

JP Merz

*Out, Out-*

for flute and electronics

11' 30"

2013



## about:

*Out, Out-* is based on Robert Frost's poem of the same name, itself a reference to Macbeth's final soliloquy. This piece, like Frost's poem, explores the sometimes violent relationship between people and technology. This drama is played out between the flute and the electronics, representing two oppositional forces. The piece opens powerfully, with both players creating a chaotic texture that eventually yields to a soft and pastoral flute melody. After an improvised cadenza, the melody becomes fragmented between explosive strikes in the electronics. The piece ends with an electronically processed flute improvisation in which the flutist and the electronics respond to one another, signifying the dissolution and merging of the relationship between man and machine.

-Sam Golter

*The buzz saw snarled and rattled in the yard  
And made dust and dropped stove-length sticks of wood,  
Sweet-scented stuff when the breeze drew across it.  
- Opening lines of "Out, Out-" by Robert Frost*

...

*... Out, out, brief candle!  
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player  
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage  
And then is heard no more. It is a tale  
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury  
Signifying nothing. — Macbeth (Act 5, Scene 5, lines 17-28)*

## Performance Notes:

0:00

Boxed times marks should line up with the timer in the patch.

4"

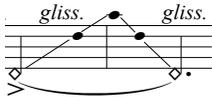
Brackets indicate the passage of time in seconds.



Boxed material with a large arrow should be repeated until the end of the arrow. Feathered beams indicate speeding up or slowing down.

1

Circled Numbers are cues to depress the foot pedal and will be displayed in the patch. These can also be used to rehearse particular sections with the patch.



Notes with a harmonic diamond and smaller black note heads gliss'd. to above are harmonic glisses (holding the fundamental and then overblowing to the harmonics)



Arrows refer to quarter tone bends in pitch.

## Technical Notes:

Equipment Needed:

- a laptop
- an audio interface
- a condenser microphone
- a single button MIDI foot pedal
- a stereo PA

The microphone is plugged directly into the interface and runs through the provided software. The foot pedal should be plugged into the laptop and placed near the performer. While sound checking, adjust the dry level to blend the sound of the acoustic flute with the electronics. 2 channels of audio are sent from interface to the PA.

# Out, Out-

for flute and electronics

## Desperate and brash

(Humanity overpowered by Machine)

1 Flute should be held up to mouth from the start until m. 32

*sfz p sub.* < *mf* > *p* *f sfz p sub.* *sfz*  
 The flute should sound like it is struggling to be heard over the electronics, occasionally letting the electronics overpower it's own sound.

2:06 2:10 2:15 **2**  
 senza vibrato  
 legato un poco rubato  
 Tranquil and Elegant (Humanity's Statement)

30 *gliss.* *gliss.* *p* *mf* *p* *sfz* *mp* *f* *p* *ppp* *p* *ppp*

36 *n* *pp* *mp* *ppp* *sub.* *p* *mf* *n* *p* *mp* *pp*

43 *ppp* *mp* *p* *sub.* *mp* *pp* *mp* *n* *ppp* *mp* *pp* *p* *mf*

49 *n* *mp* *pp* *ppp* *sub.* *pp* *f* *sfz* *sfz* *p* *sub.* *f*

*marcato* *legato*  
 timbral trill

54 vib. norm.

*mf*  $\overset{3}{\text{trill}}$  *f* *n* *f* *pp* *n* *mp* *sfz* *f* *p sub.* *f*

58

*mp* *sfz* *f* *n* *pp*  $\overset{3}{\text{trill}}$   $\overset{5}{\text{trill}}$  *f*  $\overset{3}{\text{trill}}$  *p*

62

*sfz* *f* *pp* *f*  $\overset{5}{\text{trill}}$  *mp* *f* *mp* *f*

64

*p sub.*  $\overset{3}{\text{trill}}$  *f* *mp* *pp* *n*

Oscillate between the two boxed notes freely. Spatial distance between the notes represents the relative speed of oscillation but a regular pulse should not be used. During this section the oscillations gradually speed up until they become the trills. The notes should be played primarily legato with occasional improvised articulations inserted at the performers discretion. The murkiness of the lower oscillation should be in contrast to the sweetness of the upper melody as if the performer is experiencing an inner struggle or conflict. This continues until m. 76 where both voices become agitated.

**Conflicted: Dark textures contrasted by soaring melody**

**Measure 70:** *murky and mysterious* (8" oscillation), *mp* (boxed oscillation), *p* (transition), *mp* (trill), *p sub.* (trill), *dolce* (melody), *mf* (boxed oscillation), *p sub.* (transition), *f* (trill), *p sub.* (trill), *dolce* (melody).

**Measure 72:** *murky and mysterious* (2" oscillation), *mf* (boxed oscillation), *p* (transition), *sfz* (trill), *mf* (trill), *f* (trill), *mp* (trill), *dolce* (melody), *murky and mysterious* (4" oscillation), *f* (boxed oscillation), *p* (transition), *f* (trill), *p sub.* (trill), *dolce* (melody).

**Measure 74:** *murky and mysterious* (2" oscillation), *f* (boxed oscillation), *pp* (trill), *f* (trill), *mp* (trill), *dolce* (melody), *murky and mysterious* (4" oscillation), *pp* (trill), *f* (trill), *mp* (trill), *dolce* (melody).

**Measure 76:** *murky and mysterious* (2" oscillation), *f* (boxed oscillation), *pp* (trill), *sfz* (trill), *p* (trill), *mf* (trill), *dolce* (melody), *agitato* (trill), *f* (trill), *ff* (trill), *f* (trill), *dolce* (melody).

**Measure 77:** *ff* (trill), *p* (trill), *f* (trill), *mp* (trill), *f* (trill), *p* (trill), *f* (trill), *mf* (trill), *ff* (trill).

**Annotations:** 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. *Turbulent, rising tension in both voices* (m. 74-77).

80 *sfz* *pp* *marcato* *legato* 3"

81 *f* *p* *ff* *sfz* *p* *f* *ff* 2" *marcato* *legato*

82 *p* *fff ad lib. dynamics*  
 (Something has broken free from the conflict, it is unclear if machine or humanity has emerged)

85 8" 13"

87 20" 14

\* Frenetically and furiously improvise this cadenza. Intensity and ferocity of the improvisation is denoted by the texture of the graphic. Level of intensity in the improvisation should be conveyed through density, dynamics, articulations and extended techniques. The improvisation should be between the pitches indicated by notes in parenthesis. The given notes don't necessarily need to be played. Explore all of the possibilities within the pitch areas using rhythmic and timbral variety and both pitched and non-pitched extended techniques. Notes outside of the given pitch area may be used, but very sparingly. Depress the indicated foot pedal cue near the end of the improvisation and move on to the next page when the electronic "hits" start..

6

Melody fragmented by electronic "hits" (Machine's domination over Humanity)

Duration- ~2:00

When a "hit" occurs in the electronic track, respond by playing one of the cells. Any attack, no matter how faint, should be thought of as a "hit".  
 Play the entire cell even if other "hits" occur. Always wait for another "hit" before playing a new cell.  
 The cells are organized by row for short, medium and long lengths and are also organized by length within each row. Never play cells from the same row consecutively  
 The audio file in this section is 1:52 long, depress the foot pedal and move onto the next page after you play your last cell.

Short

Medium

Long

# The Dissolution of Humanity and Machine

Start on the given note and improvise using the cells on the previous page as a starting point. The computer will be recording, delaying, and manipulating the flutes sound and effectively "improvising". The computer may pitch shift the flutes material or create dense, delayed textures The flute should similarly develop its own improvisation by responding to the computer's decisions (i.e. if the computer pitch shifts experiment with manually pitch shifting). The flute should feel free to stray away from the cells, but use them as the main motivic material for the improvisation.

15

A musical staff in treble clef with a single quarter note on the second line. A horizontal line above the staff spans the entire width of the staff, with a bracket underneath it labeled "60" in the center.

Around the 1 minute mark white noise will start swelling into the foreground. The flute should similarly swell in intensity and density of the improvisation until the cutoff point of 1:15.

Cease improvisation; electronics fade out.

A musical staff in treble clef. The first 15 seconds of the staff are filled with dense, overlapping scribbles representing white noise. A bracket above this section is labeled "15". Below the staff, the dynamic marking *p* is at the beginning and *fff* is at the end of the scribbled section. The remaining 10 seconds of the staff are empty, with a bracket above them labeled "10". The staff ends with a double bar line.