

Behind the Back

for pipa and electronics
(2016)

*Commissioned by The Little Giant Chinese Chamber Orchestra
for Su Yun-Han*



Timothy Roy

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A very special thank you to Shih-Hui Chen for affording me the opportunity to compose this piece and work with The Little Giant Chinese Chamber Orchestra.

Program Note

The musical inspiration for this piece comes from my fascination with the murals of the Mogao Caves in Dunhuang, China. The artwork famously depicts musicians performing while dancing and flying through the air. One image – that of a woman playing pipa behind her back – is so iconic that many Chinese dancers train in order to recreate her graceful pose. *Behind the Back* alludes to the ceremonial atmosphere of the Mogao murals while imagining the sort of music provided by the acrobatic women depicted within – a music which incorporates passages suggestive of dance and aerial maneuvers. At all times, the virtuosity and lyricism of the pipa is the focal point.

EQUIPMENT LIST:

1 mixer
1 stereo speaker system
1 microphone for instrument amplification
1 computer with at least 2 GB RAM
1 audio interface with at least three outputs
All necessary cabling
OPTIONAL: footpedal for triggering by performer

- The pipa should be amplified by placing a microphone near the soundboard. Route the microphone directly to Input 1 on the audio interface, which should be connected to a laptop running the performance patch.
- Outputs 1&2 from the interface is the pipa and live processing (reverberation and delay), which should be assigned from the mixing board to the Left and Right loudspeakers, respectively. Outputs 3&4 from the interface are the stereo fixed media, left and right channels.
- Numbers enclosed in circles below the electronics staves indicate cues that must be triggered at specific moments. There are two methods to progress through cues in the performance patch. The first is by a sound technician pressing SPACEBAR on the laptop. The second is by the performer using either a USB footpedal set to output a SPACEBAR

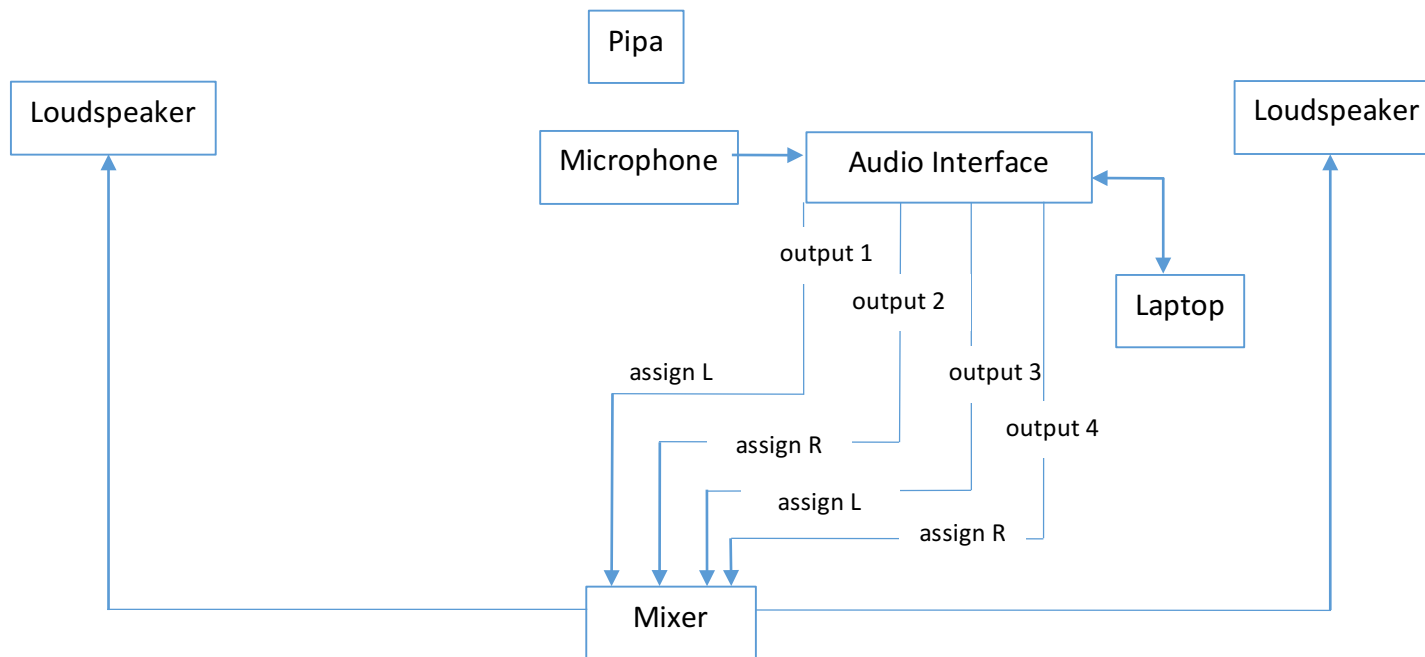
message (connected directly to the laptop's USB port), or a MIDI sustain pedal (this must be connected to an electronic keyboard, which in turn must be connected to the audio interface with a MIDI cable).

- The location of the laptop and inter face will depend on which triggering method is used (next to the mixer if the technician is cueing; onstage if the performer is cueing with a footpedal). Either way, it is preferable to have a sound technician monitoring levels at the mixer .

The performance patch and instructions for use may be acquired from the composer. It is not necessary to already own Max/MSP.

To acquire performance materials or ask any questions, please contact me at timroycomposer@gmail.com

Please notify me of any performances of the piece.



Behind the Back

for pipa and electronics

Timothy Roy

for Su Yun-Han and The Little Giant Chinese Chamber Orchestra

A **Ominous**

16" 11" 5"

Pipa

Electronics

Low Gong

pp (1)

ppp

p

Free, lyrical ♩=50

4

mp

10"

Prayer Bowls

pp

n

4+1

4+1

2

3 triggers last prayer bowl

8"

7

(♩=50)

3

III II let all strings ring; number of notes approximate

IV

pp

mf

mp

pp

7"

3"

9

sim.

p

pp

p

G.P.

Behind the Back

B

5"

$\text{♩} = 50$

Pipa

mp

12 **Low Gong** resonance sustains

E.

mp (4)

Pipa

p

mp

E.

15 resonance sustains

mp (5)

Pipa

p

mp

p

E.

19 resonance sustains

mp (6) *mp* (7)

Behind the Back

poco accel.

Pipa 22

E. 22

mf

f try to line up with cut-off in electronics as best as possible

f

Musical score for 'Behind the Back'. It features two staves: Pipa (treble clef) and E. (bass clef). The piece starts at measure 22. The Pipa part begins with a melodic line in 2/4 time, marked *mf*. A dashed line labeled 'poco accel.' spans from measure 22 to measure 25. In measure 25, the time signature changes to 3/4. The Pipa part continues with a triplet of eighth notes marked *f* and an accent (>). The E. part has a long, low note in measure 22, followed by a rest in measure 25. A double bar line is present at the end of measure 25.

Pipa

E.

Prayer Bowls

8

9 triggers last bowl

resonance carries into next measure

ad lib.

10"

ppp *pp* *n* *pp* *n*

Musical score for 'Prayer Bowls'. It features two staves: Pipa (treble clef) and E. (bass clef). The piece starts at measure 25. The Pipa part has a long, sustained note with a wavy line above it, labeled 'ad lib.' and '10"'. The E. part has a long, sustained note with a wavy line above it, labeled 'Prayer Bowls'. A circled '8' is below the first note, and a circled '9' is below the last note, with the text 'triggers last bowl' next to it. The text 'resonance carries into next measure' is at the end of the staff. Dynamics *ppp*, *pp*, *n*, *pp*, and *n* are indicated with wedges above the staff.

This space intentionally left blank.

Behind the Back

5"

4
26

Pipa

pp

ff



D ♩=60

Pipa

p

3

4"

*mf*³

E.

27

Prayer Bowls

10

11 live instrument delay and soundfile



Pipa

30

3

*f*³

*

E.

30


live delays and soundfile continue

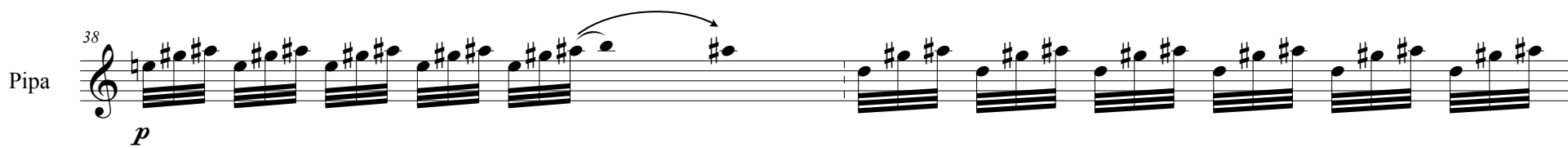
12 alters delay and ends soundfile

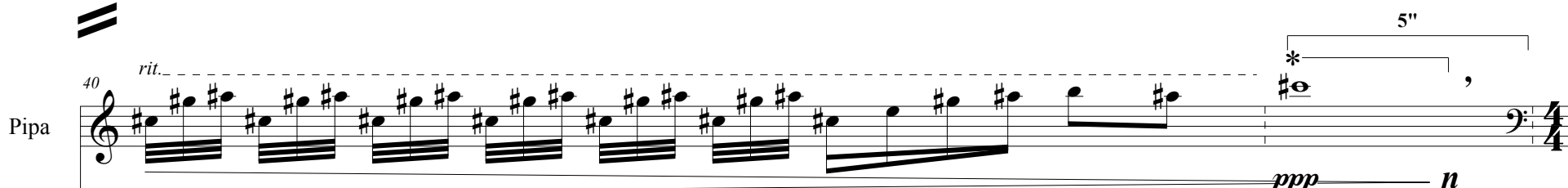
Behind the Back

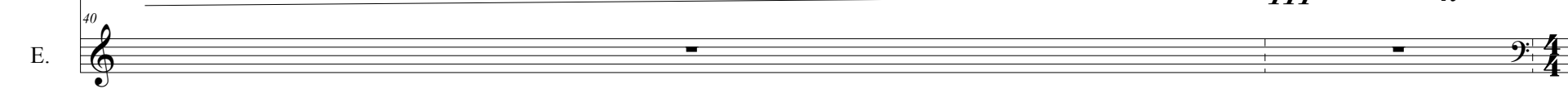
Freely (ca. ♩.=160, with rubato)

Pipa 34 

Pipa 36 

Pipa 38 

Pipa 40 

E. 40 

Behind the Back

6

Dramatic ♩=60 (see footnote †)

E

Pipa

E.

Pipa

E.

Pipa

E.

13 low tone, turbulent texture

14 low hit

15 crossfades between textures; triggers gliss

16 $\# \sigma$ *fp* \rightarrow *n* terminates texture

17 fades out

† Performer should play this passage at roughly ♩=60. The electronics will follow the performer.

Behind the Back

3" 5" 7" 7

54 G.P. **p** **mf**

Pipa

54 E. **mp**

20" (18)

57 **pp** **mf** **mf** **f** **mp** **f**

Pipa

57 E. **Large Gong**

tremolo with thumb intermittently

lun on both strings *

15"

58 **p** **pp**

Pipa

58 E. **pp**

Behind the Back

8

G

Rhythmic, Ritualistic ♩=116

Pipa

E.

59

pp

(continues through m. 64)

n

f

Drums

21 triggers soundfile;
adds channel delay/chorus effect to instrument

65

Pipa

sfz aggressive

p

f

mp

E.

65

f

69

Pipa

f

pp

ad lib.

f

sfz

E.

69

f

p

f

Behind the Back

74

Pipa

mf *f* *sfz* *f* *mf*

E.

78

Pipa

f *mp* *f* *fp*

E.

Small Cymbal

81

Pipa

f *mf* *ff*

E.

Behind the Back

10
88

Pipa

sfz *f* *sfz*

Small Cymbal

E.

88

E.

92

Pipa

sfz *sfz*

E.

92

E.

96

Pipa

f *ff*

E.

96

E.

Drums texture emerges

Behind the Back

99

Pipa

E.

103

Pipa

E.

pp *f*

noise bursts emerge

107

Pipa

E.

$\text{♩} = \text{♩} \text{ (♩} = 155.66)$

H

noise bursts (continue)

ff

Big Hit
 (22) turns off delay/chorus

Behind the Back

12 Rhythmically Precise

Pipa *111* *f* *mp*

E. *f* *p*

Pipa *116* *f* *mp* *mf*

E. *116* chords ending in ties continue to sound until change (noise bursts) High shimmers begin – continue through m. 173

Pipa *120* *f* *mf*

E. *120*

Behind the Back

125
Pipa

125
E.

(noise bursts)

130
Pipa

130
E.

134
Pipa

134
E.

f

mf

f

4

12/16

9/16

12/16

9/16

12/16

9/16

12/16

9/16

Behind the Back

14

This musical score is for the piece "Behind the Back" and consists of three systems, each with a Pipa and an E. (Electric guitar) part. The score is written in treble clef and includes various time signatures and dynamic markings.

System 1 (Measures 137-140):
Pipa: Measures 137-140. Time signatures: 9/16, 12/16, 9/16, 12/16. Includes accents (>) and a *mf* dynamic marking.
E.: Measures 137-140. Time signatures: 9/16, 12/16, 9/16, 12/16. Includes a *mf* dynamic marking.

System 2 (Measures 141-144):
Pipa: Measures 141-144. Time signatures: 12/16, 9/16, 12/16, 9/16. Includes a *ff* dynamic marking and a wavy line above the staff.
E.: Measures 141-144. Time signatures: 12/16, 9/16, 12/16, 9/16.

System 3 (Measures 145-149):
Pipa: Measures 145-149. Time signatures: 9/16, 12/16, 9/16, 6/16. Includes *sf* and *mf* dynamic markings.
E.: Measures 145-149. Time signatures: 9/16, 12/16, 9/16, 6/16.

System 4 (Measures 150-153):
Pipa: Measures 150-153. Time signatures: 9/16, 12/16, 9/16, 6/16.
E.: Measures 150-153. Time signatures: 12/16, 6/16.

Behind the Back

154
Pipa $\frac{6}{16}$ $\frac{9}{16}$ $\frac{12}{16}$
E. $\frac{6}{16}$ $\frac{9}{16}$ $\frac{12}{16}$

158
Pipa $\frac{12}{16}$ $\frac{9}{16}$ $\frac{12}{16}$
E. $\frac{12}{16}$ $\frac{9}{16}$ $\frac{12}{16}$

162
Pipa $\frac{12}{16}$ $\frac{9}{16}$ $\frac{12}{16}$
E. $\frac{12}{16}$ $\frac{9}{16}$ $\frac{12}{16}$

166
Pipa $\frac{12}{16}$ $\frac{9}{16}$ $\frac{12}{16}$
E. $\frac{12}{16}$ $\frac{9}{16}$ $\frac{12}{16}$

Prayer Bowl

Behind the Back

16

Pipa

170

pp *mf* *p* *mp*

E.

Pipa

174

f *ff* *mf*

E.

Behind the Back

J $\text{♩} = 116$ Quirky

Pipa

180 *ff* *n* *sfz* *f* *f* *Small Gong* *sfz* *sfz* *3*

Pipa

184 *sfz* *n* *sfz* *sfz* *3*

This space intentionally left blank.

Pipa

186 *f* *mp* *f* *f* *Small Gong* *sfz*

Behind the Back

18

Pipa

190

5

3

sfz

sfz

E.

190

5

3

n

sfz

sfz

f

Pipa

195

mp

f

IV

Very wide and fast vibrato – waver between F and G \flat

E.

Pipa

200

wide vibrato (stems down)

23

E.

200

sfz

sfz

sfz

sfz

Behind the Back

204

Pipa

sfz

mp

sfz

E.

p Noise Bursts

208

Pipa

mf

f

Very wide and fast vibrato – waver between B and C

E.

212

Pipa

wide vibrato (stems up)

E.

Behind the Back

20
216

Pipa

E.

221

Pipa

E.

Small Gong

Low Drum

225

Pipa

E.

Behind the Back

Pipa

230

f *mp* *f* *p* *ff*

E.

230

f *mp*



Pipa

235

f *ppp*

3 3 4"

E.

235

(chord lingers into next bar) *n*

Behind the Back

22

K

Dance-like ♩=124

Pipa

E.

244

all notes short

Pipa

E.

248

Pipa

E.

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Behind the Back

24

254

Pipa

E.

259

Pipa

E.

sempre f

264

Pipa

E.

Claves

269

Pipa

E.

273

Pipa

E.

277

Pipa

E.

Very Fast Drums

282

Pipa

E.

ad lib.

ca. 7-8"

continue until low note in next measure arrives

ff *fff*

very fast drums

Behind the Back

26
L

4"

Dramatic ♩=60 (see footnote †)

III

Pipa

mf

f

ff

E.

284

24 (this trigger need not be perfectly timed!)

25 gong hit

289

Pipa

f

ff

p

f

E.

289

26 harmonic change

294

Pipa

p

ff

p

ff

E.

294

27 harmonic change

28 gong hit

† Performer should play this passage at roughly ♩=60. The electronics will follow the performer.

298

Pipa

p < *f* > *p* < *ff* > *mp* *f* *ff*

3

3

29

30

harmonic change

harmonic change

E.

302

Pipa

fff *ffff*

3

7"

31

harmonic change and eventual termination o texture

E.

M

5"

G.P.

306

Pipa

E.

32

alters reverb

Behind the Back

28

Pipa

307

6'' 8''

p *pp* *p* *pp*

Pipa

Freely, cadenza-like
(*accel.*)

309

4'' 3''

p

Pipa

312

2'' 3'' 3''

mf ad lib.

Pipa

315

4'' 3''

p

Pipa

318

4'' 3'' 2''

p

Behind the Back

Pipa

321

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

(gliss.)

12"

3"

G.P.

Pipa

323

mp *pp*

7"

10"

near the bridge

*

lunga

33 patch off