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# FIRST PUNCH

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BENJAMIN D. TAYLOR

contrabass and electroacoustic sounds

*commissioned by Yann Dubost*

2011

*many thanks to Yann Dubost*

This commission was funded in part by  
The MidAmerican Center for Contemporary Music and  
The Graduate College at Bowling Green State University

## **Instrumentation**

Contrabass and electroacoustic sounds

## **Duration**

7'30"

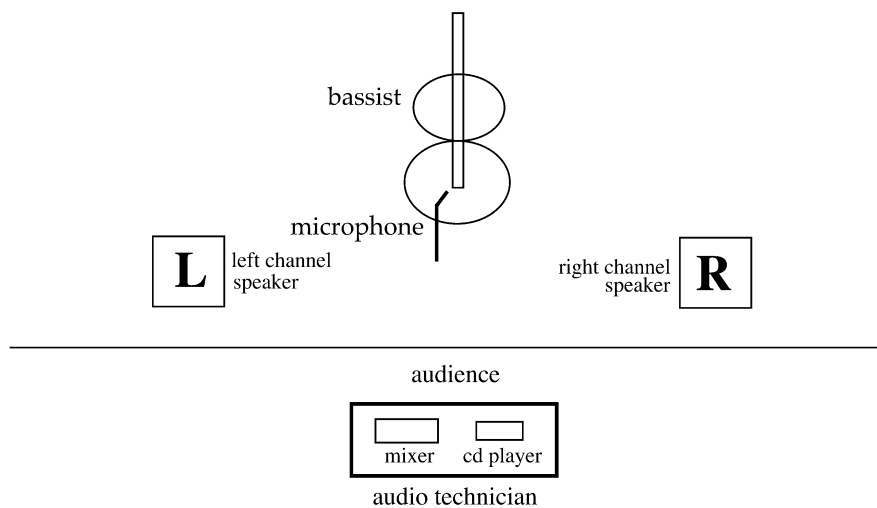
## **Program Note**

The first punch is everything. It represents a conclusion of thought – an end to analyzing personal motivation, estimating an opponent's strengths and weaknesses, playing out scenarios of strategies and positions, surveying surroundings, calculating odds of winning – ultimately putting into action a series of electronic impulses sent from the brain to a few thousand muscle fibers. That's a lot that happens in a few seconds. Cinematographers reflect an awareness of the hyper-mental and hyper-physical state required to survive in a fight by using effects like replay, slow motion, freeze, and flashback to "stretch" time. These effects allow film makers to portray the multitude of thoughts and events that happen in a two second window over the course of a several minute scene. This composition, ***First Punch***, is a musical depiction of the hyper-mental and hyper-physical state of a fighter. Using similar techniques to those mentioned above, this piece "stretches" time to reflect the many (and varied) thoughts and emotions that a fighter experiences in the last few seconds before the first punch is thrown.

## **Performance Notes Concerning Electroacoustic Sounds**

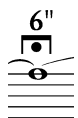
- This piece is to be performed with the CD accompaniment found in the back of this score. The performer gives a cue to an audio technician to press "play" on the CD player so that the CD and live performance start exactly together.
- The bass should be amplified in order to balance with the electronics. The amplified bass sound should come through the same speakers as the electroacoustic sounds.
- The balance of live bass with electronics should be equal at their loudest dynamic levels. The beginning of the piece is an appropriate sound check. This is one of the loudest moments in the piece, and it should be gripping and intense but not uncomfortable to audience members.
- Although timing indications are notated throughout the score, a stopwatch should not be used in performance. In the early stages of rehearsal the performer should become familiar with the electronic cues described at each time indication. Once the performer has identified the audible cues it will no longer be necessary to watch the time.

## Diagram of Typical Performance Setup

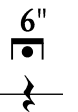


## Notation Legend

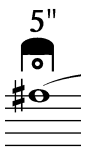
(At the first appearance of each symbol in the score, a written reminder will be given.)



Hold for about 6 seconds (take bows as necessary).



Rest for about 6 seconds.



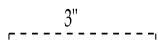
*Variable fermata.* Hold for as long as necessary until electronic cue is reached. Time above fermata represents approximate duration in an ideal performance (take bows as necessary). When a *variable fermata* is above many events, events may be repeated as necessary until cue is reached.



Time indications in a solid box represent important electronic cues. The performer must line up with the track at these times. A thick barline will always be under the time indication showing the exact point the electronic cue is heard.



Time indications in a dashed box represent approximate time elapsed. These are to be used as guideposts in rehearsal.



Approximate duration of material

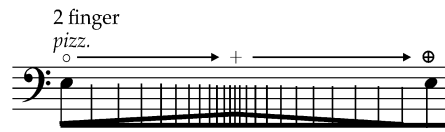


senza misura



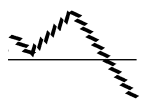
Mute all four strings by lightly placing left hand on strings.

## Notation Legend (cont.)

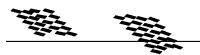


- = lightly touching string (harmonic)
- + = string fully pressed to fingerboard
- ⊕ = string is only partially pressed to create a buzzy sound
- = the arrow means a gradual transition between two states

*s.t.X.* *Sul tasto extreme* is so high up the fingerboard that the right hand is almost touching the left hand.



Scratch string with fingernail of thumb by pinching the string between your first finger and thumb. Above the line is *sul ponticello*. Below the line is *sul tasto extreme*. If no string is specified, any string may be used.



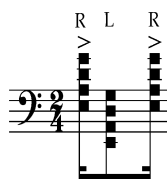
Scratch 4 strings with fingernails of 4 fingers on right hand.



Random pizzicato executed with three fingers of the right hand on all four strings. Always muted by the left hand. Above the line is *sul ponticello*. Below the line is *sul tasto extreme*.



Tap front body of bass. Score will identify whether to tap with fingers, fingernails, or knuckles.



*Slap style.* The boxed noteheads denote to slap the open strings percussively against the fingerboard. Hands are placed in the middle of the fingerboard with the right hand over the octave harmonics. This will allow the right hand hits to ring more. R and L above the notes denote which hand to use. Let ring always.  $\emptyset$  ess mute is specified by a  $\emptyset$  symbol, in which case the strings are immediately dampened by the striking hand (like a dead stroke).



Similar to above, this is a slap on the low E string but should be executed in the ordinary pizzicato position on the fingerboard. The string should percussively hit the wood and make a nasty rattle sound.



Scratch the front body of the bass with fingernails in a circular motion.



Fingernail pizzicato

**hammer-on** = Bring finger down very hard so that the string hits the wood of the fingerboard at the written pitch. The string will resonate two pitches.

**thumb slap** = Strike string percussively with side of thumb so the string hits the wood of the fingerboard.

**quasi guitarra** = Strum with thumb.

Commissioned by Yann Dubost

# FIRST PUNCH

BENJAMIN D. TAYLOR (b.1983)  
(ASCAP)

$\text{♩} = 76$

*molto passionato, rubato*

arco

*fp* *mf* *pp* *fp*

*mf* *f* *mp* *mf* *pp* *mf* *fp* *mp*

*mf* *f* *pp* *mp* *mf*

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

*sul D*  
5" hold until electronics cut out

**0:46**

quasi guitarra  
s.t.X. (sul tasto extreme)  
pizz. (senza misura)

6" rest until electronics enter

4" (bow down)

**0:58**

1:02

20" (string scratching and muted 3 finger pizz.)

*sul D*

1" 1"

*p mp p mf p*

L.H.∅

5" 2" 3" 1"

*fingernail pizz. s.t.X.*

R.H. *sul G*

(four finger scratches)

*mf pp mf*

L.H.∅

1:33

12" 2"

*mf pp*

L.H.∅

6" 3" 1:56 6"

2 finger pizz. (buzzy)

pizz. (two finger tremolo) *sul tasto* *sul pont.*

*p mf mp mf p mf pp*

♩ = 134 *suddenly very aggressive*

slap style R L R L R L

♩ = 76 *as before, rubato*

*sul A pizz. (jazz-like)*

(two finger tremolo) *ord.* *s.t.X.*

(gradually slow tremolo)

*mp p mf pp*

*This is only a sample score*

*For a full perusal score or performance score  
please contact me at*

*[benjamintaylormusic@gmail.com](mailto:benjamintaylormusic@gmail.com)*

L R R R L R L R L R L R L R R L R L R L R L R L R R

*ff* *p* *ff*

L R L R R R R L R L R R L R L R R L R L R

$\frac{2}{4}$   $\frac{3}{16}$

R L R L R R L R L R R L R L R R L R L R

*ritard.*

5"

$\text{♩} = 134$

R L R R L L R

*f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *ff*<sup>3</sup>

R L R R L R L R L R R L R L R R L R L R R L R L R

L R L R L R L R R R L R L R R R L

$\emptyset$   $\emptyset$   $\emptyset$   $\emptyset$



R L R L R L R R R L R L R L R

∅ ∅ 3 3 ∅

R L R R L R L R L R R L R L R R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R

*ff*

L R R L R L R R L R L R L R R L R L R L R L L R L R R

L R L R L R R L R R R L R L R L R L R L

8" strike until electronics cut out

7:21 *a tempo*

*accel. ----- as fast as possible!*

R L R L R L

*fff*

2" rest until electronics enter

7:24

*pizz.*

R

(elec cues) *ff* *fff*