

Christian A. Gentry

# Earworm

for piano and live electronics

PREVIEW ONLY

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### **Program Notes**

The thought that raced through my mind throughout composing this piece is “Am I writing a cover or a composition?” After sitting with this a few months my answer is emphatically and decidedly “yes.” Taking Monk’s “Rhythm-a-ning” as the main idea that is strung throughout the piece I purposefully scratch away anything that is “Monk” about it. There isn’t any real dissonance, disjunct rhythms and a lot of empty space. And where these things do happen, they are more “caricaturistic” than “characteristic” of Monk’s style. Instead I take the tune and push it to its logical conclusion by what is implied in the opening riff: A play on the whole idea of circle-of-fifths harmonic progression. There is no melody, just quickly moving harmony and dense chords. The comedic opening acts as a false start of sorts where the composer/performer/improviser seems to be creatively messing with an initial idea that he/she cannot quite get right, ultimately giving up through huge arm clusters followed by a more “tonal” and rhythmically-oriented B section. Finally, this section seems to get at a more clearly stated gestural proclamation of the opening material with harmonically dense chords that finally give way to the interlocking of chords between hands that end the piece on the dominant (F chord). In the mean time another performer live samples, loops, and otherwise affects the performance creating a mediated space between performer and audience. Essentially, what happens is a dramatic interplay between composition, improvisation, and recreating a classic tune by one of the greats. I also want to acknowledge that the chasing octaves idea that happens throughout represents another level of mediation. That is, McCoy Tyner’s solo version of the same piece recorded live in 1991 in Poland.

### **Performance Notes**

Piano: Smaller clusters=black and white keys played with palms. Large clusters=black and white keys played with forearms. Also, tempos are flexible and should be communicated clearly with live electronics performer.

Live electronics: An application (in Max 7) is provided by the composer. At the present moment the best tool for performance is laptop interfaced with a Behringer BCF2000. The performer basically acts as a shaper of sounds that come out of the piano. Instructions are general at this point. As it is performed, instructions may change and become more specific, but the built-in flexibility should not be lost. There may be questions arise as to how long the captures of particular music from the pianist should last with the subsequent looping of such events. This is fully up to the performers, although the composer suggests that captures beyond two bars may be a bit too long. The ending of the piece is solely up to the live electronics performer.

Part I: Pre-recorded Sounds

Please follow the following instructions. The music below is to be pre-recorded in advance of any performance of the work.

The music below should be recorded *no more* than **three times** using the key below as a guide for 1)Instrument type, 2) Recording device, and 3) Recording venue. There are eight possible recording situations and they are to be chosen randomly. As to how the recording situations are chosen is wholly up to the performer although the composer provides a random number generator patch for convenience sake. After the recordings, please send them to whomever will be operating the live processing.

Guide

Instrument	Device	Venue
Concert Grand Piano (CG)	Mobile device (MD)	Practice room (PR)
Rickety Upright (RU)	Portable handheld audio recorder (HR)	Concert Hall (CH)

Possible Recording Situations and Assigned Numbers

Random Number	Recording Situation
0	CG, MD, PR
1	CG, MD, CH
2	CG, HR, PR
3	CG, HR, CH
4	RU, MD, PR
5	RU, MD, CH
6	RU, HR, PR
7	RU, HR, CH

Moderato

*mf*

*senza Ped.*

# Earworm

for piano and live electronics  
for Jeff Manchur

Christian Gentry (2014)

Piano

Electronics

R=subtle

EQ=High Pass

R=slowly increase delay

**A** Vivace non troppo  
stabile

10

Subito andante con moto

*mp*

To

EQ=Peak-notch, midrange  
Move peak across spectrum  
faster and faster until clusters

ca. 10"

grow increasingly faster, louder, and dissonant until the chords become clusters.

**B** Too fast and furious

Bb Eb Bb Eb

Bb Eb Bb Eb

R=huge pre-delay and post delay  
creating feedback loops

MIX-Throughout cluster section, slowly increase amplitude of processed  
signal while decreasing dry signal

**Molto ritardando, Allargando**

17

*pp sub* *fff*

Capture cluster

**C Pulsating, somewhat fast (♩=70-76)**

21

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

hold down from cluster

PLAY cluster, Revmix

R=Return to drier sound

MIX-Increase dry signal

EQ=Subtly highlight and meander around the F5 harmonic spectrum

26

*mf* *pp*

Capture mm.54-55

*senza misura, yet pulsating*

28

**D**

*f* *ppp*

PLAY Capture 1

Capture 2

PLAY Effects=Percussive and a bit detuned

30

*mf*

32

*pp*

Playback Capture 2

*pp*

34

*mf* *pp*

Capture 3

36

*mf* *pp*

Fade Capture 1

Playback Capture 3

38

*f* *p*

3/4



40

Repeat 3-5x **rit.**

*pp*

*mf* sempre

Fade Capture 2

Capture 4, m.65

**A Tempo**

**F** Explosive!

42

*ff*

*pp*

44

*f*

Playback Capture 4

3

3

45

*mp*

47

*pp*

*pp sempre*

*lyrical*

*mf*

49

6 6 6 6 6

3/4

6 6

3

51

rit.

6 6 6 6 6 6

6

53

A tempo

H

6 6 6 6 6 6

6 6 6

55

6 6 6 6 6 6

57

6 6 6 6 6 6

3 3

59

6 6 6 6 6 6

3 3

3

Capture 5, especially F Pedal

Musical score for measures 61-62. The score is written for piano, featuring a treble and bass staff. Measure 61 begins with a treble staff containing six sixteenth-note chords, each marked with a '6' below it. The bass staff has a single note. Measure 62 continues with similar sixteenth-note chords in the treble staff, also marked with '6's, and a more complex bass line with eighth and sixteenth notes.

Musical score for measures 63-65. Measure 63 starts with a treble staff containing sixteenth-note chords marked with '6's, with dynamics *f sub* and *mp*. The bass staff has a triplet of eighth notes. Measure 64 continues with similar chords and dynamics *f* and *mp*. Measure 65 features a treble staff with eighth-note chords and dynamics *mf*, and a bass staff with a triplet of eighth notes and dynamics *mf*.

Playback 5

Playback EFX: Low pass, emphasize 44-87 hZ

Musical score for measures 66-68. Measure 66 features a treble staff with eighth-note chords marked with '3's, with dynamics *p* and *mf*. The bass staff has a triplet of eighth notes and dynamics *p*. Measure 67 continues with similar chords and dynamics *fp* and *mf*. Measure 68 features a treble staff with eighth-note chords marked with '3's, with dynamics *mf* and *fp*, and a bass staff with a triplet of eighth notes and dynamics *pp* and *mf*.

EFX: Alter direct line-in through downsampling, bit distortion, and delay until m.104

70

*mf* *fp* *mf* *fp*

*mf* *pp* *mf* *pp* *mf* *pp* *mf*

74

**molto accel.**

*fp* *mf* *fp*

*pp* *mf* *fp*

78

**Allegro assai**

*f* *pp* *ff*

CUT ALL EFX: Begin Circle of Fifths loops

*pp*

Musical score for measures 82-84. The piece is in 3/4 time. Measure 82 features a treble staff with a half note G4 and a bass staff with a half note G2. Measure 83 contains complex chords and arpeggiated patterns in both staves. Measure 84 continues with similar complex textures. A large, diagonal watermark reading "PREVIEW ONLY" is visible across the page.

A musical staff with a double bar line and the dynamic marking *mf* (mezzo-forte) centered below the staff. The staff is enclosed in large square brackets on the left and right sides.

Musical score for measures 85-89. The piece is in 3/4 time. Measures 85-89 feature complex textures with triplets and various dynamics. Measure 85 has a treble staff with a half note G4 and a bass staff with a half note G2. Measure 86 contains complex chords and arpeggiated patterns in both staves. Measure 87 continues with similar complex textures. Measure 88 features a treble staff with a half note G4 and a bass staff with a half note G2. Measure 89 contains complex chords and arpeggiated patterns in both staves. A large, diagonal watermark reading "PREVIEW ONLY" is visible across the page.

A musical staff with a double bar line and the dynamic marking *pp* (pianissimo) centered below the staff. The staff is enclosed in large square brackets on the left and right sides.

Musical score for measures 90-94. The piece is in 3/4 time. Measures 90-94 feature complex textures with triplets and various dynamics. Measure 90 has a treble staff with a half note G4 and a bass staff with a half note G2. Measure 91 contains complex chords and arpeggiated patterns in both staves. Measure 92 continues with similar complex textures. Measure 93 features a treble staff with a half note G4 and a bass staff with a half note G2. Measure 94 contains complex chords and arpeggiated patterns in both staves. A large, diagonal watermark reading "PREVIEW ONLY" is visible across the page.

A musical staff with a double bar line and the dynamic marking *pp* (pianissimo) centered below the staff. The staff is enclosed in large square brackets on the left and right sides.

96

*ppp*

{

**K**

101

*pp* *mp* *pp*

{

Capture 6

106

*mp* *mf* *p*

{



111

*pp* *mf* *pp*

115

*mf* *ff* *pp*

Rubato, expressive,  
nearly half time

Capture 7

119 **L** A Tempo

*pp* *ff* *mp*

Rubato,  
expressive

123 **A Tempo**

*pp* *f* *mp*

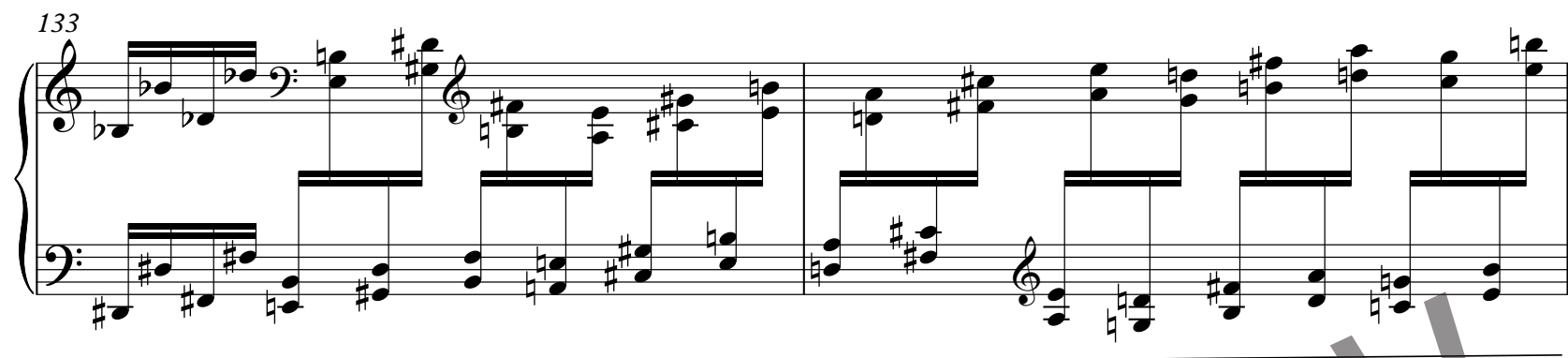
127 **Rubato, expressive**

*f* *psub* *mp*

131 **A Tempo**

*pp* *f* *psub*

133

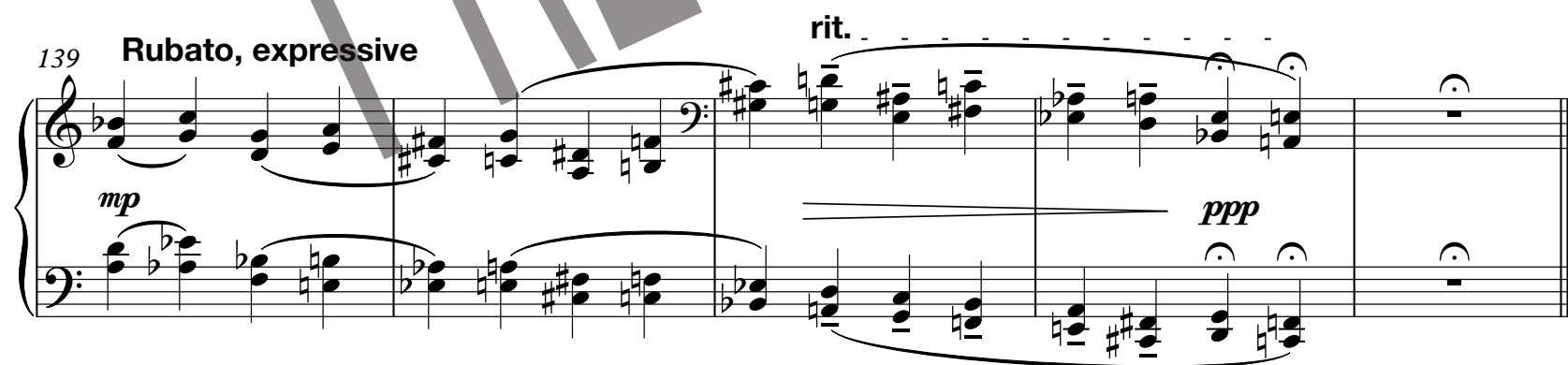


135



Playback 7

139 **Rubato, expressive**



Playback 6

**M** A Tempo

144

Musical score for measures 144-145. The piece is in 3/4 time and B-flat major. Measure 144 features a piano introduction with a bass line of eighth notes and a treble line of chords. Measure 145 continues the piano introduction with a similar bass line and treble line. The dynamic is *pp* (pianissimo) and the tempo is *A Tempo*. A bracket indicates the piano introduction spans measures 144-145. The instruction *poco a poco crescendo* is written below the piano introduction.

146

Musical score for measures 146-147. The piece is in 3/4 time and B-flat major. Measure 146 features a piano introduction with a bass line of eighth notes and a treble line of chords. Measure 147 continues the piano introduction with a similar bass line and treble line. The dynamic is *mf* (mezzo-forte). A bracket indicates the piano introduction spans measures 146-147.

148

Musical score for measures 148-149. The piece is in 3/4 time and B-flat major. Measure 148 features a piano introduction with a bass line of eighth notes and a treble line of chords. Measure 149 continues the piano introduction with a similar bass line and treble line. The dynamic is *ff* (fortissimo). A bracket indicates the piano introduction spans measures 148-149. The instruction *pp sempre* (pianissimo sempre) is written below the piano introduction. The instruction *pp sub.* (pianissimo subito) is written below the piano introduction.

150

*ff*

152

*ff sub* *pp sub* *ff sub* *pp sub* *ff sub* *pp sub* *ff sub*

*pp sub*

Capture 8

End all playbacks

155

*pppp*

Playback 8

R: Increasingly wet w/more post-delay

*ff* let ring  
and fade