

易有三義

Three Meanings of Change

- I. At Ease with Change (易簡)
- II. The Multifariousness of Change (變易)
- III. The Constancy in Change (不易)

For Solo Viola, Fixed Media, and Live Electronics

(2023)

Kenrick Ho

Preface

The title of the *I-Ching* (易經) translates to 'the Book of Changes'. It is, or more accurately, its only retrievable section, *Zhou Yi* (周易), is originally used as a divination manual in the Zhou Dynasty (c.1000 B.C.E). Historically, Taoist and Confucian scholars from as early as 400 B.C.E have studied the *I-Ching* rigorously and have produced numerous classical commentaries on the manual. For example, *Zheng Xuan* (鄭玄)'s *Doctrine on the Book of Changes* (易論) from between 127-200 C.E notes three general interpretations of what is meant by change in the *I-Ching* (易一名而含三義：易簡一也；變易二也；不易三也)：

I. At Ease with Change (易簡)：

Changes are simply natural. The ten thousand things of the universe are inevitably ever-changing, so humans should find peace and comfort in everyday life, to let change happen naturally (宇宙萬物中順其自然和簡易的變).

II. The Multifariousness of Change (變易)：

Since the universe is an open system that is self-generative and self-transformative, human beings must live with ceaseless change (宇宙萬物和人們時常都在變易之中).

III. The Constancy in Change (不易)：

The only constancy about the universe is in change itself. Since change takes place in an orderly manner, humans must find a way to understand their patterns. (宇宙萬物都保持著一種恆常, 變而不易)

The three pieces in *Three Meanings of Change* each adopts one of the above approach to embrace unpredictability and indeterminacy based on my otherwise unidiomatic material. The materials were algorithmically generated, and it is up to the composer and performer's co-attempt to situate them in a 'musical' manner.

Performance Instructions for I. At Ease with Change (易簡)

This piece is for amplified solo viola and fixed media. The fixed media part consists of pre-recorded sul pont. viola notes (mostly open strings) which the live viola part will follow closely in the performance. The score is in time-space notation where note changes in the fixed media part happen slowly. The live performer should then play to fill in the gaps between those note changes.

It is encouraged that the performer create their own fixed media part with their instrument to achieve homogeneity between the parts. Though the piece is written for solo performer, there is no reason why it cannot be played acoustically by two violas, if electronics are not available.

There is no time signature on the score. The duration of each note is entirely up to the performer as long as they are generally slow moving and within the time limit above dotted barlines. For each note, the violist can change bow as necessary, as long as the notes are held with a 'sustained' feel.

The piece should be played with flautando and sul pont. throughout. Aim to project any upper partials that emerge stably, while keeping as much of the root as possible. The live viola part should be amplified to capture the quiet partials as a result of sul pont. This may lead to subtle 'noises' such as finger tapping and the sound of bow leaving strings being amplified. These unwanted 'noises' are an essential part of the performance which give a human touch of unpredictability to the performance. This is to say that given the immense focus and precision required to play quiet, slow, stable, and sul ponticello in tune, the performer should not worry about any imperfections in the performance. While they should not be intentionally encouraged, they are a welcome addition to the material when they happen 'naturally' as a by-product from attempting to play the piece.

A stopwatch should be used in the performance (though if the performer prefers to play by ear, it is not absolutely necessary).

Dynamics should be generally quiet. If an audio engineer is available, aim to level the amplified viola with the fixed media.

Technical Rider

Speakers for fixed media and amplification (x2)
 Laptop to play fixed media (x1)
 Condensor microphone near viola (x1)
 Microphone pre-amp/ mixer
 Cables for speakers to laptop, and microphone to speakers
 Stopwatch for violist

(19'00")

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I. 易簡 (At Ease with Change)

For Solo Viola and Fixed Media

Kenrick Ho

Very Slow (let upper partials ring)

0'00" Flautando and sul ponte throughout (change bow as continuously as possible) 1'30" 4'00"

Viola

pp

Fixed Media

4'00" 5'30" 6'30" 8'00"

Vla.

F.M.

8'00" 8'30" 9'30" 10'30" 11'30"

Vla. IV III IV II IV

F.M.

This system of music spans from 8'00" to 11'30". The Viola part (Vla.) features a melodic line with several slurs and fingerings: IV, III, IV, II, and IV. The F.M. part (F.M.) provides a harmonic accompaniment with a few notes and rests.

11'30" 12'30" 13'30" 15'00" 16'00"

Vla. II I II I III IV

F.M.

This system of music spans from 11'30" to 16'00". The Viola part (Vla.) continues the melodic line with slurs and fingerings: II, I, II, I, III, and IV. The F.M. part (F.M.) continues with its accompaniment.

16'00" 17'30" 18'00" 19'00"

Vla.

F.M.

This system of music spans from 16'00" to 19'00". The Viola part (Vla.) concludes the melodic line with slurs. The F.M. part (F.M.) concludes with a final note and a double bar line.

Performance Instructions for II. The Multifariousness of Change (變易)

This piece is intended to be performed with a live-electronic part made up of samples of viola harmonics. To set up, record each harmonic in the boxed system, and save each note as a separate mp3 file. Load each sample into its respective area and let the performer (or audio technician, if available) to begin and stop the patch. A stereo set up connected to the max patch will be required for the performance.

There is no time signature, or barlines in the score. The duration of each note is roughly represented spatially by note heads but the performer is encouraged to interpret them loosely in reaction to the live-electronic part. The duration of these samples is up to the performer although they should not exceed 10 seconds. The live-electronic part will trigger the recorded samples unpredictably, which provides an unstable generative environment for the performer to freely interact with in the performance. As such, string number, dynamic marking, and bowing as notated on the score should be taken as reference only. The performer is very welcome to elaborate and deviate from the score according to 'what feels right' at the moment.

Technical Rider

Speakers for live-electronics (x2)
Laptop for Max Patch (x1)
Condenser microphone for pitch detection (x1)
Cables to connect microphones to laptop, and laptop to speakers

(4'00")

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II. 變易 (The Multifariousness of change)

For Solo Viola and Live Electronics

Kenrick Ho

♩ = 30 **Slowly** (freely, take time between bows)

Samples for Max Patch (triggered randomly)

Max Patch

1 (♯) 2 (♭) 3 4 5 6 (♯) (♭) 7 8 (♭) 9 (♭) 10 (♭) (♭) 11

Viola Solo

+ plastic mute

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

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

p *mp* *p* *rit.* *pp*

gliss.

Performance Instructions for III. The Constancy in Change (不易)

This piece should be performed with a different scordatura in every performance. The tuning of which is up to the performer, but for the best results, I recommend detuning no more than three strings at a time.

There is no time signature, barline, or rhythm marking on the score. The duration of each note is roughly represented spatially by note heads but it is up to the performer to speed up or slow down at any point according to the resulting harmonic colour of the scordatura. Notes do not have to be played in close succession, nor do they need to be held for an extended duration. Rather, the performer is encouraged to explore a 'natural' progression of the note sequence in a way that feels 'musical' to them.

(3'00")

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III. 不易 (The Constancy in Change)

For Solo Viola

Kenrick Ho

♩ = 60 Moderately slow

The first staff of musical notation for Viola, measures 1-8. It begins with a half note G2 (marked *p*) and a half note G3 (marked *mf*). The melody consists of quarter notes: G3, A3, B3, C4, B3, A3, G3, F3. The bass line consists of half notes: G2, G3, G3, G3, G3, G3, G3, G3. Above the staff, fingering numbers are indicated: III IV, III IV, III IV, III IV, III IV, III, III, III IV, III IV. Dynamic markings include *p*, *mf*, *mp*, *p*, and *mf* with hairpins. There are also two trill-like symbols (two vertical lines) above the notes G3 and G3.

The second staff of musical notation for Viola, measures 9-16. The melody continues with quarter notes: F3, E3, D3, C3, B2, A2, G2, F2. The bass line consists of half notes: G2, G2, G2, G2, G2, G2, G2, G2. Above the staff, fingering numbers are indicated: III, III IV, III, III, III IV, III IV, III IV, III, III, III, III. Dynamic markings include *p*, *mp*, *mf*, *p*, and *mf* with hairpins. There are also two trill-like symbols (two vertical lines) above the notes G2 and G2.

The third staff of musical notation for Viola, measures 17-24. The melody continues with quarter notes: F2, E2, D2, C2, B1, A1, G1, F1. The bass line consists of half notes: G2, G2, G2, G2, G2, G2, G2, G2. Above the staff, fingering numbers are indicated: III, III IV, III IV, III, III IV, III IV, III IV, III. Dynamic markings include *p*, *mp*, *p*, and *pp* with hairpins. A *gliss.* marking is present above the notes G2 and G2. There are also two trill-like symbols (two vertical lines) above the notes G2 and G2.