell 8, is up to the conductor's discretion. Memory 2 is page 8, which is considered a single cell with cues, the pacing of which is up to the conductor, and Memory 3 is the short sequence of events from page 3, cell 3.

This particular sequence of events was arrived at in the same sort of visual/orchestrational process used for determining that of movement 1. In the same way as the conductor is encouraged to find their own route through movement 1 if they wish, the conductor can also establish their own Memories from movement 1. The idea, as with Movement 1, is to have premeditated and rehearsed the Memories to be used in the context of movement 2's conducted improvisation. The following page is a visualization of the route proscribed above. As before, the idea in rehearsal and performance is for the conductor to negotiate the Memory material from the score as laid out, in order to facilitate the organic process I'm after; the example below is to provide a blueprint for how to extract and situate them.

Movement 2: *Frontier*

Memories

1. page 1, cell 8
into page 1 cell 5

(repeat*)

(no repeat)

2. page 8
(no repeat)

3. page 3, cell 3
(no repeat)

* repeats in Memories, when called for in the cells, are to be at the conductor's discretion

Movement 3: *The Home*

Note on assemblage

For movement 3, the intention is for the conductor to use the devices with Zoom to indicate pages and cells as in movement 1, and, improvising their own route through the score, splice in and layer the conducted improvisation gestures and music over and within. This might be thought of as simply adding the indication of pages and cells of materials into the arsenal of conducted improvisation, such that the transfer of technique needed to negotiate the different mediums could be more easily processed and internalized. Essentially, the conductor and players need to be as mindful as possible in being able to move from conducted gestures to visually negotiated scored material and back. As I said at the beginning, it is the risk involved in the apparent difficulty of this negotiation, confronted by the skill of the conductor to teach and lead, and the ensemble's generosity in lending their abilities to this receptivity, that I believe results in the most verdant environment for new music to be conjured. I hope that this piece can be used to find a unity between all sorts of seemingly irreconcilable elements, that it can be fun for the participants, and meaningful for all.

INSTRUMENTATION/STAGE SETUP

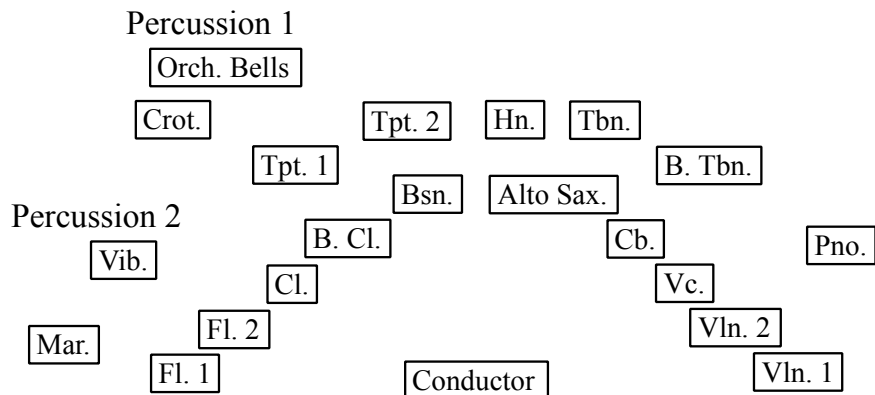
Flute (1, 2)
Clarinet in B-flat
Bass Clarinet
Alto Saxophone
Bassoon

Horn in F
Trumpet in B-flat (1, 2)
Trombone
Bass Trombone

Percussion 1 (Crotales, Orchestra Bells)
Percussion 2 (Marimba, Vibraphone)

Violin (1, 2)
Violoncello
Contrabass

straight and harmon mutes are required for trumpet and trombone



A New Space (new)
p. 2 -for Anthony Braxton

The musical score is arranged in a standard orchestral layout with the following parts from top to bottom:

- Fl. 1
- Fl. 2
- Cl.
- B. Cl.
- Alto Sax.
- Bsn.
- Hrn.
- Tpt. 1
- Tpt. 2
- Tbn.
- B. Tbn.
- Crot.
- Perc. 1
- Orch. Bells
- Mar.
- Perc. 2
- Vib.
- Pno.
- Vln. 1
- Vln. 2
- Ve.
- Cb.

Large numbers 1 through 5 are placed in the Tbn. and Perc. 1 staves to mark specific measures. The score includes various dynamics such as *mf*, *f*, *pp*, *mp*, *p*, and *ff*. Performance instructions include *sul pont.*, *straight mute*, *open*, *pizz.*, and *arco*. The score is written in a complex rhythmic style with many accidentals and slurs.

A New Space (new)

p. 3 -for John Zorn

The musical score is arranged in a vertical column of staves. The instruments listed on the left are: Fl. 1, Fl. 2, Cl., B. Cl., Alto Sax., Bsn., Hn., Tpt. 1, Tpt. 2, Tbn., B. Tbn., Croc., Perc. 1, Orch. Bells, Mar., Perc. 2, Vib., Pno., Vln. 1, Vln. 2, Ve., and Cb. The score is divided into three main sections by large numbers 1, 2, and 3. Section 1 (measures 1-10) includes dynamics like *pp*, *mf*, and *f*. Section 2 (measures 11-20) includes dynamics like *mp*, *p*, and *pp*. Section 3 (measures 21-30) includes dynamics like *pp*, *mf*, and *p*. There are also dynamic markings like *pp*, *mf*, and *p* at the end of the score. A large number 2 is placed above the Fl. 1 staff, a large number 3 is placed above the B. Tbn. staff, and a large number 4 is placed above the Vib. staff. A large number 5 is placed above the Hn. staff. A note in the Tbn. staff reads: "wind sounds; short, irregular, audible but reduced inhalations and exhalations in the horn".

A New Space (new)

p. 4 -for Tyshawn Sorey

1

Normal articulations,
mezzo-dynamics

2

Irregular groupings,
variable dynamics

3

Irregular durations,
piano dynamics

4

Irregular timbres,
variable dynamics

5

Vocalizations,
mezzo-dynamics

Musical score for 'A New Space (new)' page 4, featuring various instruments including Flutes, Clarinet, Saxophones, Brass, Percussion, Piano, and Strings. The score is written in a complex, contemporary style with many accidentals and dynamic markings. The instruments listed are:

- Fl. 1
- Fl. 2
- Cl.
- B. Cl.
- Alto Sax.
- Bsn.
- Hr.
- Tpt. 1 (cup mute)
- Tpt. 2 (harmon mute)
- Tbn.
- B. Tbn.
- (RH) Cro.
- (LH) Perc. 1 (Orech, Bells)
- (RH) Mar.
- (LH) Perc. 2 (Vib.)
- Pno.
- Vln. 1
- Vln. 2
- Ve.
- Cb.

A New Space (new)

p. 5 -for Butch Morris

Fl. 1 *pp*

Fl. 2 *pp*

Cl. *pp*

B. Cl. *pp*

Alto Sax. *p*

Bsn. *mp*

free jazz

multiphonics

wind sounds: long distant, vast

Hn. *mp*

Tpt. 1 *mp*

Tpt. 2 *mp*

Tbn. *mp*

B. Tbn. *mp*

Crot. *p*

Perc. 1 *p*

Orch. Bells *p*

Mar. *pp*

Perc. 2 *pp*

Vib. *pp*

Pno. *mp*

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Ve. *pp*

walking bass

Cb. *mf*

1

2

3

4

5

A New Space (new)

p. 7 -for Walter Thompson

1

Cro. *mp* *mf* *f* *mp* *mf*

Orch. Bells *f* *mf* *f* *mp*

Mar. *mf* *f* *mf* *f*

Vib. *f* *mf* *p* *f*

Pno. *f* *mp* *mf* *f* *mp*

Cl. *mp*

Vln. 1 *mp*

Vln. 2 *p*

Vc. *p*

Bsn. *p*

B. Cl. *mp*

Cb. *mf*

3

Fl. 1 *mf* *f* *mp*

Fl. 2 *mp* *f* *p*

Cl. *mf* *f* *p*

Hn. *f* *mp* *f*

Tpt. 1 *f* *mp* *f*

Tpt. 2 *f* *mp* *f*

Vln. 1 *mf*

Vln. 2 *mf*

Vc. *mp*

Vib. *p*

4

Tbn. *f* *mp*

B. Tbn. *f* *p* *mf* *p*

B. Cl. *mp* *f*

Bsn. *mp* *f*

Vc. *mf* *mp*

Cb. *f* *mp*

Vln. 2 *f*

Vln. 1 *ff*

Vln. 1 *p*

Vln. 2 *p*

Vc. *p*

Vib. *p*

Orch. Bells *p*

5

Tbn. *f* *mp*

B. Tbn. *f* *p* *mf* *p*

B. Cl. *mp* *f*

Bsn. *mp* *f*

Vc. *mf* *mp*

Cb. *f* *mp*

Vln. 1 *ff*

Cl. *p*

Cro. *mf*

A New Space (new)
p. 8 -for Sun Ra

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

↓ ord. ↓ quasi gliss. ↓ unstable tone ↓ quasi gliss. ↓ ord. ↓ ord. ↓ quasi gliss. ↓ ord.

Fl. 1 *p*

(sim. for all woodwinds)

Fl. 2 *p*

Cl. *p*

B. Cl. *p* *mf* *p*

Alto Sax. *p* *mf* *p*

Bsn. *p* *mf* *p*

Hrn. ↓ ord. ↓ quasi gliss. ↓ straight mute ↓ quasi gliss. ↓ open ↓ ord. ↓ 1/2 valve ↓ ord.

(sim. for all brass)

Tpt. 1 *p*

Tpt. 2 *p* *mf* *p*

Tbn. *p* *mf* *p*

B. Tbn. *p* *mf* *p*

Crot. Lv. / etc. Lv. / etc. (uneven) ↓ quasi gliss. Lv. / etc. quasi gliss. Lv. / etc.

Perc. 1 *p* (sim. for all perc, including piano)

Orch. Bells *p* (sim.)

Mar. *p* *mf* *p*

Perc. 2 *p* *mf* *p*

Vib. *p* *mf* *p*

Pno. *p* *mf* *p*

Vln. 1 ↓ ord. ↓ (sim.) ↓ col legno ↓ (sim.) ↓ sul pont. ↓ sul pont. col legno ↓ (sim.) ↓ ord.

(sim. for all strings)

Vln. 2 *mp* *mp*

Vc. *mp* *mp*

Cb. *mp* *mf* *mp*

* arrows indicate downbeats

REFERENCE LIST

- Brackett, John. *John Zorn: Tradition and Transgression*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008.
- Kim, Rebecca Y. *Beyond Notation: the music of Earle Brown*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2017.
- Lewis, George. "Teaching Improvised Music: An Ethnographic Memoir" in *Arcana: Musicians on Music*, ed. John Zorn . New York: Hips Road/Tzadik, 2000.
- Lock, Graham. *Forces in Motion: the Music and Thoughts of Anthony Braxton*. Boston: Da Capo Press, 1989.
- Marschke, Patrick. "The Sonic Universes of Tyshawn Sorey." *Liquid Music*, January 4, 2019 (accessed 3/1/20). <http://www.liquidmusic.org/blog/tyshawn-sorey>
- Morris, Butch. *The Art of Conduction: A Workbook*. New York: Karma, 2017.
- Swed, John. *Space is the Place: The Lives and Times of Sun Ra*. Boston: Da Capo Press, 1998.
- Thompson, Walter. *Soundpainting: The Art of Live Composition, Workbook 1*. New York: Walter Thompson, 2010.

VITA

David James Witter (b. 1978, Lebanon, PA) is a composer, instrumentalist, and educator active in jazz, rock, and new music scenes in Kansas City and Columbia, MO. He is currently completing a DMA in Music Composition at the UMKC Conservatory of Music and Dance, projected to graduate in August 2020. He was also recently appointed Director of Music Ministries and Assistant Professor of Music at Central Methodist University.

His award-winning music has been performed at the Contemporary Art Museum of St. Louis, the Missouri Botanical Garden, and improvisation symposiums in Santa Cruz, CA, Ann Arbor, MI and Paterson, NJ. In addition, his work has been recorded by Seattle free-jazz duo Bad Luck and NYC chamber orchestra Alarm Will Sound, and he was recently commissioned from the Kansas City-based Mnemosyne Quartet. His most recent projects have included playing electroacoustic trombone with various groups including VCrush, Piledriver, and 6th World, creating music for the inaugural 2018 Kansas City Breath Mark Artist Retreat, conducting improvisational work with the Project C4 ensemble, and playing percussion for Tim Harte's Thomas Kinkade ensembles. He is a member of the Pi Kappa Lambda National Music Honor Society and BMI.

As focal elements of both his academic and performance work, he maintains interests in electroacoustic music and solo and group improvisation as educational tools, compositional catalysts, and perpetual art laboratories.