

Gravity

A duet for piano & live electronics

Explanation

The piece consists of electronics that play twelve pre-recorded string samples that are sucked towards any note the piano plays, as if by gravity.

The score is partly indeterminate to allow the player to listen to, interact with, and make decisions based on, what they hear in the electronics. Hopefully this will help to develop skills useful for improvisation and ensemble playing.

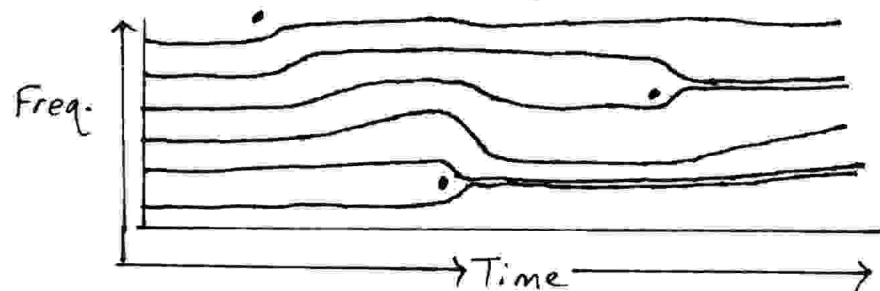
Rules

If the piano plays low notes, loud notes or pitches which are close to those of the string samples, the samples will move faster and further than if the piano plays quiet, high notes which have pitches far away from the string samples.

The closer together the string samples are, the faster they will move.

If no notes are played, the string samples will drift back to their original pitches:

original pitches:



Graphic showing how the piece works

- = piano note
- = string sample

Only one piano note at a time can be played.

No chords are allowed.

The top and bottom octaves cannot be used.

Use of pedalling is up to the performer but fast, pedalled notes will confuse the computer.

- Only press this note at the end of the piece, as it causes the computer program to fade out and finish. If this note is pressed by mistake, press this note quickly to stop it from ending:

- This note quickly fades the electronics out and this one fades them back in: This effect can be used up to two times in the course of the piece.

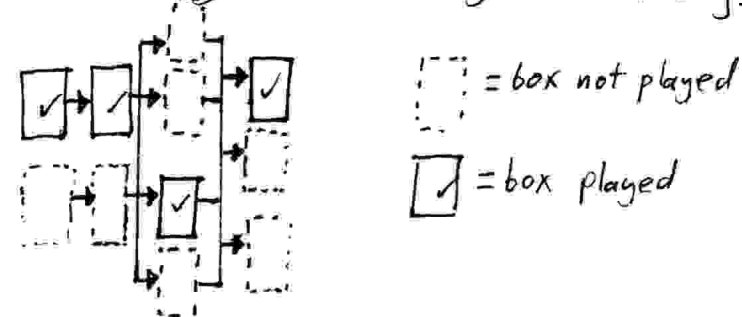
In an emergency press 'enter/return' on the computer keyboard to fade out the electronics and end the program.

The Score

The score consists of a labyrinth of boxes of material which the player navigates their way through from left to right.

Start by following the instructions in the far left box on page 1.

Once the player has completed the instructions/material in a box they can choose to move to any box connected by an arrow. e.g.



The boxes contain combinations of the following information:

Duration: ± 20 seconds = Play this box for approximately 20 seconds.

A box should never be played for more than twice the suggested duration.

Pitch: = Play any note in this range in any order, as many times as desired.

= Play only these notes in any order, as many times as desired.

Dynamics: p pp ppp = play only these dynamics, in any order, as many times as desired.
p <f> p = This dynamic change should happen gradually, over the course of the box.

Density: Low Density = Play a note every 5-15 seconds
Medium Density = Play a note every 1-5 seconds
High Density = Play a note every second or faster

Written Instructions: If an instruction cannot be achieved within the suggested time frame, move onto the next box.

If a box does not contain duration, pitch, dynamics or density information, then these are to be chosen by the performer.

Program

To use the computer program:

1. Copy all files from the DVD onto a folder on the hard disk of the computer.
2. If you are using a PC open 'Instructions for PC.rtf'
If you are using a Mac open 'Instructions for Mac.rtf'
3. Follow the onscreen instructions.

Setup

The piece can be played using either a piano miked-up with a microphone that runs to the computer or using a piano fitted with a Moog PianoBar which detects what notes are pressed and converts them into MIDI.

If the performance uses a miked-up piano:

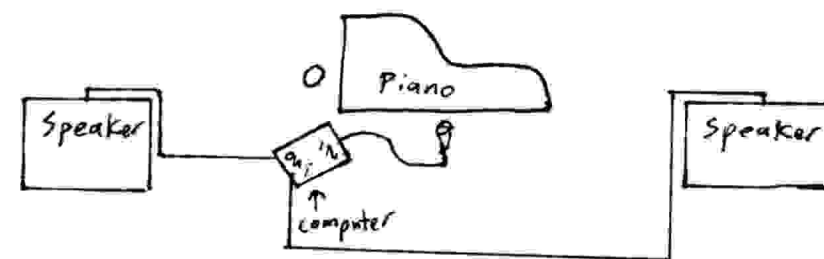
Make sure the microphone is well inside the piano and away from the speakers to stop it picking up the sounds of the electronics instead of the piano. (The computer will detect odd notes if this happens).

If this is a problem try:

- Lowering the piano lid to shield the microphone
- Reducing the volume of the electronics
- Reducing the input of the microphone.

Make sure a good quality microphone is used.

The piece should be set up like this:



The computer should be close enough so that the performer can watch the stopwatch and string sample pitches on it and operate it.

If the performer is having difficulty hearing the electronics a monitor speaker should be used or they should wear headphones.

The speakers should be placed far apart to give a stereo effect.

The electronics should be loud, but should not obscure the piano.

Ideally, the piano should not be amplified but can be to balance better with the electronics.

Practice

It is essential the performer learns how the program will react to their playing.

For practising, a normal MIDI keyboard can be used with the program. (select the MIDI option in the top left of the program).

Programme Note

An object with mass will warp the time-space around it.

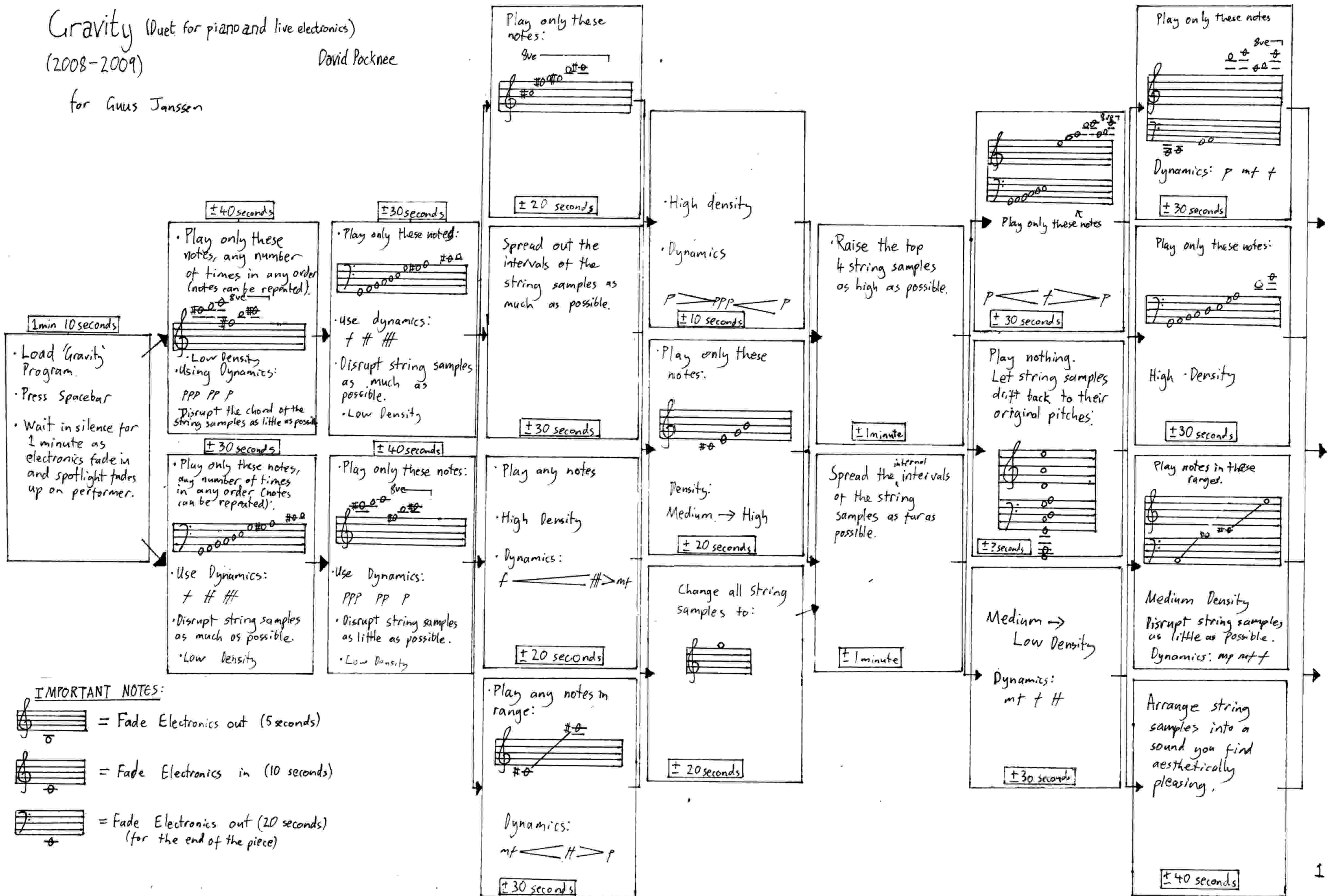
Duration: approximately 7-14 minutes

Gravity (Duet for piano and live electronics)




(2008-2009)

David Pocknee

for Guus Janssen



IMPORTANT NOTES:

-  = Fade Electronics out (5 seconds)
-  = Fade Electronics in (10 seconds)
-  = Fade Electronics out (20 seconds) (for the end of the piece)

