

TRAFFIC PIECE

Sebastian Adams

2025

This is the written part of the score for Traffic Piece. The score also contains a video score part, which contains important information not included in this document. Each movement of the video part is a day of traffic from morning rush hour to evening rush hour sped up to last 2 hours, which in DAY 2, DAY 3, DAY 6 and DAY 7 also contains embedded text and music notation: this comprises 8 chords which are also listed later in this document.

General rule:

If anything goes wrong, a commitment to watching the traffic and keeping to its rhythm is the most important thing. If elements of the score need to be scrapped due to missed trains, broken technology etc. - it is what it is!

The live traffic, recorded traffic, playing by your colleagues and general atmosphere in the room should all be used to inform the atmosphere of what you play.

The general approach to notes should be to play sustained notes at a volume below, matched to, or just above the bed of sound made by the traffic. Sounds well above the volume of the traffic should mostly be avoided.

SECTIONS

SECTIONS

[06:30 - DAY 1: MONDAY - performed by Sebastian Adams and Tom Roseingrave](#)

[08:30 - DAY 2: TUESDAY - performed by David Bremner and Sharon Phelan](#)

[10:30 - DAY 3: WEDNESDAY - - performed by Susan Geaney, Aonghus McEvoy, David Lacey, and Nick Roth](#)

[12:30 - DAY 4: THURSDAY - Beethoven Freeze - Performed by Sebastian Adams and Robert Coleman](#)

[14:30 - DAY 5: FRIDAY - performed by Kevin Free, Jane Hackett](#)

[16:30 - DAY 6: SATURDAY - In nomine - performed by Sebastian Adams, Hannah Miller, Caitriona O'Mahony](#)

[18:30 - DAY 7: SUNDAY - open improv jam](#)

THE SPACE

AMPLIFIED TRAFFIC

NOTARY

CHORDS DERIVED FROM UNIT 44'S RESONANCES

PERFORMANCE INSTRUCTIONS FOR 2018.4a

PERFORMANCE INSTRUCTIONS FOR 2018. 4b

06:30 - DAY 1: MONDAY - performed by Sebastian Adams and Tom Roseingrave

To be performed by Sebastian Adams and Tom Roseingrave

This movement includes a performance of *2ⁿ Durations Music* by Kenneth Maue. The

Timings for this performance were calculated using this webpage:

<https://www.sebastianadams.net/maue-durations>

For a new performance of this piece, new timings would need to be made.

2ⁿ Durations Music

Mark a series of durations, beginning with one second, then continuously doubling (2 sec, 4 sec, 8 sec, 16 sec, 32 sec, and so on) until a maximum duration is reached, then continuing with an immediate repetition of that longest duration and proceeding with successively halving durations, down to an ending that is a mirrored repeat of the beginning (... 8 sec, 4 sec, 2 sec, 1 sec). Do this as a continuous series, marked by strikings of a gong or other ceremonial observations, and precisely timed. Perhaps add a celebration to start and another to end the whole series.

06:30 - 08:10

Pre-set:

Tom and Sebastian sit in front of windows (one side of room each)

An alarm clock is pre-set on Sebastian's table, set to the time 07:01

Phones or other stopwatch source are set with a digital clock accurate to the second, easily readable by both performers.

06:30

Tom and Sebastian sit watching the traffic in silence, waiting for the alarm clock to go off.

07:01

The alarm goes off and Sebastian has to turn it off. Stopwatches are open and at 07:02 the performance of 2^n Durations Music begins.

Synchronised sound events are made at the following times:

07:02:00	
07:02:01	07:53:11
07:02:03	08:01:43
07:02:07	08:05:59
07:02:15	08:08:07
07:02:31	08:09:11
07:03:03	08:09:43
07:04:07	08:09:59
07:06:15	08:10:07
07:10:31	08:10:11
07:19:03	08:10:13
07:36:07	08:10:14

The movement is over after the last of these events is complete. The performers finish without ceremony, sitting for part of the pause but leaving in time for the next performers to get ready.

INTERLUDE 1:

The traffic is gradually amplified into the space. See the AMPLIFIED TRAFFIC SECTION FOR DETAILS

The next section begins with a sharp cut from the amplified traffic noise when the performers are ready.

08:30 - DAY 2: TUESDAY - performed by David Bremner and Sharon Phelan

08:30 - 10:10

To be performed by David Bremner and Sharon Phelan

instrumentation is completely open for this section

musical material:

Pitched drones (using only the pitches which appear on the video screens)

Filtered noise

Text instructions and pitch material will appear on the video screens during the performance

The instructions/pitches will appear for a short amount of time but should be considered the active material until the next instructions appear.

If you forget the material you are supposed to be playing, you may choose to use the last material you remember, or fall silent.

Silence is not scored into the video, but should definitely be a part of the performance. Only play when you feel like you should play. If this ends up leading to a huge amount of silence, that's OK. (and also OK, if not)

In general:

aim to play under, at or just above the volume you perceive the traffic to be at.

play sustained drones

when the active material involves a chord, each performer can choose to play one or more of the notes

The different attacks/envelopes created by passing traffic can be used as a guide for the entrances and exits of notes

How to end:

From about 09:50, performers should begin to reduce their impact on the listening environment. This should be done through a very gradual reduction of volume with each sonic event, while maintaining the density/number of events to around the same level in the rest of the performance. By about 10:05, all sounds made should only be audible within about a metre of each performer. At 10:10, both performers should stop playing completely, put down any instruments, and watch the traffic for a minute or two. When they feel ready, performers should leave their seats.

10:30 - DAY 3: WEDNESDAY - - performed by Susan Geaney, Aonghus McEvoy, David Lacey, and Nick Roth

10:30 - 12:10

instrumentation is completely open for this section

Layout:

David will be set up at a small table at the back of the room, with his instruments on the table
Aonghus will sit in front of one of the windows

Susan and Nick are free to roam around the room (but should be static in a position for the majority of the time, rather than moving while playing)

How to end:

From about 11:50, performers (except for David) should begin to reduce their impact on the listening environment. This should be done through a very gradual reduction of volume with each sonic event, while maintaining the density/number of events to around the same level in the rest of the performance. By about 12:05, all sounds made should only be audible within about a metre of each performer. At 12:20, all performers should stop playing completely, put down any instruments, and watch the traffic for a minute or two. When they feel ready, performers should leave their seats/positions. If a performer needs to leave early, that's OK. David can ignore the other performers leaving and continue, if he wishes.

Instructions for Aonghus, Susan, Nick:

musical material:

Pitched drones (using only the pitches which appear on the video screens - or the nearest approximation you can manage on your instrument)

Drones can disintegrate into noise (e.g. wind sounds or scraping sounds) as they end, but this should be done only as the tail of a gesture

Text instructions and pitch material will appear on the video screens during the performance

The instructions/pitches will appear for a short amount of time but should be considered the active material until the next instructions appear.

If you forget the material you are supposed to be playing, you may choose to use the last material you remember, or fall silent.

Silence is not scored into the video, but should definitely be a part of the performance. Only play when you feel like you should play. If this ends up leading to a huge amount of silence, that's OK. (and also OK, if not)

In general:

aim to play under, at or just above the volume you perceive the traffic to be at.

play sustained drones

when the active material involves a chord, each performer can choose to play one or more of the notes

The different attacks/envelopes created by passing traffic can be used as a guide for the entrances and exits of notes

Instructions for David:

Watch the live traffic very carefully. When you perceive there to be a proper gap in the traffic, make a single sound, quietly. This could be a single ringing or struck sound, or a continuous gesture. After this sound is finished, wait until the traffic picks up. Then repeat this cycle, waiting for a lull in traffic, making a sound, watching and so on. End at 12:20, or whenever you want.

12:30 - DAY 4: THURSDAY - Beethoven Freeze - Performed by Sebastian Adams and Robert Coleman

Sebastian Adams to perform using radio transmitters and radios, with the radio transmitters playing "Beethoven Freeze" (an audio piece by Sebastian)

Robert Coleman will perform using his environmental listening equipment

The details of the performance of this section should be entirely intuitive: they should be generated out of an exploration of the space, influenced by the traffic outside and by the videos of traffic on the two screens in the space.

This performance begins at 12:30 and lasts til 14:30. From about 14:00, microphones in the street will gradually increase the volume of traffic noise in the room, and the performers should let their improvisation be overtaken by this, gradually reducing their level of activity til nothing. They should also move back in the space during this time, leaving their chairs free for the next performance.

Please have all your instruments/setup set by 12:25. Sebastian / Kirkos staff will help you set up from 12:15 - but please do everything in quiet.

PAUL TRIGGER INTERLUDE AUDIO AT 14:00

14:30 - DAY 5: FRIDAY - performed by Kevin Free, Jane Hackett

Instrumentation/setup is completely open in this section.

Day 5 will use an audio score made of a recording of Day 2

In this movement, the video score contains only a video of Friday's traffic, and no further instructions.

Performers will listen to the audio score in one ear, making sure it doesn't come close to overwhelming the traffic sound. They should listen to the audio part through the ear closest to the wall/furthest from the other musician

The following are all important elements which should be used to create (instinctively) an improvisation: the audio in your earphone, the sound of traffic and the other performer in your other ear, the visual of the live traffic, the visual of the video screen.

In general:

Dynamic level should be under, at or just above the volume you perceive the traffic to be at. Any moments of louder volume should be felt as a notable gesture.

The different attacks/envelopes created by passing traffic can be used as a guide for the entrances and exits of notes

This performance begins at 14:30 and lasts til 15:10. At 15:10, performers should put down their instruments and watch the traffic for a couple of minutes before leaving quietly.

Please have all your instruments/setup set by 14:25. Sebastian / Kirkos staff will help you set up from 14:15 - but please do everything in quiet.

16:30 - DAY 6: SATURDAY - In nomine - performed by Sebastian Adams, Hannah Miller, Caitriona O'Mahony

08:30 - 10:10

To be performed by Sebastian Adams, Hannah Miller, Caitriona O'Mahony

This performance consists of a cycle of performances of Sebastian Adams' 2018.4a and 2018.4b (both in nomines)

Instrumentation: baroque horn, baroque violin, viola da gamba

musical material:
In nomine score

Text instructions and pitch material will appear on the video screens during the performance. The score consists of several repetitions of the two different *in nomines* composed by Sebastian (included in the score 2018.4), separated by silent passages.

The text instructions of 2018.4a and 2018.4c should be internalised before performing, as they will not appear on the screen. A link to the score is [here](#) and images of it can be found at the end of this document.

Where notation refers to bowing, Hannah should read this as regarding breathing

The video in this sections involves a fixed video of the traffic overlaid with the in nomine score, which can be moved on by the performer playing the ground bass at the speed they wish.

In general:

aim to play under, at or just above the volume you perceive the traffic to be at.

when the active material involves a chord, each performer can choose to play one or more of the notes

How to end:

The piece is not finished when the last cycle of in nomine ends, but when the time 18:00 is reached. Performers should listen to and watch the traffic until then.

18:30 - DAY 7: SUNDAY - open improv jam

Text instructions will appear on screen.

The following text should be written on a printed card which should be handed to all performers:

THIS IS A FREE IMPROVISATION WHERE THE TRAFFIC OUTSIDE FORMS OUR SCORE

INSTRUCTIONS WILL APPEAR ON THE VIDEO SCREENS - TRY TO FOLLOW THESE INSTRUCTIONS, BUT IF YOU DON'T SEE OR UNDERSTAND AN INSTRUCTION, DON'T WORRY: YOU CAN STILL PLAY BY INSTINCT

WE WILL KEEP PLAYING UNTIL THE ENERGY WE ARE TAKING FROM THE TRAFFIC AND ONE ANOTHER IS GONE

ALL ARE WELCOME TO JOIN IN, NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY: it's also OK to leave in the middle

THE SPACE

The space should be marked out in a way that makes it clear that members of the public can come and go as they please

AMPLIFIED TRAFFIC

Two microphones should be placed outside the space at a high enough altitude that they capture more road traffic than music or conversation from passersby. In Unit 44, an ideal placement would be mounted on a T-bar, protected from wind and rain, and dropped outside the window of the upstairs office.

The traffic should be played into the space through four speakers placed towards the corners of the room and angled into the middle of the space

The traffic should be controlled with a Max patch or DAW session that executes a gradual fade-in of the traffic sound, with a sharp cut. The timings for this should be fixed in advance and either operated via a timed action, or by manual trigger.

At its peak, the volume should be overwhelming but not painful. A limiter should be applied to ensure that sudden peaks in outside noise don't lead to painful sound or clipped audio.

NOTARY

The piece also involves a note-taking role (fulfilled by Joan Somers Donnelly). The notary will spend the day in the space, making notes on the passing traffic and events, which will be analysed after the performance.

TECH SETUP:

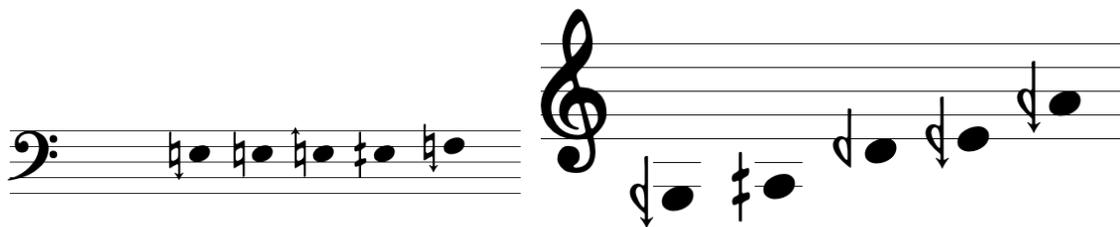
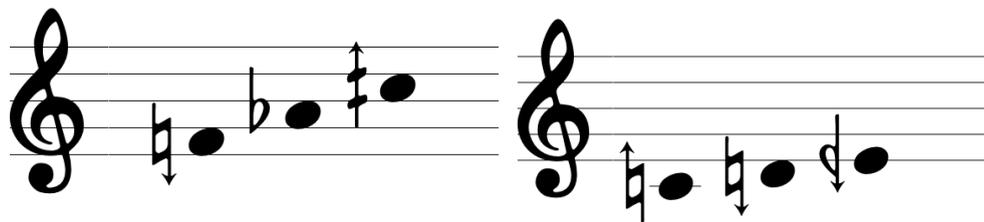
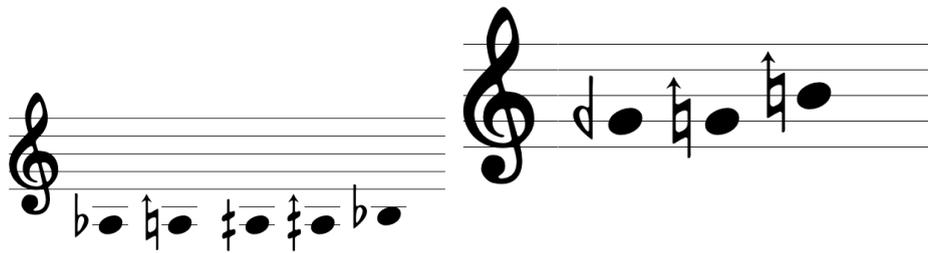
Live Stream:

- The performance should be live streamed with one camera set at the back of the space facing the street. Ideally, a stereo audio signal will also be fed to the screen.

Projection of Live Traffic into the space:

- Two cameras should be placed facing down and up the road (however possible), the goal is to get the most panoramic view of the street possible.
- These camera feeds should be stitched together using OBS or other video mapping software. This combined stream should be sent to a projector and project onto the back wall of Unit 44.
- A time delay is inevitable and not worth worrying about in the context of this performance.
- The feed from these cameras should also be recorded.

CHORDS DERIVED FROM UNIT 44'S RESONANCES



PERFORMANCE INSTRUCTIONS FOR 2018.4a

(relevant only to Sebastian, Hannah and Caitriona)

2018.4a Sebastian Adams

Commissioned by the East Cork Early Music Festival, and composed in September 2018.

For any four string instruments

Duration: indeterminate

[est. 5 minutes – but far longer performances are acceptable. The duration will be a direct result of the speed the In Nomine cantus firmus is played at. The pulse in the cantus firmus does not need to be strict, particularly if the piece is played slowly enough that a pulse will be hard for an audience to discern]

When chords of two notes or more are indicated, players are to choose one note to play. Players do not have to play the same note for an entire bar (where the instruction indicates more than one attack is to take place in the bar) but can freely choose between the available notes.

It is very important that stillness is maintained in the three general pauses, and in the rest in bar 54.

Octave is free throughout the piece, except in the first and last bar, where it is important that at least the top three voices (and maybe all four) are on an exact unison. The specific octave of these notes can still be adapted to different needs.

The entire piece is to be played so quietly that the sound produced is unstable!

Seek interactions between your sound and that of others.

This work is indebted to Stockhausen's wind quintet *Adieu*.

GLOSSARY:

SYNC. – (synchronised) – players play notes in rhythmic unison, based on the remaining instructions

INDIV. – (individuals) – players play freely as individuals

REG. – (regular) – a player's notes are of equal lengths, or if in a rit./accel. are expanding or contracting in even proportions

IRREG. – irregular – no periodicity should be discernible

G – irregular microtonal glissandi around the played notes (mainly subtle inflections). Ensure no rhythmic patterns emerge within these glissandi

TRILLS – trills, using notes that make sense according to the players' understanding of the piece's harmonic world

CRYE – Play repeated notes in a rhythm that calls to mind the Crye In Nomine by Christopher Tye. This need not be strict imitation of the Tye rhythm.

LONG/MEDIUM/SHORT – indications of note length

TREM. – unmeasured tremolo

[In nomine à 4]

2018.4a

VERY SLOW – without obvious pulse
(voice 4 leads changes of bar throughout)

1 2 3 SYNC. LONG imperceptible changes between notes SYNC. LONG G imperceptible changes between notes G.P. (7)

4 1 2 3 INDIV. LONG with short silences NO G Each player plays molto pont. once between here and end of bar 10 INDIV. LONG with short silences molto pont. G.P. (7)

4 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13

1 2 3 SYNC. SHORT IRREG. TRILLS (occasional) G (occasional) Never play the same note twice in a row INDIV. As before, but desynchronise: players choose to either speed up or slow down. Alter direction of speed-change if you feel in sync with another player.

4 14 15 16

1 2 3 SYNC. ACCEL. REG. (accel. proportional throughout bar) NO TRILLS G (more frequently as time progresses) INDIV. RIT. IRREG. CRYE [short pauses between Cryes] SYNC. LONG REG. RIT. TRILLS sul pont. [Optionally play grace note figure after a long note]

4 17 18 19 20 21 22 23

1 2 3 INDIV. LONG getting shorter REG. TRILLS G INDIV. ACCEL. by playing notes more and more often SHORT [occasionally append grace note figure to your notes]

4 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

1
2
3
4

32 33 34

INDIV.
IRREG. > SATURATED
Accel. to saturation point*

ABRUPT SILENCE / G.P.
(|.)

* Continue to pick up pace, turning individual notes into clustering runs (never play the same note twice in a row). String more and more notes into gestures, gradually removing any sense of breath or definition between gestures. Each player should play the grace note motif once, at a dynamic of *p* (the only rise in dynamic in the entire piece).

1
2
3
4

35 36 37

SYNC
LONG

Voice these chords amongst yourselves
(i.e. pre-assign notes in a way you like).
Attempt to achieve an even quieter sound than
elsewhere in the piece.
Between the first two chords, Voices 1-3 play the
grace notes in unison, but so quietly that the
audience should only hear them by accident.
One player should play A on the second chord (b.
36). They precede this with a Bb appoggiatura.

1
2
3
4

38 39 40 41 42

INDIV.
IRREG.
TREM.
Vary bow placement.
Voice 2: very short notes (irregular)
Voice 1,3: Medium notes (irregular)

INDIV.
REG.
GRADUAL ACCEL.
TREM.
Vary bow placement
2: SHORT
1,3: MEDIUM
[Play more notes as accel develops]
Occasionally play the grace
notes around your note.

1
2
3
4

43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50

SYNC.
REG.
RIT.
TREM
G
molto tasto
MEDIUM, with pauses between notes
[Each player plays grace notes once]

INDIV.
IRREG.
TRILLS Occasionally
TREM. Occasionally
molto tasto
MEDIUM, getting LONGER
[Each player may play grace
notes once, optionally]

1
2
3
4

51 52 53 54 55

SYNC.
REG.
LONG
molto tasto G, occasionally
(less as time progresses)

SYNC.
very long

PERFORMANCE INSTRUCTIONS FOR 2018. 4b

2018.4b

[In nomine à n]

S. Adams
v: 24/09/2018

1-n

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19

20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29

30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39

40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47

48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55

For any group of carefully chosen instruments.

All players play the in nomine cantus firmus (printed above) at individual tempi.

The overall speed should be very slow.

Everyone should play so quietly that the sound produced is very unstable.

Seek interactions between your notes and those played by others at all times.

Feel free to vary your speed.

Players may start at the same time or with staggered entries.

The piece is over when the last player finishes playing the entire cantus firmus.

2018.4c [for any number of instruments]

Version 1: In rehearsal, play 2018.4b, and record it. Listen back to the recording and pick between 2 and 5 chords from the recording which produce particularly beautiful interactions. Attempt to recreate these chords in an order of your choosing. Play each chord once, with each chord lasting anywhere from thirty seconds to twenty minutes. Seek interactions, and play as quietly as possible.

Version 2: As above, but choosing chords from 2018.4a instead. This can be achieved either by rehearsing 2018.4a or by choosing from the score.