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### Philosopher in a Jar

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## PHILOSOPHER IN A JAR

Christopher Castillo

28 Pages

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*Philosopher in a Jar* is composed for vibraphone, piano, electric guitar, and amplified contrabass. The music was inspired by the unpublished short story, “The Galleon,” by T.V. Swantek. Drawing from the ideas of the seventeenth century French philosopher René Descartes, the story is a fictional realization of Descartes “evil demon” scenario and references his philosophical idea: “Cogito Ergo Sum.” In “The Galleon,” the artificial intelligence entity is the “evil demon” and is represented in the music by the use of perfect fourth intervals and steady rhythmic phrases. The protagonist of the story is a consciousness (the philosopher), presumably a former human, which has been placed into a robotic body and is confined to the artificial intelligence vessel. The philosopher is represented in the music with freely performed phrases, improvisation and serial passages. The story is presented in the form of a message being sent by the philosopher. The music incorporates the use of Morse code to convey the moral of the story: “Cogito ergo sum.” The title refers to the preservation of the consciousness being held in the AI vessel.

PHILOSOPHER IN A JAR

CHRISTOPHER CASTILLO

A Thesis Submitted in Partial  
Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of

MASTER OF MUSIC

School of Music

ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY

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PHILOSOPHER IN A JAR

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## KEY COMPOSITIONAL COMPONENTS & CHARACTERIZATIONS


- Instrumentation: The piano and contrabass represent the machine. The coarse sounding harmonics in the contrabass and the clashing overtones of the un-dampened piano passages are used to convey the mechanical ambiance of the A.I. vessel. The vibraphone at rehearsal letters “C,” part of “D,” and “E” represent conscious thinking of the philosopher. The Electric guitar represents the soul of the philosopher and could be thought of as the voice of humanity. The element of improvisation also presents a contrast to the conscious-less machine.
- Harmonic language: The perfect fourth interval is used to represent the machine. Stacked fourth chords are presented in octave displacement as a means for the machine to trick the philosopher (see example in the vibraphone at rehearsal letter “K”). Pitch content from tone rows are presented in quasi-serial passages, and represent the philosopher’s freedom of conscious thought (P<sub>0</sub>:0,7,11,2,4,1,6,9,3,10,8,5).
- Tempo/Rhythm: Sections marked “Freely” represent the philosopher’s consciousness (rehearsal letter “C”) or represent the idea of freedom presented in the “Programmed Dream Sequence.” Passages in strict tempo sections that feature steady pulsed rhythms, such as the piano and contrabass in the “Mechanical” sections, represent the machine.
- Morse code: Represents the message being sent from the philosopher.

## PERFORMANCE INSTRUCTIONS


- In the vibraphone part, notes with a cross through the stem (♩<sup>\*</sup>) are to be struck on the edge of the bar with the shaft of the mallet stick.
- The note values in the “Ad lib” section at rehearsal letter “C” are approximate note values and should be realized at the performer’s discretion. This section should be performed at a *forte* dynamic level though the performer should vary the dynamic levels to shape the phrase as to their liking.
- The “Freely” section at rehearsal letter “E” is to be performed in the same manner as the above mentioned section (“C”). The vibraphonist and guitarist are independent of each other; there is no need for any rhythmic alignment. However, the distinct phrase in the guitar part which directly precedes rehearsal letter “F” should act as a cue into the next section.
- Rehearsal letters “P”, “Q”, and “R,” up to “S,” include boxed pitches of sixteenth notes in the vibraphone and piano parts. The players should perform the boxed notes and repeat them with no pause after the note successions. The result should be a constant flow of sixteenth notes. In the first measure of rehearsal letters “P,” “Q,” and “R,” the performers should vamp their part until the guitar and bass cue the next measure. The vamped measures should last three to five seconds. The vibraphone player and piano player should listen to the guitar and bass parts to receive a cue into letter “S.”



- Morse code passages are to be played rhythmically just as a typical Morse code telegraph message would sound, but using the notes or note areas as provided in the boxed figures. The performer can think of the “dashes” and “dots” as (relatively) long notes and short notes. For example the code:

•••/ ••—/ — —/ can be interpreted as: 

The slashes represent a space in between letters and should be observed with a rest. A blank space in between two slashes represents a space between words and should be observed with a rest longer than the duration of the rest in between letters. The rhythmic example provided above does not serve as a necessary solution, and the performers should interpret the code as best as they see fit. There is no rhythmic dependence among the individual parts from rehearsal letter “T,” up until “V,” and it is not intended to be in any rhythmic unison.

- In the piano part, hand symbols () should be performed as tone clusters in the general note area of where the hand image is placed on the staff. The performer should play a mix of white and black keys.

# PHILOSOPHER IN A JAR

Christopher Castillo

## "The Machine"

**A** Mechanical ♩ = 60

10" 10" 10" 10"

Vibraphone

Piano

Electric Guitar

Amplified Contrabass

*p*

*8<sup>vb</sup>* hold until rehearsal C

*sul pont.*

*p coarse*

IV III II IV III II



8

Hard mallets  
strike on the edge of bars w/ shaft of sticks

Vib.

Pno.

Cb.

*p*

*8<sup>vb</sup>* hold until rehearsal C

*l.v.*

*8<sup>vb</sup>*

III II IV III II III IV III

**B**

15

Vib.

Pno.

E. Gtr.   
*p expressive - w/o pick attack (volume swell and finger slide)*

Cb.   
 II IV III II IV IV II III IV II III IV III



21

Vib.

Pno.

E. Gtr.

Cb.   
 III IV III IV II III IV III II III II

27

Vib. *f* \*

Pno. *f* \*

E. Gtr. *f*

Cb. *pf*

II III II III IV III IV II III IV III IV



32 **C** **Freely**

Vib. *f expressive*



(32)

Vib.

**D**

Quasi-mechanical ♩ = 60

Musical score for measures 32-38. The score is in 2/4 time and features four staves: Vibraphone (Vib.), Piano (Pno.), Electric Guitar (E. Gtr.), and Contrabass (Cb.).

- Vib.:** Starts at measure 32 with a triplet of eighth notes. Dynamics include *mp* and *pp*. A *scd* (scordatura) symbol is present.
- Pno.:** Features a bass line of quarter notes with a *pp* dynamic and a *scd* symbol.
- E. Gtr.:** Features artificial harmonics starting in measure 36, with fingerings 4, 3, and 2 indicated. Dynamic is *p*.
- Cb.:** Features a bass line with a *ppp* dynamic and an *ord.* (order) symbol.



Musical score for measures 39-45. The score is in 2/4 time and features four staves: Vibraphone (Vib.), Piano (Pno.), Electric Guitar (E. Gtr.), and Contrabass (Cb.).

- Vib.:** Features complex chords and melodic lines with asterisks indicating specific techniques.
- Pno.:** Features a bass line of quarter notes.
- E. Gtr.:** Features a melodic line with a circled 1 (1) indicating a specific technique.
- Cb.:** Features a bass line with dynamics *mp*, *ppp*, *mf*, and *pp*.

**E**

46 **Freely**

Vib. *mf expressive*

Pno.

E. Gtr. *mf expressive* use bar to bend up, hammer on, and/or slide to notes

Cb. *mf*

(46)

Vib.

E. Gtr.

Cb. *pp*

**F**

47 **Quasi-mechanical** ♩ = 60

Vib. *p*

Pno. *pp* poco a poco cresc. to rehearsal H

E. Gtr. w/ pick *p*

Cb. sul pont. poco a poco cresc. to rehearsal H

53

Vib. *poco a poco cresc. to rehearsal H*  
*hold until rehearsal I*

Pno.

E. Gtr. *poco a poco cresc. to rehearsal H*

Cb. *p*

*8<sup>rb</sup>*

**G**

59 **Slightly faster (♩ = 66)**

Vib. *(mp)*

Pno. *(mp)*

E. Gtr. *(mp)* *(mf)*  
*(bend lower note from sim. semi-tone below)*

Cb. *(mp)* *(mf)*

*8<sup>rb</sup>*

66 **Slightly faster** (♩ = 72)

Vib. *(mf)*

Pno. *(mf)*

E. Gtr.

Cb.

71 **Slightly faster** (♩ = 80)

**Slow down (gradually into the tempo at "H")** **H** "Transition" ♩ = 60

Vib. *(f)* *ff* *p* l.v.

Pno. *(f)* *ff* *p* \* *ad lib*

E. Gtr. *(f)* *ff* *ord.*

Cb. *(f)* *ff* *p*



78

Vib.

Pno.

E. Gtr.

Cb.

*p* expressive - w/o pick attack (volume swell and finger slide)

*gliss.*

l.v.



84

Vib.

Pno.

E. Gtr.

Cb.


*ppp* *mp*


\*


**I**


Soft mallets  
 At an independent tempo, play the Morse code signal using the provided notes. Repeat until "J."

90

Vib. 

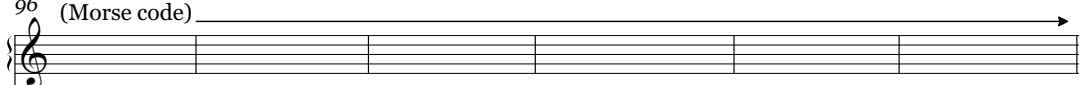
Pno. 

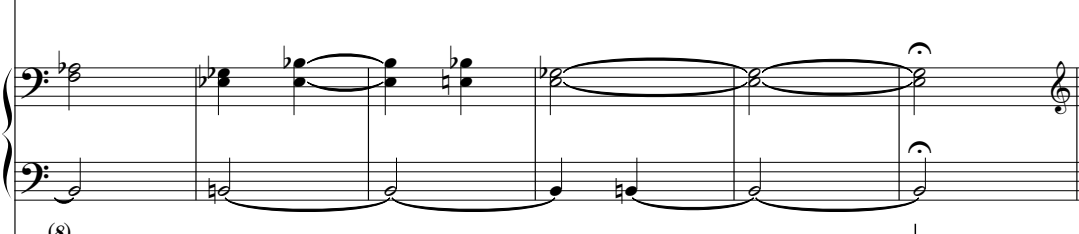
E. Gtr. 

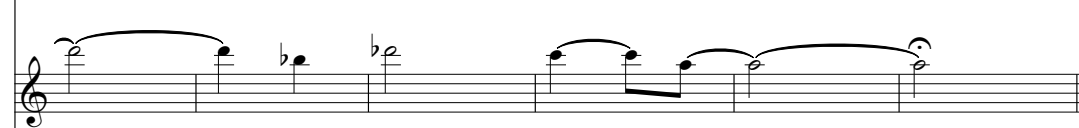
Cb. 

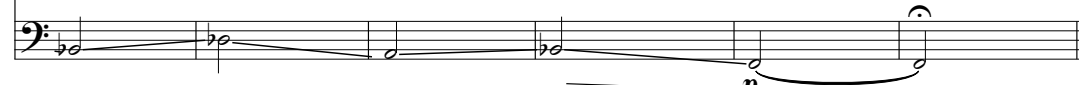


96 (Morse code)

Vib. 

Pno. 

E. Gtr. 

Cb. 

**J****Freely (approx. 15")**

102 (Morse code)

Vib.

E. Gtr.

Cb.

wide vibrato w/ bar, gradually decrease frequency

gradually increase vib. frequency

dive w/ bar & let loosened strings "grumble"

*slow dive*

*rapid*

**K "Programmed Dream Sequence"****L**

103 **G.P.** **Freely**  $\text{♩} = 112$  **Freely**

Vib.

Pno.

*p* *sim* *mp*

*p mechanical*

*8va*

*l.v.*

*l.v.*

*hold until measure 124*

**M**

107  $\text{♩} = 112$  **Freely**

Vib.

Pno.

*p*

*p mechanical*

*8va*

*l.v.*

*l.v.*



117  $\text{♩} = 112$

Vib. *Hard mallets*  
*mp*

Pno. *8<sup>va</sup>*  
*mf*

E. Gtr. *mp*

Cb. *arco*  
*mp*



120

Vib. *ff*

Pno. *ff*

E. Gtr. *ff*

Cb. *ff*

**P** (♩ = 112) 3" - 5" vamp

Play boxed notes and vamp this measure. Continue playing these notes into the next measures as the E. Gtr. & Bass start to play. Tempo does not change and there should be no pause inbetween note groups.

124

Vib. *mp*  
\* hold until rehearsal T

Pno. *mp*  
hold until "T"  
add left hand

E. Gtr. vol. swell every note  
*mf*

Cb. vol. swell every note  
*mf*



**Q** Vamp (same as before)

128

Vib.

Pno.

E. Gtr. *mf*

Cb. *mf*

**R**

Vamp (same as before)

135

Vib.

Pno.

E. Gtr.

Cb.



142

Vib.

Pno.

E. Gtr.

Cb.

**S**

148

Vib. *f*

Pno. *f*

E. Gtr. *p* *8va*

Cb. *p* *gliss.*



152

Vib. *n*

Pno. *n*

E. Gtr. *n* *pp* *8va*

Cb. *n* *gliss.* *8va*



**T** "Frustrated message"

Play morse code signals at independent tempo using pitches from the boxed figures

157

Vib. *ffff* *p*

Pno. *ffff* *p*

E. Gtr. *ffff* *p*

Cb. *ffff* *p*

8<sup>rb</sup> l.v. ^ \*



159

Vib.

Pno. gradually lower pitches to next box

E. Gtr.

Cb.

**U**

160

**Gradually increase intensity and speed**

Musical score for measures 160-161. The score is for Vibraphone (Vib.), Piano (Pno.), Electric Guitar (E. Gtr.), and Contrabass (Cb.). The Vibraphone part consists of two staves with a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes and rests. The Piano part has a treble and bass staff with a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes and rests. The Electric Guitar part has a treble staff with a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes and rests, and a diagram of a guitar fretboard showing a specific fingering. The Contrabass part has a bass staff with a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes and rests. A box highlights a specific measure in the Piano and Electric Guitar parts.



161

Musical score for measures 161-162. The score is for Vibraphone (Vib.), Piano (Pno.), Electric Guitar (E. Gtr.), and Contrabass (Cb.). The Vibraphone part consists of two staves with a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes and rests. The Piano part has a treble and bass staff with a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes and rests. The Electric Guitar part has a treble staff with a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes and rests, and a diagram of a guitar fretboard showing a specific fingering. The Contrabass part has a bass staff with a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes and rests. A box highlights a specific measure in the Vibraphone and Electric Guitar parts. The dynamic marking *(mp)* is present in the Vibraphone, Piano, and Electric Guitar parts.

162

Vib. *(mf)*

gradually lower pitches to next box

Pno. *(mf)*

gradually raise pitches to next box

gradually lower pitches to next box

E. Gtr.

Cb. alternate pitches randomly

163

Vib.

Pno. *(mf)*

gradually raise pitches

gradually lower pitches

E. Gtr. *(mf)*

Cb. alternate pitches randomly *(mf)*

164

gradually raise pitches

Vib.

( *f* )

Pno.

( *f* )

E. Gtr.

( *f* )

Cb.

alternate pitches randomly

165

Vib.

Pno.

E. Gtr.

Cb.

alternate pitches randomly

( *f* )

166

Vib. *( ff )*

Pno. *( ff )*

E. Gtr. *( ff )*

Cb. *( ff )*

167

Vib. *fff*

Pno. *fff*

E. Gtr. *fff*

Cb. *fff*

**Vamp until all players have arrived here. Continue upon consensus.**

**Vamp and gradually slow down. (not necessarily in rhythmic unison)**

*8va*

*8vb*

*alternate*

*w/ bar*

V

170 ♩=60

Vib.

Pno.

E. Gtr.

Cb.

*sim.*



176

Vib.

Pno.

E. Gtr.

Cb.

*vib.*

*8vb. -1*

# "The Philosopher's Lament"

Freely  
approx. 10" ♩ = 60

182

Vib.

Pno.

E. Gtr.

Cb.

l.v.

ff

ff

Improvise freely: the philosopher's lament

pizz.

arco

pizz.

ff



188

Vib.

Pno.

E. Gtr.

Cb.

Freely (10") ♩ = 60

Freely (10") ♩ = 60

ff

ff

ff

ff

(gtr. solo)

arco

pizz.

l.v.

arco

pizz.

ff

ff

# "The Machine"

Freely  
(10"- 20")

♩ = 60

194

Vib.

Pno.

E. Gtr.

Cb.

*mp*

*mp*

(gtr. solo) → End solo but continue improvising and gradually fade away to the end (pizz.)

*mp*



**W**

200 Play morse code using previous chord (independent tempo)

Vib.

Pno.

E. Gtr.

Cb.

*p*

*mf*

*p*

*hold until end*

*hold until end*

(improvisation)

arco sul pont.



208

Vib. *pp* brush mallet head across bars

Pno.

E. Gtr. (improvisation)

Cb. *sfz* *p*



X

215

Vib.

Pno.

E. Gtr. (improvisation)

Cb. *pp*

222

Vib.

*ppp*

brush mallet head across bars

Pno.

8<sup>vb</sup>

E. Gtr.

(improvisation)

Cb.

play code and improvise with any high pitched harmonics (independent tempo)

229

Vib.

10"

*n*

Pno.

8<sup>vb</sup>

E. Gtr.

(improvisation)

*n*

Cb.

*n*