

# Portraits of a Fingernail

*for harp and two percussionists*

Tze Yeung Ho



# Portraits of a Fingernail

for harp and two percussionists

Tze Yeung Ho (b. 1992)

**duration:** approx. 9'30"

## instrumentation:

-harp:

*scratching sounds should be produced by two plastic cards*

-percussion I:

detachable susp. cymbal, a wet plate, a slate, one timpano (25"), desk, sleeves, a metal bowl (shared with II)  
*fork, cymbal stick, medium timp. stick, fingernails*

-percussion II:

two glasses (tuned to A and B), vibraphone, a metal bowl (shared with I), sleeves  
*medium/soft vibe sticks, medium drum stick, fingernails*

## performance notes:

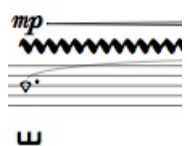
*thunder effect*



*sffz violent*



*Harp:*  
*thunder effect,*  
allow lowest  
strings on harp  
to crash onto one  
another



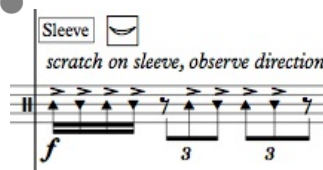
*Harp:*  
*pedal noises,*  
as indicated, improvise on  
pedal noises. Allow strings  
to buzz or vibrate.



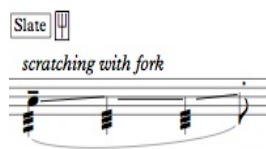
*Percussion:*  
*coin scrape,*  
direction of slurs indicate  
the direction of the scrape;  
down is toward and up  
is away from the musician



*Harp:*  
*string scratch,*  
use two plastic cards or  
some sort of plastic objects  
to scratch strings of indicated  
itches



*Percussion:*  
*sleeve scratch,*  
effect may differ  
on fabric of clothes,  
but create a resonant  
scratching noise on  
clothes



*Percussion:*  
*slate scrape,*  
intervallic contour may vary  
from the size of the board,  
but resonance and dynamic  
prevails the contour

## composer's notes:

The fingernails are a strange bunch. The dichotomy between the agonizing pain of 'melodrama' and the insipid sensationless 'indifference' seems to be some sort of metaphor of a coin with two sides. *Portraits of a Fingernail* is a short narrative in three stages: a fingernail being scratched, then split, and then plucked.

written for PERCelleh and Valeria Zane  
Portraits of a Fingernail

*i. scratched*

Tze Yeung Ho

Moderate and steady ♩ = 65

Percussion I (Cymbal, Plate, Slate, Timp., Desk)  
Cymbal scraped with coin on timp. mp indifferent

Percussion II (Glass., Vib., Metal Bowl, Sleeve)  
Metal Bowl struck f l.v.  
Wet Plate mf indifferent  
Glass. mp glittering, l.v.  
Vib. dead stroke mp dampened

Harp  
motor on (medium)  
improvise on pedal noises  
mp f

Perc. I

Perc. II bowed, motor on high p screechy = f

Harp  
scratch on string with plastic card, increase intensity/speed along dynamics (i.e. f being quick)  
mp mf mp fp mp pp mf

Perc. I  
Slate scratching with fork mf metallic, jarring = f  
Cymbal f as scratchy as possible  
Wet Plate

Perc. II  
more pressure = ff  
p f

Harp  
f f pp f f

14

Perc. I

Slate

mf metallic, jarring

f

mf

f

ff

Wet Plate

ff obn.

Timp.

allow cymbal to waver

mp subtle

Perc. II

p

f

mf

f

f

p screechy

f more pressure

Hp.

f

ff

ff

ff

mp

f

f

pedal noises

mf

scratch on sleeve, observe direction

scratch on string, increase intensity/speed along dynamics (i.e. f being quick)

18

Perc. I

Desk

scratch on a surface unevenly

ff rough

mf

fp

p

Sleeve

scratch on sleeve, observe direction

f

Cymbal

mf metallic

5

Perc. II

ff

f

f

f

f

f

Hp.

p

f

p

fp

22

Perc. I

Cymbal

f metallic

5

3

5

Wet Plate

f obnoxious

Timp.

struck, with cymbal ringing on top

mp indifferent

Glass.

f l.v.

Sleeve

mf

3

Perc. II

3

3

3

3

3

3

Hp.

ff

ff

ff

ff

ff

p

26 Perc. I **Desk** **Cymbal** *ff* *mf metallic* *improvise on rhythm* **Timp.** *mp indifferent*

Perc. II *f* *f* *f* **Glass.** *f* **Sleeve** **Glock.** *f* **Vib.** *dead stroke* *f*

Hp. *ff* *ff* *ff* *ff* *improvise on pedal noises* *ff* *p* *mp*

*E mp* *U*

29 Perc. I *f harsh* *ff* **Slate**

Perc. II **Sleeve** *f* **Glass.** *f* **Sleeve**

Hp. *ff* *ff* *ff* *f* *ff* *ff* *ff*

*U* *U* *U*

32 Perc. I **Wet Plate** *ff scratchy* *mp indifferent* *ff rough* *fff* *10"*

Perc. II *f* *f* **Glass.** *f* **bowed** *f* *ff* *10"*

Hp. *fff violent* *10"* *thunder effect*

*U* *U*

Musical score for Percussion I, Percussion II, and Harp (Hp.) starting at measure 35.

**Perc. I:** Measures 35-37 feature *mf indifferent* dynamics. Percussion I I uses **Wet Plate** (measure 35), **Cymbal** (measures 36-37), and **Timp.** (measure 37).

**Perc. II:** Measures 35-37 feature *mf indifferent* dynamics. Percussion II II uses **Sleeve** (measures 35-37).

**Hp.:** Measures 35-37 are mostly silent, with *mf* and *f* dynamics appearing in measures 37 and 38.

**Measures 38-40:**

- Perc. I:** Continues with *mf* dynamics and triplets.
- Perc. II:** Measures 38-40 feature *f* dynamics. Percussion II II uses **Glass.** (measure 39) and **Metal Bowl** (measure 40).
- Hp.:** Measures 38-40 feature *mp* and *p* dynamics.

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ii. split

Stately and militaristic ♩ = 80

Perc. I *f* but defined *sf* *sf* *mp* *f* *p* *f* *sf* *p*

Perc. II *f* bright *l.v.*

Vib. motor on medium

Hp. *mp* clear

Perc. I *sfz* *sf* *mp* *f* *pp* *sf* *ff* *p*

Perc. II *f* *mp* *ff* *f* *fp*

Hp.

Perc. I *f* *pp* *f* *mf* *f* *mp*

Perc. II *f* *sf* dry *sfz* *mp* *f* *mp*

Hp. *mf*

Cymbal

Timp.

Perc. I *f* *pp*

Perc. II *ff* *sf* *p* *f*

Hp. *fp* *mp* *f*

17

Perc. I *p* *mp* *pp* *f* *ff* *f l.v.* *struck* *Metal Bowl*

Perc. II *l.v.* *f* *ff* *pp* *motor on high*

Hp. *ff bright* *ff* *scratch strings with plastic card* *p*

21

Perc. I

Perc. II

Hp. *pp* *p*

25

Perc. I *f* *p* *mf* *mp echo* *p* *ff* *6* *sf* *Timp.*

Perc. II *f* *p* *mf* *ff* *sf*

Hp. *f* *mp* *cresc.* *fp bisb.*

29

Perc. I *p echo* *f* *p* *mp* *f* *pp*

Perc. II *p echo* *f* *f l.v.* *p* *mp* *sf* *fp* *Metal Bowl struck* *Vib.*

Hp. *sf* *mf gracefully* *f*



33

Perc. I *ff ringing*

Perc. II *ff ringing*

Hp. *ff ringing*

37

Perc. I *f march-like*

Perc. II

Hp. *p*

Cymbal

41

Perc. I

Perc. II *mf ringing* *f* *p* *mf* *f*

Hp. *p* *mp*

45

Perc. I *mp echo* *f* *pp*

Perc. II *mp* *mf* *p echo*

Hp. *pp*

iii. plucked

Freely, but not too slow (♩ = c. 108)

Perc. I

Glass. rubbed on the rim

Cymbal bowed

pp echoing glass

Perc. II

Vib. motor on high

pp echoing harp

p ethereal

ppp

Hp.

ff l.v.

Freely, but not too slow (♩ = c. 108)

Perc. I

Slate scratching with fingernails

Cymbal bowed

mf

mf metallic, jarring

f

pp echoing harp

Perc. II

Vib. bowed

mp ethereal

f

Hp.

scratch on string with plastic card, increase intensity/speed along dynamics (i.e. f being quick)

mp

mf

Perc. I

Sleeve

Perc. II

p

f

p

pp

Vib. struck

ff l.v.

Hp.

p

f

ff

ff

13

Perc. I

Perc. II

Hp

Glass. *rubbed on the rim*  
*p ethereal*

scratch on string with plastic card, increase intensity/speed along dynamics (i.e. *f* being quick)  
*mp* *mf* *p*

Timp. *ppp echo*

17

Perc. I

Perc. II

Hp

Cymbal *bowed*  
*pp echoing glass* *mp*

Glass. *rubbed on the rim*  
*p ethereal*

Vib. *bowed*  
*pp*

21

Perc. I

Perc. II

Hp

Slate *scratching with fork*  
*mf metallic, jarring* *f*

Timp. *ff*

Sleeve *f* *pp*

Cymbal *bowed*  
*p echoing glass*

struck *pp*

*ff* *l.v.*

25

Perc. I

Timp. **ppp** **f**

Perc. II

bowed **pp** ethereal, echoing cymbal

Vib. struck **ff** **p**

Glass. **p** ethereal rubbed on the rim

Hp.

scratch on string with plastic card, increase intensity/speed along dynamics (i.e. **f** being quick) **mp** **mf** **p**

29

Perc. I

Timp. **pp** *much* **ff**

Perc. II

**f** l.v.

Metal Bowl struck **f** l.v.

Vib. **f**

Cymbal bowed **p** **f**

Hp.

ominous **pp** **ff**

33

Perc. I

Sleeve **f**

Perc. II

Glass. **p** ethereal rubbed on the rim

**pp** echoing glass **p** **pp**

Hp.

**mp** whispering

37

Perc. I

Timp.  $p$

*ppp* echo

in an undertone

*n*

Sleeve

Perc. II

$pp$

$p$

Hp

$ff$

41

Perc. I

Wet Plate

*mf* obnoxious

scratching with fingernails

*mf* metallic, jarring

$f$

Perc. II

Vib.

$f$

$p$

*mf*

$p$

$pp$

Hp

$mp$

45

Perc. I

Wet Plate

$f$  obnoxious

Perc. II

Metal Bowl struck

*f l.v.*

$p$

$p$  echo  $pp$

$mf$

$pp$

$mf$

$p$

Hp

$mf$

$p$

$ff$  rough

sim.

Portraits of a Fingernail

49

Perc. I

Timp. *f* *ff* *pp* *f*

Wet Plate *f obnoxious*

Perc. II

Vib. *p* echoing harp *mp*

Hp

*f*

53

Perc. I

Cymbal bowed *p* *f*

Perc. II

*ff* rough *f* mellow *ff* *p*

Hp

57

Perc. I

Sleeve *f* *p* *pp*

Perc. II

Vib. *f* floating *ff* *p* *fff* l.v.

Hp

*ff* *sim.*

61 Perc. I *ff raucous* *f* *pp* *ff* Cymbal struck *f jubilant*

Perc. II *p* *f* Wet Plate *f jubilant*

Hp. *ff raucous* *ff l.v.*

65 Perc. I *f l.v.* Metal Bowl struck

Perc. II *fp* *pp* *f* *ff*

Hp. *ff raucous* *fff*

