

Popular Contexts, Volume 10: Beethoven's fourth symphony in context

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For flute, violin, cello and synthesiser/sampler

In four movements:

1. Beginning, middle, end
2. Seaside Construction
3. Situation Comedy
4. Ode to Joy

Composed in 2016

Duration: 16 minutes

Written for Peärls Before Swine Experience

Commissioned by the Swedish Arts Council.

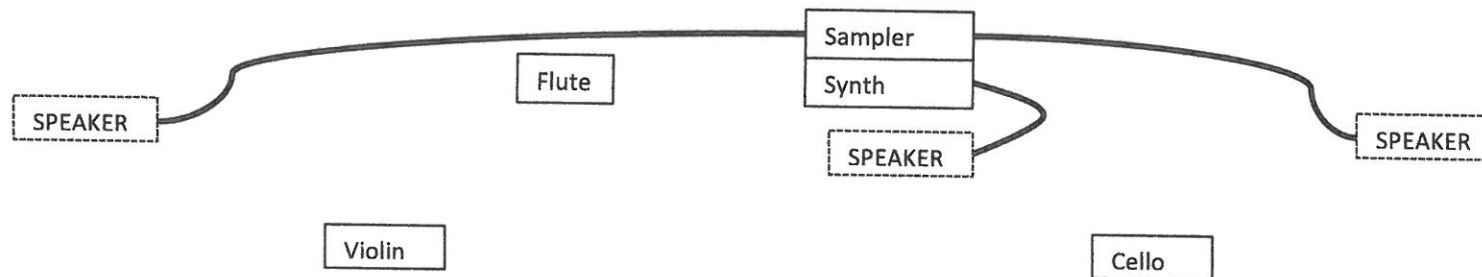
Programme note

Popular Contexts is a series of pieces combining pre-recorded sounds with live instrumental music to explore everyday and popular culture. Funded by the Swedish Arts Council, Volume 10 was written for Peärls Before Swine Experience and their Beethoven symphony cycle project.

KEYBOARD/ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT

- 88 note touch-sensitive synthesizer, routed to one loudspeaker (or keyboard amplifier)
- 2 octave sampler keyboard and computer sampling software, routed to 2 loudspeakers

STAGE SET UP



SYNTHESISER SOUNDS

One sound setting is used in each movement:

1. Full brass
2. Electronic synth sound*
3. Electric bass (middle of the road Rock sound)
4. Trumpet

* Saccharine electronic synthesiser sound, with low-frequency oscillation for exaggeratedly wide vibrato-like effect, and delay over a three-second-fadeout time with the delay synched to the tempo (delay time 0.71 seconds). With a DX7 (FM synthesis) quality - see the 'Mellow Poly' sound setting on Garageband/Logic Pro for reference.

In general, the sounds should have a MIDI and 'factory setting' synthesiser sound quality.

SAMPLES

NOTES:

- C4 is Middle C
- All samples begin from the start of the sample each time they are triggered.
- In the first two movements, the samples are set to stop when the key is released; in the final two movements, the samples continue to play after the key is released, either playing until the end of the sample, or stopping if another sample is triggered.
- The only sample that plays in more than one movement is the 'Duck Quacking' sample, which reappears at the end of the final movement.

MOVEMENT	KEY	SAMPLE	MODE	DURATION	DYNAMIC
First movement	C4	Siren 1 (air raid siren)	Sample sounds as long as key is depressed	25"	F
	Db4	Siren 2 (ambulance coming closer)	Sample sounds as long as key is depressed	25"	F
	D4	Siren 3 (air raid siren)	Sample sounds as long as key is depressed	25"	F
	Eb4	Siren 4 (air raid siren)	Sample sounds as long as key is depressed	45"	F
	E4	Computer Noise 1 (bleeps)	Sample sounds as long as key is depressed	5"	MF
	F4	Computer Noise 2 (white-ish noise)	Sample sounds as long as key is depressed	5"	FF
	Gb4	Computer Noise 3 (8-bit computer game sound)	Sample sounds as long as key is depressed	2"	F
Second movement	G4	Waves	Sample sounds as long as key is depressed	1'00"	P
	A4	Person running on pebbles, slowing down	Sample sounds as long as key is depressed	30"	P
	B4	Children playing	Sample sounds as long as key is depressed	30"	P
	C5	Duck quacking	Sample sounds as long as key is depressed	30"	MP
Third movement	Ab4	Canned laughter	Sample cut by next sample, or continues to end	5"	MF
	Bb4	Crowd: cheering and applause	Sample cut by next sample, or continues to end	15"	MF
Fourth movement	C#5	Children singing Carnatic song	Sample cut by next sample, or continues to end	25"	MF
	D5	West Ham song (<i>I'm forever blowing bubbles</i>)	Sample cut by next sample, or continues to end	25"	MF
	Eb5	Silence	Sample cut by next sample, or continues to end		
	E5	Happy Spanish song with guitar	Sample cut by next sample, or continues to end	25"	MF
	F5	Group singing <i>Sto Lat</i> (Polish happy birthday song)	Sample cut by next sample, or continues to end	32"	MF
	G5	Amazing Grace	Sample cut by next sample, or continues to end	1'05"	F

♩ = 66

1. Beginning, middle, end

Musical score for the first system, featuring five staves: FL (Flute), VLN (Violin), VC (Viola), Sampler, and Synth (Brass). The score is in 4/4 time with a tempo of 66 BPM. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The FL staff has a melodic line of five half notes: B-flat, G, F, E, D, with a dynamic marking of MF. The VLN and VC staves have a similar melodic line, with dynamic markings of PIZZ (pizzicato) and ARCO, Ominous (arco, ominous). The Sampler staff has a sequence of notes: B-flat, G, F, E, D, with a dynamic marking of F and a label 'Siren 1'. The Synth (Brass) staff has a sequence of notes: B-flat, G, F, E, D, with a dynamic marking of MF.

Musical score for the second system, featuring five staves: FL (Flute), VLN (Violin), VC (Viola), Sampler, and Synth (Brass). The score is in 4/4 time with a tempo of 66 BPM. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The FL staff has a melodic line of five half notes: B-flat, G, F, E, D, with a dynamic marking of MF. The VLN and VC staves have a similar melodic line, with dynamic markings of PIZZ (pizzicato) and ARCO. The Sampler staff has a sequence of notes: B-flat, G, F, E, D, with a dynamic marking of F and a label 'Siren 2'. The Synth (Brass) staff has a sequence of notes: B-flat, G, F, E, D, with a dynamic marking of MF.

②

Musical score for system 2, measures 1-6. The score is written for five staves: FL (Flute), VLN (Violin), VC (Viola), Sampler, and Synth (Brass). The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The time signature is 4/4. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 320. The score includes dynamics MF (mezzo-forte) and F (forte). The Violin and Viola parts are marked with PIZZ (pizzicato) and ARCO (arco). The Sampler part is marked with 'Siren 3'. The Synth (Brass) part is marked with MF. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and accents.

③

Musical score for system 3, measures 1-6. The score is written for five staves: FL (Flute), VLN (Violin), VC (Viola), Sampler, and Synth (Brass). The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The time signature is 4/4. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 320. The score includes dynamics MF (mezzo-forte) and F (forte). The Violin and Viola parts are marked with PIZZ (pizzicato) and ARCO (arco). The Sampler part is marked with 'Siren 4'. The Synth (Brass) part is marked with MF. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and accents.

♩ = 320

With heightened tension

3

④

FL

VLN

VC

Sampler

Synth. (Brass)

FL

VLN

VC

Sampler

Synth. (Brass)

7

FL

VLN

VC

Sampler

Synth. (Brass)

Computer noise #3

Noise 1

ff

mf

8 Joyous

FL

VLN

VC

Sampler

Synth. (Brass)

Noise 2

Noise 3

Noise 1

ff

f

mf

F (to end)

F (to end)

F (to end)

F (to end)

FL

VLN

VC

Sampler

Synth. (Brass)

Noise 2

FF

FL

VLN

VC

Sampler

Synth. (Brass)

Noise 3

Noise 1

MF

9

FL

VLN

VC

Sampler

Synth.

Noise 2

Noise 3

FF

F

$\text{♩} = 84$

2. Seaside Construction

* This figure, and the one that follows an octave below, acts as a sign that 'triggers' the next recording and/or musical event. As such, it should sound external, with a didactic quality.

FL

VLN

VC

Sampler

Synth

Sempre FF

Vulnerable

pp

Waves

p

①

FL

VLN

VC

Sampler

Synth.

Waves & running

p*

*Each sample set at 'p', so the combined result is louder.

②

FL

VLN

VC

Sampler

Synth.

More assured

p

Waves, running & children

p

FL

VLN

VC

Sampler

Synth.

p *sonorous* *bg* *bg* *bg*

FL

VLN

VC

Sampler

Synth.

p *MF* *p* *MF*

③

Cantabile 10

FL

VLN

VC

Sampler

Synth.

FF

p

p

Puck

MP

FL

VLN

VC

Sampler

Synth.

MF

p

p

MF

④

11

FL *MP*

VLN *MP*

VC *MP*

Sampler *Waves, running, children & duck* (Waves)

Synth. *MP*

FL *p*

VLN *p*

VC *p*

Sampler (running) *Molto Rit* (Roughly matching the slowing runner)

Synth. *p*