

I am sinking in a sea of copper ships

for Flute, Clarinet, Violin, Percussion, Guitar, Piano, and Live electronics

by Zach Sheets (2015)

I am sinking in a sea of copper ships

version for ensemble and live electronics in Max/MSP

by Zach Sheets

duration: ca. 9'30"

Written for the Ritsos Festival, with many thanks to Aristéa Mellos

Original version premiered in August 2015 at the Ritsos Festival in Samos, Greece

Revised version with live electronics premiered in November 2015 in Rochester, NY

Oliver Hagen, conductor

Instrumentation:

Flute, doubling alto flute

Clarinet in B \flat

Violin

Percussion (see list on following page)

Guitar

Piano

Live electronics

This piece is very much about chamber music and togetherness. The foremost priority is always to blend sounds as much as possible with your colleagues.

A great many of the gestures will be made successfully only if all the performers listen across the ensemble and work as one large instrument.

Tempi are not meant as strict rules but rather as context-sensitive guidelines. There are, in essence, three primary tempi in this piece: m.m. = 54, 66, and 72

Up and down arrows are added to accidentals to indicate one quarter tone flatter or sharper

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The flute and clarinet have multiphonics and quarter tones provided in standard fingering diagrams, where necessary, in their parts

.....
Signs and symbols for alternative playing methods (i.e. air sound, behind bridge, etc) are all provided with an explanation upon their first and subsequent uses

.....
The percussionist needs:
four wooden planks of different sizes*
four wine bottles with different pitches (add water if necessary)*
small wind gong
a metal bowl filled with gravel*

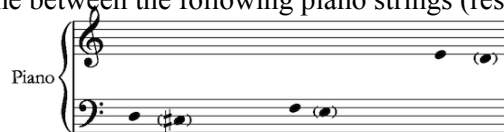
* = the "pitch" indications on the four-line staff indicate general contours for these instruments

.....
The guitar is tuned as follows:



The score and part are printed with the 6th string relative to Eb (i.e. sounding pitches); the 2nd and 4th strings should be tuned down approximately 1/4 tone. The guitarist should also have a slide for "slide guitar" style glissandi. This is marked as "metal slide" in the score but can also be done with a piece of glass, etc. In certain sections, the guitarist is asked to tap or strike the body of the guitar. Rather than providing specific locations, the staff shows "low", "middle," and "high" indications with respect to a 2-line staff (above = high, middle = middle, below = low), which refer to the pitch contour of the percussive sounds.

.....
The pianist should thread a dime between the following piano strings (resulting pitches in parenthesis):



The pianist should also place a pink eraser between the lowest A# and B strings (near the pins) so that they have a damped sound throughout the piece.

The composer shall provide the pianist with a harmonic device, comprised of a wooden dowel and a windshield-wiper insert. This is pressed across many strings at once, either during or after pressing the keys, to facilitate many simultaneous harmonics. 7th harmonics are marked with a 7°, and higher partials are marked in a tablature stave (i.e. bar 34) that shows the range between the pins and the dampers close to the pianist). The top of the staff indicates near the dampers, and the bottom indicates near the pins. Often, the keys are depressed first in a cluster at sounding pitch, then higher partials are activated by the harmonic device.

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C Score (sounding pitches)

Slowly, yet flowing (♩=66)

Flute: *tongue pizz.*, *sfz*

Clarinet in Bb

Violin: *pizzicato, behind bridge*, *p* to *sfz*, *pizz.*

Percussion

Acoustic Guitar: *percussive tapping on guitar body:* high, mid, low; *p*

Piano: *Slowly, yet flowing (♩=66)*, *8va*, *p* to *f*, *tr*, *pp*, *3*, *5*, *6*, *6*; *8va*; *damp Bb6 through F6 with a felt weight or a chickpea-filled sock*; *add pedal ad. lib. for extra sympathetic resonance*

① buffer recording: on

② granulation on

rit. G.P.

Fl. *sfz*

Cl. key clicks *p* *f* *p*

Vln. (pizz.) *f, marcato* pizz. behind bridge pizz. ord.

Perc. fingertips on wood planks *p* *f* wd. planks *f* bottles *p* (bottles) *mp l.v.*

A. Gtr. *<mf l.v.* damp with L.H. tapping: high: mid: low: *f* *mp* *f* *f l.v.*

Pno. *sfzpp < f > pp* *f* *mf* *6* $\frac{1}{2} +$

③ begin granulation sequence (trigger "curve 1" parameters)

④ loop recording: off

⑤ granulators off play: sound file 1

release left hand slightly to let a little bit of pitch resonate

A Tempo (♩=66)

key clicks

3

Fl.

Cl.

key clicks:

L.H. finger tapping

*ad lib. on fingerboard and instrument body
blend as much as possible with others*

continue ad lib., quasi-improvised

soft mallets or fingers
wooden planks

Perc.

*quasi-improvised; explore different ranges and contours
generally maintain continuous sound*

tapping fingers+nails

higher → lower

A. Gtr.

A Tempo (♩=66)

p l.v.

(+) (*damped with eraser*)

Pno.

⑥ fade sound file 1, fade in granulator 2 [previous buffer (bars 4-6)]

⑦ fade out granulator 2
restart loop recording and granulator 1
play: sound file 2

Fl. 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 air 5

Cl. 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6

Vln. gliss. gliss. gliss. gliss. gliss. gliss. gliss. gliss.

Perc. exact number approximate

A. Gtr. > p f p f

Pno. 8va 8va

8va 1

damp Bb6 through F6 with the left hand or a heavy mute

⑧ re-initialize granulator 2
continue granulation sequence
trigger "curve 2" parameters

11

Fl. *sfz* *sfz* *p* *p*

Cl. *p* *f*

Vln. *gliss.* pick up bow pizz. behind bridge arco behind bridge *p*

Perc. bottles *p l.v.*

A. Gtr. scrape nails along strings *p* *f non l.v.* *mp*

Pno. *f* *p* *f* *mp*

8va

*emphasize non-stopped notes:
A7, G#7, E6, and Eb6
(. b. . b.)*

⑨ begin flute-buffer recording
 play sound file 3
 initiate granulator 2

15

Fl. *l. tr* *pp* *p* *pp* *sfz* *pp* *sfz* *pp* *mp* *p* *mp* 7

Cl. *3* *p* *pp* *mp* *p* *mp* *pp*

Vln. *arco* *tr* *3* *p* *mf* *pp* *pizz.* *sfz*

Perc. *3* *mf* *wd. planks* *p* *f*

A. Gtr. *metal slide* *sfz* *metal slide* *sfz* *ord.* *f l.u.* *mp* *tamb.* *p*

Pno. *(tr)* *f* *f* *p* *f* *5* *5* *8va*

11 stop granulator 2

12 restart granulator 2

Fl. *rit.* *switch to alto*

Cl. *p* *pp* *3* *p*

Vln. *arco* *jeté* *pizz.* *p* *f* *p* *f* *3* *3* *3* *p*

Perc. *f* *p*

A. Gtr. *p l.n.* *damp with LH (no pitch)* *sfz* *sfz*

Pno. *rit.* *3* *p* *8va*

21 Slower, Broad (♩=54)

Fl.

Cl.

Vln.

Perc.

A. Gtr.

l.v. throughout
tamb.

p l.v.

f l.v.

ord.

ord.

p l.v.

Slower, Broad (♩=54)

Pno.

l.v. throughout

p — *mp* — *p*

pick up harmonic device

f — *p*

p l.v.

7° (harmonic device)

8^{vb} Ped.

If not possible to switch quickly enough, leave harmonic device resting on strings at the 7th node and pickup/put down with each attack

14 set medium reverb
play sound file 5

15 harmonizer swell

16 chorusing swell

(Ped.)

24

Fl. *alto flute*

Cl.

Vln. *jeté, II.*

Perc. *bottles*

A. Gtr.

Pno. *mp*

7° (harmonic device)

leave A#0 and B0 resonating at pitch

8^{vb}

(Ped.)

3

p *mp*

sfz *p*

p

mf

p *mp*

7°

8^{vb}

(Ped.)

(17) harmonizer with 4 sec. delay

(18) chorusing swell

27 ord. switch to flute, detune alto flute down a quater tone until end

Fl.

Cl.

Vln.

Perc. gravel bowl - stir rocks in bowl
p mp pp

A. Gtr. still l.n. throughout
f sfz mp p (l.n.) mf
 sul pont.

Pno. *p, echo* *f* *p mp* *p l.n. with finger on strings* *"sul pont." (near pins)* *sfz*

(19) chorusing fade (Ped.) (20) harmonizer swell (21) chorusing swell

32

Fl. *mf* Flute *tr*

Cl. *t. tr*

Vln. III. & IV. *mp* *p* *pp* *mp*

Perc.

A. Gtr. *f* *f l.v.* *mp* *p* *f* pont.

Pno. *p* *sfz* *mf* *f* dampers: pins:

(22) harmonizers (1-2) & chorusing

(Ped.)

(23) piano harmonizer (3)

(24) fade piano [harmonizer 3]

poco rall. , A Tempo II (♩=54)

36 (tr) *p*

Fl. *mp > p* *f > p*

Cl. *> pp* *mp > p* *mp* *< mf > p* *pp* *pp*

Vln. *pizz.* *p* *arco* *gliss.* *mf* *p* *mp* *I. II. III. IV.* *> p* *mf > p*

Perc. *mf*

A. Gtr. *f* *poco rall. , A Tempo II (♩=54)*

Pno. *p, expressive, but simple* *p*

Ped. *Ped.*

poco rall.

40

Fl. *p* $\xrightarrow{3}$ *mf* $\xrightarrow{}$ *mp* $\xrightarrow{}$ *p* $\xrightarrow{}$ *f* $\xrightarrow{}$ *p* $\xrightarrow{}$ *mp* $\xrightarrow{}$ *pp*

Cl. *p* $\xrightarrow{}$ *mf* $\xrightarrow{}$ *p* $\xrightarrow{}$ *mp* $\xrightarrow{}$ *p* $\xrightarrow{}$ *mf* $\xrightarrow{}$ *pp* $\xrightarrow{}$ *p* $\xrightarrow{}$ *pp*

Vln. *p* $\xrightarrow{}$ *f* $\xrightarrow{}$ *p* $\xrightarrow{}$ *sfz* $\xrightarrow{}$ *p* $\xrightarrow{}$ *sfz* $\xrightarrow{}$ *p* $\xrightarrow{}$ *mf* $\xrightarrow{}$ *mp* $\xrightarrow{}$ *pp*

Perc.

A. Gtr. metal slide *sfz* *mp* *l.v.* *f* metal slide *gliss.* *poco rall.*

Pno. *mp* *sfz* *8^{vb}* *Ped.* *8^{vb}*

Flowing slightly more (♩=60-66)

44

Fl. *p* *mp* *pp* *mf* *pp*

Cl. *p* *pp* *mf* *pp* *mp* *p* *mf*

Vln. *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *p* *mf* *p* *sfz* *pizz.* *sfz*

Perc. *p l.v.*

A. Gtr. *mf* *p l.v.* *sfz*

Pno. *mf*

Ped.

harmonizers with delay in flute / clarinet
medium heavy reverb on guitar and piano

47

Fl. *mp* *pp* 5 3 3 5 7 *pp* 3 3

Cl. 3 *pp - mp* *pp* 5 3 3 7 5 *mp* *pp*

Vln. arco, sul pont. ord. *pp* *mp* *pp* *pp* 5

A. Gtr. *f - mp* (fill background with resonance) *f l.v.* *f l.v.*

Pno. *mp*, fill background with resonance *mp* *pp* *f l.v.* *f l.v.*

(flutter) Ped.

27 fade harmonizers (ca. 3")

28 clear harmonizer delay / reset

Fl. 50 *p* *pp* *mf* *p*

Cl. *mp* *pp* *mp* *pp*

Vln. *p* *mp* *p* (transition from ord. vib. to molto vib.)

A. Gtr.

Pno. *mf* *ff*

8^{va} (Ped.)

29 reset harmonizers and delays (flute / clarinet)

30 violin harmonizer swell

31 violin harmonizer swell

52

Fl. *f* *p - mf* *pp* *f* *pp*

Cl. *mp* *pp* *f* *p* *pp*

Vln. *f* *f* *p* *sfz* *p* *f* *p*

Perc. *4/4*

A. Gtr. metal slide *sfz* *f* *p*

Pno. *f*

Ped.

Detailed description: This page of a musical score, numbered 18, contains measures 52 through 55. The score is for a woodwind quintet and guitar. The Flute (Fl.) part begins with a dynamic of *f*, moves to *p - mf*, and then *pp*. It features a triplet of eighth notes in measure 52 and a quintuplet in measure 54. The Clarinet (Cl.) part starts with *mp* and *pp*, then *f*, *p*, and *pp*. It has a quintuplet in measure 54. The Violin (Vln.) part starts with *f*, has a triplet in measure 52, and then *f*, *p*, *sfz*, *p*, *f*, and *p*. The Percussion (Perc.) part is in 4/4 time and has rests in measures 52 and 54. The Acoustic Guitar (A. Gtr.) part starts with a *sfz* chord, then *f*, and *p*. It includes a 'metal slide' technique in measure 52 and fingerings 2 and 1 in measure 55. The Piano (Pno.) part has a *f* chord in measure 54. A Pedal (Ped.) line is at the bottom.

54
Fl. *mp* *p* *f* *pp*

Cl. *f* *p* *f* *p* *pp*

Vln. *f* *p* *f* *p* *pp* *p*

Perc.

A. Gtr. *f*

Pno. *mf l.v.*

56

Fl.

Cl.

Vln.

A. Gtr.

Pno.

mf *pp* *p* *mp*

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

pp *f* *p* *f* *p*

f *pp*

sfz

8^{vb}

(Ped.)

ord. → sul pont.

tamb.

32 violin harmonizer swell

33 play: sound file 7 begin gradual harmonizer fade

58

Fl. *> pp* *f* *p* *mp* *pp*

Cl. *> pp* *mf* *p* *pp*

Vln. *f* *p*

Perc.

A. Gtr.

Pno. *mf* *ffz*

8^{vb} - | (Ped.)

59

Fl. *f, articulated* 5 6 5 5 *pp legatissimo* 3 5

Cl. *f, articulated* 5 3 6 6 6 *pp legatissimo* 5 6

Vln. ord. 5 6 *f, slightly detached (match winds)* *sfz* jete *pp legatissimo* sul pont.

Perc. small wind gong *p l.n.*

A. Gtr. ord. *p*

Pno. *sfz* *p*

(Ped.)

34 re-initialize harmonizers
reset reverb

35 new harmonizers w/ delays (microtonal)

62

Fl. *sempre pp legato*

Cl. *sempre pp legato*

Vln. *(pp)*

Perc.

A. Gtr. *pp* *p* *pp*

Pno.

Detailed description: This page of a musical score, numbered 23, contains six staves. The Flute (Fl.) staff begins at measure 62 and features a melodic line with slurs and fingerings (3, 5, 6, 3, 5, 5). The Clarinet (Cl.) staff follows with a similar melodic line, including slurs and fingerings (5, 3, 5, 6, 6, 3). The Violin (Vln.) staff has a melodic line with slurs and fingerings (6, 5, 6). The Percussion (Perc.) staff is empty. The Acoustic Guitar (A. Gtr.) staff shows a rhythmic pattern with slurs and fingerings (2, 1, 2, 1, 2, 3, 2, 3, 1, 2), with dynamics *pp*, *p*, and *pp* indicated. The Piano (Pno.) staff is empty.

rit. Tempo II (♩=54)

Fl. *f* *pp*

Cl. *f* *pp*

Vln. *mf* *f* *pizz.* *mp l.v.* *p*

Perc. wood planks *p*

A. Gtr. *mp* *p l.v. non-l.v. non-l.v.*

Pno. *p*

36 gradual fade of harmonizers (before bar 66)
initialize granulator voices

Faster (♩=72)

Fl. *f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *p*

Cl. *f* *p* *f* *p*

Vln. *ff* *sfz* *p* *sfz* *p* *sfz* *p* *f* *p* *f* *p*

wind gong, with wooden stick

Perc. *mp l.v.*

A. Gtr. *f l.v.*

Faster (♩=72)

Pno. *f*

8^{vb}.1

69

Fl. *pp* *f* *p* *f* *p* *f*

Cl. *f* *p* *p* *f*

Vln. *ff* *ord.* *sfzp* *f* *f* *p*

Perc.

A. Gtr. *f* *p* *f l.v.*

Pno. *f*

Slower, rubato; follow flute

27

Fl. *p* *ff* *p. fragile*

Flute part starting at measure 71. The first staff shows a melodic line with slurs and dynamic markings *p*, *ff*, and *p. fragile*. The second staff shows a similar melodic line with dynamic markings *p* and *ff*. Fingerings 5 and 6 are indicated.

Cl. *p* *ff*

Clarinet part starting at measure 71. The first staff shows a melodic line with slurs and dynamic markings *p* and *ff*. The second staff shows a similar melodic line with dynamic markings *p* and *ff*. Fingerings 6 and 5 are indicated.

Vln. *sfzp* *gliss.* *ff*

Violin part starting at measure 71. The first staff shows a glissando line with dynamic markings *sfzp*, *gliss.*, and *ff*. The second staff shows a similar glissando line with dynamic markings *sfzp* and *ff*.

Perc.

Percussion part starting at measure 71. The first staff shows a single drum hit. The second staff shows a similar drum hit.

A. Gtr. *f* with metal slide

Acoustic guitar part starting at measure 71. The first staff shows a single note with dynamic marking *f*. The second staff shows a similar note with dynamic marking *f* and the instruction "with metal slide".

Slower, rubato; follow flute

Pno. *mf*

Piano part starting at measure 71. The first staff shows a single note with dynamic marking *mf*. The second staff shows a similar note with dynamic marking *mf*.

electronics: *f*

40

fast fade-out to niente

8^{vb} *Ped.*

Tempo I (♩=66)

Fl. *l. tr*
73
3

Cl.

Vln. *fp* *non-tremolo* *pp*
3
pizz., behind bridge
p *f* *f*

Perc. gravel bowl
mp *mf* *mp* *f* *f* *p* *f*
move from center to edge to control pitch contour

A. Gtr. *mf l.v.*

Tempo I (♩=66)

Pno. *8va* *tr* *tr*
3
p *mp* *p* *pp*
8va7
8vb
damp

77

Fl. *p* *mf* *p* *p* *mf* *pp*

Cl. *p* *mf* *p* *p* *mf* *p*

Vln. *p* *mf* *p* *p* *sfz* *p* *mp* *mf* *p*

Perc. *simile* *p* *mf* *fp* *f* *p* *f* *p* *f*

A. Gtr. *p* *l.v.*

Pno. *f* *p* *mf* *pp* *p*

tr. side key 3/4

arco

III.

II. jeté

on the string

5

Tempo I (♩=ca. 66 or slower)

Alto Flute, detuned

Follow violin

G.P.

82

Fl. *p*

Cl. *pp legatissimo*

Vln. *p* *f* *pp legatissimo*

Perc.

A. Gtr.

Pno.

use guitarist's slide (ad lib.)

freely, accel.

pizz.

sul pont.

Ped.

II. I. IV. I. III. II. I.

3 5 3

5 6 5

5 6

86

Fl. *pp sempre legatissimo*

Cl. *pp sempre legatissimo*

Vln. *pp sempre legatissimo*

88

Fl. *ppp* to flute

Cl. *ppp*

Vln. *mp* sul pont. *p* sul tasto *mp* *p* (III.)

Very slow and broad (♩=48-54)

90

Fl. Flute

Cl.

Vln. (enough *tasto* to sustain 3 strings at once)

Perc. gravel bowl

A. Gtr. scrape string with nails

Pno. gliss inside piano "sul pont." (near pins)

Ped. *8^{vb}*

pp, *mp*, *p*, *pp*, *p*, *f*, *f l.v.*, *p*, *p*, *f l.v.*, *p*, *p*, *f*, *f l.v.*, *p*, *p*, *p*

3, *7*

1. tr

2nd time only

p very expressive

94

Fl. *pp*

Cl. *pp*

Vln. *mp* *p* *p* *f* *p* *f* *p* *ord.*

Perc.

A. Gtr.

Pno. *p* *mp* *f* *p* *6* *6* *6* *8va*

43 adjust reverb settings

44 subito off

34 96

Fl. *p* *mp* *p* switch to alto flute

Cl. *p* *p* 3

Vln. *mp* *pp* *p* IV. molto *tasto* 3

A. Gtr. metal slide *sfz*

Alto Flute (detuned)

98

Fl. *fp* *f* 6 *p* *f* *p* *mp* *pp* 3

Cl. *f* *mp* *f* 6 *p*

Vln. *p*

A. Gtr. ① ② *p l.v.*

100

Fl. *mf* > *p* *mp*, softer each repeat until *ppp* *p* *mp*, softer each repeat until *ppp* *tacit* 5th time: *5x* air sound

Cl. *mp* *p* *mp*, softer each repeat until *ppp* *tacit* 5th time:

Vln. III. IV. *mf* > *p* *mp*, softer each repeat until *ppp* *p*, on bridge 3rd and 5th time only

Perc. small wind gong *mf* l.v. *p* l.v. play 2nd-5th times (tacit 1st time) 3rd and 5th time only gravel bowl *p*, smooth, continuous sound

A. Gtr. *p* expressive *mp*, softer each repeat until *ppp* *p* l.v. *p*, in foreground 3rd and 5th time only

Pno. *mf*, resonant *mp*, softer each repeat until *ppp* *tacit* 5th time: *5x*

8^{vb}