

Fuze

for amplified violin with audio file playback

Paul Frehner

Fuze – Program Note

Fuze is a work scored for violin or electric violin and audio file playback. The playback component originated as a separate piece for 'tape' entitled *Submerged Echoes*. The earlier work is a soundscape composed using audio samples recorded from *Tectonic Shift*, a sonic sculpture created by Nova Scotian blacksmith John Little. The samples were manipulated primarily through pitch shifting and splicing. I felt that the samples hardly needed any DSP processing since the sonority of the instrument is so rich and reverberant: it has a natural reverberation of 8 seconds, much like a large cathedral. An image of *Tectonic Shift* is below.



Tectonic Shift
Sound sculpture by John Little

The instrument is quite large, measuring approximately nine feet in length, eight feet at its highest point, and weighs approximately 200 pounds. It can be played using the hands, various mallets or by using its stainless steel bow (leaning against the instrument in the picture).

For the composition of *Fuze*, I extended the playback part of *Submerged Echoes* and fused to it a solo violin part. The added violin both becomes a part of the soundscape and gives it a more subjective perspective. The title also refers to the prevalent sounds of shrieking metal heard throughout.

Performance Notes

Instrument

The violin part can be played on either an amplified acoustic or electric instrument. A moderate amount of signal processing, eg. reverb or overdrive, could be used at the player's discretion. The music on the playback file, entirely composed with samples I recorded on John Little's ironwork sculpture *Tectonic Shift*, has a certain rawness and the violin sonority could be tweaked to match this.

Use of a Click Track

Since the audio file has a specific duration and because certain events between the live and playback parts have to be coordinated it is advisable to use a click track when performing this work. The click track should be set at $q = 60$. The opening 32" passage in m. 1 should be counted as 8 measures of 4/4 time on the click track. Thus, the fortissimo attack in m. 2 would be on the downbeat of the 9th measure as counted by the click track.

An approximation of the playback part is represented in the score on two staves using a mixture of musical notation and verbal descriptions. Not all details of the audio file are notated and the rhythmic values used are at times imprecise. It should, however, be sufficient to serve as a guide for coordination purposes.

Bowing

in the opening passage, mm. 1-39, upbows frequently start from *niente* and crescendo to *mp* or so. In these instances the notes should be played as if a volume pedal were being used and the initial attack was removed. It is, of course, possible to use a volume pedal to accomplish the desired amplitude envelope.

Accidentals

The following quarter-tone symbols are used:

♭ one quarter-tone flat

♯ one quarter-tone sharp

three quarter-tones sharp

All accidentals, quarter-tones included, function in the traditional manner.

Duration: 8'10"

The playback file can be acquired by contacting the Canadian Music Centre or the composer.

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32" (12" + 20")
molto vib. S.P.
pp senza cresc.
Violin: $\text{♩} = 60$ Rough 5 3 ord. ff mp mf

Sound Images: arrhythmic drones 32" p ff metallic rattling

Playback: arrhythmic drone mp

Pitch: mp

Bow as if using a volume pedal to create amplitude swells.
Fall (slight gliss at the end of the indicated duration)

4 Vln. senza vib. → vib. 3 3 f pp mp mp

S. Im. Playback Tacet

Pitch

9 Vln. jeté f pp

10 Vln. ord. Fall 3 V V V V V V mp mp simile

12 Vln. molto vib. Fall molto vib. 9 9 9 mf f fff

S. Im. metallic rattling (backwards) pp ff Abrupt silence Playback Tacet

Pitch: pp ff

15 *Fall*

Vln. *< mp < mp simile < f < simile*

19

Vln. *ff p* L.H. tremolo (*gliss.*) slow

S. Im. *mf* metallic rattling

Pitch *mp* arrhythmic drones

22 *fast → slow*

Vln. *mf mp mf*

S. Im. **Playback Tacet**

Pitch

26

Vln. *f p*

30

Vln. *< mp < mp < mf simile*

32

Vln. *f*

34

Vln. *jeté* 5 6 3 *ord.*

p *mf* *mp* *pp*

S. Im. *pp* *rumbling* Playback Tacet

39

Vln. *S.P.* *ord.* 3 3 5

p *ff* *ffff*

S. Im. From mm. 38-113 the playback part is present and quite full in texture. *'crying' metal*

Pitch harmonics and feedback harmony unfolds gradually

43

Vln. *f* 6

S. Im.

Pitch *f*

44

Vln. 6 6 6 6 3 *mp*

S. Im. *mp* Rusty seesaw motive continues as part of the texture until m. 65

Pitch *mp*

46

Vln. *mf* 3 3 3 *pp* *ff* *p* *S.P.* *ord.*

S. Im. *feedback and distortion*

Pitch *Drone*