

**Composition with
the Sound of Its
Own Découpage
Michael Baldwin**

Composition with the Sound of Its Own Découpage

toy piano (3-octave 'concert grand') with video playback

PROGRAM NOTE

Drawing from the methodological principals of Robert Morris's similarly titled *Box with the Sound of Its Own Making* (1961), a wooden cube accompanied by a recording of the sounds produced during its construction, *Composition with the Sound of Its Own Découpage* explores the possibilities of deriving and structuring a musical composition based on the characteristic qualities of scissors.

Composition with the Sound of Its Own Découpage was written specifically for the 2015 *Rock, Paper, Scissors* concert series organized by the Inlets Foundation for Experimental Practice and is dedicated to pianist Eric Gottlieb.

PERFORMANCE NOTES

GRACES – Nearly all gracenotes are placed before the beat. There is one instance where a gracenote is placed on the beat, in which case the placement of the gracenote has been adjusted.

DYNAMICS – The dynamic range of the instrument is knowingly stretched beyond its expressive capacity. Embody and project the prescribed dynamic indications regardless of the instrument's expressive limitations. In general, dynamics apply to both hands. In instances where the dynamics of both hands are decoupled, each hand's dynamic stream is clearly marked.

METER – *Senza tempo* is indicated with an X for the meter marking. In some instances, *senza tempo* is qualified by a performative behavior.

SPECIFIC NOTES

- There is no gap between the end of cue-4 and the following entrance of the toy piano.
- The notation found below the score's title is decorative and not to be played during performance.

SPECIAL SYMBOLS

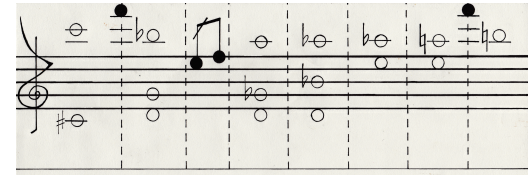
- An x-shaped notehead indicates a sharp and sudden release of previously held keys. The resultant should be a distinct clicking of the instrument's mechanisms.
- Lines extending from video/audio boxes provide an indication of the length of a cue's video or audio component.

CUES AND VIDEO PLAYBACK – An additional video-playback performer is required to trigger the playback of five video cues to be projected onto a projection screen or an otherwise flat, white surface. These cues are in the format of video files (.mov). There are five video files found in the supplementary folder 'cwtsoiod_video-cues_1-5': 1_VIDEO-CUE, 2_VIDEO-CUE, 3_VIDEO-CUE, 4_VIDEO-CUE, and 5_VIDEO-CUE. All video cues are triggered in synchronicity with the instrumentalist at points indicated in the score, with the video-playback performer anticipating the arrival of the respective downbeats. The video-playback performer should not have a prominent place on stage with the performer; they are ideally off stage, but still able to see the live instrumentalist during performance.

The volume of sound playback for all video cues should be set at the same volume. Set this master volume relative to 4_VIDEO-CUE.mov, striving to have the cue sound as though it is emergent from the toy piano chords.

It is suggested that the video-playback performer use the media playback software VLC for the triggering of video files. However, other software solutions are possible so long as there is no playback lag.

Composition with the Sound of Its Own Découpage



composer: Michael Baldwin

dedicated to: Eric Gottlieb

toy piano
stately and direct
6-second pause

Musical notation for the first section of the score. It is written for a toy piano in 4/4 time. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 60. The dynamics range from *mf* to *mf*. The notation includes a 6-second pause at the end of the section.

timeless: as fast as playable without producing any mechanical sounds on the instrument and then slower still.
senza tempo

1 Video

a tempo

senza tempo

mf

Musical notation for the second section of the score. It is written for a toy piano in 4/4 time. The tempo is marked as *senza tempo*. The dynamics range from *pp* to *mp*. The notation includes a video cue marker labeled '1' and a section marked 'a tempo' followed by 'senza tempo'. The dynamics are *pp*, *ppp*, *p*, *pp < mp*, *mf*, *p*, and *mp*. The section ends with a video cue marker labeled '1' and a section marked 'a tempo' followed by 'senza tempo'. The dynamics are *mf*.

Video cue: Watch video for point when dashed bar-line is completely severed by scissors and then play

slow body down, relax

2 Video

mf

sffz

mf

sfz

senza tempo

Audio

Musical notation for the third section of the score. It is written for a toy piano in 4/4 time. The tempo is marked as *senza tempo*. The dynamics range from *mf* to *sfz*. The notation includes a video cue marker labeled '2' and a section marked 'senza tempo'. The dynamics are *mf*, *sffz*, *mf*, and *sfz*. The section ends with a video cue marker labeled '2' and a section marked 'senza tempo'. The dynamics are *mf*.

3 Video

(Audio)

placid

ppp

senza tempo

Musical notation for the fourth section of the score. It is written for a toy piano in 4/4 time. The tempo is marked as *senza tempo*. The dynamics range from *ppp* to *ppp*. The notation includes a video cue marker labeled '3' and a section marked 'senza tempo'. The dynamics are *ppp*.

still and connected

ff *mp pp*

senza tempo

4
Video
Audio

instant segue

right-hand: *mf* *p pp* *mp*

♩ = 72

left-hand: *mf* *f* *mp* *mf*

Audio cue: Listen to audio for D₄. Pitch increases in volume. At peak of volume begin playing cued material.

5
Video
Audio

D₄ fade-in D₄ peak

♩ = 60

pppp *p > ppp* *mp* *sfz* *ppp sfz* *f* *mf*

senza tempo

freeze. hold pinky finger on key

video: paper slid off surface
action: quickly lift pinky finger

sharply remove fingers from keys