

ephemeral blossom

(2025)

Max Chung

For flute, viola, soprano, piano, and fixed electronics

Full Score

PIECE TITLE: ephemeral blossom

DURATION: ca. 7'

INSTRUMENTATION: flute, viola, soprano, piano, and fixed electronics

PROGRAM NOTES:

Death Valley is an area in the Mojave desert, known for its desolate climate and its spectacular geological formations. The huge scale which the desert spans makes it remote and the extreme conditions makes it difficult to survive. Most animals come out at night, when it is cooler, and the plants mainly consist of bushes and short plants, leaving little to no cover. The soundscape when exploring was unique—despite the amount of space, there was completely unfiltered wind which was nearly silent because there was practically nothing to pass through. The different desert structures were all beautiful, but also terrifying due to their scale.

In contrast to the typical sparse wildlife, sometimes there are “superblooms”. These only occur about once a decade, and the desert springs to life with colorful flora. The seeds rely on being dormant in the ground to preserve themselves during desert conditions, and this resilience allows them to grow quickly when the time comes. However, this moment is fleeting—taking too long exposes the plants to the tough desert conditions which could quickly wear these flowers down. In the same way that these flowers grow, this same resilience is necessary, especially right now. Recognizing the moment to grab, seeing the path forward, even in a world where it can be difficult to find anything—that is one of the skills necessary to make it day by day.

PERFORMANCE NOTES:

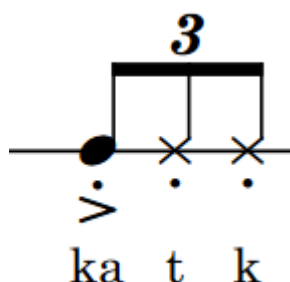
The piece begins with hollow and airy sounds dominating the soundscape, mirroring the desert. Over time, pitch slowly creeps into each phrase, integrating itself while lively percussive sounds creep into the texture. The piece's phrasing is clear at first, with fermatas demarcating the ending, but over time they begin to weave into each other. These changes suddenly compound on top of each other like the superbloom in the last third of the work, growing into a flourish which drastically changes the range and timbre that the instruments span. This moment is quick to disappear, and dies away until the listener is left with textures from the beginning, slowly disappearing.

KEY:

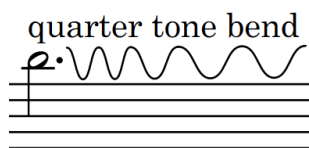
General:

Accidentals only apply to the note they modify. Any naturals are courtesy accidentals. At the very end, walking up the piano is indicated for almost every instrumentalist. In this case, speak or play into the piano to take advantage of its reverberation.

Each instrument has a speaking line and a typical performance line. On the speaking line, the x noteheads represent a whisper. Regular noteheads represent spoken syllables.



Pitch bends: pitch bends are indicated by curved lines after the note. A pitch range may or may not be specified. If it is not specified, go up or down as far as possible smoothly and quickly.

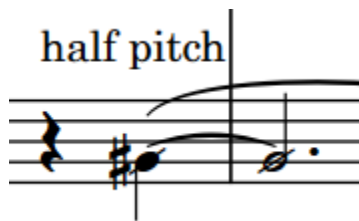


Flute:

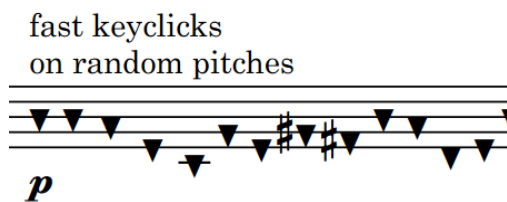
Full air: blow pure air into the flute using the consonant provided at the bottom.



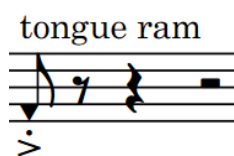
Half pitch, half air: use half pitch and half air. Changing between different amounts gradually during the held duration is preferred.



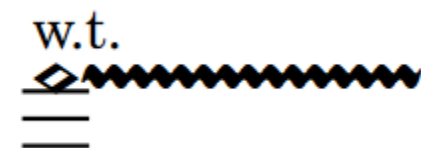
Keyclicks: Random keyclicks as quickly as possible. This is done after walking to the piano, and try to get the flute close to the inside of the piano as possible.



Tongue Ram: Prepare a tongue ram. This will usually be accented

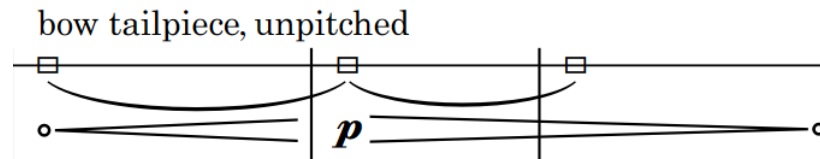


Whistle Tone: Do a whistle tone on the specified note. The whistle tone should be unstable in pitch.



Viola:

Bow tailpiece: Bow the tailpiece of the viola. Aim for an unpitched and noisy sound.



Soprano:

When possible, starting pitches are indicated in the part.

Piano:

Piano lid should be raised if possible. Unless pedaling is specified, all pedal is up to the pianist's discretion. Aim for a reverberant texture, without being muddy.

ephemeral blossom

Max Chung

Like the Wind ♩ = 92

Flute (Spoken)

Flute

Viola (Spoken)

Viola

Soprano (Spoken)

Soprano

Piano (Spoken)

Piano

air

sh

bow tailpiece, unpitched

pp

p

w.t.

p

shu ee eu

shu ee eu ah

shu ee eu

h

p

10

Fl. (Spoken)

Fl.

Vla. (Spoken)

Vla.

S. (Spoken)

S.

Pno. (Spoken)

Pno.

A

ah

pp

air

air

f

p

sh

ee eu

shu ee eu ah

bow tailpiece, unpitched

pp

pp

h

shu ee eu

ppp

nebulous

shu i eu

v

pp

20

B

Fl. (Spoken)

Fl.

Vla. (Spoken)

Vla.

S. (Spoken)

S.

Pno. (Spoken)

Pno.

fv

(air)

pp

air

f

mp

p

shu ee eu

p *sfp* *sfp*

shu ee eu mm mah

shu ee eu fv

shu ee eu mm mah

ah

p

tap keys with fingernails

15^{ma}

8^{ba}

8^{ba}

gliss.

gliss.

30

C

Fl. (Spoken)

Fl.

Vla. (Spoken)

Vla.

S. (Spoken)

S.

Pno. (Spoken)

Pno.

chu ee sho mm chu shee

sfp *sfp* *p* *p* *fp*

half pitch

sh

p *fp*

like glass

p *mp* *pp* *p*

gliss.

ricochet

mp

ppp

p

zh h

nebulous m

chu ee eu mm

p *sfp* *sfp* *p*

[illegible]

56 E

Fl. (Spoken)

Fl.

Vla. (Spoken)

Vla.

S. (Spoken)

S.

Pno. (Spoken)

Pno.

pp *smooth, like silk* *pp*

jeté *pa* *p*

mp *p* *mp* *p* *sfpp* *mp*

ta k li cha p shu ee ch ta tah

p *shu* *kah* *mp* *sfp*

pp

64

Fl. (Spoken)

Fl.

Vla. (Spoken)

Vla.

S. (Spoken)

S.

Pno. (Spoken)

Pno.

pp *p* *p*

shu *ee* *eu* *ch* *ah* *oh* *jeté* *pizz.*

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

sfpp *mp* *mp* *ch*

fah hh shu ee eu ah mm

gliss.

tah shu cho teu tch

sfp *p* *sfp* *sfp*

p *mp* *p* *pp*

F

[illegible]

84

Fl. (Spoken)

Fl.

half pitch

kh kh kh kh sh p f mp

Vla. (Spoken)

Vla.

ee pt sh jeté 3 sfz f p

S. (Spoken)

S.

kh kh kh ch ch kh ch ch ch ch ch mp f > p

Pno. (Spoken)

Pno.

tah cheu pf sfz mp f p sfz p < mp

90

G

Fl. (Spoken)

Fl.

pp f sfz p mp 3 p

Vla. (Spoken)

Vla.

jeté shi li fp sub.

S. (Spoken)

S.

sfz sfz mp sfz p p

Pno. (Spoken)

Pno.

pp sfz p mp p sfz sfz mp sfz p

95

H Blooming

Fl. (Spoken) *tongue ram*

Fl. *f* *ppp* *pp* *mp* *mp* *ff*

Vla. (Spoken) *ou*

Vla. *f* *sfp* *sfp* *p* *ff* *mp*

S. (Spoken) *shu* *ee*

S. *f* *ff*

Pno. (Spoken)

Pno. *mp* *p* *ff* *f*

102

Ebbing

Fl. (Spoken)

Fl. *f* *ff* *f* *ff* *mp* *tongue ram*

Vla. (Spoken)

Vla. *p* *p < fp*

S. (Spoken)

S. *f* *f* *p* *ka t k*

Pno. (Spoken)

Pno. *f* *mp*

109 **I Blooming**

Fl. (Spoken)

Fl.

Vla. (Spoken)

Vla.

S. (Spoken)

S.

Pno. (Spoken)

Pno.

ka t k

k t k

tongue ram

f *ff* *f*

p *ppp*

mp *gliss*

mf *f* *sfz*

mp *ff* *sfz*

Red.

116 **Ebbing**

Fl. (Spoken)

Fl.

Vla. (Spoken)

Vla.

S. (Spoken)

S.

Pno. (Spoken)

Pno.

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

ff *mp* *p* *f*

sfz mp *p* *f*

f *ff* *p*

gliss

p *f* *p*

sfz *Red.* *sfz* *Red.* *Red.*

vibrant *ff*

Red.

122

J Blooming

Fl. (Spoken)

Fl.

Vla. (Spoken)

Vla.

S. (Spoken)

S.

Pno. (Spoken)

Pno.

(Ped.)

sfz *fp* *pp* *f* *fp* *pp*

vibrant *sfz* *f* *f* *p* *f*

ricochet

gliss.

gliss.

hwe *hwe*

ah *ah*

f *mp* *f*

128

Fl. (Spoken)

Fl.

Vla. (Spoken)

Vla.

S. (Spoken)

S.

Pno. (Spoken)

Pno.

f *p* *sfz* *f* *vibrant* *ff* *mp*

gliss. *f* *fp* *f* *p* *sfz* *ff*

jeté

vibrant *f* *p*

k *k* *fp* *p*

oh

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

vibrant *f* *l.v.*

ff *(Ped.)* *f* *sfz* *(Ped.)* *p* *(Ped.)* *8ba.*

135 K

Fl. (Spoken)

Fl. *quarter tone bend* *quarter tone bend* *mp* *f* *f* *p*

Vla. (Spoken)

Vla. *6* *f* *mp* *p* *f* *p* *f* *gliss.* *ff* *mp* *f*

S. (Spoken)

S. *f* *p* *f* *p* *p* *gliss.* *gliss.* *gliss.* *f*

ah oh ah uh

Pno. (Spoken)

Pno. *8va* *f* *ff* *f* *sfz*

(8) Red.

141

Fl. (Spoken)

Fl. *tongue ram* *quarter tone bend* *f* *ff* *mp* *f* *ff* *mp* *ff* *p*

Vla. (Spoken)

Vla. *fp* *f* *ff* *f* *p* *p* *3* *p*

S. (Spoken)

S. *t* *t k t* *f* *p* *pp* *sh*

shi

Pno. (Spoken)

Pno. *sfz* *mp* *f* *l.v.* *3* *8va* *p*

(8) Red.

147

Fl. (Spoken)

Fl.

tongue ram

sfz

p

w.t.

Vla. (Spoken)

Vla.

gliss.

f

mp

S. (Spoken)

S.

p

f

p

Pno. (Spoken)

Pno.

f

sfz

mp

sfz

f

p

pp

Red.

151 **L** Withering Away

Fl. (Spoken)

Fl.

walk to piano

fast keyclicks
on random pitches

p

Vla. (Spoken)

Vla.

gliss.

walk to piano

pp

p

p

pp

S. (Spoken)

S.

shu ee eu

walk to piano

shu ee eu

Pno. (Spoken)

Pno.

15ma

pp

ppp

p

lift and prepare L.H. after playing note

Red.

156 **Extremely Freely, but Slower**

159