

Five Weather Reports

five short excerpts from David Ohle's *Motorman*

female voice with live electronics

Taylor Brook
2012

Text and concert notes:

I)

Cloudy, freezing in the outskirts, cold tonight, colder tomorrow, warming Thursday and Friday, cooling off by Saturday, sleet by Sunday, double suns on Monday, and so on, according to the everyday charts, indicating a possible trend — warm, cool, cooler, etcetera, chance of light-to-heavy blister snow, probable drizzle washing out the artificial month, gas breaks at Amarillo, Great Chicago, and Texaco City, no moons tonight, shelter animals if necessary, please stay tuned...

II)

Possible dry storms in the bottoms area, reports not confirmed, estimates of high winds, gauzemen working overshifts, nothing official, stay tuned, remain calm...

III)

Roving chuff clouds, floxiness hovering above L.A. unpredictable, nothing verified, minimum forecast, probable extensive sunsout, birdfall index high per hundredcount, earlier reports not reliable, premature, lofty hopes for a sunsy weekout, otherwise rain and sleet.

IV)

The wind fence is near completion along the coastal swamps, wind speed down, temperature de-emphasized until same time tomorrow and Sunday, birdfall seasonal to normal...

...

Snowslides at Modessa, blowing flox in Great Chicago metro area, enclose the animals...no fishing in the water tubs...possible flooding on the River Odorous...

...

Seven oval spheres in Scorpio according to the charts, probable deadly Friday, chance of a two-Tuesday mock week, brackish drizzles in the midlands, lozenges melting in the drugstores.

V)

Two suns cooling at the horizon, restless moons, animals should be sheltered, travelers are warned, all craft should return to port, possible flood on The Jelly, toxic snakes in the treetops, the wind alive again, temperatures will...

About *Five Weather Reports*:

Five Weather Reports was written for Sarah Kirsch and Charlotte Mundy in the Summer and Fall of 2012 and is the third piece towards a complete setting of David Ohle's novel, *Motorman*. This work consists of five short songs that set bizarre and absurd weather reports that are heard over the radio to the protagonist throughout the novel. Although the book was published in 1974, these excerpts seem to have an intensified contemporary meaning as it speaks to environmental destruction and how consent is manufactured by various forms of media.

Text set with the permission of the author, David Ohle.

microtonality and just intonation

Although microtones are employed heavily in this work, much of the harmony is quite consonant and familiar. The microtones are used to approximate just intervals, therefore small adjustments should be made by ear to sing these intervals perfectly in tune. I advise the singer to listen for their note, or closely related notes, in the electronics part of the work where almost all the pitches are reinforced.

The following accidental nomenclature is also used to approximate exact pitches:

♭ - ♯ approximately 1/4 tone flat or sharp

♭ - ♯ approximately 1/6 tone flat or sharp

♭ - ♭ - ♯ - ♯ - ♯ - ♯ approximately 1/12 tone flat or sharp

The accidentals showing the twelfth-tone (one sixth of a semitone) alterations should be thought of as extremely small inflections of the pitch. This minute alteration in pitch equals the difference between the just major third (the fourth harmonic) and the equal temperament major third. In other words, it is best to treat the notes with these accidentals as if they required a slight inflection for the sake of good tuning.

The sixth-tone (one third of a semitone) alteration equals the difference between the seventh harmonic and the equal temperament minor seventh. In other words, the seventh harmonic is a sixth-tone flat of the equal temperament minor seventh.

The quarter-tone alteration should be precisely halfway between the equal tempered pitches. The quarter-tone alteration can be heard at the 11th partial of the harmonic series, which is exactly halfway between the perfect fourth and the tritone.

The most important thing to keep in mind is that the goal of these microtones is often to realize acoustically consonant harmonies; if the singer can recognize their role in the harmony, this will ensure optimal tuning of the microtones. The electronic portion of the music often provides the harder-to-find pitches for the singer. I would encourage the singer to ignore the 12th-tone alterations when learning the piece and then gradually work in the nuances once they're more comfortable with the material.

electronics

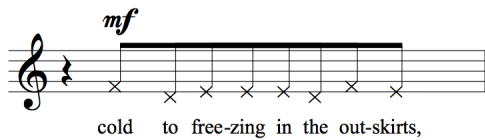
This work is performed with a Max/MSP patch, a vocal microphone, and a minimum of two loudspeakers. The details of the patch are provided along with the patch files themselves. To perform this work the vocalist must sing into a microphone, preferably a clip-on, that is piped into the computer running the MAX patch. The speaker setup must be stereo at the minimum. If more speakers are available the sound image may be widened through the mixer. Speakers should never be placed behind the audience.

The singer must have some sort of switch or foot pedal to trigger the cues given in the "pedal" staff of the score. The electronic sounds are notated in the score over three staves. The notation of the pitches and noise elements are given as accurately as possible to correspond to the electronic sound but are ultimately best thought of as a way to visually follow the cues while learning the piece.

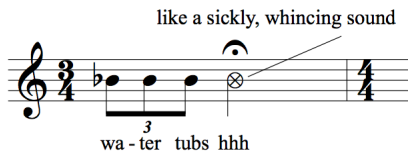
vocal notation



speaking — crossed noteheads signify declamatory singing. This is like sprechstimme, but should not have any portmanto or glissandi unless indicated.



speaking — “x” noteheads signify speaking or enunciating syllables without pitch. Where the notes are written on the staff show where in the vocal range the words should be spoken. The rhythm is notated spacially and should be rather free.



This encircled ex notehead only occurs at one point in the score and signifies an effect of a sickly, whincing sound as if you’re having trouble breathing. This technique involves constricting the throat while performing an audible inhale. The result is somewhat unpredictable and small, high-pitched, squeaks should come out.

pronunciation

The spoken words should be pronounced with an American, and preferably Midwestern, accent. This accent should not be very strong and should be varied according to the affect-related instructions found in the score. If the performer does not excel at making the accent sound natural it is preferable to just sing in their own accent, whatever that may be. Traditional recitative tone should be avoided.

When only syllables or single letters are provided, intone on these letters as they would be pronounced in a word from the text appearing just after or before in the score. For example, “ng” should be the last sound of the word “working”.

acting

Sometimes the singer is required to act by speaking words with various personalities attached, such as a serious old-fashioned newscaster or a silly weather person. It is important never to overact or try to be funny. People may laugh at the acting, but the performer must remain serious and never try to get laughs. When no character is called for, the singer should be as unexpressive as possible with regards to facial expressions and physical gestures.

Five Weather Reports

I

Taylor Brook

♩ = 66

p < *mp* > *p* < *mp* > *p* < *mp* > *pp* *pp* < *mp* > *p* *mf* > *mp* < *mf* > *mp* < *mf* >

Voice: mmm mmm ooh

Midi Pedal: cue 1-1 quiet delay cue 1-2 delay fades out

Electronics: air and noise sounds

Clarinet/flute: *mp*

a tempo lib.

Spoken like an old-fashioned newscaster while holding your body rigidly in a mildly uncomfortable and self-aware manner.

mp < *mf* > *pp* *mf*

Voice: mmm cold to freezing in the out-skirts, cold tonight colder tomorrow, warming thursday and friday cooling off by saturday sleet by Sunday

ped.: cue 1-3 cue 1-4

el.: harp attack with flute sustain harp harmonics in uneven rhythms harp tremolo and voice

Clarinet/flute: *mf ppp* *mp* *mp*

8^{va} *fp* 8^{vb} *fp*

excited, maniacal *ff*

a tempo poco rit. enunciate gradually (♩ = 48) *mp* *f* *mf* *mp*

Voice: dou-ble suns on mon-day, and so on, a-cord-ing to the e-very day charts in dic at ing a po-ssi-ble trend warm cool cool-er et - - ce - te-ra

ped.: cue 1-5 cue 1-6 cue 1-7

el.: *mp* *mp*

a tempo lib.

2 like a silly weather reporter, gesturing at an imaginary weather map

14 *mf*

chance of light to hea-vy blis-ter snow pro-ba-bly drizz-le wash-ing out the art-i-fic-ial month gas breaks at a-mar-ill-o, Great Chi-ca-go, and Tex-a-co ci-city

ped. cue 1-8 cue 1-9

el. clarinet/flute

mp

fp

a tempo ♩ = 66

18 *mp > p mp > p mp > p* *mp* *p* *mp* *mf* in a serious, monotonous, tone *poco rit.* nervous *mp* (♩ = 42)

no moons to-ni-gh-t shel-ter an-i-mals if ne-cess-ar-y cess-ar-y cess-ar-y ne-cess-ar-y if ne-cess-ar-y

ped. cue 1-10

el. harp tremolo

a tempo ♩ = 66

Enunciate the words as if in slow motion.

22 G.P. (about 10 seconds) *mp* *mp* *mp* *mp* *ppp* 5-10" then attacca

please stay tu n-ed

ped. cue 1-11 cue 1-12 m.23-25 play in reverse

el. clarinet/flute harp tremolo crickets *mp*

air and noise sounds

II

rit. poco a poco
♩ = 72

26 *mf* *p* *mf* *p* *mp* *mf* *p* *mp* *mf* *p*

po-ssi-ble — dry stor- - - - m - s in the bottoms a-re-a — re - - - ports of con - fi - - ne - d

ped. *cue 2-1* *reverb*

crickets fade out

el. *mp* *mp* *bell-like timbre* *harp tremolo* *noise layer*

(sempre rit. poco a poco)

51 *mp* *mf* *p* *mp* *mf* *mp* *mf* *p* *mf* *p* *mf* *p*

est - i - mates of high wi - - - n - - - ds gauze-men — work-ing o - ver-shi - - ft no - - - - thing o - ffi - cia - - - - l

ped. *4/4* *3/4* *2/4* *4/4*

el.

(sempre rit. poco a poco) ♩ = 48

55 *mp* *pp* *mp* *pp* *mp* *pp* *p* *mp* *p* *attaca*

stay tu - ne - - - d re - mai - n ca - - - l - - - - - m

ped. *4/4* *3/4*

el.

54 *pp* < *p* > *pp* < *p* > *pp* < *p* > *mf* *pp* *a tempo lib.*
spacy and removed

pre-ma- ture loft -y hopes of a suns - y week - out

ped. cue 3-9 cue 3-10 cue 3-11
ringmod

el. *f* *mp*
wind sounds
p

58 *a tempo mp* *vib.* nasal → norm. *mp* *vib.* *f* *p* *ff* *p* 10-20"
with spurts of vibrato and nasal tone ad lib.

o - - - ther - - - wise rain and slee - - - - - t

ped. cue 3-12 cue 3-13
ringmod off

el. voice distorted clarinet
p *f* *pp*
8th - -

♩ = 92
ecstatic, trance-like
mf

nasal 7 nasal 7 nasal 7 nasal 7

i e eh i r a i i e eh i r a i i e eh i r a i i e eh i r a i i e eh i r a i i e eh i r a i

ped. cue 4-1 cue 4-2 cue 4-3
delay with speed changes (doppler)

loop from vocal part, loop glissando down

i e eh i r a i i e eh i r a i i e eh i r a i i e eh i r a i i e eh i r a i i e eh i r a i

fast as possible, press pedal as soon as you're finished
f s.vib. nasal vib. s.vib. norm. nasal

tuh fe ss k sh teh ka tu ka tu ku je ke ss sh puh tu ka tu ka ch ka ch w n m n r ng

ped. cue 4-4 cue 4-5 cue 4-6
ring modulation chorus and delay

loop from vocal part with random changes in speed and pitch
mf distorted harp tremolo and voice

i e eh i r a i i e eh i r a i i e eh i r a i i e eh i r a i i e eh i r a i i e eh i r a i

71 norm. nasal vib.

mmm wah ng ew

ped. cue 4-7

loop from vocal part
mf

i e eh i r a i i e eh i r a i i e eh i r a i i e eh i r a i i e eh i r a i i e eh i r a i

76 like a silly weather reporter, gesturing at an imaginary weather map , in a robotic and monotonous tone

mf

The wind fence is near com - pletion a-long the coast-al swamps, wind speed down, temp-er - a-ture de-emph-a-sized un-til same time to-morr-ow and suns-day

cue 4-8

noise layer

81 spoken like the old-fashioned newscaster $\text{♩} = 66$ *rit.* \rightarrow $(\text{♩} = 42)$ *accel.* $\text{♩} = 66$

f

bird - fall sea-son - al to norm - al. no li de ah mo de sa lo wi fuh see gr tu go chi pa

cue 4-9 spinning delay

cue 4-10

cue 4-11

loop from m.68

heavy breathing and vocal fry

a tempo lib.

spoken in a dreamy/spacy/removed tone, while slowly swaying

a tempo

slightly nasal with nervous vibrato like a sickly, whincing sound

mf

snow-slides at Mo-de-sa, Blow-ing flox in the Great Chi-ca-go a - re-a, en-close the a - - ni-mals... no fish-ing in the wa-ter tubs hhh

cue 4-12 delay off

cue 4-13 delay, ring modulation, and reverb

harp tremolo

vocal squeak sounds

noise

8

92

f *mf* nasal nasal

cue 4-14

ped.

random short loops

f
distorted harp tremolo
and voice

mf

el.

96

nasal nasal

cue 4-15

spinning delay

ped.

el.

random squeak sounds

pp 20"

101

s.vib. *pp* nasal 10" *ff* *fff*

cue 4-16

cue 4-17

cue 4-18

ped.

spinning delay

high metal drones

mp

noise

bell-like timbre

mp

distorted harp tremolo
and voice

f

electronics solo

el.

spoken plainly, like a modern newscaster
speak in rhythmic unison with the voice in the electronics

109 *mf*

se - ven o - val spheres in scor - pi - o acc - ord - ing to the charts, pro - ba - ble dead - ly Fri - day, chance of a two tues - day mock week brack - ish

cue 4-19

ped. reverb ends

This system contains three staves. The top staff is a vocal line with lyrics. The middle staff is a piano line with a few notes and rests. The bottom staff is a pedal line with a few notes and rests. The lyrics are: "se - ven o - val spheres in scor - pi - o acc - ord - ing to the charts, pro - ba - ble dead - ly Fri - day, chance of a two tues - day mock week brack - ish". There are annotations "cue 4-19" and "ped. reverb ends" on the piano and pedal staves respectively.

se - ven o - val spheres in scor - pi - o acc - ord - ing to the charts, pro - ba - ble dead - ly Fri - day, chance of a two tues - day mock week brack - ish

This system contains three staves. The top staff is a vocal line with lyrics. The middle staff is a piano line with a few notes and rests. The bottom staff is a pedal line with a few notes and rests. The lyrics are: "se - ven o - val spheres in scor - pi - o acc - ord - ing to the charts, pro - ba - ble dead - ly Fri - day, chance of a two tues - day mock week brack - ish".

112

→ spacy

dri - bbles in the mid - - - lands lo - - zeng - - es melt - - - ing in the drug - - - stores.

ped.

el.

This system contains three staves. The top staff is a vocal line with lyrics. The middle staff is a piano line with a few notes and rests. The bottom staff is a pedal line with a few notes and rests. The lyrics are: "dri - bbles in the mid - - - lands lo - - zeng - - es melt - - - ing in the drug - - - stores." There is an annotation "→ spacy" above the vocal line. The system ends with a double bar line and a 4/4 time signature.

V

10 $\bullet = 52$

114 *pp* *mp* *ff* *pp* *mp*

mmm ooh aah mmm two

Detailed description: This block contains the vocal line for measures 114 to 119. The music is in 4/4 time, with a tempo of 52. The vocal line starts with a half note 'mmm' (pp), followed by a half note 'ooh' (mp), a half note 'aah' (ff), another half note 'mmm' (pp), and finally a quarter note 'two' (mp). The dynamics are indicated by slanted lines above the notes.

ped. cue 5-1 reverb and delay cue 5-2

Detailed description: This block contains the pedal line for measures 114 to 119. It features two cues: 'cue 5-1' with 'reverb and delay' and 'cue 5-2'. The pedal line consists of quarter notes in 4/4, 3/4, 2/4, 5/8, and 3/4 time signatures.

metallic/voice *mp* metallic sound *mp* *p* voice *mp* *p*

Detailed description: This block contains the electric guitar and piano accompaniment for measures 114 to 119. The electric guitar part includes 'metallic/voice' and 'metallic sound' effects. The piano part includes 'voice' and 'piano' dynamics. The music is in 4/4, 3/4, 2/4, 5/8, and 3/4 time signatures.

120 *mf* *p* *f* *ppp* *mp* *mf* *mp*

suns

Detailed description: This block contains the vocal line for measures 120 to 124. The music is in 3/4 time. The vocal line starts with a triplet of eighth notes 'suns' (mf), followed by a triplet of eighth notes (p), a triplet of eighth notes (f), a triplet of eighth notes (ppp), and finally a triplet of eighth notes (mp), a triplet of eighth notes (mf), and a triplet of eighth notes (mp). The dynamics are indicated by slanted lines above the notes.

ped. $\frac{3}{4}$

Detailed description: This block contains the pedal line for measures 120 to 124. It is in 3/4 time and consists of quarter notes.

p *p* *p* *p* *p* *p* *p* *p*

Detailed description: This block contains the electric guitar and piano accompaniment for measures 120 to 124. The electric guitar part includes 'piano' dynamics. The piano part includes 'piano' dynamics. The music is in 3/4 time.

124 *mf* *mp* *f* *p* *a tempo lib.* light-hearted and silly *mp* *a tempo* *p* *f* *p* *mf*

two suns cool-ing at the ho-ri-zons. mmm ooh mmm

Detailed description: This block contains the vocal line for measures 124 to 129. The music is in 3/4 time. The vocal line starts with a triplet of eighth notes 'two suns cool-ing at the ho-ri-zons.' (mf), followed by a triplet of eighth notes (mp), a triplet of eighth notes (f), a triplet of eighth notes (p), and finally a triplet of eighth notes (mp), a triplet of eighth notes (p), a triplet of eighth notes (mf), a triplet of eighth notes (p), a triplet of eighth notes (mf), and a triplet of eighth notes (p). The dynamics are indicated by slanted lines above the notes.

ped. cue 5-3

Detailed description: This block contains the pedal line for measures 124 to 129. It features 'cue 5-3' and consists of quarter notes in 3/4 time.

mp

Detailed description: This block contains the electric guitar and piano accompaniment for measures 124 to 129. The electric guitar part includes 'mp' dynamics. The piano part includes 'mp' dynamics. The music is in 3/4 time.

150 *a tempo* *mp* spacy and removed
 rest - less moons *p* *mf* *f* *ppp* *a tempo lib.* spacy and removed *mf* *p*
 ooh ah mmm a - ni - mals should be shel - tered, tra - vel - ers are warned. ah

ped. cue 5-4 cue 5-5

el.

155 *f* *mp* *mf* *a tempo lib.*
 matter-of-fact, modern newscaster *mf* *p*
 all craft should re - turn to port.

ped. cue 5-6

el.

159 *a tempo* *mf* *p* *f* *p* *a tempo lib.* *mf* *a tempo* *mf* vib.
 monotonous, without expression
 poss - i ble flood on the jell - y aah

ped. cue 5-7 cue 5-8

el.

12
146

mf *mp* *mf* *p*

tox-ic snakes in the tree-tops. aah ee aah

ped. cue 5-9

el. clarinet and voice *mp*

151

f *p* *mp* *p* *f* *mp* *mf* *mp* *p* *f*

the wind aah a live aah a gain eh

ped. cue 5-10 cue 5-11 cue 5-12

el. *mp* *mp*

156

nasal *mp* *mf* *mp* *pp* *mp* *ff* *ppp*

temp-er-a-tures i will mmm eee aah mmm

ped. cue 5-13 cue 5-14 cue 5-15 cue 5-16

el. air and noise sounds voice: "the wind alive again temperatures will"

crickets and heartbeat outro