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J A B

PIANO

(2021)

ALEX TAY

Jab is dedicated to Adam Łukawski, a gifted composer who radically changed how I regard Shepard tones. He himself is carrying out important research which implements both Shepard tone principles and Artificial Intelligence technologies. This piece would have taken a very different course if not for many of our perspective-altering conversations. *Jab* is directly influenced by many of Adam's ideas.

Jab is a simultaneous expression of turmoil and joy. At the time of composing *Jab*. I experienced frustration, anger, fear, rejection and loss. At the same time, there was laughter, exhilaration, discovery and rebirth. While sketching, composing and extensively recomposing, I constantly questioned what exactly I wanted to deliver.

Was it a joke or swear? A punch line or a sucker punch? Ultimately, I couldn't decide.

The piece is built on six contrasting gestures. The first, at bar 1, is a cluster that peels away to reveal diatonic harmonies and then a scale (such gestures are found in Dutilleux, Nielsen and Schumann). The second, at bar 5, is a twinkling two part counterpoint. The third, at bar 8, is a bulldozer in a China shop, a spectacle which misdirects. The fourth, at bar 23, is a slow, ornamental, Finnissy-an melody with morphs into two. The fifth, at bar 33, is a Shepard tone texture. The Shepard tone textures in particular are inspired by

Adam's research. While formulating his theories and ideas, he showed me Shepard tones built on parallel chords and what he described to me as "gravity lines". On hearing these "gravity lines", I realised that a descending tone suspended in the air by piano resonance could be answered either immediately with a downward scale and/or its next descending tone in its downward trajectory could arrive much later. When both of the above are implemented, two scales descending in different timescales are heard, such is the power of pitch-proximate stream segregation. This way of increasing the scalic potential of each tone in a Shepard tone texture only enhances the illusion's effect. The sixth and last gesture, at bar 51, consists of lithe arpeggiations which excite ghostly harmonics from strings sustained in the sostenuto pedal. These seemingly appear from nowhere. Across the piece I combine and recombine these gestures; push them through Risset accelerations and decelerations; throw and muddy them.

Jab was commissioned by John Woolf through the Ralph Vaughan Williams Trust. Initially, Dominic Degavino, a Park Lane Group young artist, was due to premier the piece. However, because of the coronavirus pandemic, the Park Lane Group were unable to mount a premier of the piece. Instead, Ben Smith premiered the piece in November 2021 at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama.

The tempi marked in this piece are ideals: although they cannot be fully realised by a human pianist, they should be strived for. In the fastest passages, pianists should decide their own maximum tempi and scale the tempi in the rest of the piece accordingly. Where certain composed details prevent performers from realising the full effect which they interpret that any given passage of *Jab* should have, performers may edit or even omit any of those aforementioned details.

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JAB

Alex Tay

 $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 104$ rit.

Strike keys, left hand gradually releases over the indicated duration

Piano

$\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 104$ rit.

$\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 88$

f, vicious

$\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 92$, con rubato

rit.

$\text{♩} = 80$

Subito $\text{♩} = 96$

$\text{♩} = 116$ $\text{♩} = 144$

molto leggiero, starlight

pp

f, boisterous

sub. p, wraith

f

mf

> p fp

mf

f

sf

Pno.

Ped.

$\text{♩} = 120$

$\text{♩} = 150$ rit.

$\text{♩} = 96$ $\text{♩} = 68$ rit.

$\text{♩} = 48$ $\text{♩} = 144$

$\text{♩} = 116$

più f

p

ff

sub. p, cresc.

mp, cresc.

f

pp

molto cresc.

f

pp

mf, molto cresc.

Pno.

3

A

Pno.

19

$\text{♩} = 88$

$\text{♩} = 60 \leftarrow \text{♩} = \frac{5}{6} \rightarrow \text{♩} = 60$ poco rit.

$\text{♩} = 48$

$\text{♩} = 92$ molto rit.

poco rit.

ff sonoro

sub. p leggiero

pp

sf

p

Ped.

B

Pno.

23

$\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 48$, con molto rubato

ppp sotto voce ma cantabile

Una Corda

(Ped.)

$(1/4)$

$(1/4)$

$(1/2)$ (full)

$(1/2)$ (full)

Pno.

30

poco a poco cresc.

mp

poco accel.

$\text{♩} = 60 \leftarrow \text{♩} = \text{♩} \rightarrow$

$(1/2)$

C STORM

rit.

♩ = 150

♩ = 100

ppp, poco cresc.

rit.
♩ = 52 ← ♩ = 104 →

pp

ppp

pp

p

♩ = 60 ← ♩ = 1 →

Pno.

pp poco a poco cresc.

p, poco a poco cresc.

mp — mf — mp — mf pp — f

p

9

10

< f mp < f

p — f p
mp — mf
> 3 — f

Tre Corde

rit.
♩ = 120

♩ = 60 ← ♩ = 120 →

rit.
♩ = 150

♩ = 120 ← ♩ = 1 →

Pno.

l.h. r.h. ♫

3

pp

pp

f

pp

f

pp

f

pp

ff

pp

5

-

5

-

5

-

5

-

5

-

3

-

sf

ff

sf

sf

gliss.

r.h.

gliss.

5

gliss.

5

gliss.

5

gliss.

5

gliss.

5

fff, heavy

long

G.M.

p

5

-

5

-

5

-

5

-

5

-

fff, wrecking ball

C.M.

ff

5

-

5

-

5

-

5

-

5

-

fff, heavy

rit.

$\text{♩} = 86$

$\text{♩} = 54 \xleftarrow[3]{>} \text{♩} \rightarrow \text{♩} = 150$

$\text{♩} = 68/ \xleftarrow[5]{>} \text{♩} \rightarrow \text{♩} = 150/ \text{♩} = 300$

$\text{♩} = 136$

Pno.

f — *p* — *mf* — *ff* — *più ffp* — *f* — *fff*

$\text{♩} = 47/ \text{♩} = 94$

rit.

$\text{♩} = 7:6 \xleftarrow[6]{>} \text{♩} = 94$

$\text{♩} = 80$

$\text{♩} = 64$

$\text{♩} = 54 \xleftarrow[4]{>} \text{♩} = \text{♩} \rightarrow$

Pno.

fp — *ff* — *sub. p* — *ppp* — *mf* — *p* — *ff*

D $\text{♩} = 54 \text{♩} = 108$

51 Pno.

p, <> nervous

Sost. Ped. semper

Ped.

Ped.

accel.

$\text{♩} = 120$

mp

pp

f

(full)

rit. $\text{♩} = 108$

57 Pno.

sub. mp

(Sost. Ped. semper cont.)

ff

p

Ped.

accel.

$\text{♩} = 120 \text{ molto rit.}$

f

sf

$\text{♩} = 54 \leftarrow \text{♩} = \overset{5}{\text{♩}} \rightarrow \text{♩} = 90 \text{ accel.}$

$\text{♩} = 120 \leftarrow \text{♩} = \overset{3}{\text{♩}} \rightarrow \text{♩} = 180 \text{ rit.}$

$\text{♩} = 108$

62 Pno.

sub. p cresc.

mf

sub. mp

(Sost. Ped. semper cont.)

3

pp

ff

accel.

pp

*Ped. — — **

Ped.

Ped.

poco rit.

E

$\text{♩} \equiv 180$ ($\text{♩} \equiv 120$) accel.

$$\theta = 180^\circ$$

102

Pno.

poco a poco cresc. ff

(Ped.)

G Subito Meno Mosso ♩ = 48

105

poco accel.

sub. ppp

ff

sub. pp

Una Corda

Sost. Ped. sempre

109

Pno.

ppp

ppp

f

pp

p

pp < ff

(Una Corda) (Sost. Ped. sempre cont.)

Ped.

pp < f

Ped.

H WINDING, TIGHTENING
accel.

p = 60

p *mp* *ppp* *p* *pp* *mp* *pp*

Pno.

112

p, poco a poco cresc.
(Sost. Ped. sempre cont.)

Ped.

mp *sub. mf* *sub. p* *mf*

d = 90 *6*

d = 100 *3* *mp* *mf* *p*

d = 110 *6* *pp* *mf*

d = 120 *6* *mf*

Pno.

115

sub. p *sub. pp* *sub. p* *ppp* *mp* *pp* *p* *sub. pp* *mf*

mp, poco a poco cresc.
(Sost. Ped. sempre cont.)

I più accel.

d = 60

ff *pp*, leggiero

mp *pp* *mp* *pp* *pp* *pp* *pp* *pp*

Pno.

118

ff *sf mp* *sf* *mf* *mf* *mf* *mf* *mf*

Ped.

sf *smf* *smf* *mp* *pp* *pp* *pp* *pp*

Sost. Ped. cont.

Pno.

121

122

pp ————— mp ————— pp

< p > pp

mf

sf

sf

sub. p

6

3

sf

pp ————— mf ————— pp

mp ————— 5 ————— f

sff

sf

mp

3

mf ————— f

f

ff

mp

pp ————— mp ————— pp

f

sf, feroce

8va

p

mf

p

mf ————— pp ————— fp

mf ————— ff

3

3

p ————— mp

p ————— pp

p ————— pp

(Sost. Ped.)

Musical score for piano (Pno.) in 4/4 time. The score consists of two systems of music. The first system starts at measure 128 with a tempo of $\text{♩} = 130$. It features dynamic markings such as *sub. p*, *p fp*, *f*, *mf*, *sff*, *ffp*, *f*, and *sf*. The second system begins at measure 170 with a tempo of $\text{♩} = 170$. It includes dynamic markings like *sff*, *mp*, *f*, *fp*, *mf*, *p*, *mfp*, *mf*, *mfp*, *mfp*, *mf*, *sf*, *mf*, *ff*, and *p < f*. The score also includes performance instructions such as *L più accel.*, *8va*, and *Ped.*.

M MAELSTROM
rit.

J = 120

132

ppp, cresc.

p, cresc.

rit.

J = 80

J = 54 ← J = J → J = 108

ppp

pp

gliss.

mp smf mp

mf > p

Pno.

ppp, cresc.

p, cresc.

ppp, cresc.

p, cresc.

mp smf mp

gliss.

Ped.

J = 68

135

mf

pp

f > pp

ff

rit.

J = 26 ← J = J → J = 80

5

9

5

6

8:6

pp

mf

sub. ppp

ff

Pno.

sub. mp

mf

f

fp

gliss.

gliss.

ff

ffp

mfp

f

p

gliss.

12

8

Pno.

rit.
♩ = 160

137

138

ffp ————— mp sf sub. mp ————— fpp ————— mp

sf sub. mp ————— mf sf ————— pp ————— fp ————— mf

ff

gliss.

ff

13

♩ = 120 ← ♩ = ♩ →

O rit.

$\text{♩} = 280$ $\text{♩} = 245$ $\text{♩} = 60 / \leftarrow \text{♩} = \text{♩} \rightarrow \text{♩} = 120$ $\text{♩} = 210$ $\text{♩} = 112$

143

Pno.

$f \longrightarrow mp$

$f \longrightarrow 9:10$

$sub. pp \longrightarrow f \longrightarrow$

$sf \longrightarrow p \longrightarrow ff \overset{3}{\longrightarrow} pp$

$sfmp \longrightarrow ff \overset{3}{\longrightarrow} pp$

fff

$\text{♩} = 102$ $\text{♩} = 94$ $\text{♩} = 85$ $\text{♩} = 77$

147

Pno.

$sfp \longrightarrow mf$

$f \longrightarrow pp$

$fp \longrightarrow f \longrightarrow$

$fp \longrightarrow ff \longrightarrow mp$

$f \longrightarrow mp \longrightarrow fp \longrightarrow più f \longrightarrow mp \longrightarrow mf$

$fp \longrightarrow ff \longrightarrow mp$

Musical score for piano (Pno.) showing four staves of music. The score includes dynamic markings such as *p*, *sub. pp*, *mp*, *mf*, *f*, *ff*, and *sfp*. Performance instructions include *rit.*, tempo changes ($\text{♩} = 76$, $\text{♩} = 60$, $\text{♩} = 120$, $\text{♩} = 104$), and grace notes. Measure numbers 155, 156, and 157 are indicated. Measure 155 starts with $\text{♩} = 76$ and *p*. Measure 156 begins with *sub. pp* and includes a tempo change to $\text{♩} = 60$. Measure 157 shows a complex rhythmic pattern with grace notes and a tempo change to $\text{♩} = 120$. Measures 158-160 show a section starting with *sub. mf* and *sub. p*, followed by *mf*, *f*, and *ff*. Measure 161 ends with *sfp* and *p*.

(Sost. Ped. sempre cont.)

(Sost. Ped. sempre cont.)

A musical score for piano (Pno.) in 160 time signature. The score consists of two systems of music. The first system starts with ***sff***, followed by ***fff sub. mf***, ***f***, ***pp ff < fff***, ***p < ff***, and ***più fff, sonoro***. The second system begins with ***più fff, sonoro***, followed by ***sub. mf < f***, ***ff***, ***sub. mp, cantabile***, and ***ffff***. The score includes various dynamic markings like ***gliss.***, ***5***, ***3***, ***7***, ***5:3***, and ***Q***. The piano part features multiple staves with different key signatures (B-flat major, A major, G major) and time signatures (3/2, 2/2, 3/2).

162

Pno.

sub. p

ffff, sonoro

sub. mf < ffp

ffp

ffffp

fffmp

ffff, sonoro

fff

Musical score for piano (Pno.) in 8/8 time, measure 164. The score includes three staves: treble, bass, and a lower bass staff. The dynamics are marked as follows:

- Measure 163: **f**
- Measure 164:
 - mf → ff
 - p
 - ffff, molto sonoro
 - sub.f < ff
 - sub.p

Performance instructions include:

- Measure 164: **5** (above the first measure), **3** (below the second measure), **II** (below the third measure), **7-3** (above the fourth measure), **= 105 rit.** (above the fifth measure).
- Measure 165: **Sost. Ped. sempre** (below the bass staff).

$\text{♩} = 68$ poco rit. $\text{♩} = 60$

167

Pno.

ff

(*Ped.*)

(*Sost. Ped. sempre cont.*)

poco accel.

170

Pno.

f

mp

ff

fff

(*Ped.*)

(*Sost. Ped. sempre cont.*)

R Subito $\text{♩} = 60$ rit.

173

Pno.

sub. mp

p

pp

Ped.

Ped.

accel.

f

mp

(*Sost. Ped. sempre cont.*)

A musical score for piano (Pno.) spanning five staves. The score includes dynamic markings such as *(ppp)*, *mf*, *ppp*, *mp*, *accel.*, *rit.*, *p*, *f*, *Ped.*, and *Sost. Ped. sempre*. Articulation marks like 5, 3, 7, and 14 are present. Performance instructions include *(Ped.)* and *(Sost. Ped.)*. The tempo changes from $\text{♩} = 92$ to $\text{♩} = 60$, $\text{♩} = 40$ with *accel.*, and $\text{♩} = 72$ with *rit.*

Musical score for piano, page 20, measures 190-195. The score consists of three staves: treble, bass, and a lower staff. Measure 190 starts with a dynamic of *sub. pp*. Measure 191 begins with *p*, followed by *pp*. Measure 192 starts with *pp*. Measure 193 begins with *mp*, followed by *pp*. Measure 194 begins with *pp*. Measure 195 begins with *mp*, followed by *p*, then *sub. ppp*. The score includes various performance instructions like '3' and '5' over groups of notes, and a dynamic marking 'accel.' above the measure 195. The tempo is indicated as $\text{♩} = 40$. The page number 20 is at the top left.

Musical score for piano, page 193, measures 1-10. The score consists of two staves. The top staff is in treble clef, 2/4 time, and the bottom staff is in bass clef, 2/4 time. Measure 1 starts with a dynamic of *mp*, followed by a crescendo to *mf*. Measure 2 begins with a dynamic of *8vb*. Measure 3 features a dynamic of *3*. Measures 4-5 show a melodic line with slurs and grace notes. Measures 6-7 begin with a dynamic of *ppp*, followed by eighth-note patterns with grace notes. Measures 8-9 include dynamics of *3* and *5*, with a dynamic of *sim.* in measure 9. Measures 10-11 begin with a dynamic of *sempre ppp*, followed by eighth-note patterns with grace notes. Measures 12-13 include dynamics of *3* and *5*, with a dynamic of *5-7* in measure 13. The score concludes with a dynamic of *rit.* in measure 14.

Musical score for piano, page 196, measures 1-10. The score consists of two staves. The top staff is for the right hand and the bottom staff is for the left hand. Measure 1 starts with a dynamic of mf and a tempo of $\text{♩} = 80 \text{ rall.}$. Measure 2 begins with a dynamic of p . Measures 3-4 begin with a dynamic of mp . Measures 5-6 begin with a dynamic of p . Measures 7-8 begin with a dynamic of pp . Measures 9-10 begin with a dynamic of mp . The score concludes with a dynamic of ppp . The key signature changes frequently, including $\#$, \flat , and \natural symbols. Measure 10 ends with a tempo of $\text{♩} = 40$.

A musical score for piano, page 22, measures 199-222. The score is in 2/4 time, key signature is B-flat major (two sharps). The piano part consists of two staves: treble and bass. Measure 199 starts with a dynamic of ***ppp***, followed by **Ped.** and **(Sost. Ped. cont.)**. The melody is played in the treble staff, while the bass staff provides harmonic support. Measure 200 begins with a dynamic of ***mp***, followed by a series of eighth-note patterns. Measure 201 starts with a dynamic of ***mf***, followed by **sub. *p***, ***f***, ***p***, and ***mp***. Measure 202 concludes the section. Measure 203 begins with a dynamic of ***mf***, followed by ***f***, ***p***, and ***mp***. Measure 204 ends with a dynamic of ***mp***. Various performance markings are present, including grace notes, slurs, and dynamic markings like ***16:15***, ***18***, ***8^{vb}***, ***5***, ***3***, ***3***, ***5***, ***7***, and ***3***.

Subito ♩ = 40

poco accel

72 rit.

202

Pno.

pp — p

mp

3

5

16:10

3

6

5

p

Ped.

(Sost. Ped. sempre cont.)

(Sost. Ped. sempre cont.)

J = 60 poco accel.

- - - marcato

sim.

With Palms

Musical score for piano and orchestra, page 205, measures 8-18. The score includes parts for Piano (Pno.) and full orchestra. The piano part features a treble clef, 3/4 time, and dynamic markings such as *ppp*, *pp*, *ppp*, *p*, *ppp*, *mp*, *ppp*, *mp*, *pp*, *mp*, *p*, *mp*, *mf*, and *wie Tants*. The piano's bass clef part shows measures 8-18 with various dynamics and time signatures (3/4, 2/4, 3/4). The orchestra part includes woodwind entries with dynamic markings like *pp*, *sim.*, and *3* above a bracket. The score concludes with a measure number 38.

S $\downarrow = 72$ rall.

(Ped.) -

$\text{♩} = 120 \leftarrow \text{♩.} = \overline{\text{♩}} \rightarrow \text{♩} = 107$ poco rall.

- 1

($\omega = 60$) poco r

(P_{ed_1})

| = 56

| Ped. _____
Sost. Ped. ser

Musical score for piano, page 10, measures 223-227. The score consists of four staves. The top staff is treble clef, the second is bass clef, and the third and fourth are bass clef. Measure 223 starts with dynamic *fff*. Measure 224 starts with dynamic *fff*, followed by *mp*, *sub. mp*, and *mf*. Measure 225 starts with dynamic *ff*, followed by *p*, *mp*, *pp*, *mf*, *pp*, *mf*, *pp*, and *mf pp*. Measure 226 starts with dynamic *fff*, followed by *p*, *mp*, *pp*, *mf*, and *ppp*. Measure 227 starts with dynamic *fff*, followed by *p*, *mp*, *pp*, *p*, *pp*, *p*, *mp*, *mp*, and *mf*. The score includes various performance instructions like gliss., Ped., and tempo markings like 3, 5, 6, 7, 8.

Musical score for piano, page 226, measures 8-22. The score consists of four staves. The top staff is treble clef, 7/8 time, dynamic ff. The second staff is bass clef, 7/8 time, dynamic ff. The third staff is treble clef, 7/8 time, dynamic ff. The bottom staff is bass clef, 7/8 time, dynamic ff. Measure 8: ff. Measure 9: mf, pp. Measure 10: mp, p. Measure 11: mf, p. Measure 12: ff. Measure 13: ff. Measure 14: ff. Measure 15: ff. Measure 16: ff. Measure 17: ff. Measure 18: ff. Measure 19: ff. Measure 20: ff. Measure 21: ff. Measure 22: ff.

A musical score for piano, page 8, measure 228. The score consists of five staves. The top staff is for the right hand, the middle staff for the left hand, and the bottom staff for the bass. The score includes various dynamic markings such as *p*, *mp*, *sf*, *fff*, *ppp*, *sub.p*, and *rit.*. Performance instructions like "Ped." and "sust. Ped. sempre cont." are also present. Measure 228 starts with a dynamic of *p* followed by *mp* and *sfp*. It then transitions through *fff*, *ppp*, *sub.p*, *ppp*, *mf*, *sf*, *rit.*, *ppp*, *sub.f*, *sub.f*, and ends with *pppp*.

♩ = 56 poco a poco accel.

Musical score for piano showing measures 245-250. The score consists of three staves: Treble, Bass, and Pedal. Measure 245 starts with a dynamic of f and includes performance instructions like "sub. *ppp* *mf* sub. *pp* *mf* *p*". Measures 246-247 show various dynamics including *ff*, *p*, *sf*, *fp*, *mf*, and *fpp*. Measures 248-249 continue with dynamic changes such as *f*, *ff*, *mf*, *fp*, *sf*, and *ffff*. Measure 250 concludes with a dynamic of *p* followed by *ffff*.

U Subito Presto Possible

250 8

Pno.

pp, molto leggiero

(Ped.)
(Sost. Ped. sempre cont.)

mp sub. pp

sub. mp sub. pp

sub. mp

pp sub. mf

mp

pp sub. mp sub. pp

sf

(Ped. off)

252 8^{va}

Pno.

mf

pp mp > pp

mf sub. pp

sf

sub. f

pp sub. mf

sub. pp

sub. mf

> pp sub. mp

< mf sub. pp

< mp sub. pp

< mf p

mf

(Sost. Ped. sempre cont.)

Repeat this staccato passage more than twice. The performer should decide where it is most fitting to end. The final repeat of this passage may be partial. Once the performer finishes, the bass tones held by the sostenuto pedal should have long died out and only a haze of harmonics should remain.

254

Pno.

sub. pp

mf

sub. pp

sf

pp

sub. mp

f

(Sost. Ped.)

Hold the sostenuto pedal at least until the harmonics die out.

FIN