

negotiating the absolute location of buoyancy - - - for horn - - - 2012 - - - ray evanoff

## About the Piece - - -

Influences on the composition of *Negotiating the Absolute Location of Buoyancy*, in no particular: Dal Niente Executive Director Ryan Muncy's statement that this work was being commissioned for a "concert called 'Hard Music Hard Liquor', which gives you an idea of the type of piece we're looking for"; my first confrontation with the horn; a discussion with an eighth grader on the geographic term "absolute location"; Hans Tutschku asking me about my use of pitch, and being dissatisfied with my initial answer; Steven Takasugi asking me about surface clarity and what I take out of my music, and reminding me that grains of sand become pearls. I hope that some of these grains of sand become pearls.

This piece was commissioned by Ensemble Dal Niente and written for Matthew Oliphant. I am exceedingly thankful for the support and encouragement of the ensemble in general, which is an almost-improbable assemblage of special people, and of Matt in particular, who fielded my endless stream of questions with grace, and applied himself to the perhaps-absurd demands of this piece with aplomb. I cannot overstate my gratitude for the experience of working with him.

## Performance Notes - - -

The indicated tempo admittedly sits at, and occasionally crosses over, the edge of performability, particularly in terms of the overlapping/interrupting rhythms and the sung doubling of the horn part (see below). While the numerical value of the chosen tempo may itself be seen as more negotiable than the fixity of the provided indication suggests, maintaining the overall sensation of speed and compaction, even in the face of preserving the wealth of dynamic and articulative detail present, is absolutely crucial. This speed itself is a principle component of the music's identity, as is the condition of risk and the potential for failure it creates. Compromising this speed in order to "more accurately" realize other aspects of the work jeopardizes undermining an essential, inherent quality of the composition.

Beyond their purely rhythmic function, the overlaid tuplets illustrate the simultaneous presence of multiple, colliding voices. This material may not always be playable strictly as written, due to the onset of new material before the full rhythmic value of the preceding has been exhausted. Expressing the intrinsic nature of the elements involved, as well as the state of collision and interruption they exist in, is of primary importance in these instances. Rhythm is spaced proportionally to duration.

The voice/noise stave serves several functions. As a single line, it indicates the use of unpitched and indeterminately pitched techniques (specified below). In these instances, register is generally indicated in relation to the central line: on the line indicates middle register, above the line indicates higher register, and below indicates lower register. Register may be understood as relative to the specific technique being used.

As a conventional 5-line staff, the voice/noise stave indicates pitches which are to be sung through the horn without any accompanying sound produced in the instrument, although sung pitches may overlap with independently-indicated sounds performed on the horn. These pitches are transposed to correspond with the horn, so that written pitches sound the same in the voice as in the horn. Sung pitches may be transposed at the octave if necessary, although singing a pitch which is difficult to produce in a given register may be preferable to singing that pitch in a more stable, "safer" register. As above, risk and its attendant extremity are integral to the piece.

Singing brackets indicate that the horn part is to be simultaneously sung in the voice. Pitches may be transposed at the octave if necessary, but should always be sung slightly out of tune, so as to produce a beating effect with the horn part, even though this effect will not always be appreciably produced owing to the speed and brevity of the notes being sung. The purpose of this technique is to produce a shadowy doubling of the horn part that distorts the music's surface. As such, the piece should not be slowed or otherwise made easier in order to more accurately vocalize the horn line: the vocalized line exists in subservience to the details found in the horn itself, and thus may be fractured or partially/inaccurately realized in order to preserve the speed and detail in the horn line (although every effort should be made to realize the vocalized line as fully as possible). When only a individual note is sung, the "SING" indication is given directly adjacent to the note being sung.


Quarter and eighth tones are principally derived from the "out-of-tune" 7th, 11th, and 13th partials. Microtones in the lower registers are also intermittently utilized; these require manual adjustments to achieve,. The following microtonal accidentals are used:




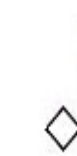
Accidentals only carry in cases of direct repetition, although cautionary accidentals may be used.


"Open" indicates an open, brassier timbre produced by removing the right hand entirely from intercepting the projected tone.


"Veiled" indicates a muffled tone not quite the level of 3/4 stopped, produced by directly positioning the right hand opposite the body to inhibit all free flow of sound while covering slightly and adjusting the pitch upward accordingly.

 indicates a tongue "pizz", a percussive technique generated through forcing a fast air stream into the mouthpiece ending with a strong tongue stop. When a specific pitch is indicated, the lips are to be brought together to form a pitch just prior to the moment of articulation. When on the voice/noise stave, the lips are not to be brought together to form a pitch, producing a sound with little to no definite pitch.

 indicates that the above technique is to be repeated as rapidly as possible over the indicated duration. The precise number of attacks is unspecified.

 indicates an air tone. When written on the conventional horn staff, this technique indicates a breathy tone with a definite pitch. When written on the voice/noise stave, this technique indicates an unpitched air stream blown through the horn. Louder dynamics for the latter instance are relative to the technique itself.

 indicates half-valving. Transition between half- and full-valving may occur.

 indicates a "kissing" sound produced by sucking the air inward whilst the mouthpiece is in place.

Duration: ~4'45"

# Negotiating the Absolute Location of Buoyancy

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Ray Evanoff

♩ = 85

4  
8

6  
8

8  
8

Musical notation for Horn and Voice/Noise, measures 1-3. The Horn part (bass clef) features a melodic line with dynamic markings *ppp* and *fff*, and a "SING" instruction. The Voice/Noise part (treble clef) includes dynamic markings *mp*, *f*, *mp*, *sfz*, *pp*, and *ppp*. Time signatures 5:4 and 3:2 are indicated.

Musical notation for Horn and Voice/Noise, measures 4-8. The Horn part (bass clef) includes dynamic markings *sfz*, *veiled*, *mp*, *open*, *veiled*, *mp*, *pp*, *ff*, *ord.*, *mp*, *mf*, *veiled*, *mp*, *pp*, *f*, and *p*. Time signatures 5:4 and 3:2 are indicated. A "SING" instruction is present. The Voice/Noise part (treble clef) shows a series of notes with dynamic markings *pp* and *f > mp*.

Musical notation for Horn and Voice/Noise, measures 9-16. The Horn part (bass clef) includes dynamic markings *mp*, *ord.*, *cuivre*, *mp*, *mf*, *mp*, *veiled*, *mp*, *pp*, *mp*, *pp*, *mp*, *pp*, *mf*, *ff*, *ord.*, *veiled*, *p*, *veiled*, *ord.*, *pp*, *ff*, *ord.*, *pp*, *ff*, *cuivre*, *pp*, and *mp*. Time signatures 5:4 and 3:2 are indicated. Multiple "SING" instructions are present. The Voice/Noise part (treble clef) includes dynamic markings *pp*, *mp*, *pp*, *mp*, *pp*, *mp*, *pp*, *mp*, *pp*, and *mp*.

Negotiating the Absolute Location of Buoyancy - 2

This musical score is written for Horn and Voice/Noise. It consists of three systems of staves, each with its own set of measures and dynamics.

**System 1:**

- Measures 13-16:** Horn starts with *mf* and *p* dynamics. Voice/Noise starts with *p* and *ff*. Both have a *SING* annotation above and below. Time signatures include 5:4 and 3:2.
- Measures 17-20:** Horn has dynamics *p*, *mp*, *p*, *f*, *pp*, *mf*. Voice/Noise has *pp*, *pp*, *pp*, *pp*. Both have *SING* annotations. Time signatures include 5:4, 3:2, and 15:12.
- Measures 21-24:** Horn has dynamics *pp*, *mf*, *pp*, *p*. Voice/Noise has *mp*, *ppp*. Both have *SING* annotations. Time signatures include 5:4, 3:2, and 7.

**System 2:**

- Measures 25-28:** Horn has dynamics *pp*, *f*, *mp*, *p*, *mf*, *ff*, *mp*. Voice/Noise has *pp*, *ord*, *mf*. Both have *SING* annotations. Time signatures include 5:4 and 3:2.
- Measures 29-32:** Horn has dynamics *mp*, *mf* cuivre, *mp* veiled cuivre, *ppp* ord., *sfz* cuivre. Voice/Noise has *mp*, *ppp*. Both have *SING* annotations. Time signatures include 5:4.
- Measures 33-36:** Horn has dynamics *ff* cuivre, *mp*. Voice/Noise has *mp*, *ff*. Both have *SING* annotations. Time signatures include 5:4.
- Measures 37-40:** Horn has dynamics *f* ord., *mf* cuivre, *veiled*. Voice/Noise has *f* > *mp* cuivre, *p*, *p*, *mf*. Both have *SING* annotations. Time signatures include 5:4, 3:2, and 5:4.

**System 3:**

- Measures 41-44:** Horn has dynamics *mp*, *p*, *f*, *p*, *f*, *p*. Voice/Noise has *p*, *ord.*, *p*, *veiled*. Both have *SING* annotations. Time signatures include 5:4.

**Large Curved Line:** A large, thin curved line arches across the bottom of the page, starting under the first system and ending under the third system.

This musical score is divided into three systems, each featuring a Horn part and a Voice/Noise part. The notation is highly detailed, with numerous dynamic markings and performance instructions.

**System 1 (Measures 21-32):**  
Horn: Measures 21-32. Dynamics range from *p* to *f*. Performance instructions include "SING" and "veiled".  
Voice/Noise: Measures 21-32. Dynamics range from *p* to *f*. Performance instructions include "SING".

**System 2 (Measures 33-48):**  
Horn: Measures 33-48. Dynamics range from *pp* to *ff*. Performance instructions include "SING", "open cuivre", "veiled", and "ord.". Rhythmic patterns are marked with 5:4 and 3:2.  
Voice/Noise: Measures 33-48. Dynamics range from *pp* to *ff*. Performance instructions include "SING".

**System 3 (Measures 49-64):**  
Horn: Measures 49-64. Dynamics range from *pp* to *ff*. Performance instructions include "SING", "veiled", "ord.", and "cuivre". Rhythmic patterns are marked with 5:4 and 3:2.  
Voice/Noise: Measures 49-64. Dynamics range from *pp* to *ff*. Performance instructions include "SING".

Negotiating the Absolute Location of Buoyancy - 4

Musical score for Horn and Voice/Noise, measures 31-40. The Horn part features complex rhythmic patterns with various time signatures (3:2, 5:4, 9:6) and dynamic markings (pp, fff, mp, ppp, mf). Performance instructions include 'open', 'ord', 'cuivre', and 'veiled'. The Voice/Noise part includes a long sustained note with a 'pp' marking and several 'SING' annotations.

Musical score for Horn and Voice/Noise, measures 36-40. The Horn part continues with complex rhythms and dynamics (ff, p, mf, ppp). Performance instructions include 'open', 'ord', and 'cuivre'. The Voice/Noise part features a long sustained note with a 'ppp' marking and a 'SING' annotation.

Musical score for Horn and Voice/Noise, measures 41-50. The Horn part includes complex rhythms and dynamics (f, sfz, p, mf). Performance instructions include 'cuivre', 'ord', and 'sfz'. The Voice/Noise part features a long sustained note with a 'ppp' marking and a 'SING' annotation.

This musical score is divided into three systems, each featuring a Horn part and a Voice/Noise part. The notation is complex, involving various time signatures and dynamic markings.

**System 1 (Measures 11-16):**  
Measures 11 and 13 are marked with a 3:2 time signature, while measures 14, 15, and 16 are in 5:4. Dynamics range from *mf* to *pp*. Performance instructions include "SING", "open", "ord", and "cuivre".

**System 2 (Measures 47-51):**  
Measures 47 and 48 are in 3:2, while measures 49, 50, and 51 are in 5:4. Dynamics include *ff*, *mp*, *pp*, and *pppp*. Instructions include "SING", "veiled", and "cuivre".

**System 3 (Measures 51-55):**  
Measures 51 and 52 are in 3:2, while measures 53, 54, and 55 are in 5:4. Dynamics range from *mp* to *pppp*. Instructions include "SING", "veiled", "open", and "cuivre".

Negotiating the Absolute Location of Buoyancy - 6

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5 4 5  
32 8 8

Horn

55

3:2 5:4 open

3:2 5:4 3:2 5:4 3:2 5:4 3:2 5:4 3:2 5:4 3:2 5:4

mf p

p mf p f p

pp mf pp pp

3:2 5:4 5:4 5:4 5:4 5:4

mf pp mp ff p

mp ord

SING

veiled

mp ord

fff mf ppp

Voice/Noise

p

p

pp > pppp

SING

SING

11 7 27  
32 8 32

Horn

60

5:4

ppp < mf

fff

open

mp

veiled

3:2

cuivre

veiled

(towards ord)

SING

SING

p

f

27 5 11 5  
32 8 16 8

Horn

63

(from veiled)

f

ord

p

f

p

open

cuivre

fff

SING

SING

pp

mf

ppp

5 6  
8 8

Horn

66



Musical score system 1: Horn and Voice/Noise parts.

**Horn:** Measures 69-88. Dynamics include *pp*, *mp*, *fff*, *p*, *ppp*, *mf*, *p*, *pp*, *mf*, *p*, *pp*, *mf*, *pp*. Performance instructions include *open*, *cuivre*, *ord*, and *veiled*. Rhythmic markings include 6/8, 3:2, 5:4, and 4/8.

**Voice/Noise:** Measures 69-88. Includes *SING* markings and a *ppp* dynamic at the end.

Musical score system 2: Horn and Voice/Noise parts.

**Horn:** Measures 73-92. Dynamics include *mp*, *pp*, *f*, *p*, *mf*, *p*, *mf*, *pp*, *mf*, *pp*, *mf*, *pp*, *mf*, *pp*. Performance instructions include *cuivre*, *SING*, *veiled*, *open*, *ord*, and *fff*. Rhythmic markings include 5:4, 3:2, and 4/8.

**Voice/Noise:** Measures 73-92. Includes *SING* markings and a *pp* dynamic at the end.

Musical score system 3: Horn and Voice/Noise parts.

**Horn:** Measures 77-84. Dynamics include *mp*, *pp*, *p*, *f*, *mp*, *mf*, *pp*, *pppp*, *pppp*, *pppp*, *pppp*. Performance instructions include *veiled*, *cuivre*, *ord*, and *SING*. Rhythmic markings include 5:4, 3:2, and 4/8.

**Voice/Noise:** Measures 77-84. Includes a *f* dynamic and a *pp* dynamic.

Musical score system 4: Voice/Noise part.

Measures 11-13. Dynamics include *ppppp* and *pp*. Rhythmic markings include 3:2.