

Paul Clift

how do you express X?

for flute, harp & viola

2011

duration ca. 8 minutes

Programme note:

The title of this work is a simple definition of the notion which, in the field of semantics, is referred to as *onomasiology*, the description of a concept by words other than that concept's name, or the opposite of *semasiology*. Diachronic linguists would consider this question to be answerable only with information about the time and context contemporaneous to the concept one wishes to express.

In writing for this ensemble, so perfectly suited to Debussy's musical language and seemingly so inappropriate for my own, the question of how to evoke and sustain my musical language demanded considerable reflection.

The work is in three sections, each with an emphasis on one particular *sustained* sound.



I would like to thank Natacha Diels, Alec Hall, Aaron Einbond & Nuiko Wadden for their invaluable help in the realization of this piece. This work was premiered on March 4th 2011 at The Tank (New York) by the Janus Trio.

Performance notes:

Although it is not essential, the work should be amplified and a slight reverb added, depending on the space. For the premiere, the harp was amplified with a contact microphone at the bottom of the sound-board, and the flute & viola with capsule microphones; also, a small amount of reverb was used.

The piece requires **three violin (or viola) bows** for section C, in which the harp is bowed.

There is a *scordatura* for the viola and for the harp:

<p>HARP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• B5: tune down ¼ tone (50 cents)• D5: tune down ¼ tone (50 cents)• F4: tune up ¼ tone (50 cents)• F3: tune down ~31 cents (match the octave harmonic with the 7th partial of G1)	 Musical notation for Harp tuning. It shows two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The treble staff has notes for B5 and D5, both with a flat symbol. The bass staff has notes for F4 and F3, both with a flat symbol.
<p>VIOLA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• tune the C-string down one octave (the result will be more of a noisy texture than a precise pitch)	 Musical notation for Viola tuning. It shows a single staff with a C-clef (soprano clef). The note on the C-string is a C below the staff, with a flat symbol.

Playing techniques:

HARP

(N.B.) This piece requires a *scordatura*, as indicated before the first bar at the beginning of this score; for this reason, it may be desirable to perform this work last in a concert programme;



with a guitar plectrum



with a bow (N.B. this effect is, of course, only possible on the lowest C string; other extended techniques may be used in conjunction with the bow, such as harmonics, or instructions to play near the sound-board, etc.)



pluck with fingernails



mute strings with one hand and pluck with the other



pedal buzz (i.e. with the pedal pressed down half-way, in order to produce a sustained buzzing sound, but without raising the pitch)

p.d.lt

près de la table - near the sound-board; with a bright, 'twangy' sound



hit the sound-board; indications such as 'with the palm', 'with the fingernails' etc. will be given; this technique is presented on a **three-line stave, to indicate approximate 'pitch'**. (N.B this may be more effective on some harps than others);



pizzicato 'Bartok' (as in the Berio *sequenza N° 2*) - pluck string close to the table, and, when pulling off, tap the table forcefully



the abrupt muting of particular pitches is indicated with this note-head; if it appears beamed or slurred to another note, then **only** that string should be muted; all other strings should be left to resonate;



indicates that all resonating strings should be muted abruptly



a resonating string should be touched gently in order to 'convert' the note into the indicated harmonic (pitch and position in the series), without striking the string again;



scrape string vertically (as indicated, with a plectrum); the steepness of the wavy line indicates the rapidity of the gesture;



rub the sound-board with the palm -in a circular motion- close to the upper-register strings; this technique is presented on a **three-line stave, to indicate approximate 'pitch'**. (N.B this may be more effective on some harps than others);



harmonics n°s 2 - 7 are used; the 2nd harmonic (+1 8ve) is indicated in the traditional way, but partials 3 - 7 are indicated as with other string instruments (fundamental with an open diamond note-head & sounding pitch with a small note-head);

Playing techniques:

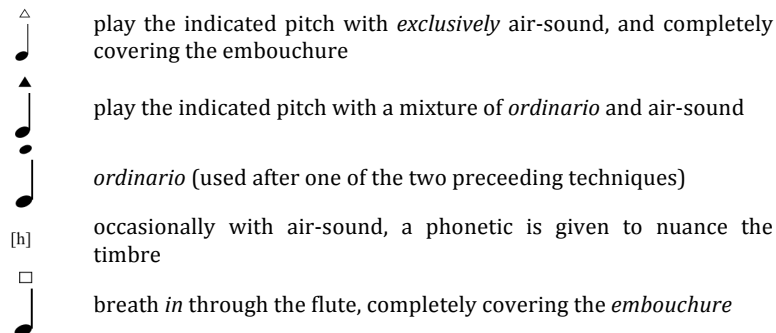
FLUTE & PICCOLO

(N.B.) This piece requires a that the flautist play the harp with two separate violin bows in the final section of this work;

Fingering for multiphonics, and occasionally for $\frac{1}{4}$ tones, are indicated as they occur throughout the score


(specialised notation in bars 1, 7, 17 etc.): using the fingering provided, oscillate freely between the two pitches present in the multiphonic, creating a 'rippling' effect; indications, such as 'slow', 'fast', 'irregular' etc. will be given;


(specialised notation in bars 12, 25 etc.): breathing in through the flute with the *embouchure* completely covered, alternate fingering rapidly and randomly in order to create a 'fluttering' effect, without excessive key click;



VIOLA

(N.B.) This piece requires a *scordatura*, as indicated before the first bar at the beginning of this score. For this reason, it may be desirable to perform this work last in a concert programme, or to use a second instrument

 with exaggerated bow-pressure ('scratchy' sounding, but still with a clear pitch);


 with extremely exaggerated bow-pressure (only 'scratch' sound, no trace of a clear pitch);




alternate as quickly as possible between harmonic and *ordinario*, without rebowing



mute strings with left hand (while continuing to bow, as indicated)

 *pizzicato* 'Bartok'

 indicates that all resonating strings should be muted abruptly

s.p *sul ponticello*
m.s.p *molto sul ponticello*
s.t *sul tasto*
a.s.t *alto.sul tasto*

(specialised notation in bars 16, 19, 35 etc.): bow the open detuned C string pressing and releasing, in a repetitive motion but with irregular timing, the string in between the bridge and the tail-piece in order to increase the tautness, and therefore the pitch; the desired effect should be more of a texture than one containing specific pitches;

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A1 ♩ = 60

3/4 slow, irregular * 2/4 4/4 faster v. slow 3/4 4/4

maximum stable multiphonic dynamic without excessive breath or whistle

*flute: the fingering indicated is for a multiphonic (dyad), however the multiphonic texture should not be held; rather, oscillate freely between the two pitches, creating a 'rippling' effect. Indications, such as 'slow', 'fast', 'irregular' etc. will be given.

scordatura

s.p. sul sol

'scratchy' noise only

mf mp

scordatura

ord.

f p mp

7° of G0, -31 cents

scrape**

fast

ff

p

**harp: rapidly scrape the string in an upward motion over the indicated duration; try to create as much resonance as possible;
 ***harp: rub the sound-board with the palm -in a circular motion- close to the upper-register strings;

A2



7

slow, irregular

2/4 faster

4/4 v. slow

3

try to reproduce the same dynamic

3

3

ppp

mp

*

**

* with 'jet-whistle' embouchure, so with some pitch;
 ** breath in through the flute, completely covering the embouchure;
 at the same time, alternate fingering rapidly and randomly
 in order to create a 'fluttering' effect;

8

simile

mf

p

3

simile

mf

8^{vb}

simile

f

mf mp

3

3

p senza dim.

simile

v. fast

ff

3

p senza dim.

A3

14

simile bars 10-11

**viola: bow the open detuned C string in a 'sul ponticello' position while pressing and releasing, in a repetitive motion but with irregular timing, the string in between the bridge and the tail-piece in order to increase the tightness, and therefore the pitch. Be very careful not to bow the open G-string;
 NB. The desired effect should be more of a texture than one containing specific pitches, but should nonetheless be reminiscent of the undulating flute multiphonics;

*harp: scrape the string very slowly in a downwards motion so that each individual 'click' (of which there should only be around 5 or 6) is clearly audible; the final triplet on the third beat should be plucked 'pres de la table' with the plectrum;



moderate,
irregular

19 $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ faster

p

simile bar 16

simile

p *mf* *f*

8^{vb}

l.v

ff

p

ff

ff

p.d.l.t

simile bar 15

24 $\frac{3}{4}$ → slow

simile

simile bar 12 $\frac{4}{4}$

p

$\frac{2+3}{8}$ $\frac{2}{4}$

fff p subito

*choose a fingering here which gives the same pitch to the held B as the lower tone in the multiphonic diad that follows, so that the transition between the two sounds is as smooth as possible;

(8)

pp

s.p sul sol

s.t s.p

ff ff pp subito

(v. irregular tremolo)

l.v

mp p p

R.H. ♥ L.H. ♥

pp sub. fff

8^{vb} fff

*harp: continue this gesture until the last possible moment before bar 29;

30 $\frac{2}{4}$ fast $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{2+3}{8}$ \rightarrow slow $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{2+3}{8}$

poco vibrato: $\overbrace{\hspace{2cm}}^6$ (etc.)

fp *p*

tremolo to circular bowing

simile $\frac{3}{}$ $\frac{3}{}$ *simile bar 16* $\frac{3}{}$

8^{vb} *mf* 8^{vb} *mf*

8^{va} *ff* *p.d.l.t ff* *ff* *ppp* *ff* *mp* *mf* *p* (as noisy as possible) $Db+$

*v. slow** *ff* $\frac{3}{}$

A6

37 $\frac{2+3}{8}$ < 'overblow' * $\frac{3}{4}$ ** $\frac{2}{4}$ fast $\frac{3}{4}$ slow $\frac{4}{4}$

s.p sul sol *ff* (v. irregular tremolo) *s.t* *s.p* *ff* *pp subito* tremolo to circular bowing ord.

f fff *fff* *pp sub.* *ppp*

A7

Flute Part: Starts at measure 42 in 4/4 time. Features a sixteenth-note run with *poco vibrato* and *rall. vibrato* markings. Dynamics range from *f* to *ff*. Includes a triplet of eighth notes and a sixteenth-note triplet. A box labeled **A7** is positioned above the staff. A note marked with an asterisk (*) is indicated as a quarter-tone fingering.

Bassoon Part: Starts at measure 42 in 3/4 time. Includes a *simile* marking and an *arco s.p.* instruction. Dynamics range from *f* to *fff*. Features a triplet of eighth notes and a sixteenth-note triplet.

Piano Part: Starts at measure 42. Includes a sixteenth-note run with *ff* dynamics, followed by a sixteenth-note triplet with *p* dynamics. A dotted line indicates a *mp* dynamic. The right hand features a sixteenth-note triplet with *fff* dynamics and a *fast* marking. The left hand includes an *8vb* marking and a triplet of eighth notes with *fff* dynamics.

Performance Notes:

- poco vibrato* (etc.)
- rall. vibrato*
- over-blow*
- simile*
- arco s.p.*
- fast*
- 8vb*

Dynamics: *f*, *p*, *ff*, *fff*, *mp*, *fffpp*, *fff*

Annotations:

- maximum stable multiphonic dynamic without excessive breath or whistle
- *flute: quarter-tone fingering with which the A $\frac{1}{4}$ is the same pitch as the highest note in the multiphonic on beat 3;

47

fingering simile

Musical staff 1 (Treble clef):
 - Measure 47: *fingering simile*, notes with fingering 2.
 - Measure 48: notes with fingering 2.
 - Measure 49: notes with fingering 2.
 - Measure 50: notes with fingering 2, *allow multiphonic to 'break'*, *fff*, triplet.
 - Measure 51: notes with fingering 3, *fff*, triplet.

(senza rall.)

Musical staff 2 (Treble clef):
 - Measure 52: *pp*, triplet.
 - Measure 53: *fffpp*, triplet.
 - Measure 54: *fffpp*, triplet.
 - Measure 55: *fffpp*, triplet.
 - Measure 56: *ff*, triplet, *p*.

Musical staff 3 (Grand staff):
 - Measure 57: *p*, triplet, *pp*.
 - Measure 58: *pp*, triplet, *pp sub.*.
 - Measure 59: *pp*, triplet, *pp sub.*.
 - Measure 60: *pp*, triplet, *pp sub.*.
 - Measure 61: *pp sub.*, triplet, *pp sub.*.

52

$\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$

pp *p* (softer than viola)

f sub. *p sub.* *pp*

p

6 3 3 *l.v.* 5 6

3 3 3

57 $\frac{4}{4}$

slow, irregular

simile bar 2

f mp p

$m.s.p$

p ff p

f f

mf pp fp

$s.p$

pizz. arco ord.

scrape

fast

8vb

mf

fff

f

f

f

ord. --- $\frac{3}{4}$

B2

jet whistle

Musical score for a piece, starting at measure 63. The score consists of three systems of staves.

System 1 (Measures 63-68):

- Staff 1 (Treble Clef):** Starts with a 3/4 time signature, then changes to 4/4, 3/8, 4/4, and finally 2/4. The piece is marked *fltz.* (flautissimo) and includes dynamics *p*, *fp*, *f*, *p*, and *fp*. It features triplet markings and a *jet whistle* section.
- Staff 2 (Alto Clef):** Starts with a 3/4 time signature and includes dynamics *fp*, *fp*, *fp*, *f p*, *f*, *p*, and *fp*. It includes performance instructions *ord.* (ordinario), *s.p.* (sordina), *pizz.* (pizzicato), and *arco* (arco).
- Staff 3 (Piano):** Includes dynamics *p*, *f*, *ff*, *f*, *mf*, and *f*. It includes *lv* (livelissimo) markings and triplet markings.

System 2 (Measures 69-74):

- Staff 1 (Treble Clef):** Continues with dynamics *p* and *fp*.
- Staff 2 (Alto Clef):** Continues with dynamics *f*, *f p*, *f*, *p*, and *fp*. Includes *ord.* and *s.p.* markings.
- Staff 3 (Piano):** Continues with dynamics *mf* and *f*.

System 3 (Measures 75-78):

- Staff 1 (Treble Clef):** Ends with dynamics *p* and *fp*.
- Staff 2 (Alto Clef):** Ends with dynamics *f* and *fp*.
- Staff 3 (Piano):** Ends with dynamics *mf* and *f*.

jet whistle

68

The musical score consists of three systems. The first system (measures 68-70) features a melodic line in 2/4 time with triplets and dynamic markings *p* < *fp*, *mp* > *p*, *pp* < *fp*, < *f* > *p*, and *f*. The second system (measures 71-72) continues the melodic line with dynamic markings *mf*, *p*, *mf*, *fp*, and *p*. The third system (measures 73-76) shows the piano accompaniment with chords and triplets, with dynamic markings *f* > *p* *mf*, *p* > *pp*, *p*, *mp*, *f*, *mf* < *f*, and *f*. A *8va* marking is present above the piano part in measure 75.

B4

The musical score consists of three staves. The top staff is for Violin, the middle for Viola, and the bottom for Piano. The Violin staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). It features a melodic line with various dynamics including *p*, *p < f*, and *f*. Rhythmic markings include 2/4, 2+3/8, 4/4, and 2+3/8. The Viola staff starts with a 12/8 time signature and includes markings for *pizz.*, *arco s.p.*, *ord.*, and *s.p.*. Dynamics range from *f p* to *f*. The Piano staff is in a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) with a key signature of one sharp. It includes dynamics such as *p*, *f*, *mp*, and *ff*. The score is marked with measure numbers 73, 74, 75, 76, and 77. Performance instructions like *l.v.* (left hand) and *r.v.* (right hand) are present. Fingerings and articulation marks are also indicated throughout the piece.

78

4/4

p *fp* *mp* *mf* *3/4* *jet whistle* 4/4

pizz.
I II -----|

fp *f* *s.p.* *p* *s.p.* *f* *s.p.* *fp*

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

82

The musical score consists of three staves. The top staff is for Violin, the middle for Viola, and the bottom for Piano. Above the Violin staff, the time signatures 4/4, 2/4, 3/8, 4/4, 2/4, and 5/8 are indicated with dashed lines. The Violin staff begins with a *ff* dynamic and a *m.s.p. sul sol* instruction. The Viola staff starts with a *ff* dynamic and a *m.s.p. sul sol* instruction, followed by a *s.p.* instruction. The Piano staff has dynamics of *f*, *p*, *mf*, and *p*. The score includes various musical notations such as triplets, slurs, and dynamic markings.

ff *fp*

m.s.p. sul sol *s.p.* *p*

f *p* *mf* *p*

88

$\frac{3}{4}$

$\frac{2}{4}$

$\frac{3+2}{8}$

$\frac{3}{4}$

p (softer than viola)

p

3

3

5

6

f

sub.

p

pp

3

5

mf

p

+||+||+||+||

3

5

B7

93

3/4 2/4 3/4 4/4

slow, irregular

s.p simile

8^{vb} *mp*

pp *ff*

scrape

v. slow fast

f *ff*

rall.

98

4/4

simile
bar 2

f

mp

simile

2/4

3/4

(8)

s.p

pizz.

f

mf

p

mp

"*f*"

fff

f

f

mf

f

mf l.v

The musical score consists of three staves. The top staff is in treble clef, starting with a 4/4 time signature and a box containing the number 98. It features a long melodic line with a tremolo effect, followed by a triplet and a change to 2/4 and then 3/4 time signatures. Dynamics range from *f* to *mp*. The middle staff is in bass clef, starting with a 3/2 time signature. It includes a triplet, a section marked *s.p* (sordano), and a section marked *pizz.* (pizzicato). Dynamics include *f* and *mf*. The bottom staff is a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The treble part has dynamics *p*, *mp*, *f*, and *fff*. The bass part has dynamics *f* and *mf*. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and performance instructions like *rall.* and *simile*.

102 *poco vibr:* *(etc.)* **3**/**4** **5** **2+3**/**8** **2**/**4** **3+4**/**8** **4**/**4** **2**/**4** **3**/**4** *slow, irregular*

imitate dynamic envelope of unison E♭ played by harp

p mp ppp

viola (sounding) *flautando s.t* *s.p*

pp p

mf mp mf

109 $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{2+3}{8}$ $\frac{4}{4}$

simile bar 2

moderate, irregular

forcefully *

8^{vb} *sffz p* *sffz p*

*viola: play the detuned C-string very forcefully so that the string vibrates against the fingerboard, creating a sound which is imitative of the harp 'pedal-buzz'; it may be necessary to muffle the G-string or even to stretch it slightly away from the C-string to avoid touching it with the bow

8^{va}

(D \flat +) forcefully *p* simile *p* *ppp*

sffz *sffz*

C2

115

simile bar 12

2+3
8

2
4

3
4

4
4

moderate,
irregular

Musical notation for the first staff. It begins with a treble clef and a triplet of eighth notes. This is followed by a wavy line representing a tremolo or vibrato, with a piano (*p*) dynamic marking below it. Above the staff, there are time signature changes: 2/4, 3/4, and 4/4. A box labeled 'C2' is positioned above the 4/4 section. A '3' is written below a group of notes. The text 'moderate, irregular' is written above the staff in the 4/4 section.

Musical notation for the second staff. It starts with a 13/8 time signature. The staff contains several notes, some with an 'x' mark above them. A wavy line is placed above the first few notes. A dashed line with the number '(8)' is below the staff. Below the staff, there are dynamic markings: *<sfz>*, *mf*, *p*, and *sfz p*.

Musical notation for the piano accompaniment. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The bass clef staff has notes with dynamics *sfz* and *f*. The treble clef staff has notes with dynamics *sfz* and *f*.

122

3/4

flute: take two violin bows and move to harp.

4/4

harp

*flute: standing on the right-hand side of the harp, insert two violin bows between the strings and bow the indicated pitches; change bowing freely, and vary pressure, allowing small variations in volume to occur, while trying to maintain a consistent overall dynamic; avoid letting any one pitch remain stable -with the exception of the fundamental- for more than two or three beats; move gradually back and forth between the middle of the string and around two inches from the top; also, try to sustain the fundamental as much as possible;

molto vibrato

sul la

s.p.

pp *mp* *sffz*

8^{vb}

molto vibrato

simile

pp *mf* *sffz*

8^{vb}

sffz

sffz

128 *p* *(etc. freely)* BREVE PAUSA

molto vibrato
simile
pp *f* *sffz* *8^{vb}* *flautando s.t.* *p* BREVE PAUSA

BREVE PAUSA

C5

134 *(vary bow pressure)* -----|

$\frac{2}{8}$ $\frac{2}{4}$ *f* *p* $\frac{4}{4}$ LUNGA PAUSA $\frac{3}{8}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ 5"

(vary bow pressure) -----|

LUNGA PAUSA

harmonic gliss. —————> gliss. ordinario

15^{ma} -----|

5"

f

LUNGA PAUSA

(vary bow pressure) -----|

15^{ma} -----|

sfz *l.v.* 5"

fff *p*