

offset iii - etude

— — for 2-6 performers

Bofan Ma (2018)

Composed for 'PRiSM - New Music & Science Collaboration' Project, in collaboration with Dr Keeley Crockett - researcher in Computational Intelligence at Manchester Metropolitan University.

This piece is played by a group of 2-6 performers with any instrument or voice type. This piece structurally comprises a 1'30" prototype ('theme'), 3 avatars ('reorganised prototypes'), and a coda. Music materials for the prototype and the coda are presented (in concert pitch) after page iii. The sound world in general is very delicate and fragile. Stopwatches should be used throughout the 6-minute performance:

0'00" - 1'30": Blocks 1-5 played sequentially with each lasting for 18" (15" playing + 3" pause)
1'31" - 5'39": 3 Avatars (devised individually by the performers, further explained below)
5'40" - 6'00": Coda

Performance Instructions:

- 'Low'-'Mid'-'High' can refer to not only pitch/register, but to any mechanism that embodies a relationship as such.
- Pitched materials can be interpreted from any angle in any register, and projected by any means (e.g. whistling/humming/singing/various kind of drums).
- Each performer should prepare their part by randomly sticking the emojis/adjectives/dynamics provided (page ii-iii) onto the corresponding spaces shown around the music materials (Face/Look/Dynamic/Distance). Everything is to be followed as strictly as possible throughout the performance.
- Definitions of the four parameters are:
 - Face** - facial expressions to be imitated;
 - Look** - overall physical (non-facial) appearances to be presented;
 - Dynamic** - (in a conventional sense) the level of loudness of the sound;
 - Distance** - how far does the sound have to (imaginarily) travel before reaching the listeners' ears.
- Avatars should be devised individually and independently by each performer, on the basis of the 5 prototype blocks. Every avatar should contain all 5 blocks (order and repeat ad lib.). However, a clear sense of acceleration should be delivered through the journey from Avatar 1 to 3.
- Face/Look/Dynamic/Distance in the avatars should all be reorganised.
- Pauses are necessary in between blocks and Avatars. Each block should be followed by a 3"-5" gap whereas all Avatars are parted with a 5"-10" one. An absolutely neutral face/body and no action should be made within the pauses.
- Coda enters at precisely 5'40" even if the third Avatar is still on-going. Back instantly to neutral and inactive at 6'00" until the audience realises that the end has been reached.
- Although the staging is flexible depending on the size of the ensemble and the venue, it should be planned carefully to ensure that everyone's face and body remain visible to the audience to the maximum level possible. Staggered positioning on stage is necessary. Ideally one of the performers is positioned at the very front and visible to the others to lead the performance, especially during the prototype.
- Moving around on stage is also encouraged throughout the performance. But everyone should remain highly focused on their own part - any physical reaction to others' playing is always to be avoided.

Faces:



Looks:

Super Chilled	Super Tense	Silent Screaming	Super Sassy
Super Cringe	Super Light	Super Heavy	Awkwardly Positioned
Knackered	Overwhelmingly Cold	Just Won an Lottery	Super Thirsty
Clueless	Super Posh		

Dynamics:

ppp

pp

p

f

ff

fff

Distances:

As if **playing in a small concert venue**

As if **speaking quietly on the phone**

As if **shouting from across the river**

As if **asking questions on a round-table meeting**

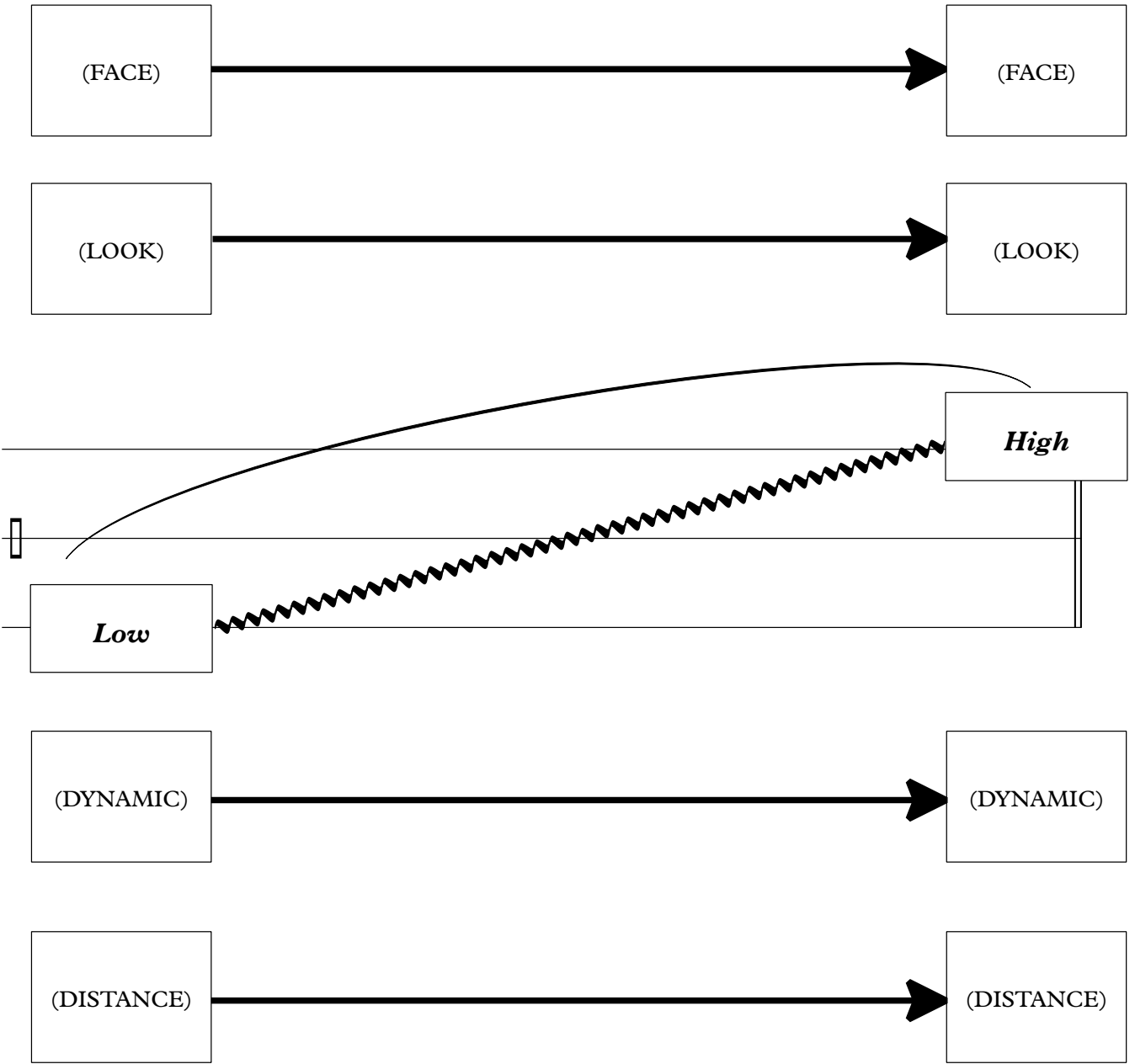
As if **whispering in someone's ear**

As if **singing along in a pop/rock concert**

As if **shouting in someone's ear**

As if **writing an outrageous email**

As if **chatting in a crowded pub**



BLOCK 1