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Composing with Extra-musical Provocations

A Dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree
Doctor of Philosophy

in

Music

by

Kuei-Ju Lin

Committee in charge:

Professor Roger Reynolds, Chair
Professor Georgios Anagnostopoulos
Professor Nancy Guy
Professor Steven Schick
Professor Wai-lim Yip

2008
The Dissertation of Kuei-Ju Lin is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm:

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Chair

University of California, San Diego
2008
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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Composing with Extra-musical Provocations

by

Kuei-Ju Lin

Doctor of Philosophy in Music

University of California, San Diego, 2008

Professor Roger Reynolds, Chair

This dissertation documents my use of the extra-musical provocations in two compositions: my music theater piece be/longing for two percussionists and At the Edge of Violence and Silence for thirteen instruments. The first work is about the emotional and physical interactions between two performers. The second piece explores the fine line between violence and silence and consists of three movements.
Both compositions illuminate life experiences that I have found intriguing.

*be/longing* reflects my experience as a housewife and *At the Edge of Violence and Silence* was inspired by a Japanese Butoh dance performance. An essay that outlines my methods in employing these extra-musical provocations is included as a preface to the works that follow the essay in the form of musical scores.
Composing with Extra-musical Provocations

Introduction

I present two compositions for my dissertation. The first one, titled be/longing, is a music theatre piece scored for a male and a female percussionist. In the work, the two percussionists play out the role of a newly married couple. The work is about the emotional and physical interactions between the two performers. The sounds, as well as the geometry of the setup and the physicality of the performance convey these interactions. The second work, At the Edge of Violence and Silence, is scored for thirteen instruments and consists of three movements.

These two works represent two different directions I have explored through my recent composition. Both directions involve an attempt to expand my music making. The first direction attempts to challenge the boundaries of musical performance by writing interdisciplinary works that combine “non-musical” elements with composed sound. In the case of be/longing, I explored the possibility of combining theatrical elements into musical compositions. The percussionists are asked to not only perform as musicians, but also to develop their own dramatic characters and to act accordingly on stage.

The second direction, which can be seen in the writing of At the Edge of Violence and Silence, shows my continuous interest in composing large-scale pieces for large ensembles. In this direction, the expansion of music making is reflected in the large size of the instrumental ensemble and also the duration of the music.
The two pieces included in this dissertation portfolio are very different in terms of instrumentation and the performance context: music theater performance in *be/longing* versus concert music performance in *At the Edge of Violence and Silence*. The common ground between these works exists in the inspiration from and employment of visual elements derived from human interaction, which I consider as “extra-musical provocations”. *be/longing* was inspired by my own everyday life experience. I observed my daily interactions with my husband and transformed some of these observations into the materials for this piece.

The extra-musical provocation for *At the Edge of Violence and Silence* is my experience of viewing the production "Hibiki", by the Japanese Butoh dance company *Sankai Juku*. Unlike the original form of Butoh, in which violence and darkness are presented through twisted body movements and painful facial expressions; in the performance of *Sankai Juku*, the nature of the violence is transformed, hidden behind their extremely slow movements. The incredible power generated from the almost motionless movement was so striking that it inspired me to work on a composition that explores the very fine line between violence and stillness. The precision of the astonishing theatrical images created by *Sankai Juku* also triggered my attempt to challenge and sharpen my compositional techniques, creating self-contained movements that hope to demonstrate the picture I dreamed of: the penetrating resonance of silent screams.

**Two compositions:**

**I. be/longing for two percussionists**

My interest in music theatre composition and the choice of subject for this piece
be/longing is a thirty-minute music theatre\(^1\) piece composed for a male and female percussionist\(^2\). In the piece, they play out the roles of a newly married couple.

I have long been interested in the idea of integrating musical and theatrical elements in my composition as a way to challenge and expand the boundaries of music making. I am particularly interested in composing pieces that dramatize performer participation, stimulating sound through movement, allowing the audience an opportunity to relate to the work on a personal level. I see incorporating “theatrical” elements as a way to reach such a goal. I want to create a piece of theatre that is full of sounds, and a piece of music that invites the audience to watch.

I was looking for a suitable subject that would have the potential, both sonically and visually, for a new synthesis to be created. After I got married in the summer of 2006 and began to establish a new household, I experienced a shift of focus in life and realized that my composition time would have to be negotiated with the many other activities in my life. For a while, I struggled to secure the role as a composer in everyday life. But soon I noticed that the dynamics and interactions between my husband and I could be turned into interesting compositional materials. These materials would have very strong potential both sonically and visually, fitting well with the ideas I want to explore in the genre of music theatre. Therefore, the idea of be/longing was born.

\(^1\) The term “music theatre” is sometimes confused with the very different phenomenon of Broadway “musicals”. Originated in the 1960s, music theatre refers to experimental mixtures of music and theatre, such as occurs in the works of Georges Aperghis, Vinko Globokar and Mauricio Kagel.

\(^2\) Although the piece was written with the intention for a male and a female percussionist, future performers of other sex combinations should not be discouraged. Also, it is welcomed to add additional actors. For instance, the premiere of the work in Taiwan was performed by two percussionists and two actresses.
There are three aspects in domestic relationships that I find suitable for a music theatre composition. Firstly, as mentioned above, it has strong potential both sonically and physically. Sounds are composed to interact with theatrical/physical movements commonly associated with married couples, such as arguing, negotiating and fighting. Secondly, it gives me the opportunity to create two distinct characters for the percussionists, each taking on his own persona: the wife tends to be anxious and impatient while the husband moves more slowly. The difference in personalities is portrayed through sound and physical movement, highlighting the various conflicts that occur as they attempt to communicate. Thirdly, the domestic relationship is a shared, but also personal experience. Music is often considered as an abstract art. I see the use of such subject material as a strategy to relate my composition more closely to the performers’ and audiences’ experiences.

I have taken a female’s point of view to interpret the anxiety that almost every woman faces after getting married. It is my intention, in this composition, to use the subject of a newly married housewife in order to explore the changing balance among self-identity, career, family and social status of women in modern society.

**The narrative of the piece**

The piece is divided into five sections. It starts in the dark; the audience first hears the sound of the vibraphone played by the wife. She begins with a series of sixteenth notes. The regularity of the rhythm and the unchanged harmony of this passage suggest a steady feeling that represents the idea of routine during a
housewife’s everyday life. The lights gradually fade in and the husband arrives as if returning home. He sits by a table and reads the newspaper without giving much attention to the wife. In the first section of the piece *vibraphone dialogue 1*, the wife plays a series of musical passages on the vibraphone. However, her activity is constantly interrupted by various tiny but annoying noises made by the husband. For instance, she stops playing when she hears the noise of the newspaper and takes an empty glass to her husband. She quickly resumes her playing on the vibraphone and attempts to stir ice cubes at the same time. She is soon distracted again by her husband’s coughing, stops playing again and puts a few ice cubes and a straw in her husband’s glass (Section I, measure 1 to 45). Throughout the first section, her playing is interrupted for six times. She keeps walking back and forth between the vibraphone, which symbolizes her own territory, and the table where her husband is sitting.

In this opening section of the piece, through the interactions between the two percussionists, I intend to propose a question: is it the husband who interrupts the routine of the wife? Or is it her anxiety that interferes?

The husband follows the wife to the vibraphone and begins the second section of the piece, *vibraphone dialogue 2*. In this section, the husband initiates the playing as a gesture to make amends, and the music returns to the passage heard in the very beginning of the piece. Here I ask the two percussionists to play together on the vibraphone in order to represent the idea of the couple sharing a cramped space. They face two kinds of challenges. Firstly, they have to negotiate the differences in the pacing of their musical materials which are composed so as to represent the contrast in
the personalities of the two characters. Secondly, they need to physically share the space. Various conflicts therefore appear.

Their conflicts arrive at the peak in section three, arguments. I noticed that couples tend to repeat- saying the same things over and over again- while in arguments, so I incorporated these observations into the compositional materials of this section. For instance, in the first four measures of this section, each player repeats short rhythmic cells (Figure 1). The characters are represented by different temporal ratios in their rhythmic cells. Those of the impatient wife are composed of sixteenth and thirty-second notes while the husband plays triplet cells. Because the rhythmic cells are unlikely to be aligned; various tensions occur as they try to communicate with each other.

Figure 1: be/longing, Section III, arguments, measure 1 to 6
The conflict between the two is not resolved in the fourth section of the piece, but is represented in another way. The two players now are positioned apart on stage. They begin by playing facing opposite directions. They occasionally turn to face each other and play. In this section I wanted to capture the image of occasional bursts that occur when two people are in a state of cold war. This demonstrates my notion of composing visual elements (the geometry of a set-up) and combining sound and physical movement to depict the emotional response of each character.

Their arguing settles down temporarily in section five, muting. The husband plays a loud and continuous roll on the tom-tom followed by four loud strikes. Failing to be acknowledged by the wife, who continues to babble on the vibraphone and the cymbal, the husband takes away the cymbal. (measure 13 and 14 of Section V)

From measure 17 to the end of the piece, the husband and wife stand on opposite sides of the vibraphone. He continuously plays dead-strokes to mute the bars played by his wife. Her “voice” becomes softer and softer and eventually her action seems to be controlled by the husband. Does she agree to lower her voice in order to maintain the balance of their relationship? Or is she forced to give up her own opinions? The lights fade out and the answers are not given by the composition.

**Portraits of characters by musical elements**

In *be/longing*, conventional musical elements such as pitch, rhythm, timbre and dynamics are considered agencies to portray the characters and express their emotions. The choice of instruments is also made to contribute to the design of the
characters. For instance, in Section III, *arguments*, I use the high register of the vibraphone and high pitched metallic junk in order to portray the wife as a woman who tends to raise her voice and cannot stop babbling when she is upset. By contrast, the husband’s voice is heard via the lower register set of bongos and two large tomtoms.

Another example can be seen in Section IV where the characters utilize complimentary instruments to represent their voices. Both players use instruments from the same family, representing their unspoken connection, while the difference in timbre highlights their contrasting characters. The wife is assigned three high-pitched wood blocks and the husband responds with two lower sounding temple blocks. In this way, the intricate voicing of the characters is clearly distinguishable.

Aside from the choice of instruments, various ways of expressing emotion are explored through the manipulation of the compositional material. In Section IV, the material in the husband’s voice is mimicked by the wife, but in a compressed version (measure 2 to 9). The language of the wife is complimented by the husband, but after a pause (measure 3). When the husband does not immediately respond, the wife raises her tone (Figure 2 on next page).

In contemporary music, many composers including Mauricio Kagel, Vinko Globokar and Georges Aperghis have looked for ways to expand their creativity by incorporating non-musical elements into their work. However, many of these attempts seem to show the inability of the musicians to realize the composers' aims rather than creating a new synthesis. Trying to avoid this problem, my idea for *be/longing* was to
construct the framework of the piece based on elements that are familiar to musicians, expressed through conventional musical notation. As shown in the score, most of the technical concerns of *be/l longing* are grounded in the musical context and supported by conventional percussion skills. The percussionists can learn this piece by reading the score; in the same way they learn standard percussion music.

Figure 2: *be/l longing*, Section IV, measure 1 to 9
**Strategies of incorporating visual elements and their notation**

My strategy of incorporating visual elements into this piece emphasizes the physicality and gestures of the percussionists. In this way, the messages in *be/longing* are expressed not only through sounds, but also through a visual dimension.

The geometry of the set-up, the gestures of the performers and their positions on stage are composed into the piece. In contrast to the ordinary musical context where action is the tool of sound-production, visual elements in this piece are considered to be effective means of expression, occupying a role as important as the sonic elements.

For instance, in the second section, the flux of the dynamic between the two players can be seen from their physical positions in relation to the vibraphone. Throughout this section, the wife occupies the dominant position relative to the vibraphone and the husband is forced to change his own position. He begins standing at the left of the wife, as they both play the vibraphone in cooperation. His wife pushes him away at measure 58 to 60. In an attempt to participate in her activity, he goes to her right side (measure 69) and tries to catch a few notes. But he loses his space again in measure 104, and begins to play at the opposite side of the vibraphone from measure 113 to 115. In the last part of this section, the husband must resolve to play around his wife by reaching around her body from behind. Each change of the husband’s position is matched by a change in the music. My intention is to express the emotional attitudes of the two characters both musically and visually. Because I ask the performers to share a limited space at the vibraphone, the visual focus is
brought to a contained area, helping to amplify and highlight the significance of the physical actions of the performers.

Physicality and gesture in percussion music are already powerful tools of communication. I want to push this phenomenon a step further: to achieve in *be/longing* a context in which a new synthesis of aural and visual elements is created. Throughout the piece, various situations are staged to express my thoughts about domestic relationships, articulated through the integration of sonic and visual elements.

For instance, in Section V, the audience hears the voice of the wife being eliminated by the husband. The message embedded in the qualities of the composed sound is reinforced visually. By having them stand on opposite sides of the vibraphone, I mean to create a sense of confrontation. The forceful action of the husband playing the dead-strokes against the wife implies a feeling of impatient interference and tension.

I do not ask the percussionists to “act”, but give them a situation in which their gestures are not simply treated as tools for executing sounds, but rather are carefully choreographed to suggest other meanings. Their actions become implied components of an “acting”, and can be understood in a larger context related to the dramaturgy of the work.

In order for the physicality of the performers to be perceived as an integrated element in the performance, I translate the choreography into musical language. Although the conventional notation used in *be/longing* seems very similar to standard
music notation, the score indicates more than sonic materials. The physical relationships of the performers are determined in the score. For instance, in measure 59 to 60 of Section II, both percussionists perform a series of descending notes. I designed the pitches so that when they are executed, it looks like the wife is pushing the husband away from her towards the lower register of the vibraphone. By playing the notated pitches, the performers naturally achieve the visual image that I am looking for. I believe the performance can be delivered more naturally and not seem pretentious by conceiving and then notating in a way that is rooted in musical language, instead of asking the musicians to “act” (Figure 3).

Figure 3: *be/longing*, Section II, measure 59-60

**My approach to influence performers’ stage presence**

In *be/longing*, the sounds and visual elements are all composed to portray the characters and express their emotions. I intend to provide enough information in the
score for the performers to realize a cohesive performance. Having said this, I intentionally leave a certain ambiguity in the score allowing the performers room to establish their own interpretations of the characters. The percussionists are no longer asked only to produce precise attacks. They have to consider their performance in a larger context. They have to invest in their movements according to the characters they establish.

In the first section of the piece, the score indicates the movements of the husband and his wife. But the implications of these movements are not specified and must be constructed by the performers. In measure 13 to 15 of Section I, upon hearing the noises her husband makes while reading the newspaper, the wife stops playing the vibraphone and takes an empty glass to the husband. These movements are specified in the score, and the performers could consider the following questions. Is the husband intentionally making the noise? If yes, is he doing it in order to attract the wife’s attention or to ask her to serve him? If the newspaper noise is not made intentionally, is the wife so anxious that she over-interprets the husband’s every movement therefore serving him a glass? The personalities of the characters will be revealed by these details embedded in movement. Therefore, in order to achieve a convincing performance, the percussionists need not only to execute the scored sounds and movements but to develop their own interpretations of the characters and play accordingly. By encouraging a sense of character for the percussionists, I intend that their actions on stage may carry other messages than only striking instruments. The dramatic context gives them the opportunity to evaluate their actions on stage from
another perspective. As a result, I hope their stage presence can be enhanced to a wider dimension so their performances are not primarily concerned with the execution of sounds, but with the ultimate goal of the totality of the performance in mind.

Throughout the entire piece, the ambiguities left in the score encourage the performers to invest in and design the intentionality of their movements. For instance, in section four, the timing of the turns is specified. Again, the performers need to develop an intention for these turns in order to achieve a convincing performance.

It is worth noting that in one of the rehearsals in Taiwan, I felt the performance of measure 46 to 56 of section three was too rigid. After discussing the dramaturgy with the percussionists, their focus shifted from the precision of the rhythms to the expression of emotion. Their interpretation became much more vivid. For be/longing, performing the rhythms has to be in the larger context of what the character is, what kind of mood is intended, and what function the rhythm has in that context. It is my belief that the development of the dramaturgy and the theatrical intentions of the movement will contribute significantly to the depth of the performance.

**Generating communication from shared experience**

The voices of the newly married couple and the subject of domestic relationships are adopted in be/longing with the intention of increasing the communication among myself, the performers and the audiences. There is no doubt that every piece of music prompts a unique arrangement of emotional response for the players and for the audience. By relating the performance to a shared yet personal
experience, in this case, the domestic relationship, I hope the communication in this piece is less abstract and responds more directly to our actions and emotions as human beings.

In the second section of the piece, the performers are asked to share the limited space on the vibraphone. Because the set-up can easily be related to the battle for space in domestic relationships, it provides a context for the performers’ interpretations to grow, and contributes to the corresponding experience of the viewers.

By using a subject that could be commonly understood, I also wish to promote contemporary music to a broader audience. This intention received very positive feedback from the audience in Taiwan. After the performances, many audience members told me that although the music did not have the melodies, harmonic progressions or rhythmic patterns they were familiar with, they did not feel a barrier to acceptance. They could feel the emotions expressed in the music and relate themselves to the performance. I also noticed that the audience member’s perception of the piece tends to reflect their own experiences in life. I like the idea that this piece communicates to the performers as well as the audience and generates interesting discussions, without posing particular answers.

**Conclusion I**

In the first stage of the compositional process of *be/longing*, I began by observing the movements in daily domestic life. I examined the delicate and
interweaving relationships among sounds, gestures, and the personalities of the people who produced these actions.

I applied these observations to the construction of compositional materials that suit the characters portrayed by the percussionists. Although I consider the visual elements as equally important as the aural elements in be/longing, the framework of the piece is rooted in music performance practice. I see this as a strategy of composing with all the strengths of percussionists in mind.

However, for be/longing, the percussionists need to make a step forward from where they usually perform music. I see engagement with the musician’s stage presence as a way to expand the boundaries of music making. My strategy for enhancing their stage presence is to amplify the significance of their gestures and physicality by establishing two dramatic characters for them to portray. By setting the dramatic context in a shared experience such as a domestic relationship, I hope to provide a manageable framework for the performers’ interpretation.

By taking inspiration from daily life, I hope to reflect my thoughts through music - often considered an abstract art form - on subjects that are more accessible to general audiences. I see this as an attempt to channel to a broader audience and to stimulate correspondences: things existing in our surrounding environment can bring focus to sounds that are often taken for granted and express feelings through voices that are often ignored. It has always been my hope that my composition opens opportunities for communication. Most importantly, I view composing as a way of searching and reflecting on my own identity. I certainly regard be/longing as an
attempt in this direction.

II. *At the Edge of Violence and Silence* for thirteen instruments

I would, now, like to refer briefly to my chamber work entitled “*At the Edge of Violence and Silence*”. The title reflects my impression of a performance by *Sankai Juku*. The titles of the movements are selected from the sectional titles of *Sankai Juku*’s production, *Hibiki*. It consists of three movements:

I: *Hibiki* 響 (resonance)

II: *Shizuku* 滴 (a drip)

III: *Toyomi* 響 (resonance which radiates physically)

The central idea of the first movement, *Hibiki*, is the constant alternation between the resonance of one’s inner and outer worlds. I imagine that this movement starts with the sounds in the womb. To me, it represents the resonance of the inner world, which is sonically weak and remote, but emotionally intriguing. Abruptly, it shifts to the contrasting outer world where the sounds are direct and dazzling, but emotionally detached. Being the first movement of the piece, *Hibiki* presents and combines musical materials that will be used in the following movements. Towards the end of *Hibiki*, resonance is represented in a "slow motion" fashion, which, to me, creates a liquid quality and leads to the second movement *Shizuku* (literally meaning "a drop"). In this movement, music was composed to represent various forms of the liquid quality of water drops, such as drips, splashes and trembling waves. The title of the third movement *Toyomi* is a synonym of *Hibiki*, meaning “resonance”. In this
movement, “resonance” is composed from another perspective. Unlike the strong contrast represented in *Hibiki*, the resonance in *Toyomi* returns to an energy that is radiated and projected from inside out.

**Compositional process for the two compositions**

A typical compositional process can be traced in most of my recent compositions, including *At the Edge of Violence and Silence* and *be/longing*. Before the idea for the pieces were formed, I usually had some general thoughts about what I would want to do in my future works. These thoughts usually either concern my interest in a particular genre, for instance, music theater, or evaluations of my previous works. Prior to composing *At the Edge of Violence and Silence*, I had written two large-scale compositions for ensemble. I felt that I had gained control in musical structure and would like to personalize and polish my musical language in my next composition by creating self-contained movements.

In the next step of the compositional process, I bring these ideas into realization when a compositional opportunity becomes available. *At the Edge of Violence and Silence* was written upon an invitation from the *Ensemble Intercontemporain* and *be/longing* was commissioned by the Taiwanese percussionist *Hsiao-Yin Wang*.

Then the general thoughts and the compositional opportunity are adapted in order to illuminate life experiences that I have found intriguing. These experiences are what I call “extra-musical provocations”. As I have explained, *At the Edge of Violence and Silence* was written upon an invitation from the *Ensemble Intercontemporain* and *be/longing* was commissioned by the Taiwanese percussionist *Hsiao-Yin Wang*.
and Silence was inspired by the experience of seeing a Sankai Juku performance while be/longing reflects my experience of being a housewife. I do not intend to “describe” these extra-musical sources or “transform” them into music, but rather to respond to them by composing. In the remaining compositional process, these provocations serve as a source that evokes musical gestures, shapes musical materials, polishes textures and guides the construction of musical forms.

My response to an extra-musical provocation often begins with iconic musical gestures. The composing of the second movement of At the Edge of Violence and Silence began with musical gestures I drew that represent various types of water-drops, as shown in Figure 4. The gestures were assigned to possible instruments as illustrated in Figure 5.

Figure 4: Drawings of musical gestures for Shizuku
While writing down the instrumental assignments, I could hear the characteristics of their sounds in my mind's ear. In the next step, the gestures were applied to particular instrument(s) as sketches that represent ideas from the extra-musical provocations. The first phrase of this movement contains three parts, labeled as Ia, Ib and Ic in Figure 6. They represent the sound of the blood flowing in the womb, water drips, and trembling water waves: all are images provoked from the Sankai Juku performance. The sketch provides the most essential characteristics of the music. The musical gestures are then filled in specifically in the context of actual composing (Figure 7).
Figure 6: Sketch of the first phrase of *Shizuku*
Figure 7-1: Score of *Shizuku*, measure 1-3, phrase Ia
Figure 7-2: Score of *Shizuku*, measure 4 to 7, phrase Ia (continued) and Ib
Figure 7-3: Score of *Shizuku*, measure 8-10, phrase Ib (continued)
A similar compositional process can be found in *be/longing*. The composing of the third section, *arguments*, began with a musical gesture I drew to represent the idea of a wife who cannot stop babbling and a husband who wants to yell (Figure 8). The gestures were expanded to a sketch that illustrates the occurrence of conflicts due to their contrasting pacing (Figure 9). My image of the dramatic characters contributed to expanding the preliminary musical gestures into actual musical materials. Pitches on the vibraphone are applied to the sixteenth notes to portray the “verbally-violent” wife while the “reserved” anger of her husband’s is represented by repetitive strokes on the tom-toms (Figure 10).

![Figure 8: Drawings of musical gestures of arguments](image-url)
Figure 9: Sketch of arguments

Figure 10: Musical materials of arguments
The relationship between extra-musical provocation and the musical form

In my composition, form is constructed to optimize the utilization of the musical materials. The extra-musical provocations assist my imagination when shaping the organization of the materials. They speak to me as abstract images and I arrange the materials to illuminate these images.

In *Shizuku*, the design of the form represents the idea of the water drips and the wavelets they cause. The longer phrases (I, III and V in Figure 11), which represent the wavelets are separated by short phrases (II, IV, VI), which depict the dripping. Shown in Figure 11, this preliminary formal structure was designed before I worked on the musical notation for *Shizuku*. The form suggested a direction for the manipulation and the arrangement of the material. This can be seen by comparing phrases II, IV, and VI which orchestrate and depict the image of water-dripping differently (Figure 12, 13 and 14).
Figure 11: Preliminary formal structure of *Shizuku*
Figure 12-1: Shizuku, measure 11, phrase II
Figure 12-2: Shizuku, measure 12-15, phrase II (continued)
Figure 13: *Shizuku*, measure 25-27, phrase IV
Figure 14: Shizuku, measure 35-37, phrase VI
The musical form of *be/longing* can be understood as the formal consequence of the dramaturgy. As the inspiration was taken from my real life experience, I did not feel the need to spell out a formal structure to guide the composing of *be/longing*. Using Section III, *arguments*, as an example, once the material was designed (Figure 10 on page 26), it “developed” freely to portray various moments of the arguments (Figure 15). I reworked the draft in order to intensify the dramatic element. The development can be seen by comparing the draft (Figure 16) with the score, measure 1-56 of *arguments* (Figure 17).

Figure 15: Musical materials of *arguments*
Figure 17-1: arguments, measure 1-16
launch several attempts to hit the drums without actual attacks
rub the drumhead with fingers

Figure 17-2: arguments, measure 17-40
Figure 17-3: arguments, measure 41-56
It is worth noting that the musical form and dramatic form function differently. For instance, although the dramatic intention of arguments could be delivered very briefly in time, music can provide a context in which delicate emotional responses can be depicted in detail over a longer period of time. This is the principle I had in mind when composing *be/longing*.

**Conclusions II**

Other extra-musical provocations I have used in my composition include Chinese brush paintings, classical Chinese poems, and modern Chinese poems. They bring different perspectives into my creative thinking and expand the dimensions of my imagination. By associating the compositional process with these extra-musical provocations, I have found a way of working to generate ideas that shape my music, and polish the uniqueness of my musical language. My response to the extra-musical provocations usually begins with a small idea, which is then sketched as a musical gesture, transformed into musical materials, and adapted so as to guide the arrangement of the materials and the building of formal structures. Without the extra-musical provocations, my compositions would not be shaped as they are. I see composing as a way to respond to experiences in my life that interest me, but the work takes on its own life during the process of composition. It represents my personal voice and thus remains independent from the extra-musical provocations.

I found that my use of extra-musical provocations is very similar to the idea of “crystal” in Varèse’s music. As I cannot explain it as elegantly as he did, I would like
to quote his statement as the final note of my dissertation:

I was very fond of the mineralogist, Nathaniel Arbiter’s words. He said: “The crystal is characterized by both a definite external form and a definite internal structure. The internal structure is based on the unit of crystal which is the smallest grouping of the atoms that has the order and composition of the substance. The extension of the unit into space forms the whole crystal. But in spite of the relatively limited variety of internal structures, the external forms of crystals are limitless. Crystal form itself is a resultant rather than a primary attribute. Crystal form is the consequence of the interaction of attractive and repulsive forces and the ordered packing of the atom.”

This, I believe, suggests better than any explanation I could give about the way my works are formed. There is an idea, the basis of an internal structure, expanded and split into different shapes or groups of sound constantly changing in shape, direction, and speed, attracted and repulsed by various forces. The form of the work is the consequence of this interaction. Possible musical forms are as limitless as the exterior forms of crystals.  

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Musical Score I

be/longing

離心的居所

for two percussionists

Kuei-Ju Lin

林桂如

2007
Instrumentation

**Setup I**
Metallic Junk (Metal)
3 Wood Blocks (W.B.)
2 Congas

**Setup II**
Vibraphone (Vib.)
Bell
Suspended Cymbal (Cym.)
3 Metallic Junks (Metals)

**Setup III**
2 Wood Blocks (W.B.)
2 Bongos
2 Tom-Toms

**Setup IV**
2 Temple Blocks (T.B.)
3 Junk (miscellaneous, non-musical objects)
Tom-Tom

Also need to be prepared:
a small table and a chair, newspapers, a straw, an empty glass, a bucket of ice cubes, and an unopened can of soft drink
Stage Setup

[Diagram showing stage setup with labels and symbols for different areas such as Setup IV, Setup III, Setup II, and Setup I. The diagram includes symbols for 3 junks, 2 t.b., Tom-Tom, 3 metals, 2 bongos, 2 w.b., a straw, a glass, a bucket of ice cubes, and a can. There is a section labeled "Audience."
Section I: Vibraphone Dialogue 1

Vibraphone:

W.

H.

walk to the table

sit and read newspapers

Vibraphone:

W.

H.

accel. --------- a tempo

make noise by flipping the newspapers.

pay no attention to the wife

a tempo

W.

H.

look at H. with smile;

take a glass to H.

then return to vib.

hear the bell and

look at wife w. smile

continue reading newspapers

W.

H.

poco a poco accel.
poco a poco  accel.  

\[ \begin{align*} 
&\text{W.} \\
&\text{H.} \\
&\text{look at H.} \\
&\text{cough} \\
&\text{continue reading newspapers} \\
&\text{stir ice cubes} \\
&\text{continue reading newspapers} \\
&\text{accel.} \\
&\text{stir ice cubes} \\
&\text{continue reading newspapers} \\
&\text{accel.} \\
&\text{right the bell} \\
&\text{flip the newspaper and cough;} \\
&\text{look at W. without smiling} \\
&\text{walk quickly to H. with a bucket of ice cubes;} \\
&\text{put ice cubes in the glass;} \\
&\text{walk 2 steps towards vib.} \\
&\text{pause, and walk again to H.} \\
&\text{put a straw in the glass;} \\
&\text{walk back to vib.} \\
&\text{read newspapers;} \\
&\text{pay no attention to wife} \\
&\text{poco a poco}\end{align*} \]
continue reading newspapers

star at H.

stir ice cubes with straw without particular reason

read newspapers silently

play approx. pitches;
alternate between white and black notes

continue reading newspapers

unconsciously tap table with glass

check out husband's movements while playing vib.

gradually shift focus back to vib.

continue reading newspapers
accel.

make noise by sucking the straw

pick up a can of coke and walk anxiously to H.
open and pour coke in the glass

continue reading newspapers
Section II: Vibrphone Dialouge 2

\[ \frac{\text{W.}}{\text{H.}} = 72 \]

**Wife**
- keep drinking coke
- pick up mallets and gradually get ready to join H. on the vib.
- \( \text{X 4~6} \)
- \( \ell = 72 \)
- repeat 4~6 times
- until W. picks up mallets

**Vibrphone**

**Husband**
- \( f \)
- \( p \)
- \( \text{do not speed up} \)
- \( \text{both play on the vib.} \)
- \( \text{W. stand at the right of H.:} \)
- \( \text{both on the vib.} \)

**Section II**

\( \text{Vibraphone Dialouge 2} \)

- \( \text{p} \)
- \( \text{mp} \)
- \( \text{nf} \)
- \( \text{a tempo} \)
- \( \text{poco a poco} \)
- \( \text{accel.} \)
- \( \text{a tempo} \)
- \( \text{f} \)
- \( \text{mp} \)
- \( \text{p} \)
poco a poco accel.

large tom-tom

large tom-tom

large tom-tom

go to the right side of W.

perform at the right of W.
q. = 60

= 56

= 60

goto the opposite side of the vib.

drop the mallets

perform behind the W.
W. pushed away by W. go to the opposite side of the W.

large tom-tom
Section III: Arguments

\( \text{\textit{Vibraphone}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Wife}} \)

Cymbal

3 Metal Junk

\( \text{\textit{Husband}} \)

2 Tom-toms

\( \text{\textit{Vib}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Cym}} \)

3 Metals

2 Bongos

2 Tom-toms

\( \text{\textit{2 Bongos}} \)

\( \text{\textit{2 Tom-toms}} \)
launch several attempts to hit the drums without actual attacks

rub the drumhead with fingers
Section IV: Cold War
Section V: Muting

\( \text{Cymbal} \quad \text{3 Metal Junk} \)
\( \text{Wife} \quad \text{Vibraphone} \)
\( \text{Large Tom} \)
\( \text{Husband} \quad \text{Large Tom} \)

Repeat the cells in random order

\( \text{Cym.} \quad \text{3 Metals} \)
\( \text{W.} \quad \text{Vib.} \)
\( \text{Tom-Tom.} \)
\( \text{H.} \quad \text{Large Tom} \)

Play the notes as fast as possible in any order

Drop the mallets on the drum head
walk furiously to the cymbal and take it away

hit the "cym."

return to the opposite side of the vib.

attempt to mute her by playing dead strokes
throw away the mallets
play with palms
cover the keyboard of the vib. with upper body and arms

play with fingertips
bell
grab her mallets

raise the left hand three times according to the indicated rhythm
play the notes by controlling wife's mallets
lift the mallets up
Musical Score II

At the Edge of Violence and Silence
暴力與寂静間的剎那

for 13 instruments

I: Hibiki 響
II: Sizuku 滴
III: Toyomi 響

Kuei-Ju Lin
林桂如

2005-2008
Instrumentation

Flute/Piccolo

Oboe

Clarinet in Bb

Bass Clarinet

Bassoon

French Horn

Trumpet

Trombone

2 Percussions

Piano

Violoncello

Contrabass
**Percussion I**

Vibraphone (Vib.)

5 Oddities (Odd.):
Choose five small, distinctive noise sources. The top three are dry-sounding junk metallic, i.e. a thin metal pot. These should, in fact, be “odd” sounding. The only concern that runs counter to distinctiveness is that there should also be a consistency of carrying power; one sound source should not be markedly weaker or stronger than another.

2 Gongs:
preferably one medium almglocken and one large gong
Peking Opera Gong (a small gong with bending pitch)
Sizzle Cymbal (Sizz.)
Chinese Cymbal (Cym.)
Large Tam-Tam

3 Tom-Toms
Concert Bass Drum (B.D.)

**Percussion II**

Stone
Vibraslap
Chinese Wood Block (W.B.) with very high pitch
Triangle
Flexatone
Spring
Chinese Temple Bowl (Bowl) prepared on the timpani head

Hi-Hat
Crash Cymbal (Crash)
2 Suspended Cymbals (Cym.)
Gong
Tam-Tam

Snare Drum (S.D.)
Bongo
2 Tom-Toms:
the pitches of the tom-toms should be in between the pitches of the three tom-toms of the first percussion
Bass Drum (a.k.a Kick Drum/ B.D.) operated by two pedals
Performance Notes

General

\#  A quarter-tone sharp
\#  Three quarter-tones sharp
d  A quarter-tone flat

Grace notes to be performed just before the beat; always play as fast as possible and slur to then main note unless articulations are indicated

Grace notes to be performed right after the beat

Non-linear crescendo; make an exaggerated crescendo towards the end

Non vibrato

Molto vibrato

Inhale

Exhale

Play as high/low as possible

Woodwinds and brass

Flutter tongue

Whistle tone

Play and sing simultaneously

Blow without producing pitches

Trombone

Vibrato with slide
**Piano**

- Hit the strings inside the piano with the palm
- Make glissandi directly on the strings with fingernail
- Make glissandi along the string with fingernail
- Mute the strings near the pins (producing unpitched sounds)
- Strum the strings forcefully in the lowest register; be sure to let strings bounce against each other
- Play clusters in the given register
- Prepare a hard mallet (to hit on the soundboard inside the piano)

**Breath only**

**Violoncello and Contrabass**

- Bow on the bridge without producing pitches
- Bow diagonally on the strings without producing pitches

- Press bow at heel so hard that it sticks and produces “stuttered” sounds of not clear pitches
- Harmonic glissandi
- Harmonic trill
- Bounce the bow freely
- Left hand pizzicato
- Bartok pizzicato
Percussion

- Soft mallet
- Hard mallet
- Super ball
- Triangle beater
- Play with the handle of the mallet
- Dead stroke
- Mute the cymbal immediately after striking
- Play on the rim
At the Edge of Violence and Silence

I: Hibiki 響

$\frac{3}{4} = 36$

Flute

Oboe

Clarinet in B♭

Bass Clarinet

Bassoon

Horn in F

Trumpet in B♭

Trombone

3 Tom-Toms
Bass Drum

Snare Drum
2 Hand Drums
H.D.

Piano

Violoncello

Contrabass
*) Hit with a hard mallet on the sound board inside the piano
**) Hit with a hard mallet on the supporting bar of the piano
\( \text{\( q = 120 \)} \)

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

B. Cl.

Bsn.

Hn.

Tpt.

Tbn.

3 Tom-Toms

B.D.

S.D.

Bongo

2 Tom-toms

B.D.

Vc.

Cb.

Pno.

how very slowly with extra pressure, gradually increase the bowing pressure as if stuttering towards the clear pitch, which becomes just perceptible, then is left immediately

3 Tom-Toms

1/3 bassoon

Vc.

how very slowly with extra pressure, gradually increase the bowing pressure as if stuttering towards the clear pitch, which becomes just perceptible, then is left immediately

how very slowly with extra pressure, gradually increase the bowing pressure as if stuttering towards the clear pitch, which becomes just perceptible, then is left immediately
\( \boxed{\text{= 64}} \)

The image contains a musical score with various symbols and annotations. The notation includes a mark indicating a tempo of 64 quarter notes per minute. The score is for a piece of music, with indications for different sections and expressions.

The text at the bottom of the page is a note explaining a technique:

> *) left hand gliss freely with small motions, bow very close to the bridge with only the very bottom part of the bow
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
B. Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
Tbn.
3 Tom-Toms
B.D.
S.D.
Bongo
2 Tom-toms
B.D.
Vc.
Cb.
Pno.

Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
B. Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
Tbn.
3 Tom-Toms
B.D.
S.D.
Bongo
2 Tom-toms
B.D.
Vc.
Cb.
Pno.
Hit the strings with the left palm as dead strokes

breath only

breath only

breath only

breath only

breath only

breath only

breath only

breath only

Hit the strings with the left palm as dead strokes

bow diagonally on the strings without producing pitches

bow diagonally on the strings without producing pitches
*) Hit with a hard mallet on the sound board inside of the piano
*) Hit with a hard mallet on the sound board inside of the piano
II: Shizuku 滴

\[ q = 36 \]

- **Flute**
- **Oboe**
- **Clarinet in B♭**
- **Bass Clarinet**
- **Bassoon**
- **Horn in F**
- **Trumpet in B♭**
- **Trombone**
- **3 Tom-Toms**
- **Bass Drum**
- **Percussion 2**
- **Violoncello**
- **Contrabass**

Prepare a cymbal on the timpani head

At the lowest register of the strings till the palm.
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
B. Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
Tbn.
Vib.
Vc.
Cb.
Pno.

°
parco
Œ

q = 52

place a chain of paper clips on the surface of the tam-tam
±
muted near the pin

pizz
œ

gradually turn on the motor

Tam-Tam

p

Tam-Tam

p
Tam-Tam

on the timp.

B. Cl.

Tbn.

Pno.

Bsn.

Vib.

Hn.

Ob.

Cb.

Vc.

Fl

Oboe

Clarinet

Bass Clarinet

Bassoon

Horn

Trumpet

Timpani

Vibraphone

Percussion

Vocal

Choral
(play as loud as possible with overtones clearly maintained)
III: Toyomi 響

\[ \text{\( \text{\(= 42 \)}} \]

Flute

Oboe

Clarinet in B♭

Bass Clarinet

Bassoon

Horn in F

Trumpet in B♭

Trombone

Percussion 1

Sizzle cymbal

2 Cymbals

Gong

Tam-Tam

Piano

Violoncello

Contrabass
poco a poco accel.

a tempo