

Jason Kao Hwang

*Symphony of Souls*  
(2011)

for an Orchestra of String Improvisers

(violin, viola, guitar, cello, string bass and drum set)

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## **Performance Notes:**

*Symphony of Souls* is created through orchestral improvisation that is conducted by a lexicon of hand gestures (see following page) in dialogue with sixteen written passages. Generally the score progresses left to right, with earlier sections reappearing in variations, often with cued fermatas and transpositions. The conductor can cue the whole orchestra or sections or individuals to perform written passages or improvisations. The conductor indicates passages 1 through 5 with the five digits on one hand. Ear 1 through 5 is indicated by the left hand holding the left ear, and digits 1 through 5 of the right hand. Heart 1 through 5 is indicated by the right hand over the heart, with digits 1 through 5 of the left hand. “Arm Up to the Sky” is cued as described. “Waving 5” (measure 25), is cued by waving five digits of one hand. “Top” is indicated with the hand on top of the head. Cues 2, 3, Ear 1, Ear 2, Ear 3 and Heart 3 can be cued in time or with note-to-note fermatas. They can also be transposed as cued by the conductor. As in the jazz tradition, the drummer has the freedom to support and create in dialogue with both the conductor and orchestra.

*Symphony of Souls* was recorded on April 24, 2010. A video of the recording session is on youtube:: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iKch6kft2ZY>

COMPOSER/ CONDUCTOR/ VIOLIN: Jason Kao Hwang

DRUMS: Andrew Drury

VIOLIN: Trina Basu, Sarah Bernstein, Charles Burnham, Julianne Carney, Mark Chung, Fung Chern Hwei, Rosi Hertlein, Gwen Laster, Marlene Rice, Dave Soldier, Curtis Stewart, Elektra Kurtis, Midori Yamamoto, Helen Yee

VIOLA: Leanne Darling, Nicole Federici, Judith Insell, Eric Salazar, David Wallace

GUITAR: Cristian Amigo, Bradley Farberman, James Keepnews, Dom Minasi, David Ross, Tor Snyder, Hans Tammen

CELLO: Martha Colby, Loren Dempster, Daniel Levin, Tomas Ulrich, Shanda Wooley

BASS: Michael Bisio, Ken Filiano, Francois Grillot, Clifton Jackson, Tom Zlabinger, James Ilgenfritz

# Lexicon of Conducted Improvisational Cues

## Traditional

- Downbeat (traditional)
- Held note (open palm)
- Cut-off

## Pitch

- Sustained Fermata – note to note  
- assigning leaders to cue sustained notes
- Sustained followed by slides – RH downbeat, LH curve down, RH cut
- High notes – point up
- Low notes – point down
- Drone on D – arc both arms over head

## Transposition

- ½ step – from nose up to top of head
- whole step up - chin up to top of head
- whole step - chin up to top of head
- minor third – chin to above head
- fourth - chest to way above head

## Dynamics

- pianissimo, forte, - shhh and fist
- Cresc, Decresc - V up and down
- Mute - cover

## Texture

- Tremelo – mime bow tremelo
- Bird calls (above finger board) *shake hand above head*
- Pizz – mimed
- Harmonics – hand circle (ok)
- Crunch - mime
- Mime: Gtr tight – squeeze to chest; Strings mime bow crunch
- Colegno – mimed colegno
- Wide vibrato – mimed
- Trill – flat palm rotated rapidly back and forth
- Gliss – follow shape of hand gesture
- Air sounds - shhh (strings blow across f holes)
- Tremelo/ Flutter tonge - bow tremelo
- Pitch bends – gesture down or up
- Wide vibrato
- Drunk improv – rubbery stretches

## Drum Set

- arco cymbals or slides on drum

## Mutes

- Mute (*cover bridge for strings*)

## Double-stops (strings)/ Multiphonics (reeds)

- interlaced fingers

### **Improvisation**

- Solos – point and come hither gesture
- Call & Response – each hand gestures talking
- Short stabs – tiger claw
- Guitars comp – mime strum
- Repeat or Riff - hands bracket
- Improv – solo or sectional - come hither!
- Call and response – talking bird
- Open more space – hands pulled apart
- Develop – hand circles encouragement
- Break up pattern
- Arpeggio - follow shape of hand gesture
- Riffs Cues from Conductor's violin
- Improv runs up or down – use arm, trace finger up or down
- Conducted Rhythms – follow gestured rhythm
- Conduct any written cue as note to note fermatas

### **Assign Leaders**

- Create Riff – point to leader, eye to ear, riff gesture
- Create Sustained, point to leader, eye to ear, sustain

### **Grooves**

- Ostinato 4/4
- Walk 4/4
- shuffle 4/4 (digging triplet gesture)
- 6/8 conducted
- Break Groove and develop
- Guitar comp (mime strum)

### **Conductor generated**

- Cues from my violin
- Conducted Rhythms

### *Combination Example:*

- Forte piano (fist + shh)
- Accent/ trill/ gliss (fist – hand flutter – slide)

# SYMPHONY OF SOULS

Music by Jason Kao Hwang

**TOP**

**1** Mute

**2** *Divisi* *mp*

**3** *mf*

Violin 1

Violin 2

Viola

Guitar

Cello

Contrabass



5

Vln 1

Vln 2

Vla

Gtr

Vcl

Cb

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WAVING  
5

The musical score consists of six staves. Vln 1 and Vln 2 both start with a glissando (gliss.) and a fermata over a half note. Vla is silent until the third measure, then plays a series of eighth notes. Gtr and Vcl play a rhythmic eighth-note pattern throughout. Cb plays a bass line with eighth notes and rests.

EAR  
1

A musical score for a string ensemble and guitar. The score is arranged in six staves, labeled Vln 1, Vln 2, Vla, Gtr, Vcl, and Cb from top to bottom. The music is in 4/4 time and features a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The first two staves (Vln 1 and Vln 2) play a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The third staff (Vla) features a triplet of eighth notes. The fourth staff (Gtr) plays a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The fifth staff (Vcl) plays a continuous eighth-note accompaniment. The sixth staff (Cb) provides a bass line with eighth and sixteenth notes. A double bar line with repeat dots is placed after the second measure of each staff. A large, faint watermark is visible across the score, reading '© 2011 by Kao Hwang. All Rights Reserved'.

EAR  
2

EAR  
3

EAR  
4

EAR  
5

Vln 1  
Half-Harmonic  
*Divisi*  
Pizz<sup>3</sup>  
Pizz<sup>3</sup>  
Arco

Vln 2  
Half-Harmonic  
*Divisi*  
Pizz<sup>3</sup>  
Pizz<sup>3</sup>  
Arco

Vla  
Half-Harmonic  
Pizz<sup>3</sup>  
Pizz<sup>3</sup>  
Arco

Gtr  
*Divisi*  
Half-Harmonic  
*Divisi*<sup>3</sup>  
Arco

Vcl  
Half-Harmonic  
Pizz<sup>3</sup>  
Pizz<sup>3</sup>  
Arco

Cb  
Half-Harmonic  
Pizz<sup>3</sup>  
Pizz<sup>3</sup>  
Arco

HEART  
1

Musical score for HEART 1, featuring Vln 1, Vln 2, Vla, Gtr, Vcl, and Cb. The score includes dynamic markings like *mf* and performance instructions like *Arco* and *Pizz*. The score is in 3/4 time and includes various musical notations such as triplets, slurs, and accidentals. A watermark "© 2011 Pearson Kao Hwang. All Rights Reserved" is visible across the score.

The image displays a musical score for six instruments: Violin 1 (Vln 1), Violin 2 (Vln 2), Viola (Vla), Guitar (Gtr), Violoncello (Vcl), and Contrabass (Cb). The score is written in a single system with six staves. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 7/8. The music features complex rhythmic patterns, including numerous triplets and slurs. Dynamic markings such as *f* (forte) are present. A large, semi-transparent watermark is overlaid diagonally across the score, reading "© 2014 Jason Kao Hsu. All Rights Reserved." The score is divided into measures by vertical bar lines.

HEART  
2

Musical score for HEART 2, featuring Vln 1, Vln 2, Vla, Gtr, Vcl, and Cb. The score includes dynamic markings like *mf*, *fff*, and *mf subito*, and guitar chords such as  $A\flat 7(\sharp 9)$ ,  $A 7(\sharp 9)$ ,  $B\flat \text{maj} 7(\sharp 5)$ ,  $B 7(\sharp 9)$ ,  $D^\circ$ , and  $E 7$ .

59 *mf subito* *fff*

Open Improv  
Upwards  
gliss.

HEART  
3

Vln 1

Vln 2

Vla

Gtr

Vcl

Cb

*fff* *p subito 6* *ppp*

*fff* *p subito 6* *ppp*

*fff* *p subito 6* *ppp*

*fff* *p subito 3* *ppp* *mf*

*fff* *p subito 6* *ppp* *mf*

*fff* *p subito* *ppp*

HEART

4

Pizz

The musical score is for a piece titled "HEART 4". It is written for a string quartet and guitar. The score is in 3/4 time and consists of six staves: Violin 1 (Vln 1), Violin 2 (Vln 2), Viola (Vla), Guitar (Gtr), Violoncello (Vcl), and Contrabass (Cb). The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The score is divided into two systems by a double bar line. The first system contains measures 1 through 4, and the second system contains measures 5 through 8. The Violin 1, Violin 2, and Viola parts play a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes, starting with a pizzicato (Pizz) instruction. The Guitar, Violoncello, and Contrabass parts play a melodic line, with the Violoncello and Contrabass parts marked "Unison w/ Bass" and "Unison w/Cello Arco" respectively. The dynamic marking *mf* is present at the beginning of the Contrabass staff. A watermark "© Jason Kao Hwang. All Rights Reserved" is visible across the score.

HEART  
5

Vln 1

Vln 2

Vla

Gtr

Vcl

Cb

Arco

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Detailed description of the musical score: The score is for a piece titled 'HEART 5'. It is written for a string quartet (Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola) and guitar/bass. The time signature is 3/4. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The score is divided into measures by vertical bar lines. The first system contains measures 1-4. The second system contains measures 5-8. The third system contains measures 9-12. The fourth system contains measures 13-16. The fifth system contains measures 17-20. The sixth system contains measures 21-24. The seventh system contains measures 25-28. The eighth system contains measures 29-32. The ninth system contains measures 33-36. The tenth system contains measures 37-40. The eleventh system contains measures 41-44. The twelfth system contains measures 45-48. The thirteenth system contains measures 49-52. The fourteenth system contains measures 53-56. The fifteenth system contains measures 57-60. The sixteenth system contains measures 61-64. The seventeenth system contains measures 65-68. The eighteenth system contains measures 69-72. The nineteenth system contains measures 73-76. The twentieth system contains measures 77-80. The score includes various musical notations such as triplets (indicated by a '3' below the notes), slurs, and dynamic markings like 'Arco' (arco) and 'G#7'. The bass line (Cb) is mostly silent, with some notes appearing in the later measures.

ARM UP  
TO SKY

Vln 1   
 Eb7 FM7(+5) Db7+5 V   
 Pizz

Vln 2   
 Eb7 FM7(+5) Db7+5 V

Vla   
 Eb7 FM7(+5) Db7+5 V

Gtr   
 Eb7 FM7(+5) Db7+5 V

Vcl   
 Eb7 FM7(+5) Db7+5 V

Cb   
 Eb7 FM7(+5) Db7+5 V   
 Pizz Shuffle, G whole tone

This musical score is arranged in six staves, labeled Vln 1, Vln 2, Vla, Gtr, Vcl, and Cb from top to bottom. The notation includes various musical symbols such as treble and bass clefs, stems, beams, slurs, and triplet markings (indicated by a '3' above or below a group of notes). The score is divided into four measures by vertical bar lines. A large, semi-transparent watermark is oriented diagonally across the center of the page, reading '© 2013 Yoon Kyo Hwang. All Rights Reserved.' The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots at the end of each staff.