

Infinite Regress

for ten musicians

Paul Clift

2011

FINAL VERSION—PRINT ON *A3* or *TABLOID*

duration circa 8'

Infinite Regress

for ten musicians:

- FLUTE
- OBOE (doubling melodica, bass drum, small suspended-cymbal)
- BASS CLARINET
- TROMBONE
- PERCUSSION (vibraphone, medium timpani, large suspended-cymbal, plastic comb, ratchet, tuned gongs)

GONGS:



MALLETS:



VERY soft wound-yarn mallets



medium wound-yarn mallets



very thin wooden drumsticks



soft timpani mallets



medium, large bass drum mallet

- PIANO
- VIOLIN (metal practice-mute required)
- VIOLA (metal practice-mute required)
- CELLO (metal practice-mute required)
- CONTRABASS

Past one o'clock. You must have gone to bed
The Milky Way streams its silver through the night.
I'm in no rush, with lightning telegrams
I have no cause to wake or trouble you.
And, as they say, the matter is closed.
Love's vessel has smashed against daily drudgery.
Why bother then to balance mutual sorrows, pains and hurts,
See what quiet settles on the world.
Night wraps the sky in a song from the stars.
In hours like these one should rise to address
History, the ages, and creation.

-Vladimir Mayakovsky, *Untitled* (1930)

In C

Infinite Regress

a setting of translations of texts by Vladimir Mayakovsky

Paul Clift
composed 2011

A1 $\text{♩} = 66$

Flute: ca. 15". **Oboe**: bass-drum, drop paper-clips onto bass-drum; vary dynamics freely. **Bass Clarinet in B \flat** : **Trombone**: with cup mute (not harmon!). **Percussion**: tuned gongs, l.v. vibraphone (ON), FAST, SLOW. **Piano**: SCORDATURA*, IV III II I. **Violin**: practice mute, 'scratchy', sul sol, tap freely - use the tip of the bow. **Viola**: practice mute, 'scratchy', ord. **Violoncello**: practice mute, 'scratchy', simile. **Contrabass**: mute, s.f.

Texts:
"Past one o'clock, you must have gone to bed."
"I'm in no rush, I have no cause to wake or trouble you."
"I'm in no hurry, I have no cause to wake you"
"...and as they say, the matter is closed"
"Past one o'clock"
"I have no cause to wake or trouble you"
"...and as they say, the matter is closed"
"...and as they say, the matter is closed"

*strings: those strings indicated here with a downward-arrow should be lowered to the point where the note 'breaks', i.e. where no distinct pitch is discernible. Typically, this occurs at roughly a 'minor-7th' below normal tuning.
**spoken text should be delivered with a soft, flat, monotonous voice; almost mumbled. Timing/rhythm may be freely interpreted but must cover the indicated duration

A2

13

Fl.

Ob.

B. Cl.

Tbn.

Vib.

"Love's vessel has smashed against daily drudgery."

Pno.

"Why bother then to balance mutual sorrows, pains and hurts"

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

A4

I9

Fl.

"Why bother then to balance mutual sorrows, pains and hurts"

Ob.

B. Cl.

Tbn.

Vib.

Pno.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

ppp pp ppp

pp p ppp sforz.

pp p pp <mp

pp

p

pp senza cresc.

s.t. 3:2 p.s.p.

p

poco rall.

B1

accel. A tempo

5

24

Fl.

spoken

"In hours like these, one should rise to address history, the ages and creation."

Ob.

B. Cl.

Tbn.

Perc.

Pno.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

mp

dynamics simile

roll with fingertips, allowing paperclips to vibrate

détimbré / breathy

mp (sung harmonic 13° relative to played 9°: tritone +37 cents)

Cymbal on timpani

gongs

vibraphone - ON slow

piano

practice mute

scratches (6°)

remove mute

con vibrato

ord. → m.s.p

slow down trem.

a.s.t

remove

mf

B2

30

Fl.

spoken
"If at least you would have mercy and stop tormenting me."

Ob. (simile bar 1)

B. Cl.

Tbn. *mp*

spoken
"If at least you would have mercy and stop tormenting me."

Perc.

Pno. *p* *pp*

Vln. *m.s.p* *mp* *p senza cresc.*

Vla. *simile* *p* *m.s.p*

Vc. *pp* *p senza cresc.* *5:4* *<mp* *ord.* *m.s.p*

Cb. *s.t.* *p* *mp* *con vibrato* *s.p* *s.t.*

A detailed musical score page for orchestra and piano, numbered 35. The score includes parts for Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Bassoon (B. Cl.), Trombone (Tbn.), Percussion (Perc.), Piano (Pno.), Violin (Vln.), Viola (Vla.), Cello (Vc.), and Double Bass (Cb.). The music features complex rhythmic patterns with time signatures such as 3:2, 6:4, and 5:4. Various performance instructions are included, such as 'simile bar 9', '(simile)', dynamic markings like *p*, *mp*, *mf*, and *pp*, and articulation marks like 'con vibrato' and 'ord.'. The piano part is prominent, especially in the lower half of the page.

40

Fl.

Ob.

B. Cl.

Tbn. *mp* remove mute

Perc. cymbal on timpani

Pno. *p* *mp* *pp*

Vln. *m.s.p* *p senza cresc.* *pp*

Vla. simile *p* *m.s.p* remove mute *pp*

Vc. *ord. → m.s.p* *pp* *pp*

Cb. *con vibrato* *m.s.p* *s.t.* *p*

5 **4**

C1

9

C2

51

Fl.

Ob.

B. Cl.

Tbn.

Perc.

Pno.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

2

Musical score for orchestra and piano, page 56. The score includes parts for Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Bassoon (B. Cl.), Trombone (Tbn.), Percussion (Perc.), Piano (Pno.), Violin (Vln.), Cello (C. B.), and Double Bass (Cb.). The score features complex rhythmic patterns with 3:2 and 6:4 time signatures, dynamic markings like *mf*, *p*, *mp*, *f*, and *ff*, and performance instructions such as *vibraphone - OFF*, *Rebd.*, *ord.*, *m.s.p.*, and *s.p.*. The piano part includes dynamic markings *mf*, *p*, *mp*, *mf*, *mp*, *f*, *ff*, and *mf*.

C3

Musical score for orchestra and piano, page 59, measures 59-60. The score includes parts for Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Bassoon (B. Cl.), Trombone (Tbn.), Percussion (Perc.), Piano (Pno.), Violin (Vln.), Viola (Vla.), Cello (Cb.), and Double Bass (Cb.). Measure 59 starts with a dynamic *f* for Flute, followed by *fltz.* for Oboe and Bassoon. The piano part features a sustained note with a dynamic *fff*. Measure 60 begins with a dynamic *ff* for Flute, followed by *fltz.* for Oboe and Bassoon. The piano part features a sustained note with a dynamic *fff*. The score concludes with a dynamic *ff* for Flute, followed by *fltz.* for Oboe and Bassoon.

Fl. simile *fff* 3 4 2 4 cluster 4 4

Ob. simile *fff* [to cymbal quickly!] cymbal *ff*

B. Cl. *fff* fffff

Tbn. vibrato *p* *mf* *f* molto vibrato *ff*

Perc. play notes if possible G.C. *ff*

Pno. ff f fff sffz ff < fff NO ff

Vln. fff

Vla. fff

Vc. fff

Cb. m.s.p. vibrato molto vibrato ord. m.s.p. vibrato molto vibrato fff

C4

Fl. *f poss.*

Ob. (cymbal) *mf* *to cymbal quickly!*

B. Cl. *mp*

Tbn. *mf*

Perc. *vibrato* *ff*

Pno. *mp* *f* *ff* *ff* *ff* *ff* *ff*

Vln. *p* *cresc.*

Vla. *p* *cresc.*

Vcl. *p* *cresc.* *ord.* *m.s.p* *s.p* *molto vibrato* *ord.* *m.s.p* *s.p* *molto vibrato*

Cb. *mf*

C5

73

Fl. *cluster* **4** **4** **3** **3+2** **8** *simile*** **1** **2** **4** **4**

Ob. (cymbal) *cymbal* **4** *spoken* **4** *"As you see, I am calm!"* **4**

B. Cl. **4** *[sh]* **4** *[a]* **4** *possible* **4** *simile* **4**

Tbn. **4** *[sh]* **4** *[a]* **4** *gliss.* **4** *simile* **4**

f poss.

Perc. **4** *G.C.* **4** *comb* 'pluck' the teeth of the comb while pressing it down upon the bass drum skin **4** *G.C.* **4** *ff* **4** *comb* **4** *simile* **4** *B.D.* **4** *simile* **4**

Pno. **4** *sffz* **4** *fff* **4** *ff < fff* **4** *sffz* **4** *simile* **4** *ff < fff* **4** *simile* **4**

Vln. **4** *w/ only a slight hint of pitch* **3** *pppp senza cresc.* **4** *spoken* **4** *mf* **4** *"As you see, I am calm!"* **4** *2* **4** **4** **4** **4**

Vla. **4** *ffff* **4** *spoken* **4** *mf* **4** *"As you see, I am calm!"* **4** *mp* **4** *sul do* **4** *m.s.p.* **4** *p* **4** *w/ only a slight hint of pitch* **4** *pppp senza cresc.* **4**

Vc. **4** *ffff* **4** *m.s.p.* **4** **[m.s.p.]* **4** *sul do* **4** *p* **4** *pppp senza cresc.* **4** *sul sol* **4** *m.s.p.* **4** *p* *change bowing freely / vary bow pressure slightly*

Cb. **4** *ffff* **4** *spoken* **4** *mf* **4** *"As you see, I am calm!"* **4** *pppp senza cresc.* **4** *sul sol* **4** *m.s.p.* **4** *p*

* viola & cello: with a lot of bow pressure and extremely slow bow-movement bring out individual 'sputters' as the bow scrapes the string; NOT a sustained sound.
** flute: try to reproduce EXACTLY the same sound each time, i.e. over-blow to the same notes.

accel.

C6 | $\mu = 100$

86

Fl.

Ob. (cymbal)

B. Cl.

Tbn.

perc.

Pno.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

ff

gliss.

sffz

ff < fff

s.t.

D1 ♩ =

01 | ♩ = 60

17

rall.

Fl. *ff*

bal. *ff*

Cl. [sh] [a] *f possible*

Tbn. *gliss.* *f possible*

So what, I can take it. As you see, I'm calm! Like the pulse of a corpse. Do you remember how you used to talk? ...I saw one thing only: you, a Gioconda, had to be stolen. And you were stolen. In love I shall gamble again, the arch of my brows ablaze. What of it! Homeless tramps often find shelter in a burnt-out house! You're teasing me now? Well, remember: when they teased Vesuvius, Pompei perished! Hey! Amateurs of sacrilege, crime and carnage, have you seen the terror of terrors - my face when I am absolutely calm?

spoken *p*

rub wooden mallet against the edge of a table or music stand; move stick towards and away from body to alter 'pitch'

two mallets *mf pp f*

Pno. *ff*

Vln. *m.s.p sul sol pp change bowing freely / vary bow pressure slightly sul do m.s.p*

Vla. *p*

Vc. *sul do f p*

Cb. *(m.s.p) * pp*

m.s.p → *sul sol f p*

m.s.p → *sul do f p*

m.s.p → *f p*

m.s.p → *f p*

change bowing freely / vary bow pressure slightly

*contrabass: with a lot of bow pressure and extremely slow bow-movement bring out individual 'sputters' as the bow scrapes the string; NOT a sustained sound

118

Fl.

Ob.

B. Cl.

Tbn.

Perc.

Pno.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

melodica

sing+fltz.

harmon mute

ratchet

muffle if necessary

vary bow pressure & dynamics more substantially

spoken

simile

I cannot sing, in the heart's chapel the choir loft catches fire! Into the calm of an apartment where people quake, a hundred-eyed blaze bursts from the docks. Moan into the centuries, if you can, a last scream: I'm on fire!

simile

spoke while playing, or stop speaking momentarily to play, then continue;

simile

spoke while playing, or stop speaking momentarily to play, then continue;

stable; vary dynamics freely

D2

D3

Fl.

Ob. (Melodica)

B. Cl.

Tbn.

Perc.

Pno.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

134

Fl.

Ob. (Melodica)

B. Cl.

Tbn. *p sempre*

Perc.

Pno. *ppp* *pp*

Vln. *pp sempre*

Vla. *pp*

Vc.

Cb.

2

8^{me}

3

pp

This musical score page shows a multi-part instrumental arrangement. The instruments listed from top to bottom are Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.) / Melodica, Bass Clarinet (B. Cl.), Trombone (Tbn.) with dynamic instruction *p sempre*, Percussion (Perc.), Piano (Pno.) with dynamics *ppp* and *pp*, Violin (Vln.) with *pp sempre*, Viola (Vla.) with *pp*, Cello (Vc.), and Double Bass (Cb.). The score includes measure numbers 134 and 2, and a rehearsal mark 8^{me}. Various performance instructions like *ppp*, *pp*, *pp sempre*, and *p sempre* are included. Measure 134 begins with sustained notes from most instruments, followed by a transition to measure 2 where the piano and strings play eighth-note patterns. Measure 8^{me} features sustained notes from the piano and strings. Measure 3 concludes with a dynamic *pp*.