

Angular Momentum
for Chamber Ensemble

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Performance Notes

Contrary to the title, this is not really an improvised piece - it is titled after a poem by A. R. Ammons. However, it does have elements that are indeterminate.

This music was conceived of as a polyphonic intersection of simultaneous solo parts that can intersect in a variety of different yet consistent ways. The result is a form of canonic music that is proportioned to the physical experience of each performer.

The players can choose to co-ordinate in exactly the ways shown in the score. However, they are not limited to this. Each section of the piece is scalable in duration, with the length of each section tied to the physical gesture required and perhaps the performer's levels of fatigue. Each section can be shortened or extended at the discretion of the group. The duration of each section, and therefore the total duration of the piece, is ultimately to be decided by the group. Also within this, different players can move to some degree at their own pace. An individual player can either extend or shorten a particular section (especially in regards to C through F) so long as the most important points of convergence remain intact, which are G, H, I, and K. In most cases, note-to-note synchrony is not essential and need not be of primary concern. More important is the individual performer's physical experience of gesture and how this forms the aggregate sound and duration of the music.

It is also important to note that the flute and clarinet performers can breathe, take breaks, and do whatever is necessary to be comfortable. Analogously, the string players can also pause if needed. However, the pianist must keep playing trills for the duration of the piece (the trills, though can be widely variable in their speed). Under no circumstances should any performer do something that is too physically taxing. If the player becomes too fatigued, then it is best to stop and wait until the next section to join in.

For rehearsal purposes each page can be thought of as lasting around one minute, and each section with a rehearsal number around 30 seconds. This is a good jumping-off-point from which to deviate from. Also, if desired, a timer or clock can be used to synchronize. Alternatively, a player or players can be designated to cue each section.

The duration of any note event continues until the next note event unless otherwise specified. Slurs are used to indicate smaller phrases and dotted slurs indicate a larger phrase. An arrow on a beam or notehead means sustain the note or continue the gesture until the next event or until the arrow stops.

The suggested dynamic level is generally low, especially in the higher registers. Shrillness is not intended. An increase in activity without an increase in amplitude is generally desirable.

Instrumentation:

Flute
Clarinet (A and Bb)
Piano
Sine Waves/Computer
Violin
Cello

An Improvisation for Angular Momentum

A. R. Ammons

Walking is like
imagination, a
single step
dissolves the circle
into motion; the eye here
and there rests
on a leaf
gap or ledge,
everything flowing
except where
sight touches seen:
stop, though, and
reality snaps back hard,
forms sharply
themselves, bushbank,
dentree, phonline,
definite, fixed,
the self, too, then
caught real, clouds
and wind melting
into their directions
breaking around and
over, down and out,
motions profound,
alive, musical!

Perhaps the death mother like the birth mother
does not desert us but comes to tend
us and produce us, to make room for us
and bear us tenderly, considerately,
through the gates, to see us through,
to ease our pains, quell our cries,
to hover over and nestle us, to deliver
us into the greatest, most enuring
peace, all the way past the bother of
recollection,
beyond the finework of frailty,
the mishmash house of the coming & going,
creation's fringes,
the eddies and curlicues

Angular Momentum

for Chamber Ensemble

A **B**

Flute
pp

Clarinet in A
pp (mute if necessary) *p*

Piano
pp L.H.: 1,3 1,2 1,5 1,4 2,4 3,4 1,5 4,5 3,5 2,5 2,4 2,3 1,3 1,2 1,3 1,5 1,3
R.H.: 1,3 1,4 1,3 1,5 1,3 1,2 1,3 2,3 2,4 2,5 3,5 4,5 1,5 3,4 2,4 1,4 1,5 1,2 1,3.

Electronics
ppp *pp*

Violin
pp

Cello
p *p*

With the right hand, trill independently of left hand on the fourth finger F# G#, E, and F keys. Try to never trill at the same speed in both hands. The right hand should never find any equilibrium but always be speeding up or slowing down.

- * Breathe or pause whenever necessary. No circular breathing is required for this piece.
- ** Begin trill on top of the key, without sounding the top note but playing the key. Slowly begin to press down until the note sounds inconsistently, and then eventually speaks normally.
- *** Attempt to use as many fingers as possible when playing these trills in order to vary the characteristics and possible rhythmic and timbral implications of different combinations. A slight accent can be included when switching from one fingering to another but should not be over-emphasized.
- **** Top voice should be quieter throughout.
- ***** These figurations should be played as fast as possible while still getting the pitches to speak.

C

D

Fl.

p *p* *p* *mf*

C# B# B D# C# B D# C# B

A Cl.

L.H.

Pno.

R.H. L.H.

Ped.

El.

Vln.

I II III IV

pp *mp* *p* (quasi-harmonic)

Vlc.

f *p*

E **F**

Fl. *f* *p* *p* *mf* *f* *mp* *mf* *f*

A Cl. *gradually add multiphonics*

(begin trilling the side keys if possible)

Pno. *p* *Ped.* *una corda*

R.H.: 1,3 1,4 1,3 1,5 1,3 1,2 1,3 2,3 2,4 2,5 3,5 4,5 1,5 3,4 2,4 1,4 1,5 1,2 1,3.
 L.H.: 1,3 1,2 1,5 1,4 2,4 3,4 1,5 4,5 3,5 2,5 2,4 2,3 1,3 1,2 1,3 1,5 1,3 1,4 1,3

(finish sequence of fingerings before G if possible)

El. *mp* *p* *mf*

Vln. *f*

Vlc. *ppp*

G

H

Fl.

A Cl.

Pno.

El.

Vln.

Vlc.

una corda

fp

pp

A G#
B

A B C

I I II III IV

I **J** (optional)

Fl. switch to Bb Clarinet

A Cl. *p* *tr* very slow trill, almost a tremolo

Pno. transition to *ff* *f* *p*

El. *ppp* *pp*

Vln. ,

Vlc. IV I *fp* *pp*

K **L**

Fl. *pp* Half step trills or less Very slowly transition to breath sounds and key sounds only by pulling away from the mouthpiece

A Cl. *p* L.H. R.H. With the right hand, trill independently of left hand, completing this sequence of fingerings listed below before N. Spend as much or as little time on each trill combination as desired. L.H. *p* R.H. Continue sequence of fingerings independently of the left hand.

Pno. L.H. R.H. Very slowly transition until only the piano mechanism is audible.
Phase out one key at a time gradually, inconsistantly hitting each key as its pitch disappears.

El. *p* *ppp* Very slowly transition to bow sounds only, phasing out the pitched material gradually.
Bow closer to the bridge (and even on the bridge) as the sound is fading away.

Vln. *pp* Very slowly transition to bow sounds only, phasing out the pitched material gradually.
Bow closer to the bridge (and even on the bridge) as the sound is fading away.

Vlc. *pp* *quasi f* slowly switch from 1st finger to thumb φ II 4 III *p*

Very slowly transition to breath sounds and key soundss only by pulling away from the instrument

M N

Fl. Very little to no perceptible pitch

A Cl. Very little to no perceptible pitch

Pno. *pp* *pppp* Very little to no perceptible pitch

El. *pppp*

Vln. Very little to no perceptible pitch *pppp*

Vlc. *pp* *pppp* Very little to no perceptible pitch