

Gestaltzerfall

(2025)

Max Chung

For C trumpet, piano, percussion, and live electronics

Full Score

PIECE TITLE: Gestaltzerfall

DURATION: ca. 6'

INSTRUMENTATION: C trumpet, piano, and percussion

PERCUSSION INSTRUMENTS: Drum set: kick drum, snare drum, mounted tom-toms (2), hi-hat, crash cymbal

MALLETS: sticks, brushes

PROGRAM NOTES: “Gestaltzerfall” refers to a psychological phenomenon where a complex shape or pattern is observed for a long time, and in that time, the brain begins to break the image into simpler sections. This fragmentation leads to unfamiliarity with the object. In the same way, this piece takes a melody and focuses on tiny sections to repeat and modify, stretching these moments out through improvisatory sections. Rhythmically, the work switches between locking the instruments in a strict grid and decaying into a nebulous cloud of sound, using the motifs from before and developing them.

The piece explores the idea of desperately trying to hold the future within my control, as a familiar situation becomes increasingly confusing. The government in which this country has been put under is now completely alien as it feels like anyone who meant to represent me has disappeared. The instability of trying to cobble together aspects of the old structure is represented in the work with the constant back and forth of the piece, finally flatlining in a single note before cutting off.

PERFORMANCE NOTES:

The piece explores the idea of the contrast between rhythmically sharp and very free phrases, using the same notes but focusing on the effect of the groove. Over time, these differences grow, and the “gestaltzerfall” described in the program notes begins to take over. These short 2-5 note patterns for each instruments alternate with a strict 2/4 groove. Terms like “robotic” are invoked in order to give a sense of emotionless repetitiveness in the sections hammering the same notes over and over.

In the improvisatory sections, the players should start on the beats but slowly drift away from the beat over time, and then come back together. The ideal situation would be to make it as smooth as possible in between these two very different sound worlds.

Gestaltzerfall

Ethereal, Floating ♩ = 156

Max Chung

1

Trumpet in C

c. 10" slowly increase density

c. 5" slowly increase density

ppp *p*

Drum Set

c. 10" c. 5"

Piano

Electronics

delay (3 v.), reverb (high)

Tpt in C

air sounds together

T.R.

air sounds

3 T.R.

p *mp* *sfz* *p* *mp*

together

Dr.

p

Pno

together

Ele

T.R.

2

c. 20''

The musical score for "The Elephant" by John Cage is presented in four staves. The top staff is for Tpt in C, the second for Dr., the third for Pno, and the bottom for Ele. The score is divided into two main sections by a vertical dashed line. The first section is marked "c. 10\"", the second "c. 10\"", and the third "c. 20\"". The Tpt in C staff features a melodic line with "flz." (flautando) markings and a dynamic range from *pp* to *mp*. The Dr. staff includes a rhythmic pattern with accents and a dynamic marking of *p*. The Pno staff features a melodic line with a dynamic marking of *p* and a performance instruction "play phrase at random intervals". The Ele staff includes a performance instruction "delay (2 v.), reverb (high), ringmod (low), pitch shift (1 v.)".

delay (2 v.), reverb (high), ringmod (low), pitch shift (1 v.)

3

15 together flz. air sounds

Tpt in C

Dr.

Pno

Ele

mp together

f p

pp mp f fp

mp

mp

sfz mp > pp

15^{ma} together

mp f mp f 3 mp < f

8^{ba} p

delay (3 v.), reverb (low), distortion (low)

21

Tpt in C

Dr.

Pno

Ele

mp

f p mp

mp

sfz f mp f

(15) mp

f

(8) mp

27

Tpt in C

Dr.

Pno

Ele

Measures 27-32. Tpt in C: measures 27-32 with dynamics *f*, *mp*, *mp*, *p*, and triplets. Dr.: measures 27-32 with dynamics *f*, *mp*, *p*, and triplets. Pno: measures 27-32 with dynamics *ff*, *f*, *mp*, *mp*, *p*, and triplets. Ele: empty staff.

4

c. 15"

c. 15"

transform the first phrase into the last phrase shown

33

Tpt in C

flz.

p

c. 15"

c. 15"

play the three-note phrase in different rhythms

Dr.

c. 15"

c. 15"

play each note in a random sequence once per phrase

Pno

p

8ba

delay (2 v.), reverb (high), ringmod (low), pitch shift (1 v.)

Ele

Measures 33-38. Tpt in C: measures 33-38 with flz. and *p*, and a transformation instruction. Dr.: measures 33-38 with a three-note phrase and rhythm instruction. Pno: measures 33-38 with *p* and a random sequence instruction. Ele: empty staff with delay (2 v.), reverb (high), ringmod (low), pitch shift (1 v.) instructions.

5

35 *funk-like groove together*

Tpt in C

Dr.

Pno

Ele

flz.

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

funk-like groove together

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

delay (3 v.), reverb (low), distortion (low)

42

Tpt in C

Dr.

Pno

Ele

p *f* *p* *f*

p *f* *p* *f*

p *f* *p* *f*

sfz

48

Tpt in C

Dr.

Pno

Ele

ff mp fp mp f p fp f

p mp f p f

ff mp p f f p

pp

54

Tpt in C

Dr.

Pno

Ele

f mp

p

mp pp

6

10"

Gestaltzerfall

10"

7

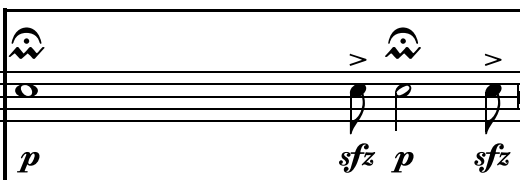
Tpt in C

58

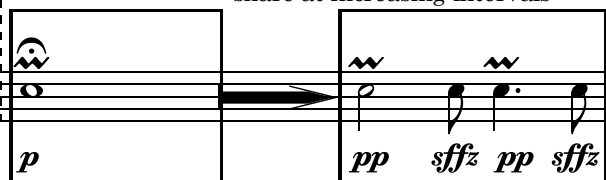
*mp*random notes played
at slow rates*pp*random descending two note phrases
played at different intervals

Dr.

10"

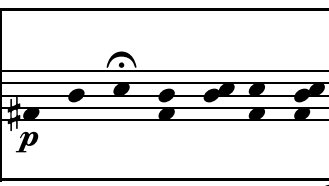
rub stick across snare and
hit snare at slow, random intervals

10"

rub stick across snare and hit
snare at increasing intervals

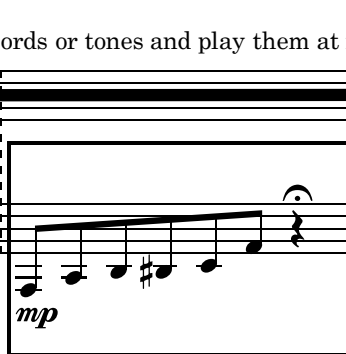
Pno

10"



pick different written chords or tones and play them at random intervals

10"

play each note in a random
sequence, once per phrase

Ele

delay (5 v.), reverb (high)

7

Tpt in C

60

together

f together

Dr.

f together*mp**f*

Pno

f

delay (5 v.), reverb (low)

Ele

2/4

67

Tpt in C

Dr.

Pno

Ele

flz.

flz.

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

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

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

74

Tpt in C

Dr.

Pno

Ele

f *p* *f* *f* *f* *f*

f *mp* *pp* *f* *f* *f*

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

81

Tpt in C

Dr.

Pno

Ele

mp f p flz. 8 flz. flz.

f pp p sfz mp

delay (5 v.), reverb (low), distortion (low)

Detailed description: This block contains the musical notation for measures 81 through 87. The Tpt in C part features a melodic line with dynamics *mp*, *f*, *p*, and *flz.* (flautando), including a measure rest marked with a boxed '8'. The Dr. part provides a rhythmic accompaniment with dynamics *f*, *pp*, *p*, *sfz*, and *mp*. The Pno part has a harmonic accompaniment with dynamics *f*, *pp*, *sfz*, and *p*. The Ele part is marked with 'delay (5 v.), reverb (low), distortion (low)'.

88

Tpt in C

Dr.

Pno

Ele

f p fp f p f flz. 3

p f p f

mp f f p f

Detailed description: This block contains the musical notation for measures 88 through 94. The Tpt in C part continues the melodic line with dynamics *f*, *p*, *fp*, *f*, *p*, *f*, *flz.*, and a triplet marked '3'. The Dr. part has dynamics *p*, *f*, *p*, and *f*. The Pno part has dynamics *mp*, *f*, *f*, *p*, and *f*. The Ele part is empty.

94

Tpt in C

Dr.

Pno

Ele

ff *3* *mp* *p* *ppp*

f *3* *mp* *p* *3* *3*

f *3* *mp* *p*

mp *pp*

9 accel. rit.

100

Tpt in C

Dr.

Pno

Ele

three note phrases played in this contour

10" 10"

rub brushes across snare at different rates

10" 10"

rub brushes across snare and hit snare at increasing intervals

p *p* *pp* *sffz* *pp* *sffz*

pick different written chords or tones and play them at random intervals

10" 10"

p *mp*

play each note in a random sequence, once per phrase

mp

delay (7 v.), reverb (med)

2/4

10

102 together

Tpt in C

Dr.

Pno

Ele

delay (5 v.), reverb (low), distortion (med)

f *mp* *ff* *f* *mp* *ff*

f *p* *f* *p*

f *ff* *f*

11

109 like a computer freezing flz.

Tpt in C

Dr.

Pno

Ele

like a computer freezing

like a computer freezing

delay (10 v.), distortion (med)

ff *f* *mp* *f* *mp* *f* *ff*

p *f* *p* *f*

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

115

Tpt in C

Dr.

Pno

Ele

f *mp*

f *p*

sfz *sfz* *sfz* *sfz*

f *p*

12

121 *funk-like groove*

13

like a computer freezing

Tpt in C

Dr.

Pno

Ele

mp *pp* *p* *f* *mp* *ff* *f*

funk-like groove

flz.

like a computer freezing

flz.

p *f* *p* *f*

funk-like groove

sub.f

ff

delay (5 v.), reverb (low), distortion (med)

delay (10 v.), distortion (med)

128

Tpt in C

Dr.

Pno

Ele

Measures 128-133. Tpt in C: Triplet eighth notes, dynamics *f*. Dr.: Eighth-note pattern with triplets, dynamics *f*. Pno: Tremolo in right hand, eighth notes in left hand, dynamics *f*, *sfz*. Ele: Silent.

134

14

Tpt in C

Dr.

Pno

Ele

Measures 134-139. Tpt in C: Dynamics *pp*, *f*. Dr.: Dynamics *pp*, *f*. Pno: Dynamics *f*, *p*, *8va*, *sfz*. Ele: Silent.

delay (5 v.), distortion (med), reverb (low)

140

Tpt in C

Dr.

Pno

Ele

mp *f* *p* *f*

p *fp* *p* *fp* *f*

ff

p *sfz*

(8)

3

flz.

145

15

Tpt in C

Dr.

Pno

Ele

p *f*

like a computer freezing

like a computer freezing

like a computer freezing

ff

8va

delay (5 v.), distortion (high)

(8)

150

decaying away

Tpt in C

f

pp

Dr.

decaying away

f

pp

rimshot

3

Pno

decaying away

(8)

ff

pp

3

3

3

Ele

16

20"

157

play the written notes randomly in four-note sequences

Tpt in C

mp

20"

Dr.

p

rub brushes across snare and hit snare at increasing intervals

pp *sfz* *pp* *sfz*

10"

10"

Pno

mp

pick different written chords or tones and play them at random intervals, slowly change chords to the ending chords

play each note in a random sequence, once per phrase

mp

delay (3 v.), reverb (high)

Ele

17

159 together

Tpt in C

f together

Dr.

Pno

typo
play each note in a random sequence, once per phrase

f

pp 8^{va}

8^{ba}
mp

delay (5 v.), distortion (high)

Ele

18

165 funk-like groove

Tpt in C

f flz.

p sub.f

p sub.f

fp

Dr.

funk-like groove

sfz pp sfz

f

p *fp*

Pno

(8)

(8)

f sfz p sfz

p ff p f sfz sfz

8^{va}

delay (3 v.), reverb (low), ringmod (med)

Ele

19

172

Tpt in C

Dr.

Pno

Ele

f

p

flz.

sub.*f*

robotic

scratch cymbal

f

robotic

sub.*f*

f

p

delay (5 v.), ringmod (high), distortion (high)

179

Tpt in C

Dr.

Pno

Ele

to brushes

mp

20

186 *funk-like groove*

Tpt in C

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

to sticks

Dr.

funk-like groove

p *sub. f* *ff*

Pno

f *mp* *f* *mp*

delay (3 v.), reverb (low), ringmod (med)

Ele

21

193

Tpt in C

flz.

robotic

1 2

3 3

split-tone

Dr.

p *f*

scratch cymbal

to brushes

Pno

robotic

tr

delay (5 v.), ringmod (high), distortion (high)

Ele

1
2

199

Tpt in C

Dr.

Pno

Ele

split-tone

f *p*

3 3

(8)

3

22

funk-like groove
mute out
together

205

Tpt in C

Dr.

Pno

Ele

p *f*

funk-like groove
together

together

f

(8)

flz.

delay (3 v.), reverb (low), ringmod (med)

212

Tpt in C

Dr.

Pno

Ele

fp

p *f*

mp

(8)

8^{ba}
p

218

23 *robotic*

Tpt in C

Dr.

Pno

Ele

p *f*

fz.

robotic

f

robotic

(8)

(8)

delay (5 v.), ringmod (med), distortion (med)

224

Tpt in C

Dr.

Pno

Ele

p *f* *mp* *p* *pp* to brushes

(8)

24

228

Tpt in C

Dr.

Pno

Ele

10" play each note in a random sequence once per phrase

10" rub brushes around tom

10" play each note in a random sequence once per phrase

(8) delay (5 v.), reverb (high), ringmod (low)

25

229 *funk-like groove together* *flz.*

Tpt in C *p* *p < f* *p < f* *mp < f > p* *f sub.* *f*

Dr. *to sticks together* *funk-like groove* *mp* *mp*

Pno *funk-like groove together* *mp* *8va* *f* *sfz* *p sfz* *sfz* *f*

Ele *delay (5 v.), reverb (low), ringmod (low)*

26

236 *robotic*

Tpt in C *3* *3* *3* *3* *3* *3* *3* *pp*

Dr. *robotic* *f* *f*

Pno *robotic* *f* *pp*

Ele *delay (3 v.), ringmod (high), distortion (high)*

242 27

Tpt in C

Dr.

Pno

Ele

f *mp* *p* \triangleleft *f* *p* \triangleleft *fp* *flz.* *tr* *fp*

pp *mp* *p* *sffz* *sffz*

delay (5 v.), reverb (low), ringmod (high)

28

249

Tpt in C

Dr.

Pno

Ele

mp \triangleleft *f* *p* \triangleleft *f* *like a computer freezing* *like a computer freezing*

mp *f* *like a computer freezing*

f *sffz* *sffz* *sffz* *sffz* *sffz* *sffz*

delay (10 v.), ringmod (high), distortion (high)

256

Tpt in C

Dr.

Pno

Ele

slightly uneven

ff

slightly uneven

f

slightly uneven

f

29

262

Tpt in C

Dr.

Pno

Ele

ff

fz.

freeze in place

f

freeze in place

ff

ff

(C#)

(C)

(click)

10"

10"

10"