

written for Ryan LeMoine

no sound except you
for baritone saxophone and digital media

Ben Stonaker
2009

Written for Ryan LeMoine, *no sound except you*, is the second work in a series of three pieces based on writings by Stanley Donwood. Ryan approached me for a piece, for baritone saxophone and tape, to perform at the Region VI NASA convention in March 2009. This was my first piece for soloist and digital media (CD playback).

My first piece composed around the writings of Mr. Donwood is titled *The Grey Skies the Blind* and was written for flute, clarinet, and cello. The text comes from a short story titled *Beautiful Story About*, from the collection *Partly Mechanical, Hardly Human*. From the same collection is another short titled *Engage in Meaningful Conversation*:

yeah yeah yeah advert=suffocating under dirt/pollution? buy more.

eventually i watch war atrocities and the soundtrack makes it okay.

oh very funny.

i think ill wake up is this worth watching mmm okay i was sleeping but now Im okay. theres a few ideas id like to kick around hows this grab you.

?

pitch one: escaping from burning hotel. no shoes. its raining. do you go back into the burning hotel and find shoes or get your feet wet?

pitch two: wander into schoolroom by mistake. all the children know your name and your darkest secrets. do you run or make the best of it?

pitch three: answering phone in call box on top of hill. its the devil. do you slam down the phone or attempt conversation?

pitch four: evryone expects you to perform but you cant. [copy/paste] do you slam down the phone or attempt conversation?

eventually

i can watch

anythingwithasoundtrack.

[copy/paste]Theres just the muffled crunchy sound of teeth grinding and scraping of boots on tarmac or something and a noise far away that maybe is someone crying or a cat and evrything moves a bit in the wind but there isnt any noise of that sort of thing.

no sound. except you. no sound. except you.

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a lot of background noise and a lot of repetition. and we wish it was just noise just a trapped bird in the chimney just a blockage in a pipe just the boiler

just the floorboards just the

"house, settling".

im a machine to record the noise made by a plant wilting a mouse dying a hinge rusting a newspaper rotting a meal cooked left on the table uneaten drying carried away into the kitchen scraped into the trash the plate washed up the detergent bubbles dying leaving tiny traces too tiny to see on the china stacked back up for ANOTHER DAY.

soandso would like you to call left a message saying

oh no sound except you no sound except you.

evryone expects you to perform but you cant. copy/paste but nothing happens. undo but cant undo. get text ha ha ha. im a very busy person im sorry

youll have to wait until tomorrow or maybe the next day if youre lucky. if im lucky. if im lucky ill still be here: hello how are you is evrything okay i hope insert situation has been satisfactorily resolved ha ha ha. a jolly good night to you all. Try t ngage n mnngfl cnvrstn. Try.

ha, ha.

try a new lipstick a new colour a new you [this week only]

The samples for the digital media come from a cell phone texting “no sound except you” with the old number pad form of texting, so you hear actual tones like someone dialing on a telephone. I had become so aggravated with texting and could not stand how rude people had become that I thought this would be an interesting way to start the piece. Other samples were taken from a printing plant I was working at (various machines making noise, a tape dispense, etc.) and me reciting some of the text. The interaction between the soloist and the tape part may seem confusing, but it’s because they’re constantly struggling to get each others’ attention. By the end of the piece, the soloist is simply breathing in loudly and breathing out loudly through the saxophone – a literal sense of no sound, except the soloist (you).

All performance notes are found within the solo part. The performer may need to use a stopwatch to keep track of the timeline suggested in the score. All notes have an accidental preceding them– even natural notes – so there will be no confusion about the desired pitch to be played. The moments where the tape and soloist line up are more important than any synchronization between these points. The piece is written in such a way that each performance will result in different combinations of sounds throughout the piece and different interpretations of the gestures in the solo part. The overall idea of the piece is to be a somewhat meaningless conversation between soloist and accompaniment – sort of struggling to engage in meaningful conversation, but without any resolution.

The balance between the tape part and the soloist will be tricky, at best. There are extremely soft sounds in both parts and extremely loud sounds. Depending on the setup used, the soloist may need to be amplified at times.

Duration: 8:30

no sound except you

for baritone saxophone and digital media

Ben Stonaker

Freely (♩ = c. 60)*

Baritone Saxophone in E_b

Digital Media

air only *mf* (decresc. for breath only) *pp* pitched slap-tongue

quick breath if needed *sfpppp*

ad lib. random key clicks - as quickly as possible *p* *f* (cresc. for key clicks only)

00:22

ord. (slap-tongue) *mp* *p* *pp* *ppp* 3

key clicks, as quickly as possible (do not close off mouthpiece)

non-pitched slap tongue *mf*

(typing sounds start at 0:29)

00:38

air only *p* *mp*

mf 3 3 *mp* *pp* *p* *fp* 3

mf blow air during key clicks, *cresc.* enough so that a few random pitches sound at the very end

molto

00:55

hold until phone tones are heard

A ♩ = c.112, suddenly steady and in tempo

3 3 *sfpppp* *f* *mf*

(phone sounds at 1:02)

01:08

* The suggested tempo is only to be used as a reference to give the performer an idea of the composer's intentions for written durations. Do not strictly adhere to this tempo. White space between notes/gestures indicates pauses and should be followed horizontally from left to right, with regard to running time instead of tempo.

(this gesture should end just before phone sounds stop)

3 3 5 *f*

poco

1 (end of phone sounds at 1:11)

01:15

use ♩ = c. 60 for reference

sneak in

ppp *poco a poco* *mp* *pp* *mf* *mp*

mf (*decresc. for breath only*)

air only

mostly higher "pitched" key clicks, use palm/side keys

p *f*

(pitched tones)

01:25

(pitched)

mf *sempre*

mf all key clicks with x-shaped noteheads are to be played with the written pitches (or close approximation)

01:33

mf *p* *ord.*

p *molto stacc.*

(key click)

(lower pitched phone tones)

01:45

ppp *mf* *p* *mf* *mp* *mf*

(key clicks)

pitch bend

pitch bend 3

01:58

continue air stream as if trying to play as written so that the notes eventually do not sound, only air is heard

fp *ppp* (does not apply to key clicks)

02:09

molto rubato

pp *mf* *pp* *pp* *mf* *mf* *p* *pp*

02:20

poco rit.

*hold until fast tempo - line up as closely as possible
cresc. at the very last moment before the tempo change

mf *f* *pp* *molto*

(scraping sounds)

02:27

B ♩ = c.156, fast and in strict tempo**

f (try to blend with audio)

02:32

02:37

*The performer should attempt to line up as closely as possible with the sudden change in tempo that occurs in the audio. The written gesture just before the tempo change will need to be adjusted accordingly. The performer will need to quickly judge whether or not this gesture will need to be held longer or be shortened.

**This tempo is an approximation of the tempo heard in the audio. The performer should attempt to play in tempo with the audio, although actual synchronization is not expected. The pitches in the fast gestures and runs are less important than the gesture itself. The effect should sound like the live performer is struggling to keep up with the audio.

02:42

mp *ff* (*cresc.* just enough to be heard over the audio)
(low sound/repeat of [B])

02:47

fast fall
fp *f*

02:52

growl/flutter
ff (*cresc.* from this point and try to drown out the audio) *fff* *mf* *mp*

02:57

f

03:03

03:09

C ♩ = c. 72, suddenly slower, *molto rubato**

(remove slap if not possible)

03:19

poco accel.

poco rit.

03:29

accel.

non-pitched

03:39

poco rit.

a tempo

(slap)

poco rit.

03:49

*Between rehearsal marks C and D, the audio staff and running time are provided only as reference so the performer does not get too far behind. The audio tracks are not proportional to the changes in tempo written in the solo part. The performer does not need to line up with the audio (or running time) until rehearsal D.

Musical staff 1: Treble clef, key signature of two flats. The staff contains a complex melodic line with triplets and slurs. Dynamics include *mf espr.*, *f*, *mp*, *f*, and *p*. A *sfz* marking is present with a plus sign. A *poco rit.* tempo change is indicated by a dashed line.

03:59

Musical staff 2: Treble clef, key signature of two flats. The staff contains a melodic line with slurs and dynamics *mf* and *f*. A performance instruction is provided below the staff.

f continue in a steady tempo playing the higher pitches as written and slapping the keys for the lower pitches (the performer does not need to blow air through the key slaps, but should close off the mouthpiece throughout)

04:09

Musical staff 3: Treble clef, key signature of two flats. The staff contains a melodic line with a long slur and dynamics *pp* and *mf*. A performance instruction is provided above the staff.

(key clicks while blowing air)

04:19

Musical staff 4: Treble clef, key signature of two flats. The staff contains a melodic line with slurs and dynamics *f*, *pp*, *sfz*, *pp*, and *f*. A performance instruction is provided above the staff.

(pitch bend)

04:29

Musical staff 5: Treble clef, key signature of two flats. The staff contains a melodic line with slurs and dynamics *fp*, *f*, and *acc.*. A tempo change to *accel.* is indicated by a dashed line.

04:39

D ♩ = c. 112, *molto rubato*

mp espr. *mf*

(typing sounds return)

pitch bend

04:48

bend pitch (if possible)

f

(phone tones return)

04:48

gva

add wide, fast vibrato if possible

growl/flutter

ff *fff* *fff*

(swell become louder) (swell cuts off... keep holding high note until just before the end of the climax/noise)

This gesture should occur just before the end of the climax and the performer should cut off with the audio.

05:10

E Freely

hold about 2 seconds

gradually widen vibr.

suddenly without vibr.

mp *ff*

decresc. as much as possible

05:35

fast vibr. - gradually becoming slower and wider

no vibr.

slow vibr.

mf *pp* *mf* *p* *mf*

poco *poco*

06:00

(hold until high frequency) **F**

f *f* *f* *molto*

ff no accent - loud, full sound, hold as long as possible without change in dynamic, no vibr., very steady, breathe when necessary

(high frequency at 6:11)

06:25

slow key clicks while still blowing air fast

ppp *pp* *ppp*

dim. until pitches no longer sound and continue blowing air through the key clicks

cresc. just enough so the written D#/B \flat sound without a break in the air stream

slowly drop pitch

06:50

Repeat gesture in box quietly and as smoothly as possible. Gradually relax/change embouchure so the intonation varies with (and within) each repetition, as if trying to immitate the pitch heard in the audio. (Try to follow the speed of the audio.)

pp sempre

try to stop suddenly when audio cuts off (or just before)

(fast, higher pitched "boing" noise at 7:07 - count 5 more pulses before audio cuts off)

07:13

G

pp *ppp* *molto stacc.* barely audible, if possible

slap-tongue (as quietly as possible)

(noise at 7:24)

(silence)

07:31

use ♩ = c. 60 for reference

air only

slap

as smooth as possible

p

pp

mf

pp (or as much as possible)

(noise at 7:33)

(noise at 7:41)

07:49

air only (finger written pitches)

mf

dim.

p (but loud enough to be heard)

repeat the gesture in the box exactly as written, as if playing a loop, about 3 or 4 times

niente

*breathe in for one second

exhale through instrument for three seconds

sim.

(audio fades out)