

無間

Mou4 Gaan3

For Harp Four-Hands

(2023)

Kenrick Ho

Performance Note:

This piece is for two harpists playing on a single harp (pedal or non-pedal), where one player plays as 'normal' and the other plays a preparation part to set up for extended techniques. The title, 無間 (*Mou4 Gaan13*), refers to the physical collaboration required to play the piece, but also hints at the 'torturous' outcome in the likely scenario where sounds are not created as intended due to incoordination between players.

In fact, such 'disruptive' incoordination is welcomed in the piece. Some playing techniques, such as harmonics, are intentionally difficult to produce. When these techniques 'fail' to sound, they add a humanized unpredictability to the sounding result. Hence, it is the physical attempt at carefully trying to 'make it work' between the two players that is important in performing the piece. This is to say that mistakes are fine and it is expected that performers will encounter them at some point during the performance.

The score is not in space-time notation nor traditional notation. Rather, it should be treated as an event score where each musical event (separated by dashed bar lines) can take as long as it needs. The actual speed of the piece will depend on the time it takes for the maneuver of the preparation part, as well as the harp player's ability to read the score quickly. In other words, the piece can be as quick or as slow as the performers are comfortable with the material. Each bar does not necessarily need to be played immediately after its preceding bar, and it is fine to have gaps of silences between bars. As a rough reference, each semibreve should last at least 5 seconds, but again, it is up to when the performers are ready to proceed.

Optionally, if the piece is being played on a pedal harp, set E Pedal to E#.

If the piece is being played by a teacher-student duo, it is recommended that the student plays the normal harp part. While this piece is written specifically to be a duet, depending on the performers available, there is no reason why it cannot be played as a solo piece.

Instructions for Preparations Part:

The preparation player is expected to be moving around the harp as necessary during the piece. To begin, I suggest the preparation player to kneel on the floor by the left of the bass strings for the tapping sounds, get up for the whistle sounds, and move towards the top of the instrument for the vibrato.

Technique	Description
Tap with hand	Tap anywhere on the sound board of the Harp
Tap with fingertips	Tap anywhere on the sound board using fingertips
Whistle	Slide hand upward across any unused strings on the harp to create a whistling sound
Vibrato	Press on the upper portion of the string repeatedly, above the moving discs to create a vibrato effect
Damp	Damp the sounding strings for the harp part
Harmonics	Touch the strings to be played by the harp part gently so the sounding pitch is an octave above
Snap Pizz.	Pluck the string directly above the sound board so the finger hits the sound board in the attack
Xyl. (<i>Sons Xylophonique</i>)	Press firmly against the strings just above the sound board while the harp part plays normally
P.d.l.t. (<i>Prés de la table</i>)	Play very close to the sound board
Gong	Strike strings between designated notes with force
Cricket Gliss	Run finger (or a pick, if needed) across the top part of the strings, above the moving discs.
Bend	Like vibrato, but only press once on the upper portion of the string, above the moving discs.

ca. 3-5 minutes

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Preparations

tap with hand

tap with fingertips

whistle

p < *f* > *p*

p < *f* > *p*

Harp

L.V.

Prep.

vibrato

damp

Hp.

L.V.

Prep.

touch strings for harmonics

hold strings for xyl.

xyl.

ffz

Hp.

Prep.

p.d.l.t.

hold strings for xyl.

xyl.

Hp.

Prep. tap with hand

p *f* *p* *ff* join gliss freely

Hp. *sfz* free gliss *mf* *ff*

Perc. gong *sfz*

Hp. *mf* *sfz*

cricket gliss bend

Prep. vibrato bend *pp* damp

Hp. *mp* *p* *pp*