

RESPONSE/ability

for

solo vibes

commissioned for Jed Blodgett
by the Center for Latter-day Saint Arts

music by
ANDREW MAXFIELD

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OH, what do you do in a bumper-time
When the world has lost control?
Do you hide in a hole and endlessly scroll
On your phone as you try not to cry?
Is THAT what you do? So do I.

ABOUT THIS PIECE

What should we make of 2020, the year, which, as of this moment is just barely halfway cooked, yet which has offered more unwelcome surprises than probably any other recent year? Australia burning, California burning, a pandemic spreading, murder hornets descending, and, possibly worst, human beings yielding to their lowest motivations and (ab)using their influence (45) to encourage others to do the same. We can be and do better than this, right? In any case, 2020 has been a steady drip of the weird, the hard, the disappointing, the mundane, the revolting, the alarming, the darkly humorous (oh, how we would laugh if it weren't all SO real), the sobering, the challenging, and so much more . . . all mixed, with brighter bits of hopeful stuff. Oh, and being quarantined with kids.

This is simply to say that 2020 has been pulsating like a migraine, dripping like that damned, leaky faucet, ticking like the clock in the dentist's office, and . . . well, you get the gist. A steady barrage, an . . . ostinato, albeit an offputting, gnarly one. Hence this piece. Now, I hope you won't find it inherently offputting or gnarly! (If you do, please blame the performer!) But I decided to characterize 2020 (or the broader "moment") via an ostinato, a repeating note. That's the steady drip. The surrounding music is a riff on the phrase "my response is my responsibility." First, I like how the word responsibility parses phonetically into "response" and "ability." That's just cool. Second, I like the reminder that my response is in my control, even if the drip is not. I can "lift where I stand" (thanks, Br. Uchtdorf), even in 2020. Especially in 2020. And so the four vignettes that comprise this "meditation on response-ability" are just four different responses to the steady drip. None is characterized as a "good" or "bad" response; each is simply an exploration of the many possible reactions to the ostinato.

In writing this piece, I've followed three self-imposed rules:
1) Do not touch a computer (heaven knows I've had enough screen time);
2) Attend to the hanging voices (we can geek out on counterpoint sometime if you care about that one); and 3) Give the story to the performer, who chooses the order of the vignettes (and which to omit), many tempi, and other attributes which contribute to the totality of this small creation. My sincere thanks to JED BLODGETT, the co-recipient of this commission, for proposing this project, and to the CENTER FOR LATTER*DAY SAINT ARTS for making this, and many other, much worthier projects, possible. Here's to fixing the leaky faucet and to each of us being part of the solutions, big and small!

Andrew Maxfield
Provo, UT, USA, July 2020
Courtesy of my Great Grandpa's
Underwood Standard Typewriter No. 5

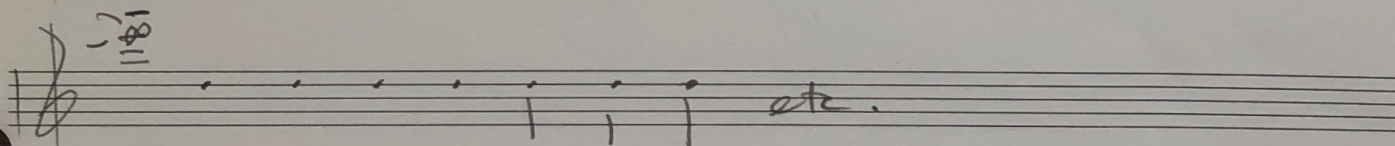
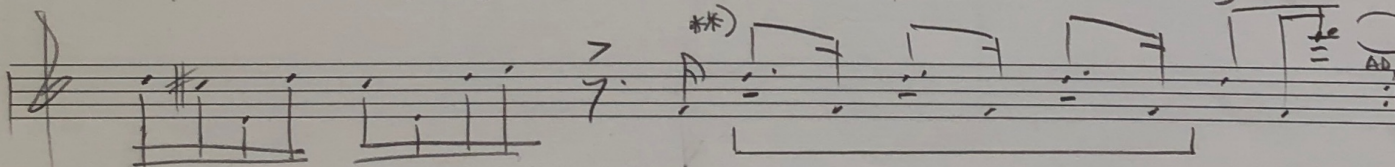
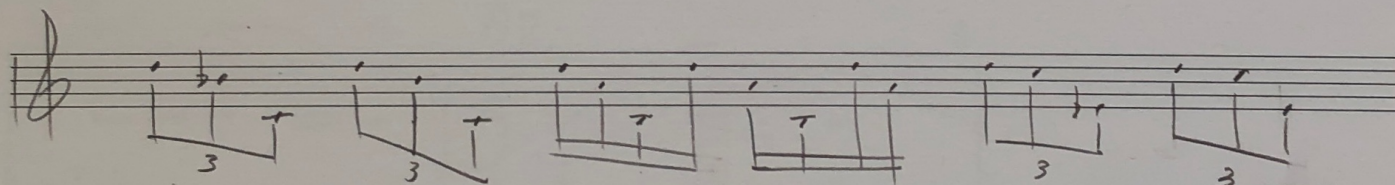
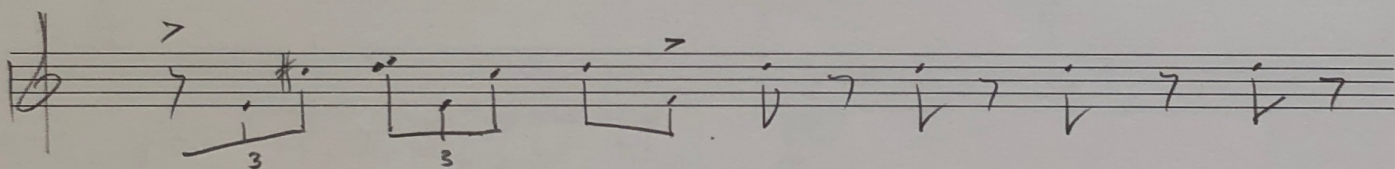
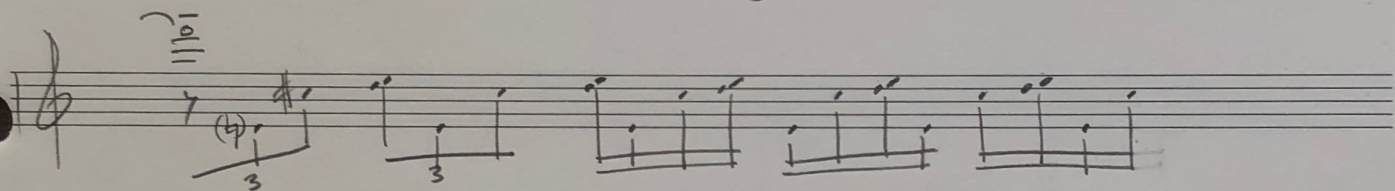
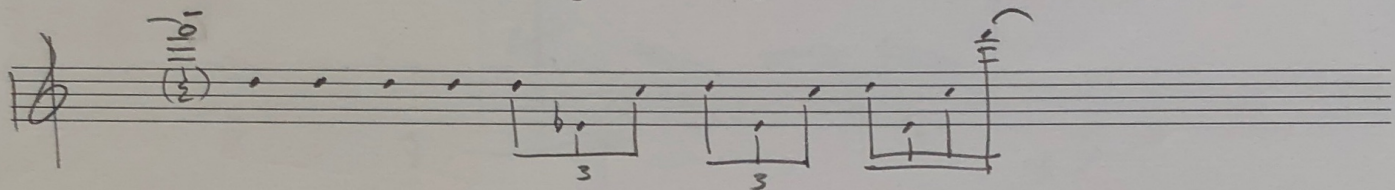
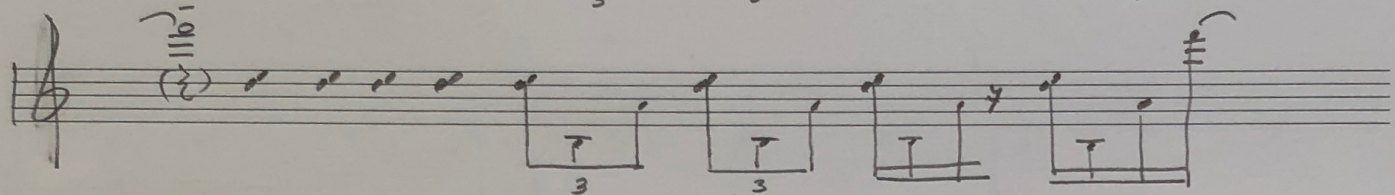
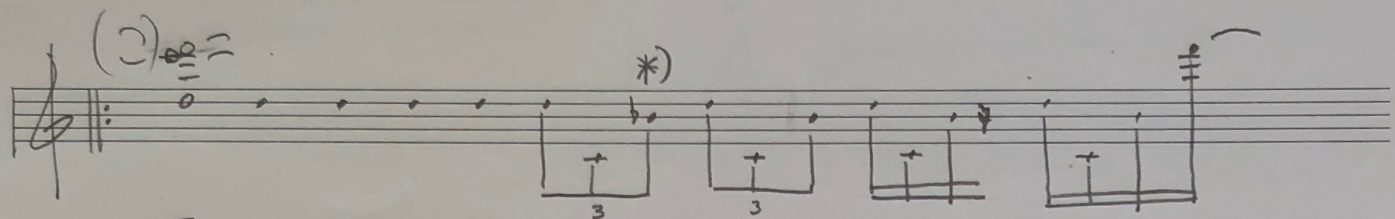
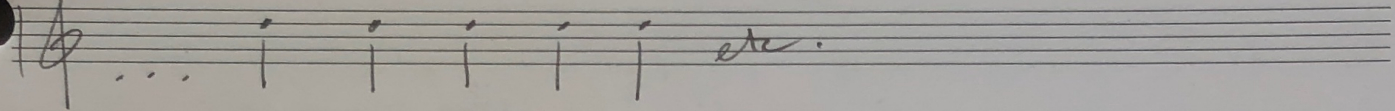
OPTIONAL PREPARATION OF VIBES

Dear Performer,

First, nice to meet you. Second, if you choose, you may "prepare" the "incessant ping" D natural by either dampening it (with cloth or leather, etc.) OR adding to it something that clicks or buzzes (like a jangly earring or some pins that are suspended so that they buzz and hiss on the surface of the bar when it is struck ... by you). The idea is to choose a preparation that you can apply or remove as you play so that in some of the movements, the ping has a timbre that differentiates it from the surrounding material. You're in the driver's seat here, choosing how to craft the narrative, and a preparation is one of your tools.

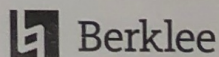


Andante con rubato



*) Accidentals apply just to the line where they appear

M4 **) Repeat bracketed section such that it becomes unclear whether the D or F is "on" beat.



Instructions: 1) Repeat ANY element ad lib. 2) Make a story you like.

Andante, more or less

AD LIB

pings become more detached + quieter

Bring out this line, if you want to.

f

*) $\text{f} \text{ : } \text{f}$ = Repeat ad lib, i.e., stay a while, if you feel like it.

M4 *) If you choose to repeat this passage, consider repeating it + varying accents until it's unclear whether the D or C# feels "on" the beat,



① pings continue, hold some pings longer etc.

② unaccented pings Response sneaks in over time MANY

③ eventually... increasingly fast + manic unaccented pings → ad lib ping accents overtime MANY

④ eventually... Rising Action → Apex SOME (ADD HIGH PING OCTAVE OVER TIME)

⑤ eventually... Falling Action → Denouement SOME (SUBTRACT HIGH PING OCTAVE OVER TIME)

... pings subside, leaving response in foreground; then response subsides too...

⑥ unaccented, quiet pings - ad lib durations etc.

intensity

Relaxed PANICKED Relaxed

M 4

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥

time →

Adagio Quietly

... ~p etc.

(- - -)
*) #10

b2

#0

rit a tempo
~mf ~p

b2

#0

~f

p f p

1. OPTIONAL (AD LIB)

The musical notation consists of three staves. The top staff is in 3/8 time and contains a sequence of notes with a slur and a repeat sign. The middle staff continues the sequence with a slur and a fermata. The bottom staff continues with a slur and ends with 'etc.'

*) A three-voice chorale moves quietly, freely, and fluidly against the steady drip. You may choose

+ vary the number of drips in any phrase + the relative balance between chorale + drips.

Accent moving parts within chorale and creative overall dynamic contour that fits your vision + feelings (marked articulations + dynamics are suggestions only).