

Duet: Multivariants

for resonating instrument(s) and one sustaining instrument

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Program Notes

Duet: Multivariants uses a structural approach based on literary multivariant structure. Multivariant structure can be found in the iconic *Chose Your Own Adventure* books (and even earlier, in fact, in certain modern and post-modern literature). Today, this structure is most commonly used in hyperlink art.

In essence, multivariants represent the ways one can navigate between different discrete models. Some examples are a split (where one has the option to go to one of two or more different modules), a join (where two different modules lead to the same place), a bypass (where one module leads past numerous others to a further point), and a loop (where a module leads back to an earlier point in the series).

In my duet, I create modules (using square brackets) in which I place musical material for the two instruments performing. One is blue, the other pink. I provide arrows that indicate which choices the performers have, and certain other symbols (numbers within the boxes, text indications) to indicate duration. The score is a map because it allows for a full navigation of musical material, but in a sense functions more like a dungeon in a video game than a traditional map. Certain things change by returning to certain places, such as durations, and certain things (such as those yellow modules that are linked with a dotted line) are only unlocked by returning to other modules a certain amount of times.

By creating this type of musical structure, I allow the musicians to perform and realize a piece of music that is elastic, modular, and ever-changing, yet still born of the same kernel idea. I use this approach because I believe it invites the musicians involved to engage more closely with the material, be more active in the performance, and invest in creating a realization that is true to themselves as players.

Performance Notes

Each unit between [brackets] is one module

The blue form represents the resonating instrument(s) (instrument 1), and the pink form a sustaining instrument (instrument 2)

Vertical representation within brackets represents amplitude (ie -- first set of brackets, instrument 1 plays as loud as possible and lets the note decay fully to silence)

The D or F at the beginning of the bracket indicates which note is played in that module (assume that if there is no other indication, both instruments should be perfectly in tune)

In the final module on the second page, the "X" indicates any note of the player's choice excluding D or F

The players may choose the register and timbre of each module individually, and may change them when returning to or repeating a module

Arrows indicate the path between modules players can choose to perform

Brackets around arrowheads indicate that modules may overlap by 1-4 seconds

Dots within the brackets indicate that the module may be repeated the number of times, indicated above (ie. last module on the first page repeated 1-4 times)

"Final barlines" (thicker brackets) around modules indicate that the module may be conclusive (ie. may end the piece) at any point

Dotted lines enclosing a segment with numbers in it (ie in the second module on the first page) mean that any time that module is played again, the segment gets longer (first time: 7 seconds, second time: 9 seconds, and so on). When all of the values have been played, the players may either continue playing the longest value, or traverse the values in reverse order

F with an arrow above it indicates a slight sharpness, less than a quarter tone

An X parallel to a decay ramp indicates that the decay time is left to the discretion of the player (in cases / instruments where this is possible)

On the second page, the wavy lines above the second module which turn into the sixteenth note gesture in the third indicate that player two should listen to the beating created by the slight difference in tuning between the instruments and create a pulse at an equal tempo in the next module

The two yellow modules may be "unlocked" by playing other modules enough times (indicated by the dotted line). Once unlocked, they may be played as many times as desired by either instrument and at any time (including overlapping other modules)

A + sign indicates an optional second note for instrument 1

