String Quartet No. 1

(Tubular – Mondo)

Laure M. Hiendl
(2018)

Tubular – Mondo took as a starting point the rapid sampling techniques of Footwork music, cutting and looping grains of sonic (often vocal) material, completely irreverent of phrase boundaries of the original sample, resulting in jagged, fragmented, dense textures. Taking these ideas to the string quartet world, I was interested in creating a disrupted continuity between quasi lyrical gestures and their cut-up electronic resonances. In the first movement—Tubular—all players follow and interpret a unison line according to different instructions, leaving them improvisatory openness within rigid temporal synchronicity. In the second movement—Mondo—the ensemble breaks apart in an attempt to performatively open the stage focus.

Premiere
JACK Quartet on April 3rd, 2018.
Symphony Space, New York
https://soundcloud.com/martinhiendl/string-quartet-no-1-tubularmondo

Notes

This string quartet consists of **two movements**. In the first movement all four musicians perform with their instruments on stage. In the second movement, only the viola keeps playing on stage, whereas the violins and the cello put down their instruments, leave the stage and perform gestural actions throughout the hall. Detailed instructions for the second movement can be found on p.10.

Throughout the first movement all strings play a **unison melody**, interpreted in different ways as detailed by the instructions provided in text boxes in the score. **4 shorthands specify the octave transpositions** of the unison line for each instrument, which should be maintained until the next instruction follows (unless notated otherwise).

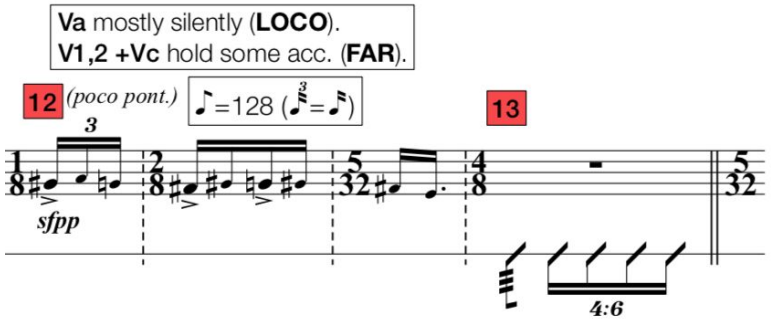
LOCO	Play the line as written.
CLOSE	Play the line one octave above or below.
FAR	Play the line two or more octaves above or below.
XRTM	Play the line at either of the extreme ends of your instruments' range.

Arrows on accidentals indicate a deviation of about a quarter tone from equal temperament. The exact amount of deviation is not as important as that it is the same for all players.

Electronics

The string quartet uses a **live-electronic patch** written in the free, open source software Pure Data. The patch is provided with the score. Each instrument should be amplified with a close mic (the DPA 4099 seems to be a good choice as of 2018).

The patch simply records short passages of the musicians and plays back small, cut-up, glitchy grains of the recorded passage. The **viola** is responsible for triggering cues with a foot pedal. The patch reads the actual performance tempo of the musicians by measuring the distance between cues, and it adjusts the playback tempo of the grainy rhythms accordingly. **It is therefore crucial that the cues are triggered precisely at the downbeat of each bar.** Here is an example of how the electronics are notated:



Top staff is the unison line of the strings, the electronics are the bottom staff, and cues are indicated in red number boxes. The viola will read the score from the computer and additional cues with arrows at the bottom right are given to indicate page turns, which do not need to be triggered precisely in time:

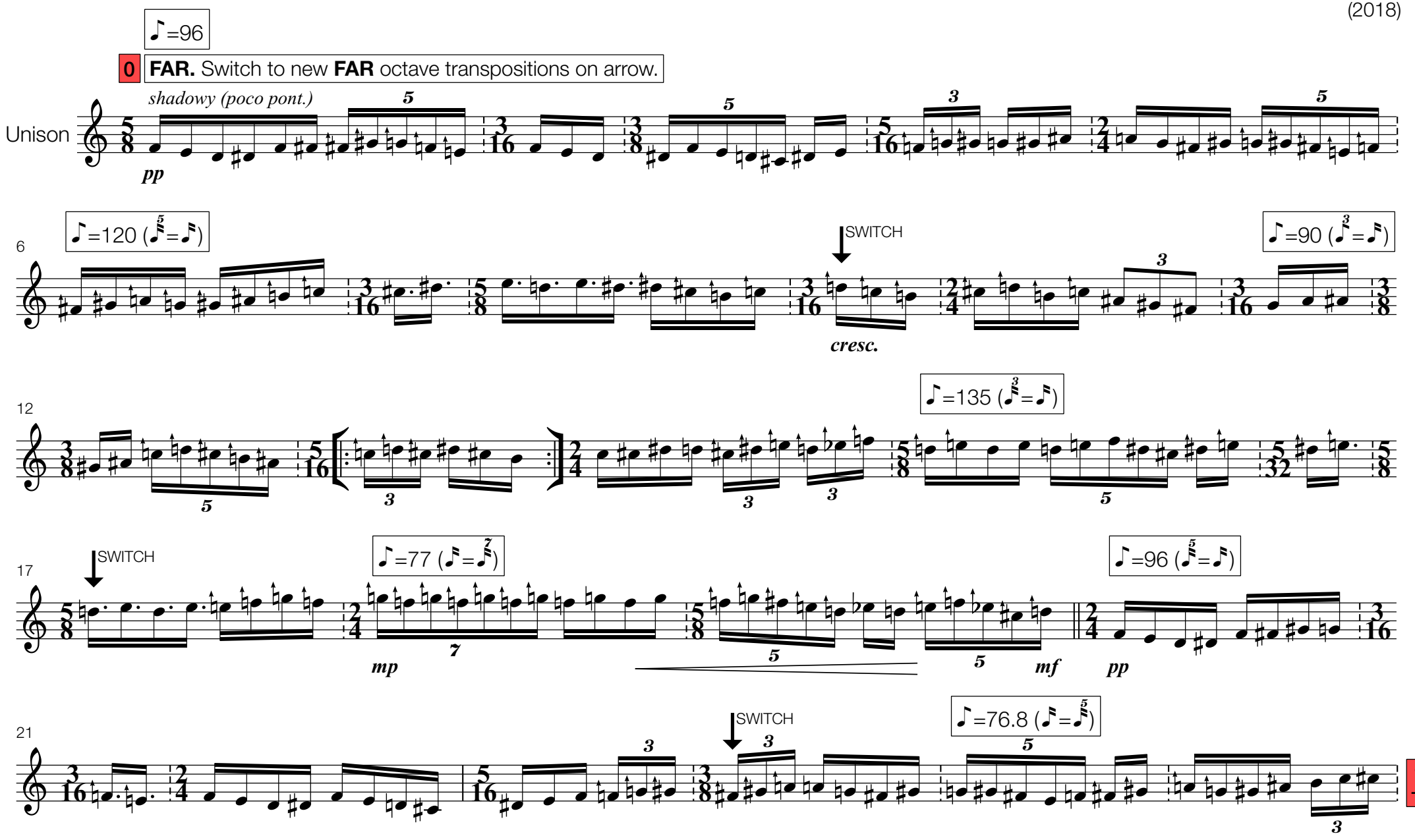


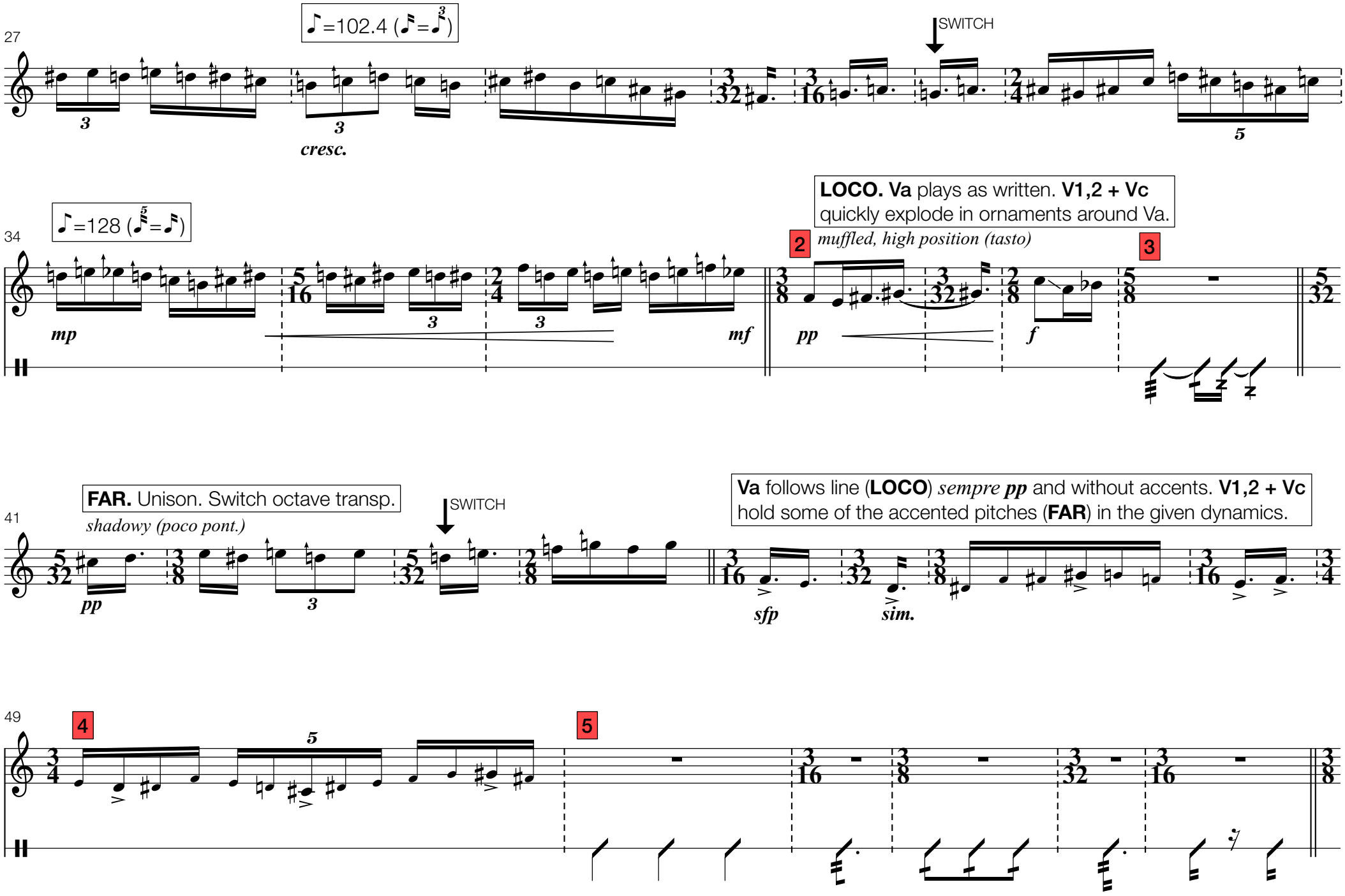
The string quartet should be slightly amplified so that the electronics and live sound merge as much as possible, using a close speaker position to the instruments. Monitors for the performers should be provided. Details on how to run the electronics can be found in the patch.

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I. Tubular

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27
♪=102.4 (𝅘𝅥𝅯=♪³)
SWITCH
cresc.
34
♪=128 (𝅘𝅥𝅰⁵=𝅘𝅥𝅯)
LOCO. Va plays as written. V1,2 + Vc quickly explode in ornaments around Va.
muffled, high position (tasto)
mp
mf
pp
f
41
FAR. Unison. Switch octave transp.
shadowy (poco pont.)
SWITCH
Va follows line (LOCO) sempre pp and without accents. V1,2 + Vc hold some of the accented pitches (FAR) in the given dynamics.
pp
sfp
sim.
49
4
5
6


55
LOCO. Va as written.
V1,2 + Vc ornaments.
7
muffled (tasto)
pp
ff
8
FAR. Unison. Switch
octave transpositions.
shadowy (poco pont.)
p
♪=96 (♪³=♪)
♪=72 (♪³=♪)
63
♪=90 (♪⁵=♪)
SWITCH
f
pp
CLOSE. Va in tempo. V1,2 + Vc fall behind in different tempi,
but start catching up eventually to sync up again at the arrow.
♪=112 (♪⁵=♪)
flowing (ord.)
69
SYNC
cresc.
f
74
♪=144 (♪⁵=♪)
V1, Va XTRM high.
V2, Vc XTRM low.
9
V1, V2
Va, Vc
ff
10
sim.
mf
fff
f
ff
mf
11
→