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J A B

PIANO

(2021)

ALEX TAY

Jab is dedicated to Adam Łukawski, a gifted composer who radically changed how I regard Shepard tones. He himself is carrying out important research which implements both Shepard tone principles and Artificial Intelligence technologies. This piece would have taken a very different course if not for many of our perspective-altering conversations. *Jab* is directly influenced by many of Adam's ideas.

Jab is a simultaneous expression of turmoil and joy. At the time of composing *Jab*, I experienced frustration, anger, fear, rejection and loss. At the same time, there was laughter, exhilaration, discovery and rebirth. While sketching, composing and extensively recomposing, I constantly questioned what exactly I wanted to deliver.

Was it a joke or swear? A punch line or a sucker punch? Ultimately, I couldn't decide.

The piece is built on six contrasting gestures. The first, at bar 1, is a cluster that peels away to reveal diatonic harmonies and then a scale (such gestures are found in Dutilleux, Nielsen and Schumann). The second, at bar 5, is a twinkling two part counterpoint. The third, at bar 8, is a bulldozer in a China shop, a spectacle which misdirects. The fourth, at bar 23, is a slow, ornamental, Finnis-y-an melody with morphs into two. The fifth, at bar 33, is a Shepard tone texture. The Shepard tone textures in particular are inspired by

Adam's research. While formulating his theories and ideas, he showed me Shepard tones built on parallel chords and what he described to me as "gravity lines". On hearing these "gravity lines", I realised that a descending tone suspended in the air by piano resonance could be answered either immediately with a downward scale and/or its next descending tone in its downward trajectory could arrive much later. When both of the above are implemented, two scales descending in different timescales are heard, such is the power of pitch-proximate stream segregation. This way of increasing the scalic potential of each tone in a Shepard tone texture only enhances the illusion's effect. The sixth and last gesture, at bar 51, consists of lithe arpeggiations which excite ghostly harmonics from strings sustained in the sostenuto pedal. These seemingly appear from nowhere. Across the piece I combine and recombine these gestures; push them through Risset accelerations and decelerations; throw and muddy them.

Jab was commissioned by John Woolf through the Ralph Vaughan Williams Trust. Initially, Dominic Degavino, a Park Lane Group young artist, was due to premier the piece. However, because of the coronavirus pandemic, the Park Lane Group were unable to mount a premier of the piece. Instead, Ben Smith premiered the piece in November 2021 at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama.

The tempi marked in this piece are ideals: although they cannot be fully realised by a human pianist, they should be strived for. In the fastest passages, pianists should decide their own maximum tempi and scale the tempi in the rest of the piece accordingly. Where certain composed details prevent performers from realising the full effect which they interpret that any given passage of *Jab* should have, performers may edit or even omit any of those aforementioned details.

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JAB

Alex Tay

♩ = ca. 104 rit. ♩ = ca. 88

Strike keys, left hand gradually releases over the indicated duration

Piano

f, vicious

♩ = ca. 92, con rubato

rit. ♩ = 80

Subito ♩ = 96

← ³ = ♩ → ♩ = 116 ← ⁵ = ♩ → ♩ = 144

Pno.

pp molto leggiero, starlight

f, boisterous

sub. *p*, wraith

sub. *mp*

mf

f

mf > *p* *fp* *mf* *f* *sf*

Ped.

← ⁵⁻⁶ = ♩ → ♩ = 120

← ⁵ = ♩ → ♩ = 150 rit. ♩ = 96 ← ⁵ = ♩ → ♩ = 68 rit. ♩ = 48 ← ³ = ♩ → ♩ = 144

molto rit. ♩ = 116

Pno.

più f *mf* *p* *ff*

sub. *p*, cresc.

mp, cresc.

f *pp* molto cresc.

mf, molto cresc.

A

$\text{♩} = 88$ $\text{♩} = 60$ $\text{♩} = 60$ poco rit. $\text{♩} = 48$ molto accel. $\text{♩} = 92$ molto rit.

Pno.

ff *sonoro* mp ff *sub. p* *leggiere* pp sf p f

Ped.

B

$\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 48$, con molto rubato

Pno.

ppp *sotto voce ma cantabile*

Una Corda
(Ped.)

(1/4) (1/4) (1/2) (1/2)
(full) (full)

poco accel. $\text{♩} = 60$

Pno.

poco a poco cresc. mp f

(1/2)

Tre Corde

The musical score for "The Wrecking Ball" by John Adams is presented in a single system. It features a piano (Pno.) part and a vocal part. The piano part is written for three staves (treble, middle, and bass clefs) and includes various dynamics such as *pp*, *f*, *sf*, *ff*, *fff*, *p*, and *sub. p*. The vocal part is written on a single staff and includes dynamics such as *ppp*, *ff*, *fff*, *p*, and *ff*. The score is marked with a tempo of 60 beats per minute and a time signature of 3/4. The piece is in the key of D major. The score includes various performance instructions, such as "rit." (ritardando), "gliss." (glissando), "fff, heavy long" (fortississimo, heavy, long), and "fff, wrecking ball" (fortississimo, wrecking ball). The score is divided into measures by vertical bar lines, and the measures are numbered 36 through 44. The piano part includes a large section of music that is marked with a "5" (quintuplet) and a "3" (triplet). The vocal part includes a section of music that is marked with a "5" (quintuplet) and a "3" (triplet). The score is a complex and detailed musical work that requires a high level of technical skill and musical understanding to perform.

rit. $\text{♩} = 86$ $\text{♩} = 54 \leftarrow \text{♩} = \text{♩} = 150$ rit. $\text{♩} = 68/ \leftarrow \text{♩} = \text{♩} = 150/$ molto rit. $\text{♩} = 136$ $\text{♩} = 300$

Pno.

41

f *p* *mf* *ff* *più ffp* *f* *fff*

7 3 5 3 7:5

rit. $\text{♩} = 47/ \text{♩} = 94$ $\text{♩} = 80$ $\text{♩} = 64$ $\text{♩} = 54 \leftarrow \text{♩} = \text{♩} =$

Pno.

46

fp *ff* *sub. p* *ppp* *mf* *p* *ff*

7:6 3 5 3 3 3

D ♩ = 54/♩ = 108

51

Pno.

p, *nervous*

p

mp *pp* *f*

accel.

Sost. Ped. sempre *Ped.* *1/2 Ped.* *(full)*

rit. ♩ = 108

57

Pno.

sub. mp *ff*

p

accel. ♩ = 120 *molto rit.*

Ped. *f* *sf*

♩ = 54 ← ♩ = 90 *accel.* ♩ = 120 ← ♩ = 180 *rit.* ♩ = 108

62

Pno.

sub. p cresc. *f* *pp* *ff* *pp*

sub. mp *mf*

accel.

Ped. *Ped.* *Ped.*

67

Pno.

$\text{♩} = 120 \text{ rit.}$ $\text{♩} = 80$ $\text{♩} = 120 \text{ molto rit.}$ $\text{♩} = 72$

f, cresc.

sub. p

ff

sf

p, cresc.

ppp

pp

p

mp

mf, molto cresc.

mp, molto cresc.

(Ped.)

(Sost. Ped. sempre cont.)

poco rit. $\text{♩} = 32$ $\text{♩} = 160$ **poco accel.**

72

Pno.

ff *più ff* *sub. p* *ff* *più ff* *mf* *sf* *pp* *p* *pp* *mp* *pp*

(Ped.) (Sost. Ped. sempre cont.) Ped.

[illegible]

87

Pno.

p *pp* *mp* *mf* *mf*

(Ped.) (1/2) (1/4) (full) (1/4) (full) (1/2)

91

Pno.

mp, poco cresc.

mf, poco marcato, cresc.

f, marcato

sf

f

mp

(Ped.)

(1/2)

(1/2)

(full)

(sim.)

95

Pno.

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

mf *sf* *sf* *sf* *sub. mp* *f*

(Ped.)

99

Pno.

p *f*

p *f*

p *f*

poco accel.

p, poco a poco cresc.
(Sost. Ped. sempre cont.)

mp, poco a poco cresc.
(Sost. Ped. sempre cont.)

I più accel.
♩ = 60

M MAELSTROM
rit.

♩ = 120 ♩ = 80 ♩ = 54 ← ♩ = ♩ → ♩ = 108 rit.

132

Pno.

ppp, cresc. *p, cresc.* *ppp* *pp* *mp smf mp* *mf > p*

ppp, cresc. *p, cresc.* *gliss.* *gliss.*

Ped. _____

♩ = 68 ♩ = 26 ← ⁻³ ♩ = ♩ → ♩ = 80 rit. ♩ = 40 ← ♩ = ♩ →

135

Pno.

mf *pp* *f > pp* *ff* *pp* *mf* *sub. ppp* *ff*

mf *sub. mp* *mf* *f* *ffp* *mfp* *f* *p*

gliss. *gliss.* *gliss.* *gliss.* *gliss.* *gliss.*

Musical score for "The Great Wall" by John Adams, measures 137-140. The score is for Piano (Pno.) and features complex rhythmic patterns and dynamic markings.

Measure 137: Tempo rit. , $\text{♩} = 160$. The score is in 5/8 time. The piano part consists of three staves. The top staff has a melodic line with a ffp dynamic, followed by mp , sf , sub. mp , fpp , and mp . The middle staff has a ffp dynamic. The bottom staff has a ff dynamic. The measure is divided into two sections: a 6:5 ratio section and a 9:9 ratio section.

Measure 138: Tempo $\text{♩} = 138$. The score is in 5/8 time. The piano part consists of three staves. The top staff has a melodic line with a sf dynamic, followed by sub. mp , mf , sf , pp , fp , and mf . The middle staff has a gliss. marking. The bottom staff has a mf dynamic. The measure is divided into two sections: a 10:10 ratio section and a 6:5 ratio section.

Measure 139: The score is in 5/8 time. The piano part consists of three staves. The top staff has a melodic line with a ff dynamic. The middle staff has a gliss. marking. The bottom staff has a f dynamic. The measure is divided into two sections: a 6:5 ratio section and a 6:6 ratio section.

Measure 140: The score is in 5/8 time. The piano part consists of three staves. The top staff has a melodic line with a ff dynamic. The middle staff has a gliss. marking. The bottom staff has a f dynamic. The measure is divided into two sections: a 6:5 ratio section and a 6:6 ratio section.

139

Pno.

rit.
♩ = 120/
♩ = 420

ff *p*

mf

f *p* *mf*

mf *ppp* *mf*

ff *mf* *fp* *f* *mp* *sf* *p* *mfp*

9

gliss.

gliss.

gliss.

3

3

3

5

5

5

7:6

4:3

5:3

11

Pno.

Pno.

P rit.

♩ = 68 ♩ = 60 ← ♩ = ♩ → ♩ = 120 ♩ = 104 ♩ = 90

151

marcato

sfp *f* *fffppp* *pp sub. ppp* *pp*

ff *gliss.* *gliss.* *fff* *p sub. ppp* *p sub. pp* *p*

ffp *sf* *sub. mf* *fff* *fff*

gliss. *gliss.* *gliss.* *gliss.*

Sost. Ped. sempre

rit.

♩ = 76 ♩ = 60 ← ♩ = ♩ → ♩ = 120 ♩ = 104

155

p *sub. pp* *mp* *sub. pp* *p* *sub. mf* *sub. p* *mf* *f* *mp* *mf* *pp sfp* *ff* *p*

mp sub. p *mp sub. p* *mp sub. mf* *sub. mp* *mf sub. mp* *f* *sub. mf* *f* *sf* *ff* *p*

gliss. *gliss.* *gliss.* *gliss.*

(Sost. Ped. sempre cont.)

♩ = 88

sfp *ff* *mp* *fp* *ffp* *sfp* *fff* *mp* *ff* *fff sub. mf* *ff* *pp*

158

Pno.

sfp *ff* *mf* *sfp* *ff sub. mf* *ff* *fff* *f* *ff* *fff sub. f* *fff* *f*

(Sost. Ped. sempre cont.)

♩ = 72

3 5 7:6

5 10:12

gliss.

3 3 3 6 7

3 3 5 3 3

3 5 3 5

♩ = 56

fff *fff sub. mf* *f* *pp* *ff* *fff* *p* *ff*

160

Pno.

fff *fff sub. f* *fff* *più fff, sonoro*

(Sost. Ped.)

♩ = 40 ← ♩ = ♩ → ♩ = 40

sub. p *mfp* *f* *fff*

fff *sub. mf* *f* *ff* *sub. mp, cantabile* *fff*

7 5 3 5 5 3 5:3

gliss.

3 5 3 3 7 5

5 4 5 4 5 4

162

Pno.

sub. *p*

sub. *mf* < *ffp* *ffp* *fff*

fff, sonoro

fffmp

fff

(1/2) (1/2) (full) (1/2) (1/2) (full)

164

Pno.

f

mf

ff

p

fff, molto sonoro

sub. f < *ff*

sub. p

fff, molto sonoro

Ped.

Sost. Ped. sempre

rit.

7-3

5

7

3

9

ff _____
 (Ped.) _____
 (Sost. Ped. sempre cont.)

(Ped.) _____
(Sost. Ped. sempre cont.)

sub. mp //
(Sost. Ped. sempre cont.)

Pno.

178

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

Una Corda
(Sost. Ped. sempre cont.)

Pno.

183

mf *p* *f* *p* *mf* *ppp, gentle* *sempre ppp* *sim.*

Tre Corde
Ped. (Sost. Ped. sempre cont.)

accel. $\text{♩} = 72$ rit. $\text{♩} = 60$ accel. $\text{♩} = 80$ $\text{♩} = 160$ rall. $\text{♩} = 126$

Pno.

187

mf *ppp* *mp* *ppp* *mp* *mf* *p* *f*

(Ped.) (Sost. Ped.) *ppp* Ped. *mp* *mf* *p* *f* *Ped.* *Sost. Ped. sempre*

$\text{♩} = 92$ $\text{♩} = 60$ $\text{♩} = 40$ accel. $\text{♩} = 72$ rit.

$\text{♩} = 40$
sub. pp *p* *pp* *mp* *pp* *mp* *p* *sub. ppp* *accel.*

190

Pno.

mf

sub. pp *p* *pp*

p

Ped.

$\text{♩} = 80 \leftarrow \text{♩} = \text{♩} \rightarrow \text{♩} = 160 \text{ rit.}$

193

Pno.

mp *mf* *ppp* *sim.* *sempre ppp*

8^{vb}

(Ped.)
(Sost. Ped. sempre cont.)

$\text{♩} = 80 \text{ rall.}$ $\text{♩} = 40$

196

Pno.

mf *p* *mp* *p* *mp* *pp* *mp* *ppp* *mf* *ppp* *mf* *ppp*

(Ped.)
(Sost. Ped. sempre cont.)

♩ = 60 accel.

♩ = 80 rit.

199

Pno.

ppp *mp* *mf* *sub. p* *f* *p* *mp*

Ped. (Sost. Ped. cont.) Sost. Ped. sempre

Subito ♩ = 40

poco accel.

♩ = 72 rit.

202

Pno.

pp *p* *mp* *p* *mf*

Ped. (Sost. Ped. sempre cont.)

♩ = 60 poco accel.

205

Pno.

ppp *pp* *ppp* *p* *ppp* *mp* *ppp* *mp* *pp* *mp* *p* *mf* *sim.*

Ped. (Ped.) With Palms

(Ped.) _____

(Ped.) _____ _____

(Ped.) _____ Ped. _____ Ped.

(Sost. Ped. sempre cont.)

223

Pno.

fff fffmp mf sub. mp mf

3 7 3 3

gliss.

mf p mp p mf sf p mp pp mf pp mf pp

gliss.

gliss.

gliss.

fff ppp p mp p p mp mp mf

pp p pp mp ppp mp mf

Ped.

(Ped.)
(Sost. Ped. sempre cont.)

226

Pno.

ff mfp sf pp mp p mf p mf pp mf pp f pp f ppp

3 7 5 3

gliss.

gliss.

gliss.

fff ppp mf

fff pp mp pp sf sfp mp > pp fp > pp mp pp

ffp < mf sub. p mf p pp mf p mp > pp mf pp f

p

Ped.

(Sost. Ped. sempre cont.)

♩ = 56 poco a poco accel.

233

Pno.

mf pp mp sub. f

ff sub. pp sf sub. pp mp sub. f sub. ppp sub. f sf

mp sub. ppp sub. mf < f sub. mp mp

mf mp

sf

mp sf

sf sub. mp sf

mp

Una Corda Tre Corde

Ped. (Sost. Ped. sempre cont.)

239 $\text{♩} = 63$

Pno.

mf sf ppp sf sub. f

f

mp mf p

gliss.

f

mf

fp sf

f

mf mp < f sub. pp

ppp

mf

mf

mp

mf

Ped. *(Sost. Ped. sempre cont.)*

$\text{♩} = 76$

più accel.

$\text{♩} = 84$ $\text{♩} = 96$ $\text{♩} = 108$ $\text{♩} = 120$ $\text{♩} = 144$ $\text{♩} = \text{♩} \rightarrow$

Pno.

sub. ppp mf sub. pp

mf p

ff

p sf

mp mf

f ff

sf

fp mf fpp

ff mf fp sf

fff sub. f

ffff

fff

p

ffff

Ped. *(Sost. Ped. sempre cont.)*

250

U

Subito Presto Possibile

Pno.

pp, molto leggero

mp sub. *pp*

sub. *mp*

sub. *pp*

sub. *mp*

pp sub. *mf*

mp

pp sub. *mp*

sub. *pp*

sf

(Ped.)

(Sost. Ped. sempre cont.)

(Ped. off)

252

Pno.

mf

pp *mp*

pp

mf sub. *pp*

sf

sub. *f*

pp sub. *mf*

sub. *pp*

sub. *mf*

pp sub. *mp*

mf sub. *pp*

mp sub. *pp*

mf *p* *mf*

(Sost. Ped. sempre cont.)

Repeat this staccato passage more than twice. The performer should decide where it is most fitting to end. The final repeat of this passage may be partial. Once the performer finishes, the bass tones held by the sostenuto pedal should have long died out and only a haze of harmonics should remain.

254

Pno.

sub. *pp*

mf

sub. *pp*

sf *pp* sub. *mp*

f

(Sost. Ped.)

Hold the sostenuto pedal at least until the harmonics die out.