GB

For Double Bass &
Electronics

Teerath Majumder

GB

Program Note

Inspired by the obsessively symmetric shots in *The Grand Budapest Hotel* (2014), this piece is an attempt at bringing symmetry in the individual gestures made by the player as well as the large-scale structure of the piece. The live sound is electronically manipulated to add textural complexity.

GB came out of a collaboration between Teerath Majumder and the German double bass virtuoso Sebastian Gramss during the second edition of South Asian Music Residency organised by Goethe Institut, Chennai in 2017. The original idea of creating a piece for piano that would be based on symmetric gestures around D4 was transferred to the double bass; symmetric shapes for the left hand, and bowing/plucking patterns that felt symmetric to the player were explored.

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Performance Instructions

Double Bass

1. The part is a collection of 25 blocks, each of which shows roughly the finger positions for the left hand, the order in which the notes in the block are to be played, and the dynamic level which doesn't have to be strictly followed. *Fig.1* describes each element in details.

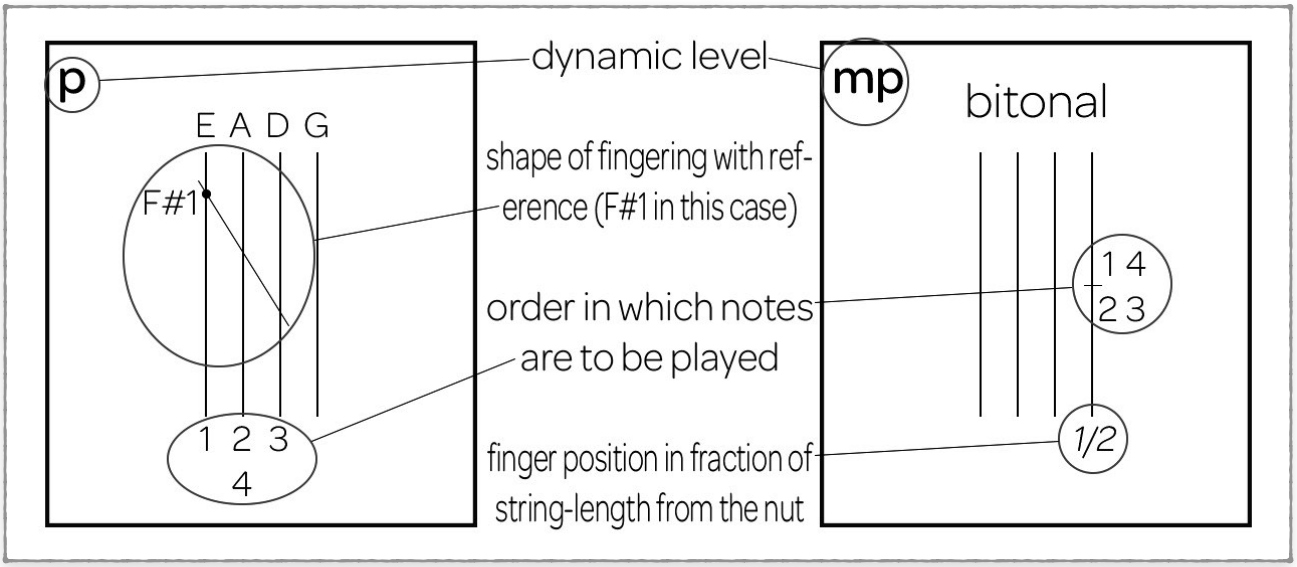

Fig.1 Description of elements in the blocks

2. "Bitonal" indicates that both the section above and the one below the point at which the string is stopped are to be played. At such instances, a fraction in italics indicates where the string is to be stopped. The order, in these cases, tells when to play above/below the point where the string is stopped.
3. The other instances use lines to create certain shapes of fingering. The player has to imitate these shapes remaining within her/his comfortable reach without worrying about the notes produced (which can be non-tempered).
4. The player has to come up with a set of at least 6 gestures based on different ways of bowing or plucking the strings or combinations of both. Extended techniques — such as bowing with a combination of hair and wood, vertical bowing, slapping etc. — are most welcome (in a sense *required*). The notes indicated in the blocks are to be played using these gestures. Only one gesture should be allocated to each block. Same gesture should be allocated to blocks that are diametrically opposite and equidistant from the 13th block or the centre block, like the 2nd and the 24th.

5. Each block should take roughly 8 seconds to be performed. The player has the option to repeat the gestures at whatever pace makes musical sense to her/him.
6. There are 4 different orders in which the blocks can be performed. See *Fig.2*.
7. The blocks should not all be performed in a disjunct manner; one block may seamlessly flow to the next. The cohesion of the piece depends solely on the performers' interpretation. The player is asked to remember this when coming up with the gestures and choosing the respective pace at which they are performed.
8. An expression direction can be seen at the beginning of the score: *Like a Lunatic*. It may be interpreted in a theatrical way, but more than anything I am looking for an expression of madness in the playing. (It can become extremely dramatic if that qualifies as being lunatic to the player.)
9. The player may choose to react to the electronic manipulations. If a certain block demands more than 8 seconds or needs to be cut short, the player may go for it.

- Electronics

1. The raw signal from a dynamic microphone placed near the bridge passes through several auxiliary channels (that are also internally routed) with effect inserts in a Logic Pro X project. The sum of their outputs is heard through a stereo sound system.
2. The manipulator has control over the following 6 parameters:
    i. the **Delay Time** of the **Echo** insert on the **Delay** channel
    ii. the **Gain** of the **Delay** channel
    iii. the **Gain** of the **Distortion** channel
    iv. the **Gain** of the **Reverb 1** channel
    v. the **Gain** of the **Reverb 2** channel
    vi. the **Gain** of the **Drones** channel
3. The parameters are to be controlled using a MIDI controller. Parameter *i* is best controlled using a knob. Faders are suitable for the others.
4. The task of the manipulator is to respond to the double bass player. The directions that will follow are to be taken only as guides and not as directives.
5. Parameter *i* may be used to extend or cut short the ambiance created by certain gestures. It can also be used to gradually slow down or speed up the echo tail after a gesture has ended which can be an interesting effect.
6. Use **Distortion** with reserve. It is meant to be implemented as an added color for gestures like normal bowing. It may not be used with soft gestures as it might subdue their effect.

7. **Reverb 1** has a typical space reverb setting. Vary parameter *iv* to create contrasting wet and dry sections.
8. The reverb in the **Reverb 2** channel adds an airy ambiance to the mix. It should be used selectively according to the manipulator's taste.
9. The **Drones** channel consists of two transient-activated drones produced by convolution reverb inserts utilizing two different impulse response (IR) samples. They are effective especially when used with plucked gestures.

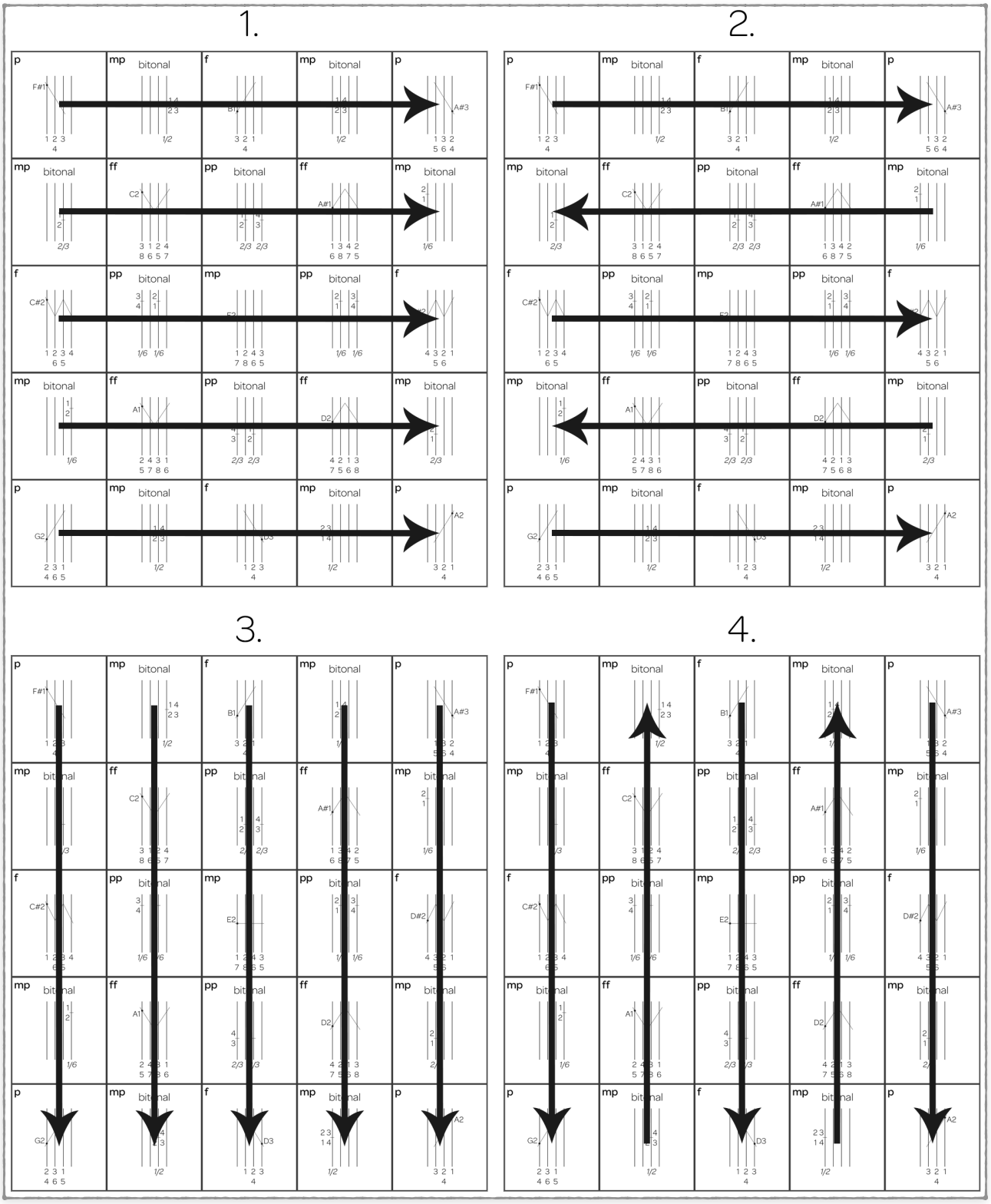

Fig.2 Possible orders in which the blocks may be performed

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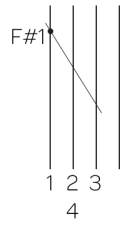
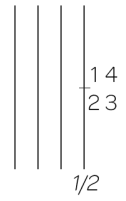
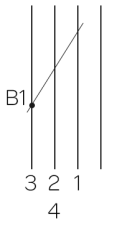
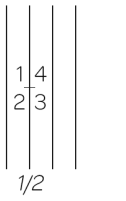
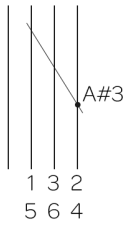
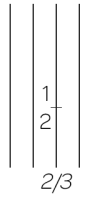
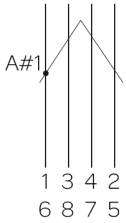
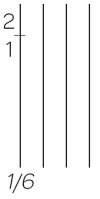
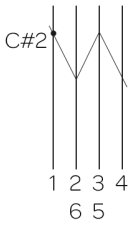
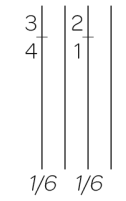
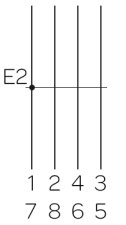
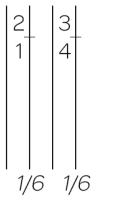
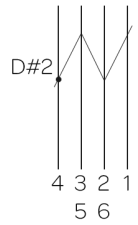
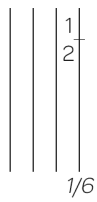
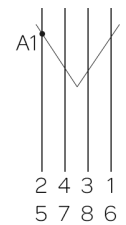
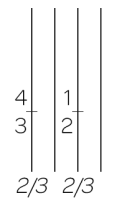
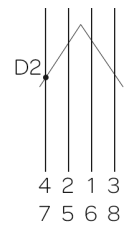
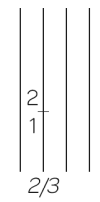
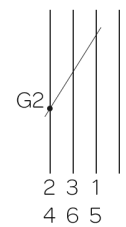
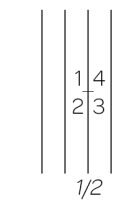
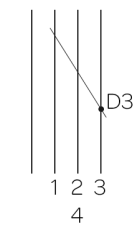
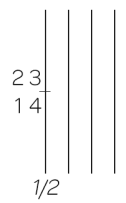
Teerath Majumder

1 block = 8 sec

Double Bass

Like a Lunatic

p 	**mp** bitonal 	**f** 	**mp** bitonal 	**p** 
mp bitonal 	**ff** 	**pp** bitonal 	**ff** 	**mp** bitonal 
f 	**pp** bitonal 	**mp** 	**pp** bitonal 	**f** 
mp bitonal 	**ff** 	**pp** bitonal 	**ff** 	**mp** bitonal 
p 	**mp** bitonal 	**f** 	**mp** bitonal 	**p**