

EXCURSUS: THREE ART SONGS
FOR SOPRANO AND FLEXIBLE MEDIA

A THESIS IN
MUSIC COMPOSITION

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

MASTER OF MUSIC

by
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Kansas City, Missouri
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EXCURSUS:
THREE SONGS FOR SOPRANO AND FLEXIBLE MEDIA

Cody Kauh, Candidate for the Master of Music Degree

University of Missouri-Kansas City, 2015

ABSTRACT

Commissioned by coloratura soprano Mikaela Sullivan for performance in April 2014, Excursus explores the methods in which modern television broadcasting attempts to provide different facets of human desire, thus propagating the continued use of the medium. The composition consists of three songs, each of which focuses on comedic, physical, or philosophical fulfillment. Current television programming attempts to satisfy these desires with sitcoms, pharmaceutical ads, and political slander, respectively.

Instead of communicating this message traditionally via voice and piano, prerecorded media serves as accompaniment to the soprano. I make the distinction in the title that the work is for “soprano and flexible media.” This word choice stems from the desire for media to truly act as an accompaniment, therefore the electronic track follows the singer instead of the singer following a click track embedded into a fixed media file.

For a download link of the Max Runtime file and the electronic tracks, please inquire at: codykauh@gmail.com

APPROVAL PAGE

The faculty listed below, appointed by the Dean of the Conservatory of Music and Dance, have examined a thesis titled “Excursus: Three Art Songs for Soprano and Flexible Media,” presented by Cody Kauh, candidate for the Master of Music degree, and certify that in their opinion it is worthy of acceptance.

Supervisory Committee

Paul Rudy, D.M.A., Committee Chair
Conservatory of Music and Dance

James Mobberley, D.M.A.
Conservatory of Music and Dance

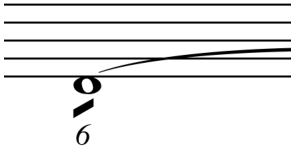
Chen Yi, D.M.A.
Conservatory of Music and Dance

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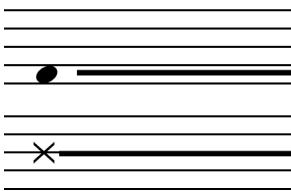
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PLEASE SEE YOUR DOCTOR... ..	7
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PERFORMANCE NOTES

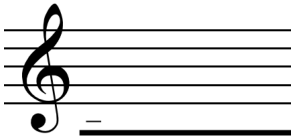
Duration: circa 16'



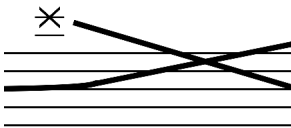
All tremolos are measured. A “3” or “6” below a tremolo indicates triplet subdivision in lieu of standard duple subdivision.



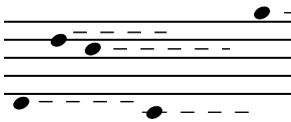
Bold, solid horizontal lines after stemless notes designate a held note free of meter. These pitches (if circle notes) or non-pitched textures (if x-shaped note) continue until the line terminates.



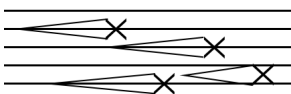
If a held note outside of the staff continues onto another staff system, a ledger line(s) will accompany the next bold, horizontal line.



At times, the bold lines might lie diagonal to the staff. This indicates a pitch or texture rising or falling in pitch.



Stemless notes that precede non-bold, dashed lines indicate repeated pitches that form no recurring rhythm.



Hairpin crescendos that precede stemless, x-shaped note heads indicate non-pitched textures that begin at niente and terminate at its peak amplitude.



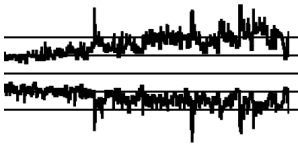
A number in parenthesis and under a square fermata indicates the amount of seconds to tacit.



Whereas capital letters in square boxes indicate rehearsal letters, numbers in diamond boxes indicate the beginning crossfade of the corresponding electronic track.



Short, non-bold, vertical lines that point upwards toward the vocal part indicate precise moments where the electronics and the soprano should be synchronized.



Waveforms in the electronics indicate non-pitches textures that significantly change amplitude over the sample's duration.



Stemless notes in the vocal part indicate phrases without an imposed rhythm. Stemless notes with any articulation attached gain 1.5 – 2x the length of a notes without articulation.

EXCURSUS

I. ...filmed in front of a live studio audience

SCORE

CODY KAUHL
Text by Cody Kauh
& Mikaela Sullivan

1 Doorbell Knocking on door Short clicks (in time)
etc. with variation

A Character 1: playful and ostentatious $\text{♩} = 78$

f
Oh! Don't mind me!
etc. with variation ...

mf *cresc.*
My broth-er, please don't mind

f *mf* **B** ($\text{♩} = \text{♩}$) over dramatic

me! I just stopped by to, just stopped by,
etc. ... cont. etc. ...
... continued etc. ...

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Excursus - pg. 2

16 *cresc.*

I just stopped by to, to catch the

20 *ff* **C** slower, much more somber ♩ = 78

show!

... continued

23 *p*

My ca - ble is out, and I will die,

Short clicks
x x x x x x x etc.

seemingly soft-spoken, understated, and introspective

26 *mp*

I will die, die,

2

D suddenly overdramatic once more

f *spoken higher pitched than natural*

E

I will die if I miss this episode!

17 kHz CRT TV hum *dim.*

White noise

White Noise

Laugh track

8th until rehearsal H

Character 2: outwardly apathetic and sarcastic, yet hopelessly idealistic ♩ = 69

30 *mp* *mf* *f* *mp*

Hold on there sis. Hold on! Which show is this one now?

F

The one where wom-en com-pete for ap - prov-al

Low pulse

40 *mf*

from one "i-deal" man, where a - dul - try is com-mon - place,

Excursus - pg. 4

46 *f* **G**

where love _____ is cur-ren - cy, _____

Laughter **5**

51 *ff* *f* *ff*

where all, _____ where all are re - ject-ed _____

56 *mf* *rit.* **H** sarcastically $\text{♩} = 104$ spoken in a normal, comfortable register

but one "per - fect" bride?! Hmm, sure sounds like quality television to me!

I Character 1: over dramatic once more $\text{♩} = 104$ *f*

My broth - er Oh, mon frère!

White noise

Laugh track

Excursus - pg. 5

64

ff *mp*

Don't be a smart ass and turn the t - v on!

Click

n. Sighing

68

Char. 2 *p* Char. 1

I did, sis. It is on. It is on?

Short clicks

J ostentatious; no longer playful $\text{♩} = 78$

f

Oh! But there's no,

etc. etc. with variation ...

8th until rehearsal L

75

no pic - ture, no sound

Excursus - pg. 6

K (♩=♩) over dramatic

80

— or tone, no sound, no tone, no sound, no tone,

... continued

... cont.

etc...

84

mf there's no pic - ture, no sound, *f* no show!

88

ff only static. // *mp* *attacca*
spoken

II. please see your doctor...

A somber $\text{♩} = 69$
mp *cresc.*

For years, I let

1 Pill popping

mf *cresc.* *mp* **B**

tox-i-di-e-ta-li-tis ru-in my life.

Pills falling

both staves δ^{th} until m. 9

f *mf*

My daugh-ter's soc-cer games, my week-ly yo-ga class, I missed them all be-cause

mp *< f* *f*

tox-i-di-e-ta-li-tis ru-ined my life.

Pills falling

C joyous, yet somehow synthetic...

But now In - sta-lax lets me run through life with-out life

Door opening

with-out life run - - - ning run - - - ning

accel.

run - ning through me.

faster $\text{♩} = 104$

p

D terse, faster 112

Deep, metallic impact

Short, percussive samples

p *f*

19

f



23

mp

Side ef - fects may in - clude head - aches, flash - es of light,

8^{va}



27

mf *ff* *mf* *f* *mf*

mild ten - di - ni - tis, as well as e - rec - tile dys -



31

func - tion. You may ex - pe - ri - ence head - aches, heart - burn hair loss, con - sti -

35

pa-tion, high blood pres-sure, head-aches, heart-burn, hair loss,

38 *accel.* ♩ = 152

bleed-ing, swell-ing, sweat-ing, itch-ing, nau-se'a, can-cer, spasms, sei-zures, jaun-dice,

41 ♩ = 126 E ♩ = 116

and in some rare cas-es death. Stop!

46 *ff* *mf* *f* *mf*

Stop! - tak-ing In-sta-lax, Stop! and call your doc-tor and

52 *mp*

Stop! your doc - tor right a-way, right a-way Stop! if you ex - pe - ri-ence

mp *p* *cresc. poco a poco*

56 *p* *mf*

you ex - pe - ri-ence an - y diz - zi - ness Stop! am - ne-sia, su - i - cid - al thoughts,

p *mf*

60

fre - quent short-ness of breath, dry mouth chest pain fa - cial flush-ing...

ff

63

F *somber* $\text{♩} = 69$
mp *cresc.*

For years, I let

n. *mp*

n.

65 *mf* *mp* *mp*

tox-i - di-e-ta - li-tis ru - in my life. don't let it

8^{vb}

68 *f* *mp*

ru-in yours please see your doc-tor__ please see your doc-tor__ if you think

5

70 *mf* *mp* *p* *attacca*

you think you think In-sta-lax__ might be right for you.

III. ...and I approve this message

60' 1 ♩ = 116
 etc. with variation and stretta

-30 Hz Rumble

mf 18 **f** ♩ = 116
 We all _____ all _____ make mis - takes.

mf **f** ♩ = 116
 We learn from them cor - rect them and move, move _____ on... 6

2

Sighing

White noise

A 3 **mp** **mf** **f** ♩ = 128
 But some _____ some _____ But some mis-takes are too big to for-get.

Sighing

8th until Rehearsal D

8 *mf* *f*

My op-po-nent prom-ised us pri-va-cy for cit-i-zens

Keyboard score for measures 8-9

Detailed description: This system contains measures 8 and 9. The vocal line starts at measure 8 with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 3/4 time signature. It features a triplet of eighth notes in measure 8 and triplet eighth notes in measure 9. Dynamics range from mezzo-forte (mf) to forte (f). The piano accompaniment consists of a single bass note in measure 8 and a half note in measure 9.

9 *mf* *f*

and trans - - - par-en-cy from Wash-ing-ton!

Keyboard clicks

Keyboard score for measures 9-10

Detailed description: This system contains measures 9 and 10. The vocal line continues from measure 9 with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 3/4 time signature. It features triplet eighth notes in measure 9 and triplet eighth notes in measure 10. Dynamics range from mezzo-forte (mf) to forte (f). The piano accompaniment features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with 'x' marks above them, indicating keyboard clicks, in both measures.

ff

In - stead the roles were re-versed.

Higher register glissando texture

Keyboard score for measures 10-11

Detailed description: This system contains measures 10 and 11. The vocal line starts at measure 10 with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 3/4 time signature. It features a glissando in measure 10 and a triplet of eighth notes in measure 11. Dynamics range from fortissimo (ff). The piano accompaniment features a glissando in measure 10 and a triplet of eighth notes in measure 11.

B preaching $\text{♩} = 116$

mf *f* *mf* *cresc.*

We all all make mis - takes. We learn from them cor -

4 5

Keyboard score for measures 11-12

Detailed description: This system contains measures 11 and 12. The vocal line starts at measure 11 with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 3/4 time signature. It features a triplet of eighth notes in measure 11 and a triplet of eighth notes in measure 12. Dynamics range from mezzo-forte (mf) to fortissimo (ff) and then mezzo-forte (mf) with a crescendo. The piano accompaniment features a triplet of eighth notes in measure 11 and a triplet of eighth notes in measure 12.

14 *f*

rect them and move, move on...

6

14

16 [C] two-faced ♩ = 128

But don't no don't don't for-get a-bout the sext-ing

2

6

19

scan-dal with a young in-tern young in-tern half his age.

Machines running

7

People humming

20

Or his sup-port for vot-er re-stric-tions claim-ing that

5

7

People shouting

22 *ff* D

ra - ci - sm ra - ci - sm was dead! But let's move, move on...

fp

24 *rit.*

And what a-bout his prom-is-es, his prom-is-es to bring our troops

Keyboard clicks

29 *mp* *p* *pp* *mp* *f*

a brief repose ♩ = 108 ♩ = 128

home, home, home, but they are still o-ver-seas!

Wrong! Wrong! Wrong! Wrong!

31 E *mf*

Let's face facts!

That is incorrect! That is incor Door slamming I am,

34

We can't af-ford my op-po-nent's mis-takes! We can't af-ford four more years of blun-der!

I am, I am, I

36

Self-righteous, holier-than-thou ♩ = 104

We can't af-ford to turn a blind eye! I am! I am! _____

am, I am!

38

I am! I am, I am! and I approve this message.

8^{va} until reverb of electronics dissipates in the hall...

VITA

Cody Kauh1 is a composer and multimedia artist that investigates the hidden musical potential of urban noise pollution while utilizing new methods of human and computer interaction. His work has been performed at international and national festivals and conferences including the International Computer Music Conference and Society of Electro-Acoustic Music in the United States. Cody graduated in 2011 with a B.M. in Music Theory/Composition at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville and recently completed his M.M. thesis in Music Composition at the University of Missouri – Kansas City.

Cody regularly collaborates with visual and performing artists, choreographers, and filmmakers and has had his work played at the Florida State University Festival of New Music, Center of Cypriot Composers, MUSLAB, Sacramento State Festival of New American Music, Metanast, Hot Air Music Festival, New Horizons Music Festival, Gallery MC, Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City Art Institute, Electronic Music Midwest, Bang! Festival, Noisefloor, Electroacoustic Barn Dance, Animation Block Party, Great Plains Regional Tuba and Euphonium Conference, Kansas City Electronic Music and Arts Alliance, and Kansas City Fringe Festival. Cody acted as composer-in-residence at the Kimmel Harding Nelson Center for the Arts in February 2014 and at the Brush Creek Foundation for the Arts in February 2015. For more information, please visit: www.codykauh1.com.