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## All Is Flux for Solo Vibraphone and Fixed Media

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## ALL IS FLUX FOR SOLO VIBRAPHONE AND FIXED MEDIA

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“All is Flux” is a composition for solo amplified vibraphone and fixed media. The title is derived from a quote by the Greek philosopher Heraclitus- “All is flux, nothing remains still.” While a traditional score will be provided to the performer for the purposes of preparation and analysis, a video score that is synchronized to the fixed media audio elements will be used in the final performance. This moving score should be visible only to the performer, not the audience. The composition serves as a practical demonstration of experimentation on structure in tandem with elements drawn from narrative theory. Additionally, this piece explores scale and its effect on the perception of musical changes and textures as both moving events or immersive environments.

The structure of the composition draws influence from the Joseph Campbell’s idea of the narrative mono-myth, the “Hero’s Journey.” Each movement of the composition serves as a musical representation of the three acts described in the Hero’s Journey. The first movement is meant to explore the idea of the “familiar environment” and the unwilling hero. In contrast, the second movement acts as the representation the hero’s growth while exploring the unfamiliar environment. Finally, the third and final movement is to juxtapose the changed hero with the unchanged, familiar environment and the discomfort of this modified relationship.

ALL IS FLUX FOR SOLO VIBraphone AND FIXED MEDIA

by

Ethan Stearley

A thesis submitted to the Graduate College  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Master of Music  
School of Music  
Western Michigan University  
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Thesis Committee:

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Finally, I would like to thank my mother, sister, and grandparents for their unending love and support. I can never thank you enough for pushing me and believing in me. None of this would be possible without them.

Ethan Stearley

## SET-UP AND PERFORMANCE NOTES

“All is Flux” is written for a 3.5 octave vibraphone that is to be amplified via a dynamic microphone (such as a Shure SM57) positioned under the resonators. The sound of the vibraphone, as well as the fixed media, should be channeled through a setup including, at minimum, a stereo set speakers and a subwoofer. Ideally, the piece is to be performed with the vibraphone’s motor set to a medium-slow speed (if the instrument’s motor supports variable speed,) although this is not entirely necessary.

During the performance, a provided video score is to be read from a screen visible only to the performer. The fixed media audio, synchronized to the video playback of the score, is to be channeled from the playback device to the stereo setup.

It is suggested that the piece be performed using two pairs of medium-hard cord mallets and two bass bows, although experimentation with implements is encouraged. Pedal markings are notated in the score, but the performer should also have a degree of freedom in pedaling decisions. With the few specifically notated exceptions, each pitch should be allowed to ring for its full duration and care should be taken with both harmonic and gestural changes to ensure that the pedaling clarifies the intent of the phrase, rather than obscuring it.

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All is Flux

# All is Flux

## I. Departure

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*J=68*

Vibraphone

Fixed Media

8

A Bowed  
*mp*  
Keep Pedal Depressed

16

The score is divided into three systems. System 1 (measures 1-7) features the Vibraphone silent and the Fixed Media playing eighth-note patterns with grace notes and slurs. System 2 (measures 8-15) features the Vibraphone playing a sustained note with a bow and dynamic 'mp' while the Fixed Media plays sixteenth-note patterns. System 3 (measures 16-23) features the Vibraphone playing a sustained note with a bow and dynamic 'mp' while the Fixed Media plays sixteenth-note patterns.

30

35

**B** Med. Hard Mallets

41

51

**C**

59

*p*

*mf*

*f*

5

62

3

5

*n*

*mp*

Ped.

68 D

Pedal every change

*p*

*f*

78

*mf*

*p*

87

E F

94

102

105

# All is Flux

## II. Initiation

**Vibraphone**

**Fixed Media**

**13**

**A**

32

40 **B**

49

59 **C**

67 **D**

*f* *ff* *ff*

*ff* *ff*

74

*mp* *ff*

*ff*

81 **E**

*f* *mp*

85

*mf* *ff*

89

Sheet music for a string quartet (two violins, one viola, one cello) in G minor (indicated by a 'b' in the key signature). The music consists of two staves. The top staff has a dynamic of *p* and a crescendo to *mf*. The bottom staff shows six horizontal ovals connected by vertical lines, forming a large rectangular frame.

93

Sheet music for a string quartet in G minor. The top staff has a dynamic of *p*. The bottom staff shows six horizontal ovals connected by vertical lines, forming a large rectangular frame.

97 F

Sheet music for a string quartet in G minor. The top staff has a dynamic of *ff* and a decrescendo to *mp*. The bottom staff shows six horizontal ovals connected by vertical lines, forming a large rectangular frame. A fermata is placed over the first oval.

101

Sheet music for a string quartet in G minor. The top staff has a dynamic of *mf*. The bottom staff shows six horizontal ovals connected by vertical lines, forming a large rectangular frame.

105

Musical score page 105. The top staff shows a melodic line in G clef with a dynamic of *p*. The middle staff consists of three horizontal lines with open circles at their ends, forming a continuous loop. The bottom staff has vertical lines connecting the circles.

109

Musical score page 109. The top staff shows a melodic line in G clef with a dynamic of *p*. The middle staff consists of three horizontal lines with open circles at their ends, forming a continuous loop. The bottom staff has vertical lines connecting the circles.

113 **G**

Musical score page 113. The top staff shows a melodic line in G clef with dynamics *f* and *mp*, and the instruction "Ped.". The middle staff consists of three horizontal lines with open circles at their ends, forming a continuous loop. The bottom staff has vertical lines connecting the circles.

120

Musical score page 120. The top staff shows a melodic line in G clef with dynamics *ff* and "Ped." The middle staff consists of three horizontal lines with open circles at their ends, forming a continuous loop. The bottom staff has vertical lines connecting the circles.

127 **H**

*ff* *ff*

*Ped.* *Ped.*

132

*Ped.*

138

*fff*

*mf*

Half pedal until rehearsal mark L

145

151

Musical score page 151. The top staff shows a melodic line with eighth-note patterns. The bottom staff shows a harmonic bass line with eighth-note chords. The music consists of six measures.

157

Musical score page 157. The top staff shows a melodic line with eighth-note patterns. The bottom staff shows a harmonic bass line with eighth-note chords. The music consists of six measures. A dynamic marking *mp* is present in the upper staff.

J

163

Musical score page 163. The top staff shows a melodic line with eighth-note patterns, including a forte dynamic *f*. The bottom staff shows a harmonic bass line with eighth-note chords. The music consists of six measures.

169

Musical score page 169. The top staff shows a melodic line with eighth-note patterns. The bottom staff shows a harmonic bass line with eighth-note chords. The music consists of six measures.

175

Musical score for piano, page 175. The score consists of two staves. The top staff has a treble clef and the bottom staff has a bass clef. Both staves have a common time signature. The music features eighth-note patterns in the treble staff and sixteenth-note patterns in the bass staff.

181

**K**

ff

Musical score for piano, page 181. The score consists of two staves. The top staff has a treble clef and the bottom staff has a bass clef. Both staves have a common time signature. The music features eighth-note patterns in the treble staff and sixteenth-note patterns in the bass staff. A dynamic marking 'ff' (fortissimo) is present above the treble staff.

187

Musical score for piano, page 187. The score consists of two staves. The top staff has a treble clef and the bottom staff has a bass clef. Both staves have a common time signature. The music features eighth-note patterns in the treble staff and sixteenth-note patterns in the bass staff.

193

Musical score for piano, page 193. The score consists of two staves. The top staff has a treble clef and the bottom staff has a bass clef. Both staves have a common time signature. The music features eighth-note patterns in the treble staff and sixteenth-note patterns in the bass staff.

199 L

*f* dim.  
*Ad.*

Measures 1-6: Treble staff: eighth-note patterns. Bass staff: eighth-note patterns.

206 rit.

Measures 1-6: Treble staff: eighth-note patterns. Bass staff: eighth-note patterns.

214 M = 128

*mp*

Measures 1-6: Treble staff: eighth-note patterns. Bass staff: eighth-note patterns.

221 p

Measures 1-6: Treble staff: eighth-note patterns. Bass staff: eighth-note patterns.

**All is Flux**  
III. Return

Ethan Stearley

**Vibraphone**  $\text{♩} = 68$  [Med. Hard Mallets]

**Fixed Media**

**11**

**A**

**20**

29      **B**

**C** Pedal every change

39

49

**D** Bowed

Keep Pedal Depressed

61

74

**E** [Med. Hard Mallets]

*mf*

*Ped.*

ff

85

**F**

*mp*

*Ped.*

5

3

5

5

94

**G**

*f*

5

5

3

3

5

102

**H**

ff

114

Musical score for page 114. The top staff consists of three measures of music for a keyboard instrument. The first measure is dynamic *mf*, the second is *mp*, and the third is *p*. The bottom staff consists of a series of sustained notes with vertical stems, spanning the duration of the three measures.

127

Musical score for page 127. The top staff consists of two measures of music for a keyboard instrument. The first measure is dynamic *mp*. The second measure contains a bowing instruction (**Bowed**) and a sustain pedal instruction (**Keep pedal depressed**). The bottom staff consists of a series of sustained notes with vertical stems, spanning the duration of the two measures.

141

Musical score for page 141. The top staff consists of two measures of music for a keyboard instrument. The first measure contains a dynamic and a sustain pedal instruction. The second measure contains a sustain pedal instruction. The bottom staff consists of a series of sustained notes with vertical stems, spanning the duration of the two measures.

148

Musical score for page 148. The top staff consists of two measures of music for a keyboard instrument. The first measure contains a dynamic and a sustain pedal instruction. The second measure contains a sustain pedal instruction. The bottom staff consists of a series of sustained notes with vertical stems, spanning the duration of the two measures.