

Clinamina (2019)
for piano and electronics

Lee Weisert

Clinamina - Program Notes

In his philosophical poem *On the Nature of Things*, Lucretius proposes the existence of a phenomenon in which atoms travelling through space are subjected to minute, unpredictable swerving motions. This random swerving of atoms, which he calls clinamen (pl. clinamina) is responsible not only for the existence of rivers, plants, and animals, but also the free will of man, since, in a completely deterministic universe, there would be no room for free will.

Clinamina explores the notion that human expressivity and creativity is in some basic sense inseparable from “lower” forms of utterances, noises, and proto-musical paraphernalia. Representations of various levels of musical organization co-exist on equal footing. Disconnected, particle-like notes float aimlessly, sometimes fusing into assemblages of chords, or converging into sudden bursts of gestural motion. Repetitive algorithmic gestures and musical automata overlap with excerpts from a Debussy prelude—warped and fragmented, but retaining flashes of a sophisticated and lyrical melodic and harmonic style. Technology serves as a modern example of hierarchical organization—an extension of our preferences and biases. By selectively capturing and extending fleeting musical events, we are presented with an imposed structural framework; an illusory “structure” to guide us through the tangle.

Clinamina - Performance Notes

This piece includes electronic sounds and effects that are triggered throughout the piece. The electronics can be either executed live (live sound processing of the piano) or using prerecorded samples. If the electronics are to be executed live, it is preferred that the composer performs this task, or, at least, that he is consulted during the rehearsals leading up to the performance. If the composer is not available to participate in the performance, the performer can trigger prerecorded audio samples using a MIDI foot controller or button of some kind. The composer will provide the audio recordings and triggering software necessary to trigger the electronic sounds. Precise cue timings are provided in the score.

This piece is dedicated to Clara Yang.

♩ = 52
Silently depress
top voice like a fading echo

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

Sost.

2

gva *mp* *Red.* *gub*

elec. cue 1 trigger

4

mf *mp* *mf* *Red.*

5

murky, faintly audible

mp *mf* *pp* *Sost.* *gub*

6

lyrical

lyrical *mf* *Red.*

elec. cue 1
fade out

7

p *mf*

8vb * Led.

foggy

8

mp

8va 8vb

sudden clarity

9

* Led.

elec. cue 2 trigger

10

* Led. (catch E and B)

11

p

* Led.

12

elec. cue 2
fade out

mf *p*

mp
* Led.

13

bring out the chords

light, curious

mp

Led. *8vb* * Led.

15

8va

mf

mf Led. *

17

movement in the shadows

mf *p*

Led. *Una corda*

18

elec. cue 3 trigger
(4.5" silence before fade-in)

Una corda

19 *mp* *p* *8va* confusion

(Una corda) *Led.

20 chords emerging *mp*

21 elec. cue 3 fade out open, refreshed *8va*

*Led.

22 *mp* *p* *8va* a strange space

24 *mf* *8va* *15ma* resonant elec. cue 4 trigger (4.5" silence before fade-in) *mf*

8vb *p*

26

effervescent

mechanical

mp *pp* *mf*

8vb *Leo.*

28

blurred

Silently depress

pp

8va *Leo.* *Sost.*

29

lyrical

elec. cue 4 fade out

suddenly agile

mp *p*

Sost.

32

8va

mp

Sost.

33

mf *mp* *p* *mp*

Leo. *Leo.* *Leo.*

34 (top note only) *8va* rising waves (an interjection) *mp* *poco cresc.*

35 *mf* *8va* *8va* elec. cue 5 trigger

36 elec. cue 5 fade out calmly *mp* *p* *mp* *6* *6* *3* *Ped.* *Una corda*

39 *p* *mp* *p* *mp* *3* *6* *Ped.* *3* *6*

40 resonant *p* *mp* *p* *3* elec. cue 6 trigger (3" silence before fade-in) *Ped.* *3*

42 still

elec. cue 6 fade out

like slowly moving particles

pp

mp

ped.

45

46 melodically

p

mp

8va

ped.

47 hidden chords

15^{ma}

p

mp

p

mp

ped.

48

8va

p

8va

elec. cue 7 trigger

celestial

mp

ped.

50 *15^{ma}* *8^{va}* *8^{vb}* elec. cue 8 trigger elec. cue 9 trigger *mp* short but not staccato

54 elec. cue 10 trigger *p* *mp* *p* Led.

57 elec. cue 11 trigger elec. cue 8 fade out *mp* *p* *8^{vb}* *8^{vb}* *

60 sudden, oblivious *mf* Led. *

61 *mp* *Sost.* *Sost.* 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

62

p *mf* *mp*

(Sost.) Led. Led.

64

p *mp*

Led. *Sost.* *8vb* Led.

65

8va *pp* murmuring

(Sost.) *Sost.* Led. *Una corda*

67

elec. cue 12 trigger

(Una corda) *p* *8vb* Led.

69

elec. cue 12 fade out *mf* *p* *mp* *mp* *p* *mp*

top voice like a fading echo

mp

elec. cue 13 trigger

71

pp *mf* *pp*

(mp) *Leo.*

elec. cue 14 trigger

nostalgic

73

mp *mf*

** Leo.* ** Leo.*

like a music box

76

** Leo.*

elec. cue 15 trigger

elec. cue 15 fade out

77

a wave gently crashing

p *mf*

** Leo.* ** Leo.*

8vb

elec. cue 16 trigger

79

mf *8va* *mf* *mp* *mf* *mp*

** Leo.* *Sost.* *Sost.*

8va

81 clockwork *8va*

82 *8va*

83 *mf* *mp* *8vb* *Sost.*

84 *mf* *mp* *Led.* *** *Led.*

86 *p* *resonant* *p* *Led.* *** *Led.*

88

mf mp mf mp 8va

p * Sost. Sost.

Detailed description: This system covers measures 88 and 89. The right hand features a melodic line with slurs and accents, while the left hand plays a rhythmic accompaniment with triplets. Dynamic markings include *mf*, *mp*, and *p*. A *Sost.* (Sostenuto) marking is present at the end of measure 89.

90

8va 3 elec. cue 17 trigger mechanical

mp *mf* *p* *mp* 3 6 6

(Sost.) *Leo.* * *Leo.* * *Leo.*

Detailed description: This system covers measures 90 and 91. Measure 90 includes a *Sost.* marking and a *Leo.* (Lento) marking. Measure 91 features a *Leo.* marking and a *mechanical* instruction. The right hand has a melodic line with a triplet and a sixteenth-note figure. The left hand has a complex accompaniment with triplets and sixteenth-note patterns. Dynamic markings include *mp*, *mf*, and *p*. A box labeled "elec. cue 17 trigger" points to a specific note in measure 91.

92

elec. cue 18 trigger

p *mp* 8vb * *Leo.* * *Leo.* * *Leo.* * *Leo.* * *Leo.*

Detailed description: This system covers measures 92 and 93. Measure 92 includes a *Leo.* marking and a box labeled "elec. cue 18 trigger". Measure 93 features a *Leo.* marking and a *8vb* (ottava bassa) marking. The right hand has a melodic line with slurs. The left hand has a complex accompaniment with slurs and accents. Dynamic markings include *p* and *mp*. Multiple *Leo.* markings are present throughout the system.

94

8va 3 with no sense of finality

p *mp* 3 * *Leo.* * *Leo.* * *Leo.*

Detailed description: This system covers measures 94 and 95. Measure 94 includes a *Leo.* marking and a *8va* marking. Measure 95 features a *Leo.* marking and a *8vb* marking. The right hand has a melodic line with slurs and a triplet. The left hand has a complex accompaniment with slurs and accents. Dynamic markings include *p* and *mp*. A phrase "with no sense of finality" is written above the right hand in measure 95. Multiple *Leo.* markings are present throughout the system.