

Things Hoped For, Things Unseen

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Abstract

Things Hoped For, Things Unseen

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Things Hoped For, Things Unseen is a new-media performance for electric/amplified harp, electronic music, and projected video. It was commissioned by the principle harpist of the National Symphony Orchestra in Taiwan, Shannon Chieh, for her concert “La Vie sans Frontières”, which was held to evoke attention toward the issue of the death penalty.

Currently, this issue has caused numerous discussions and arguments in Taiwan. The ultimate goal, however, is to gain unanimous support for human rights as well as respect for life. This process, changing from debate to concurrence, serves as the main spirit of this piece, in which the harp and the electronic music encounter, communicate, settle, and move together toward the same direction sonically.

For the electronic music, most materials are drawn from the live recordings of harp performance by Megan Bledsoe to be processed in the programming language

“SuperCollider”. Additionally, through ATS (Analysis, Transformation and Synthesis), the constituents of the recording samples can be further separated and then synthesized.

The video component for this work is a visual-instrument to interact with the music. In a formal sense, the images are simple and meant to subtly color the performance, and the video exists in a software mechanism that listens and responds to the musical composition. Through the confusion of a tangled forest, the darkness of the underworld, and then ultimately finding a realm of peace and calm, the scenes try to present the human spirit of hope and faith.

In cooperation with the visual artist Martin Jarmick, *Things Hoped For, Things Unseen* was premiered by harpist Shannon Chieh on April 2nd, 2012 at the National Concert Hall in Taipei, Taiwan.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Coming to the University of Washington has been one of the most crucial decisions I have made in my life. The brand-new environment, the research of electronic music, the studies at DXARTS, and the people I have met – all of them have significantly influenced my perspective on composition in many ways. As this period of my studies is completed, I sincerely convey my highest gratitude to the following individuals:

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To my colleagues from DXARTS, the School of Music at UW, and Taiwan, for offering me considerable help with enthusiasm.

To harpist Shannon Chieh, for her commission, warm encouragement, and marvelous interpretation.

To Martin Jarmick, for his invaluable dedication and effort for the video in this piece; the collaboration has truly been an amazing and unforgettable experience.


To Professor Kris Falk, for always being there hearkening to my concerns and giving me precious feedback and suggestions.


To my mentor, Ching-Wen Chao, who led me into the world of composition, where, with music, I am able to deeply feel the suffering in life and to be healed.


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Performance Instruction


 Hit strings around the indicated register with palm.


 Metal glissando


 Perform with the whole finger nail surface.


 Nail/finger tip

 Cluster; make the strings strike each other and let them vibrate.

 Mute string(s) with one hand while playing with the other hand.

 Rapidly sweep strings back and forth (horizontally).

 Track number

 Accelerando

 Ritardando

 Ritardando



Roughly follow the relative space between notes to perform music within the indicated duration.

Norm Normal position

Table Près de la table

Bisbig. Bisbigliando

All harmonics in this piece are NOT notated as sounding pitches: the harmonics should be performed at the 1/2 position of the strings to create the pitches which sound one octave higher, except for the only one in measure 41 which needs to be played at the 1/4 position of the string to produce the pitch that sounds two octave higher.

Equipment List

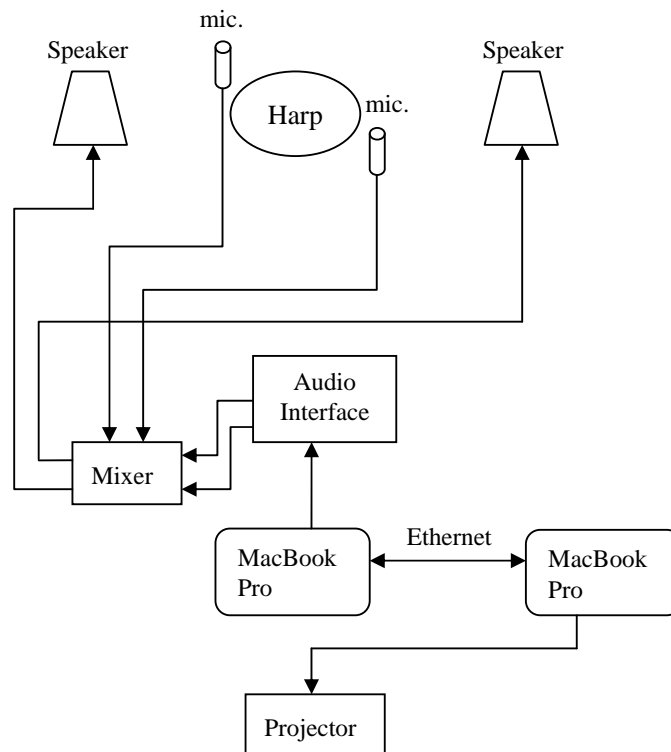
Sound

- One MacBook Pro equipped with SuperCollider
- Audio interface
- Two identical speakers
- Two microphones (cardioids recommended) to amplify the harp
- One mixing console (mixer): two inputs for microphones, and two outputs for speakers

Video

- One MacBook Pro equipped with Xcode and openFrameworks
- One projector
- One Ethernet cable to connect the two MacBook Pros

Technical Setup



9

Elec. (high bell-like attack) (ringing sound) (F#)

Hp. Tr.11 = 84 Norm. Tr.12 *mf* *ppp*

p < *mp* > *ppp*

12

Elec. (F#)

Hp. 12 *sffz* *pp* *mf* *ppp* *f*

75

Elec. (rain-like sound)

Hp.

$\text{quarter note} = 74$

[D#] [E#] [G#] [A#]

Improvisation-like; follow the melody contour to make dynamic changes.

4

78

Elec.

Hp.

$\text{quarter note} = 84$

Table Norm.

poco

cluster [G#] *mf* *pp* *p* *sf*

[G#] *f*

sub

20

Elec.
 (high bell-like attack)
 Tr. 14

Hp.
 mp sfz δ^{vz}
 pp
 mf pp

22

Elec.
 (whispering & wind sound)
 Tr. 15

Hp.
 pppp [E \sharp] [G \sharp] [F \sharp]
 bisbig.
 p ppp

= 66
 ca. $\delta, + \delta,$
 Slow gliss.; emerge from the resonance of the high attack in the electronic music.

24

24

Hp.

Tr. 16

Tr. 17 (video only)

Tr. 18

7

6

0 sfz

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

27

27

Hp.

Tr. 19

8

7

9

3

0

sfz

8th

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

Seemingly imperceptible..... Suddenly!

cluster [F#] [A# E#] [A# E#]

Elec.

Hp.

37

Elec.

(trill on F#(Gb))

[Tr. 2] From measure 38 to measure 55, tempo/pacing can be slightly changed to interact with the electronic music.

Hp.

40

Elec.

(trill on F#(G)
(lower register than the previous one))

Hp.

(sounding pitch)

mp p mp mf

[G#] [Gb]

44

Elec.

(low C)

Hp.

mp mf

[G#] [G]

Elec.

(C)

Hp.

ca. 7"

ca. 7"

f > < > < > < > < > *pp* *mf*

56

56

Tr.23 = 60~66 (video only)

Tr.24 (video only)

Tr.25

Tr.26 (video only)

Elec.

Hp.

[D^b C B, E[#] F[#] G A]

[D^b E^b F^b G^b A^b]

[D^b F[#]]

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

59

Elec.

Hp.

Tr. 27

Tr. 28 (video only)

Tr. 29

Table

mf

f

pp < mfp

mf

[B \flat F \sharp A \sharp]

[B \flat]

Elec.

Hp.

♩ = 84

(Table)

Norm.

♩ = 66

mp

mf

p

f

mp

[F \sharp]

[G \sharp]

[D \sharp E \sharp]

64

Elec.

Hp.

Tr.30 (video only)

mp

mf

p

mp

p

mp

mp

3

3

3

6

Norm. --- Table

[D>G#]

[A#]

[G#]

ff

67

Elec.

Hp.

Tr.31

Norm.

pp

p

ppp

mf

bisbig. 3

(Norm.) --- Table

[G#]

[A#]

pp

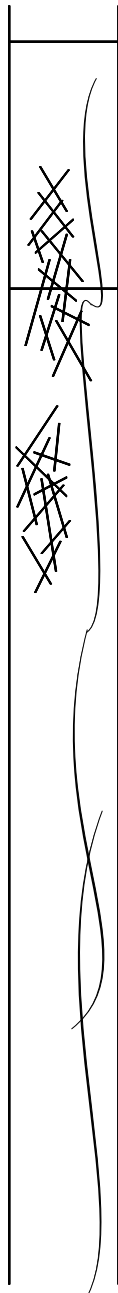
mf

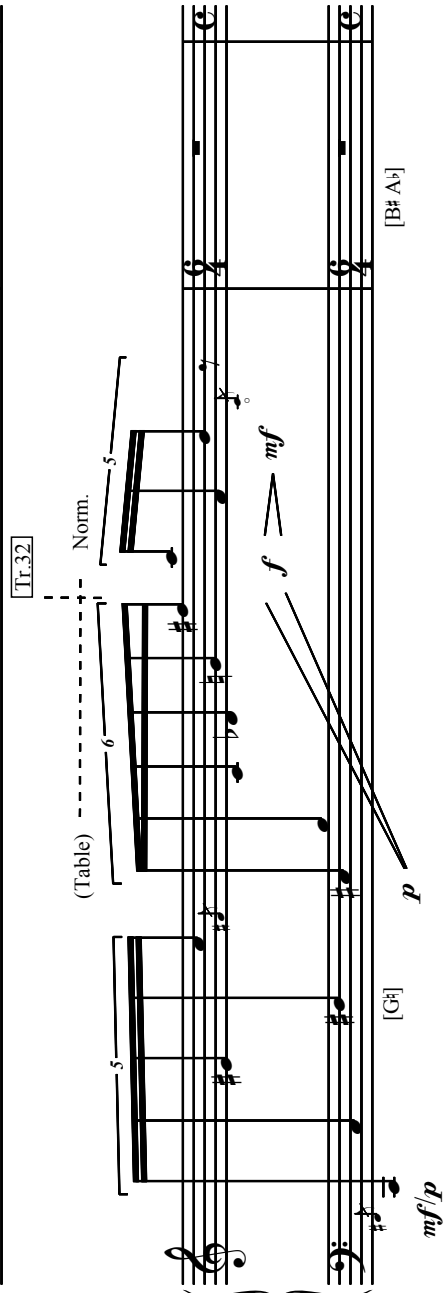
pp

(high)

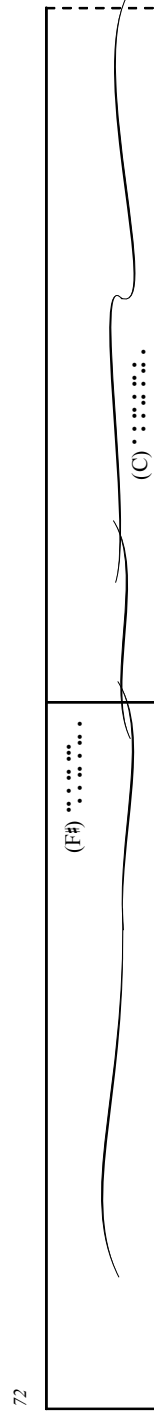
(low)

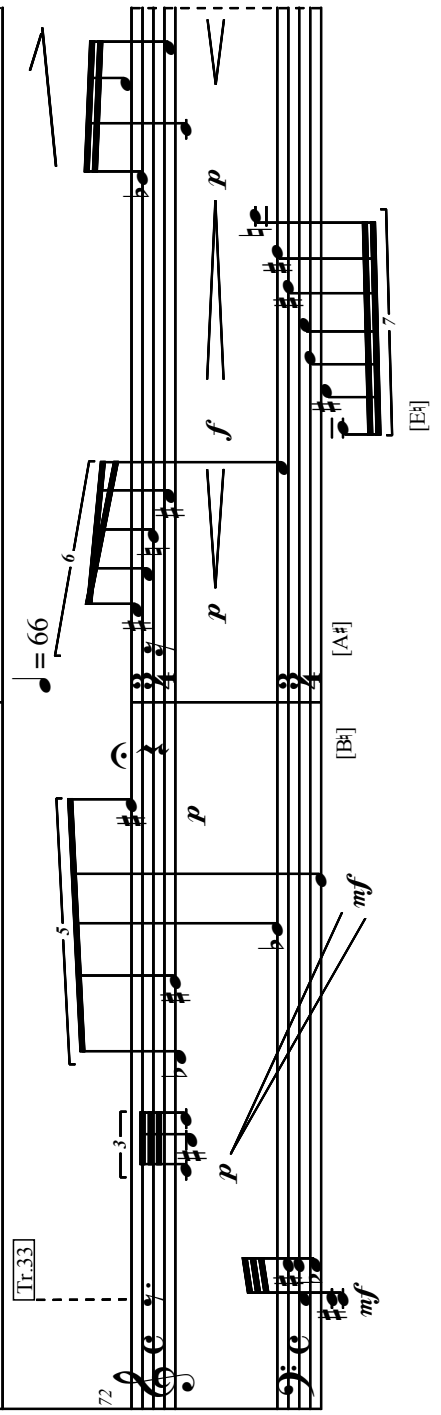
71

Elec. 

Hp. 

72

Elec. 

Hp. 

78

78

Table Norm.

Hp. *p* < *f* > *mp* < *f* / *p* < *mf* > < *f* / *p* < *mf* > < *p* > *mf* / *p*

[G♯] [E♯] [C♯] [B♯] [G♯] [B♯]

80

80

(high bell-like attack)

Hp. *f* > *mp* *mf* < *f* > *mp*

84

84

Elec. (F#) • (C) •••••

Hp. *p* *mp* *mf* *f* [G#] [D# Bb] [B#]

88

88

Elec. •••••

Hp. *p* *mf* *f* [D# Gb] [F#] [D# F#]

90

sfz / *p* < *mf* > < *f* >

8^{vb} Irregularly change the dynamic level and the patterns of the gliss; integrate with the electronic music.

91