

Cheong Li

# Senza Misura

For xylosynth, percussion and live electronics

2010

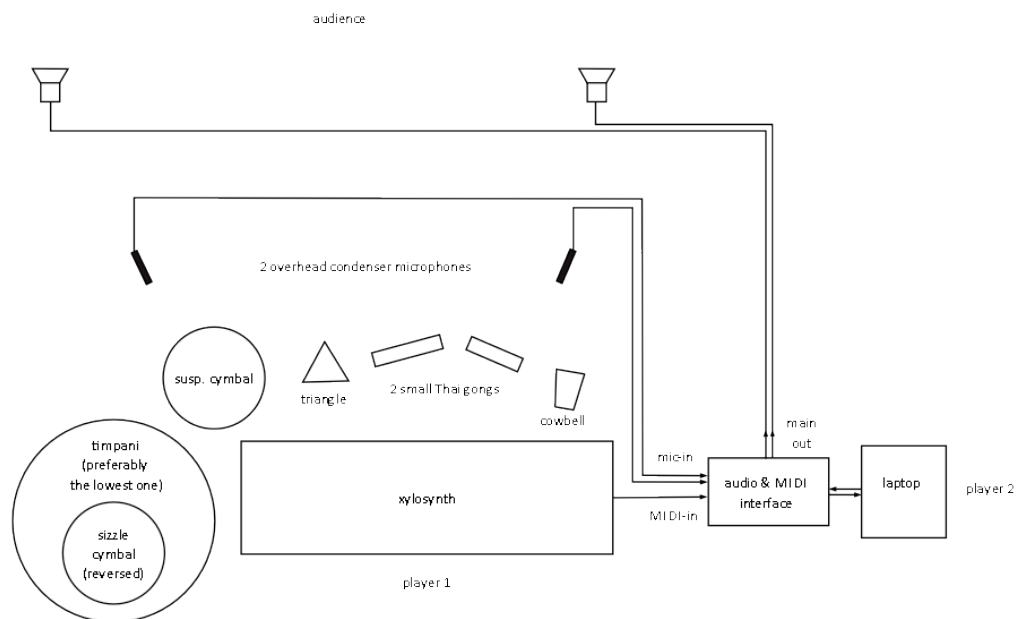


# Senza Misura

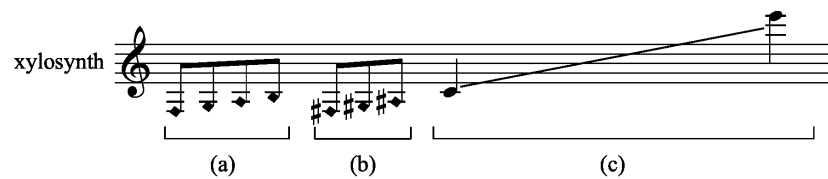
This piece is written for xylosynth and six metallic percussions (1 sizzle cymbal on a timpani, 1 suspended cymbal, 1 triangle, 1 cowbell and 2 small Thai gongs). The xylosynth is an electronic mallet instrument that resembles a xylophone but produces MIDI signals. “Sculpture” in Logic Pro, a physical modeling synth, is used to produce sound of pitched percussion that changes over time. The title *Senza Misura* suggests that there is no metre throughout the piece. The performer is free to improvise with the given materials and experiment with different mallets, extended techniques and dynamics.

*The piece was performed by Joby Burgess on xylosynth and percussion and myself on live electronics, recorded during a workshop given by Joby Burgess and Scott Wilson at the Music Department, University of Birmingham on 3rd May, 2010.*

## Floor Plan



## Performance Directions



The keys of the xylosynth are divided into three areas:

- (a) “White keys” (natural notes) below middle C trigger sound samples of Chinese drums (from low to high)
- (b) “Black keys” (sharped notes) below middle C trigger sound samples of Chinese cymbals (from low to high)
- (c) Notes from middle C above trigger two layers of sound:
  - i. When the keys are struck loudly, it triggers pitched percussion sounds created by “Sculpture”, a physical modeling synth. Its tone colour morphs over time and sounds more like xylophone or marimba at one moment and more like vibraphone or glass chimes at other moments.
  - ii. Striking the keys (softly or loudly) also triggers the sound of water drops and a soft sustained sound similar to a harmonium. Press the sustained pedal, as indicated on the score, to allow the sound to sustain longer.

Thus when the keys are struck strongly with the sustained pedal pressed, firstly we would hear a loud pitched percussion sound. Then, as the percussive sound dies out, we would notice the soft sound of harmonium and water drops.

1. Improvise with the given materials on the score. Repeat, transpose, and add your own ideas.
2. Experiment with different dynamics. Because the keys above middle C are mapped to two layers of sounds, you can trigger different sounds by playing softly or loudly.
3. Press the sustained pedal whenever indicated.
4. When a fermata (♯) sign is indicated, played the note long enough for the live electronics to respond. It may respond by an inexact imitation of your playing.
5. The sound of six metallic percussions are captured by microphones, processed, and looped by the laptop using Logic Mainstage. Experiment with different mallets, brushes and sticks.

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1 2 3 4 5

Xylosynth

*mf* *pp* *f* *p* *ff*

Pedal

6

Xylos.

*mp*

7 8 9

Triangle  
Cowbell

Susp. Cymb.  
Sizzle Cymb. on Timp.

*mf*

Scratch the surface  
with metal beater

Xylos.

(with mallets)

*f* *pp* *mf*

10

Xylos.

*p* *f*

11 12

(roll on sizzle cymbal  
while gliss. on timp.)

Cymb.  
Sizzle Cymb.

*pp* *mf* *pp*

Timpani pedal

Xylos.

*f*

13 (with mallets) 14

Gong 1  
Gong 2

*pp* *f*

Xylos.

*f* *p*

15 16 17

Trgl.  
Cow-bl.

*f*

Cymb.  
Sizzle Cymb.

Gong 1  
Gong 2

Xylos.

*p*

with metal beater

scratching around edge of gong

18 19 20 21

Trgl.  
Cow-bl.

*f* *pp*

Cymb.  
Sizzle Cymb.

Gong 1  
Gong 2

Xylos.

with brush

with metal beater

brushing on the surface of gong

brushing on the surface of cymb.

*f*

22 23 24 Gong 2 (with mallets) *pp*

Gong 1  
Gong 2

(with mallets)

Xylos. *f* *pp* *f*

25 Cowbell 26 27 (roll on sizzle cymbal while gliss. on timp.)

Trgl. C-bl. *p* *f* *pp*

Cymb. Sizzle Cymb.

Timpani pedal

Xylos. *p* *f*

Improvise with the patterns 1 - 27 in random order

Coda

Trgl. C-bl.

Cymb. Sizzle Cymb.

Gong 1  
Gong 2

*fp*

Xylos. *ff*

Detailed description of the musical score: The score is for a percussion ensemble. It begins at measure 22 with Gong 1 and Gong 2. Gong 2 has a single note marked *pp* with a hairpin. The Xylophone part starts in measure 22 with a *f* dynamic, followed by a *pp* section in measure 23, and then a *f* section in measure 24. Measure 25 features a Cowbell with a *p* dynamic. Measure 26 has a Trgl. C-bl. with a *f* dynamic. Measure 27 includes a roll on the sizzle cymbal while glissandoing on the timpani pedal, marked *pp*. The Xylophone part continues in measure 27 with a *p* to *f* dynamic. The Coda section starts at measure 28, featuring a Trgl. C-bl. with a *fp* dynamic and the Xylophone with a *ff* dynamic. The score includes various musical notations such as beams, slurs, and dynamic markings.