

gradient

(2024)

Max Chung

For soprano saxophone, electric guitar, piano, and percussion

Full Score

Title: gradient

Premier Performance by: Hypercube ensemble

Duration: ca. 7'-0"

Instrumentation: soprano saxophone, electric guitar, piano, percussion

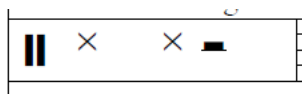
Performance Notes:

This electroacoustic quartet explores the imperceptibly slow changes in our life and the gradual shifts that go unnoticed until they culminate in a dramatic, often overwhelming realization. This piece explores the psychological concept of inattention blindness which is a failure to perceive obvious but sometimes slow transformations which cause us to miss critical information until it's too late to take meaningful action.

The slow introduction of recurring phrases. The title, "gradient", refers to the gradual change in the piece as time goes on—the form of the piece changes from a very still atmosphere (cues 1-9) to a hurried, bustling soundscape (cue 10), until it all seems to suddenly fall apart (cue 11) after a burst of energy.

In the piece, no vibrato should be employed unless any sort of pitch bend is notated.

The piece is electroacoustic and audiovisual, and works off a cue-based MAX patch which can run on its own. The piece uses an 8-channel speaker setup. Each instrument should have its own microphone input. The last requirement is a MIDI pedal, or someone to trigger the cues in the desired order. Further instructions can be found in the MAX patch itself.



Percussion:

Instrument list:

vibraphone, glockenspiel, snare drum, cymbal, bass drum

Mallet list:

bow (1), yarn mallets (4), hard/glockenspiel mallets (2), drumsticks (2)



Press hand lightly on one side of the bar to mute it. This only comes on during sections with glockenspiels.



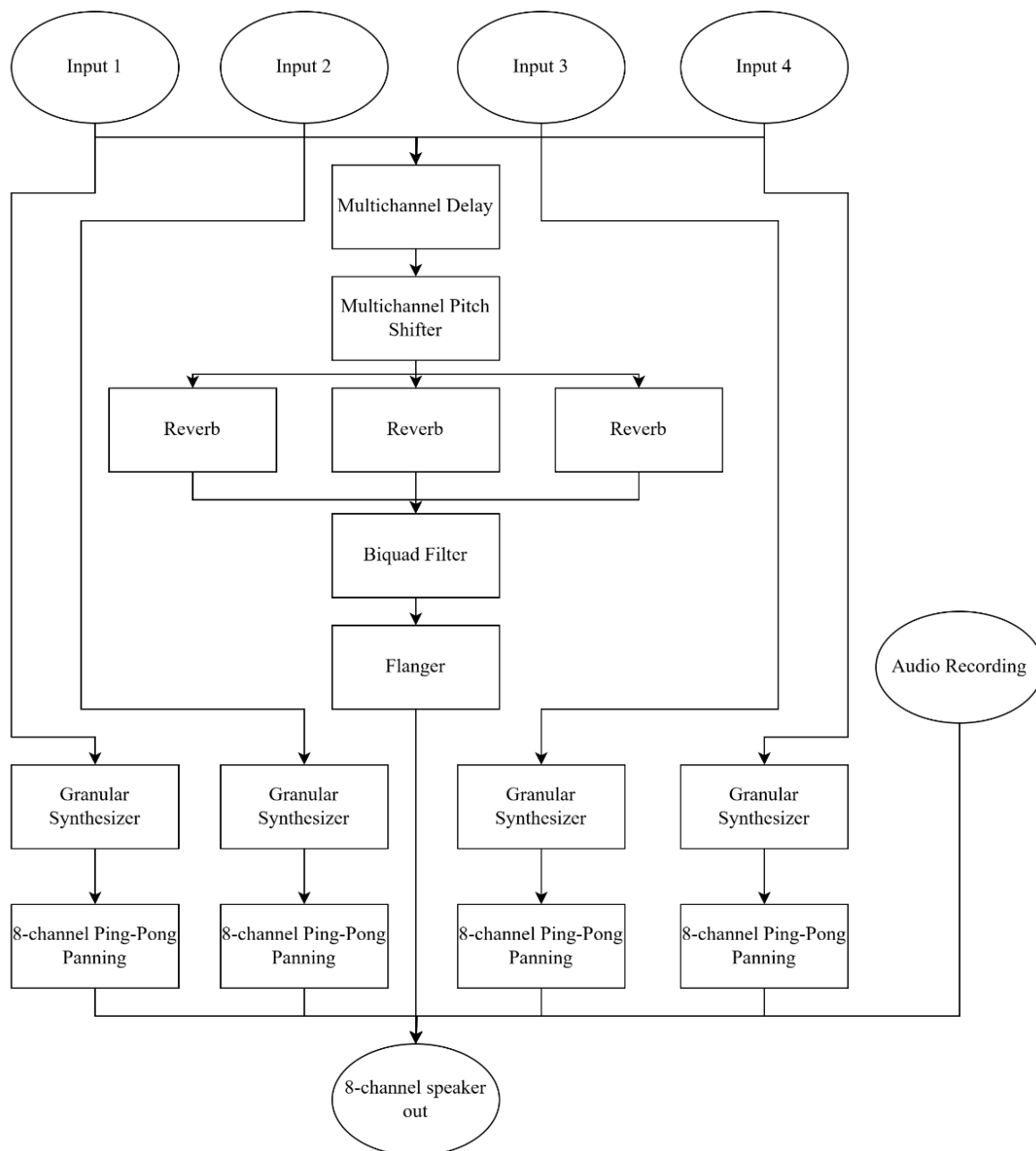
From left to right: bass drum, snare drum, snare drum (hit side), cymbal

Piano:

Pedaling is left to the pianist except when there is notation which indicates specifically otherwise, in which case, the pianist should follow the markings until *con pedale* is written.

MAX Patch Details:

Please email mc@max-chung.com to request the patch. The diagram below shows the audio signal chain for this piece.

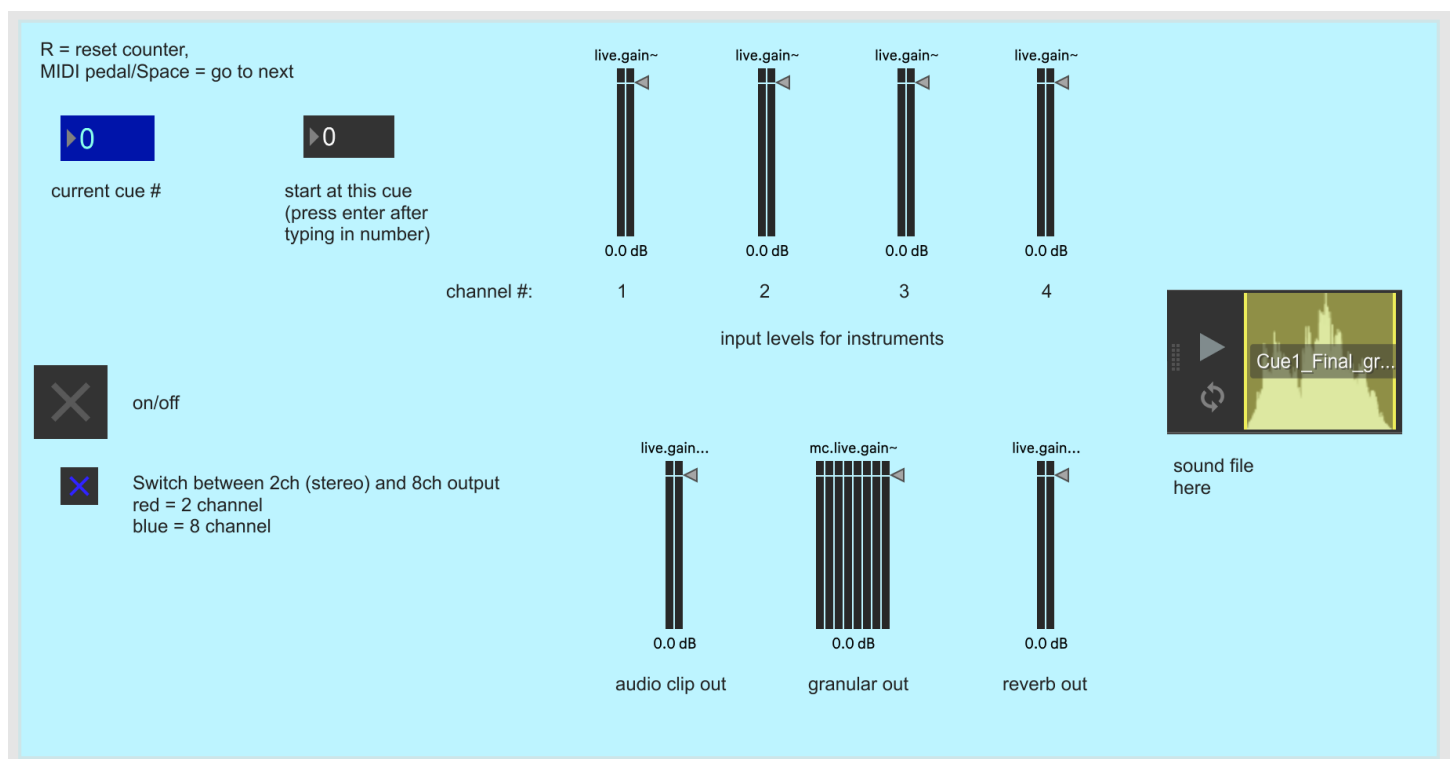


Technical Requirements:

- Laptop, containing MAX 8 standalone or newer.
- 4 omni-microphones
- 8 speakers placed in surround-sound (2 speakers if doing stereo format)
- 8-channel audio interface

Wires should be as hidden as possible in the performance, and focus should be put on the instrumentalists. The person to control the cues should have the laptop next to them, but if a separate person controls cues they should not be put in the center of the stage. If an 8-channel performance is not possible, a 2-channel setup is preferred, which can be switched back and forth as seen in the patch. In this case, the setup should stay similar, but only speakers 1 and 2 should be in their places.

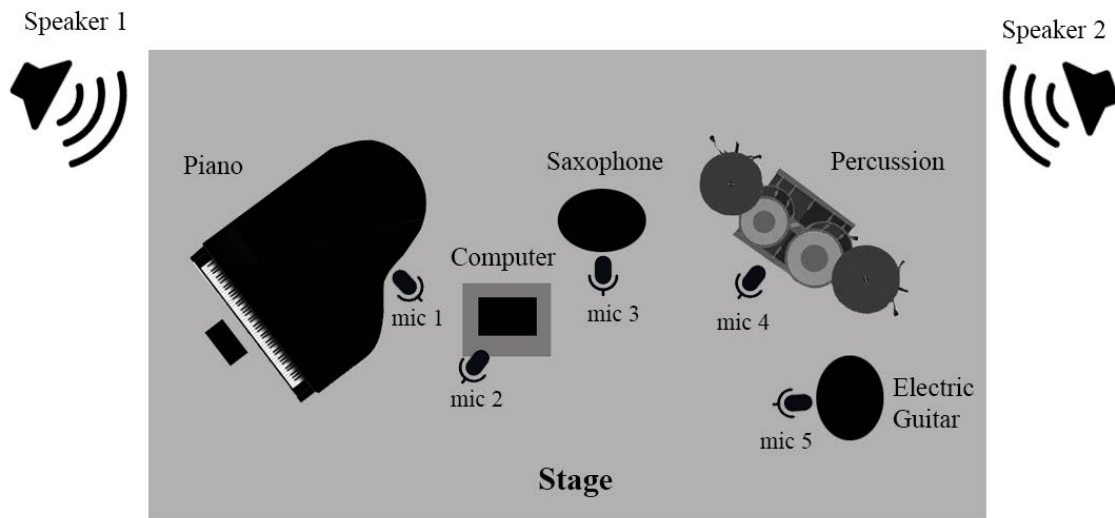
MAX interface notes:



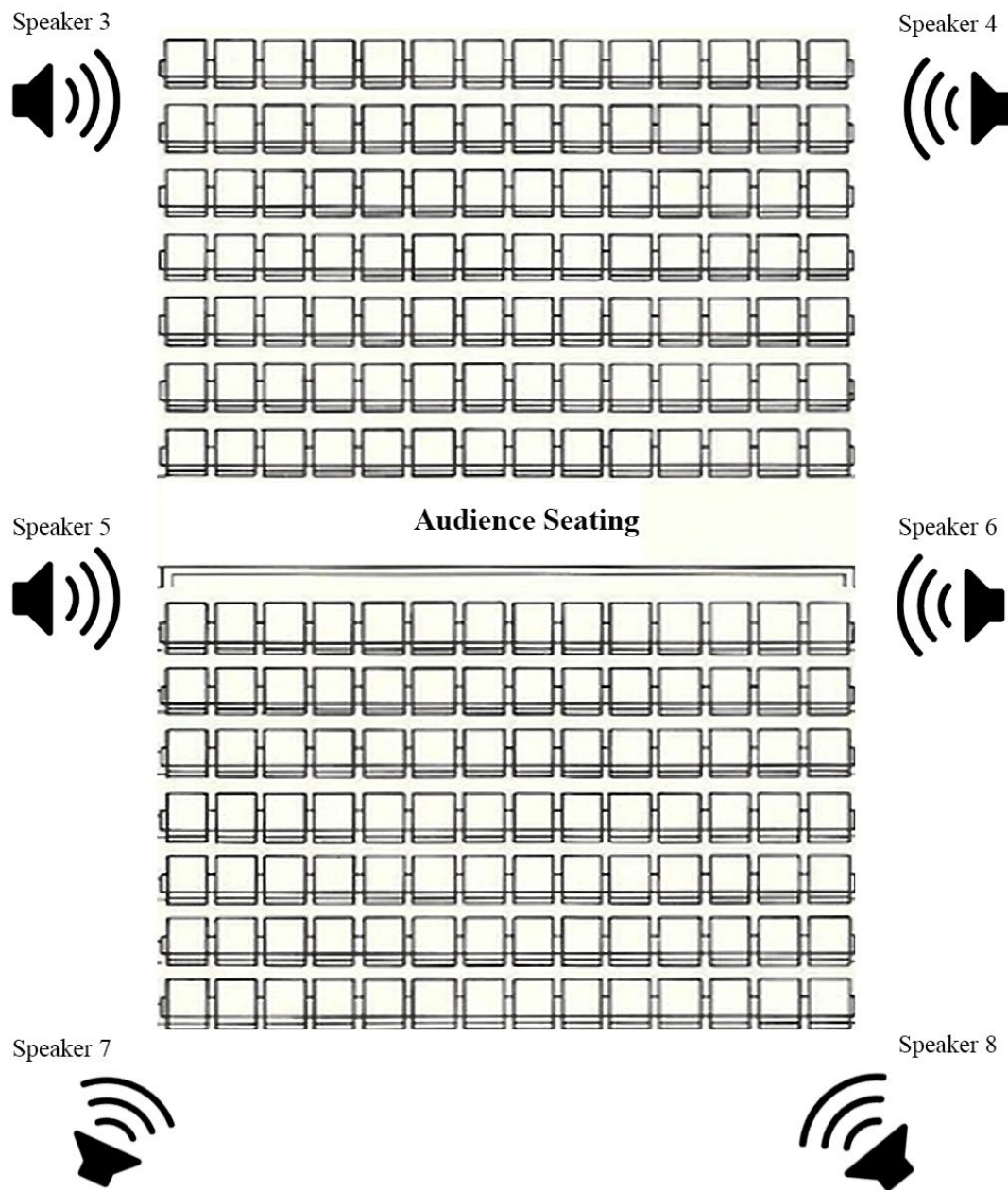
The cue # can be seen in the blue box above and is represented by a large square number in the score. Pressing space or using a MIDI pedal will go to the next number, and R resets the cue.

The input levels for each microphone can be seen on the top, and the output levels of the various effects can be tweaked for maximum control. Finally, the sound clip should look like the right—if it looks like the file is missing, drag the file manually into the patch again, and it should play.

Stage Layout Plan



Note: Microphone 1 is inside the piano



Score

Suspended, Senza Vibrato $\text{♩} = 68$

6
S. Sx. *pp* *p* n

6
Gtr. (5)

6
Vib. *p* *mp* l.v.

6
Pno. *mp*

11

S. Sx.

pp *p*

Gtr.

mp l.v.

Vib.

Pno.

pp

3

15

S. Sx.

p *mp*

Gtr.

mp *p*

Vib.

mp *p*

Pno.

p

Switch to Yarn Mallets,
Vibraphone, w/ Pedal

19

S. Sx.

p *f*

Gtr.

mp *p* pitch bend

Vib.

mp *p*

Pno.

mp *f* *p*

4

S. Sx.

f *p* *mp* *p*

Gtr.

24 *mp* *f*

Vib.

24 *f* l.v. *p* *sfz*

Pno.

24 *p* *mp* *n* *p*

28

S. Sx.

mp *p*

Gtr.

28 *p*

Vib.

28 *p* *mp* *n*

Pno.

28 *pp*

5

S. Sx.

p *mf* *p* *f*

Gtr.

33 *f* *p* *p*

Vib.

33 *p* *f* *p*

Pno.

33 *mp* *p* *f*

closed slaps at random timings and pitches

38

S. Sx. *p* *f* *pp* *mp* *f*

Gtr. *p* hold random frets on strings as quietly as possible

Vib. *p* *f* Switch to Yarn Mallets, Unpitched Percussion

Pno. *mp* *p* *p*

5 4 5 4

6

43

S. Sx. *mf* *n* *p* *f*

Gtr. *mp*

Perc. *mp*

Pno. *mp* *mf* *p* *pp*

5 4 5 4

48

S. Sx. *p* *f* *n* *f*

Gtr. *mp* *pp* *sfz*

Perc. *p* 3 snare side at random timing

Pno. *mp* *f* *f* *mp*

Rea. * Rea. * Rea.

7

S. Sx.

p *f* *p* *f* *mp* *f*

Gtr.

p

Perc.

pp *mp*

Pno.

p *mp* *f* *p*

con pedale

✱

57

S. Sx.

either open or closed slap

Gtr.

pp *f* *p* *mp*

Perc.

p *f*

Switch to Hard Mallet, Glockenspiel

Pno.

pp *p*

8

S. Sx.

p *p* *f* *f*

Gtr.

f *p* *p*

l.h. mute

Glk.

mp *f* *f* *p* *f*

mute bars with finger

Pno.

f *mp* *p* *p* *p*

✱

66

S. Sx.

Gtr.

Glk.

Pno.

f *mp*

mp *f* *mp*

p *f* *mp*

f *p* *con pedale*

p

70

S. Sx.

Gtr.

Glk.

Pno.

f *mp* *pp*

L.h. mute
p *p* *f* *p*

mute bars with finger
p *f* *mp*

f

ff *ff*

74

S. Sx.

Gtr.

Glk.

Pno.

p *mp* *p* *sub.f*

f *p* *f*

f *p* *mp* *p* *f*

p *pp* *p* *f*

9 Pressing Forward, Sharp

77

S. Sx. *pp* --- *f* *f* --- *ffp* --- *pp* *f* --- *p*

Gtr. *p* *f* --- *ff* *f* --- *p*

Glk. *f* --- *ff* --- *f* *pp* *p* --- *ff*

Pno. *pp* --- *f* *p* *p* --- *ff*
p *f* --- *ff* --- *f* *pp* *sfz*

80

S. Sx. *f* *fp*

Gtr. *f*

Glk. *p* --- *ff* *p* --- *f*

Pno. *p* --- *ff* *f* *p* --- *f*

Switch to Sticks, Unpitched Percussion

10

S. Sx. *p* --- *f* *f* --- *p* *sfz* *overblow*

Gtr. *p* --- *f* *p* *f* --- *p* *sfz*

Perc. *ff* *p* *sfz*

Pno. *f* *p* --- *f* *ff* *f* *f* --- *p* *f* --- *p* --- *f*
p --- *f*

This musical score is for a piece titled "gradient". It features four staves: S. Sx. (Saxophone), Gtr. (Guitar), Perc. (Percussion), and Pno. (Piano). The score is divided into three systems, each containing measures 86-88, 89-91, and 92.

System 1 (Measures 86-88):

- S. Sx.:** Measures 86-88. Dynamics: $f \Rightarrow p$, $f \Rightarrow pp$, $p \Rightarrow ff$, $f \Rightarrow p$, $sub.f$.
- Gtr.:** Measures 86-88. Dynamics: ff , $p \Rightarrow ff$, pp .
- Perc.:** Measures 86-88. Dynamics: ff , $p \Rightarrow$.
- Pno.:** Measures 86-88. Dynamics: ff , $p \Rightarrow ff$, $p \Rightarrow f$, $f \Rightarrow p$, $sub.f$.

System 2 (Measures 89-91):

- S. Sx.:** Measures 89-91. Dynamics: $p \Rightarrow ff$, f , p .
- Gtr.:** Measures 89-91. Dynamics: $f \Rightarrow p$, $mp \Rightarrow ff$, $p \Rightarrow ff$.
- Perc.:** Measures 89-91. Dynamics: ff , $p \Rightarrow f$, p , f .
- Pno.:** Measures 89-91. Dynamics: $mp \Rightarrow ff$, $f \Rightarrow p$, f , p .

System 3 (Measure 92):

- S. Sx.:** Measure 92. Dynamics: $p \Rightarrow ff$.
- Gtr.:** Measure 92. Dynamics: mp , $f \Rightarrow ff$.
- Perc.:** Measure 92. Dynamics: $p \Rightarrow ff$.
- Pno.:** Measure 92. Dynamics: p , mp , p , ff .

94

S. Sx.

f *p* *mp* *f*

Gtr.

f *p* *f* *ff* *p* *f*

Perc.

pp *mp* *f*

Pno.

mp *p* *f*

20"

11 Chaotic Random pitches in boxed contour and rhythm, speeding up at an inconsistent rate

f *molto accel.* *fff*

S. Sx.

Gtr.

Perc.

Pno.

f *fff*

20"

Random pitches in boxed contour and rhythm, slowing down at an inconsistent rate

ff *molto rall.* *pp*

97

S. Sx.

97

Gtr.

20"

97

Perc.

20"

97

Pno.

ff *pp*

12 Unsteadily, Recovering (♩ = c. 60)

S. Sx.

98

Gtr.

ppp *p*

98

Perc.

To Soft Mallet, Vibraphone

p

98

Pno.

ppp *p* *p*

mp

13

Light and Peaceful