PERUSAL SCORE

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Pushing Back

for trumpet, bass clarinet, and tape

Eris DeJarnett

Commissioned by Spark Duo.

eris

Among my favorite musical adventures are the ones where a friend who's already deeply familiar with my work asks me to create a piece of it that works for their instrumentation. *Pushing Back* is one of those pieces—Kate Amrine, a dear friend, came to me seeking a socially relevant piece for Spark Duo that would be a reliable performance piece incorporating electronics. We threw ideas back and forth for awhile but ultimately decided tape would be the best accompaniment for the project. Kate's one stipulation was ultimately the one that brought the piece to life: that the music and narration exist on a more gender-neutral plane than much of my other work, so neither she nor Ford would feel like the narration couldn't be about them.

So instead of misogyny and assault, I went with an old standby: Millennial despair. The heart of *Pushing Back* was born of the frustration I see in my peers, colleagues, and friends when considering our futures. It's easy to fall into pessimistic (though maybe realistic) thought patterns that tell us if our country doesn't nuke the world in our lifetimes, chances are good that climate change will do the job anyway. It's a difficult pill to swallow, but it increasingly seems like the most likely timeline. I won't spoil the piece, but *Pushing Back* is about coming to terms not only with all of that but with where our individual futures within structures that aren't sustainable.

Notes to the performers:
Pushing Back is designed to be a piece that allows for as much or as little improvisatory interaction with the tape track as the performers would like. You can center your musical decisions around the fixed media, or around each other, or within any other parameters you find useful. Please note that five seconds of silence have been baked into the track to allow for fluid, stress-free starts. (If you time it right, it will sound like the sine tones are emerging from the series of sustains at the beginning.)

Though the piece is quite simple on paper, performer enhancements are welcomed and appreciated. Multiphonics, mutes, and other extended techniques that alter the sounds produced while maintaining the musical content of the score are vastly preferred. The improvised sections are designed to allow for more and more chaos (and conflict) as the piece progresses; I highly encourage continuing discussion through your rehearsal process so you and your duo partner are approaching these sections intentionally.

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Transposed Score

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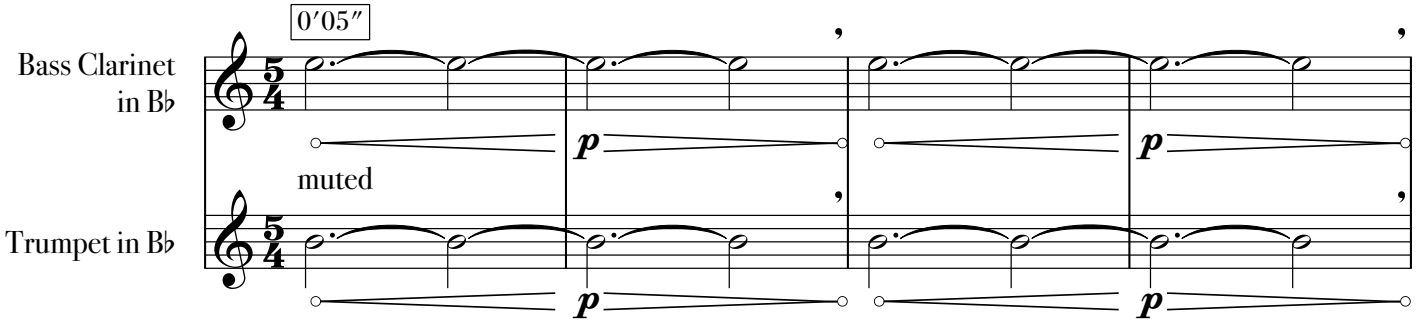
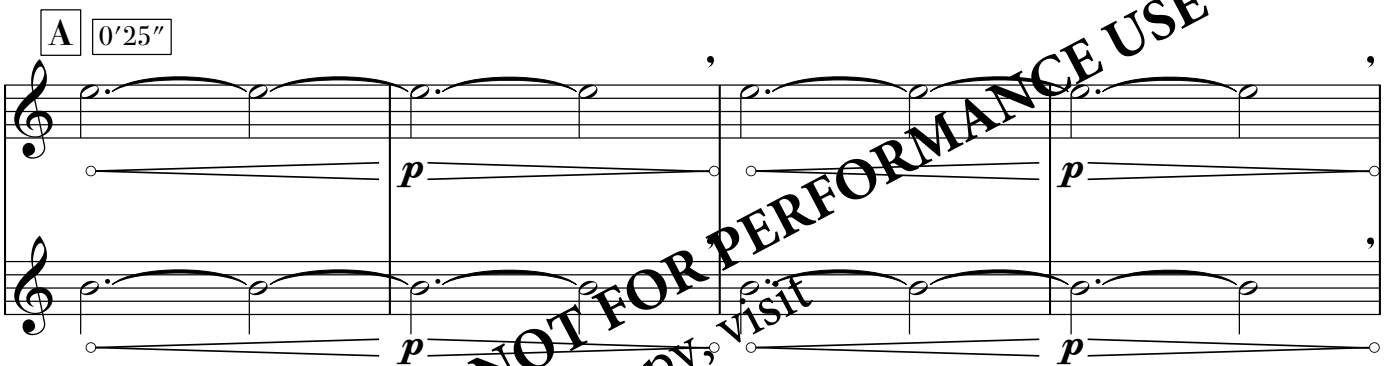
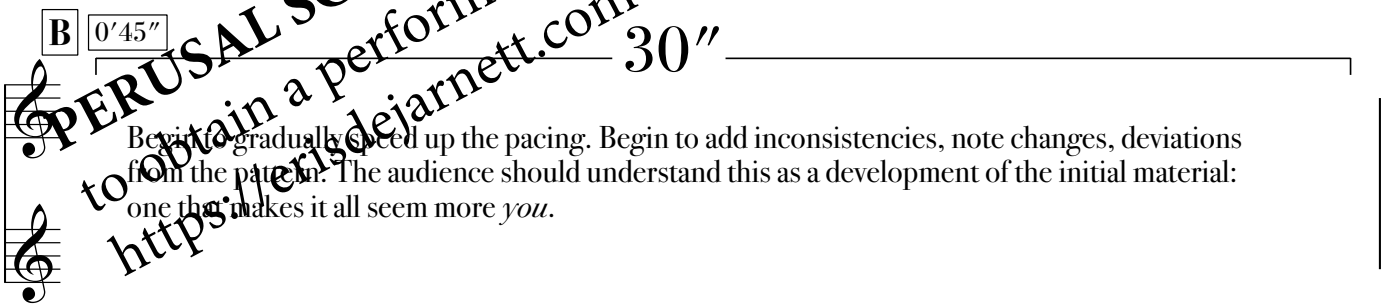
Pushing Back

Eris DeJarnett
(BMI)

Almost robotic, ♩ = 60







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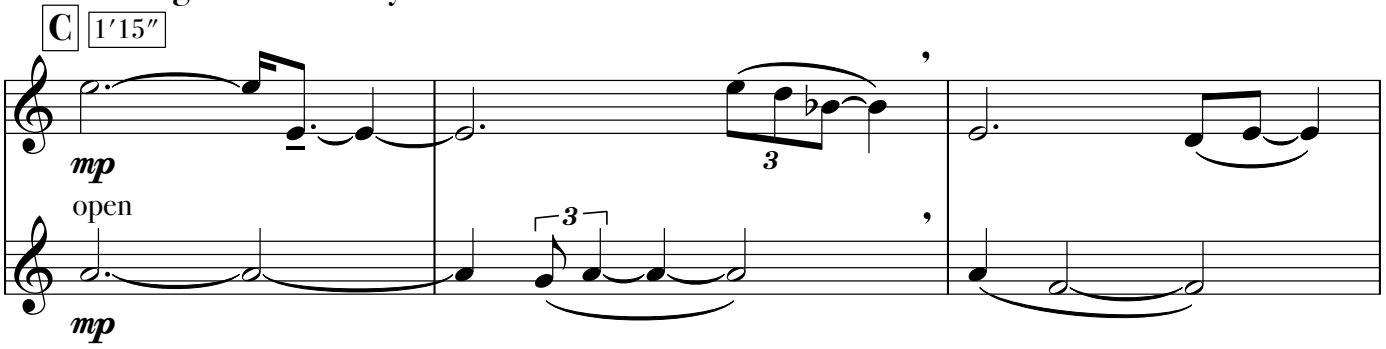
Moving more naturally



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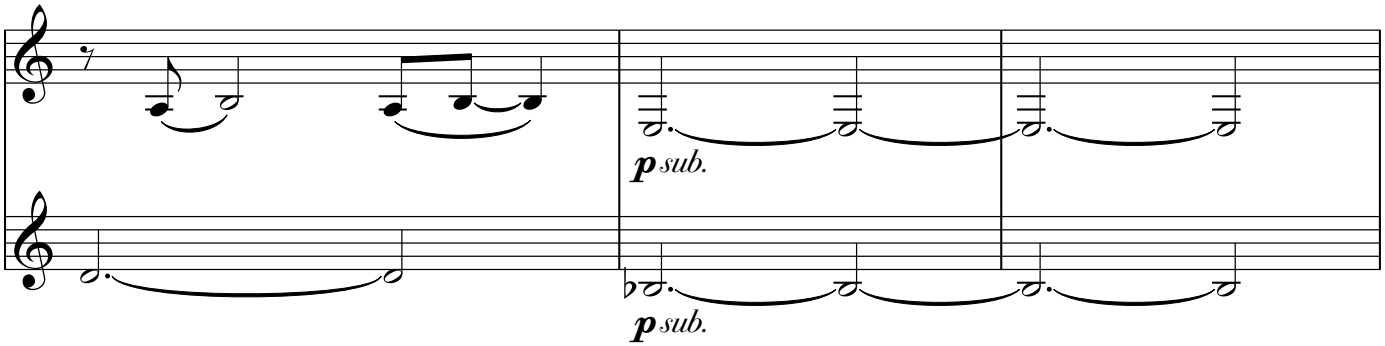

D 1′45″

35″

Begin tugging at each other (musically); as your partner begins to reach for a creative moment, pull at them/stop supporting them. As the aural struggle continues, let the tension become more obvious. Pitch and rhythm in this section are completely unrestricted.

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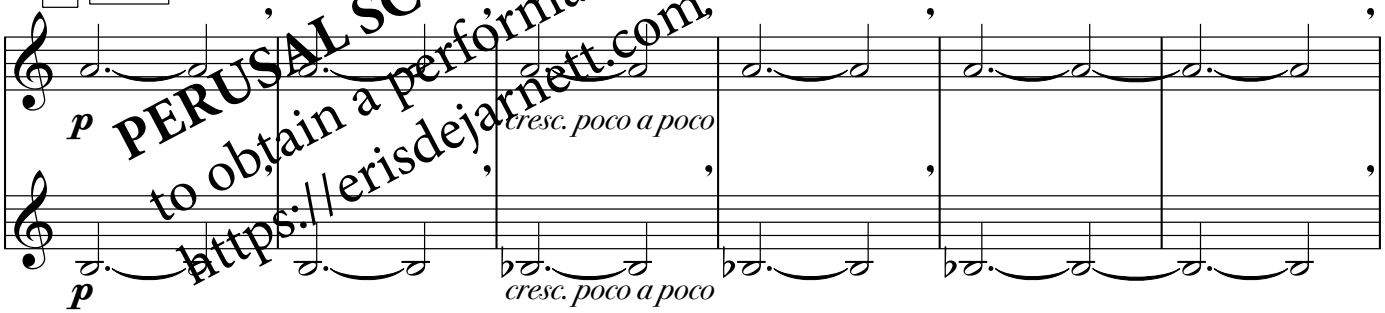
E 2′20″



F 2′50″

40″

Explode, primarily using material from the piece and ideas from earlier structured improv sections. Extended techniques are especially welcome. Continue the theme of pushing/pulling at each other, but try to work together to create something that builds and grows. (Define that however you like.)

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