

PATRICK ZIMMERLI QUARTET



PATRICK ZIMMERLI, TENOR SAXOPHONE
ETHAN IVERSON, PIANO
CHRISTOPHER TORDINI, BASS
JOHN HOLLENBECK, DRUMS

CLOCKWORKS

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|---|------|
| 1. A SCATTERING OF STARS (DISTENSION VARIATION) | 0:40 |
| 2. PENDULUM | 6:21 |
| 3. METRIC VARIATION | 3:39 |
| 4. WALTZ OF THE POLYRHYTHMIC PALINDROME | 6:54 |
| 5. LINEAR VARIATION | 6:42 |
| 6. THE CENTER OF THE CLOCK | 6:28 |
| 7. ENTROPIC VARIATION | 0:39 |
| 8. BOOGALOO OF THE POLYRHYTHMIC PALINDROME | 7:13 |
| 9. HARMONIC VARIATION | 3:44 |
| 10. WINDUP | 6:36 |
| 11. A SCATTERING OF STARS (THEME) | 4:52 |

TOTAL TIME: 53:52
RECORDED IN 24 BITS/96K

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All compositions by Patrick Zimmerli, Peripeteia Music (BMI/SACEM)

Produced by Seth Abramson

Executive Producer: Tony Reif

Recorded live to 2-track by Ryan Streber, September 9 and 10, 2017
at Oktaven Studios, Mt. Vernon, NY

Mastered by Katsuhiko Naito

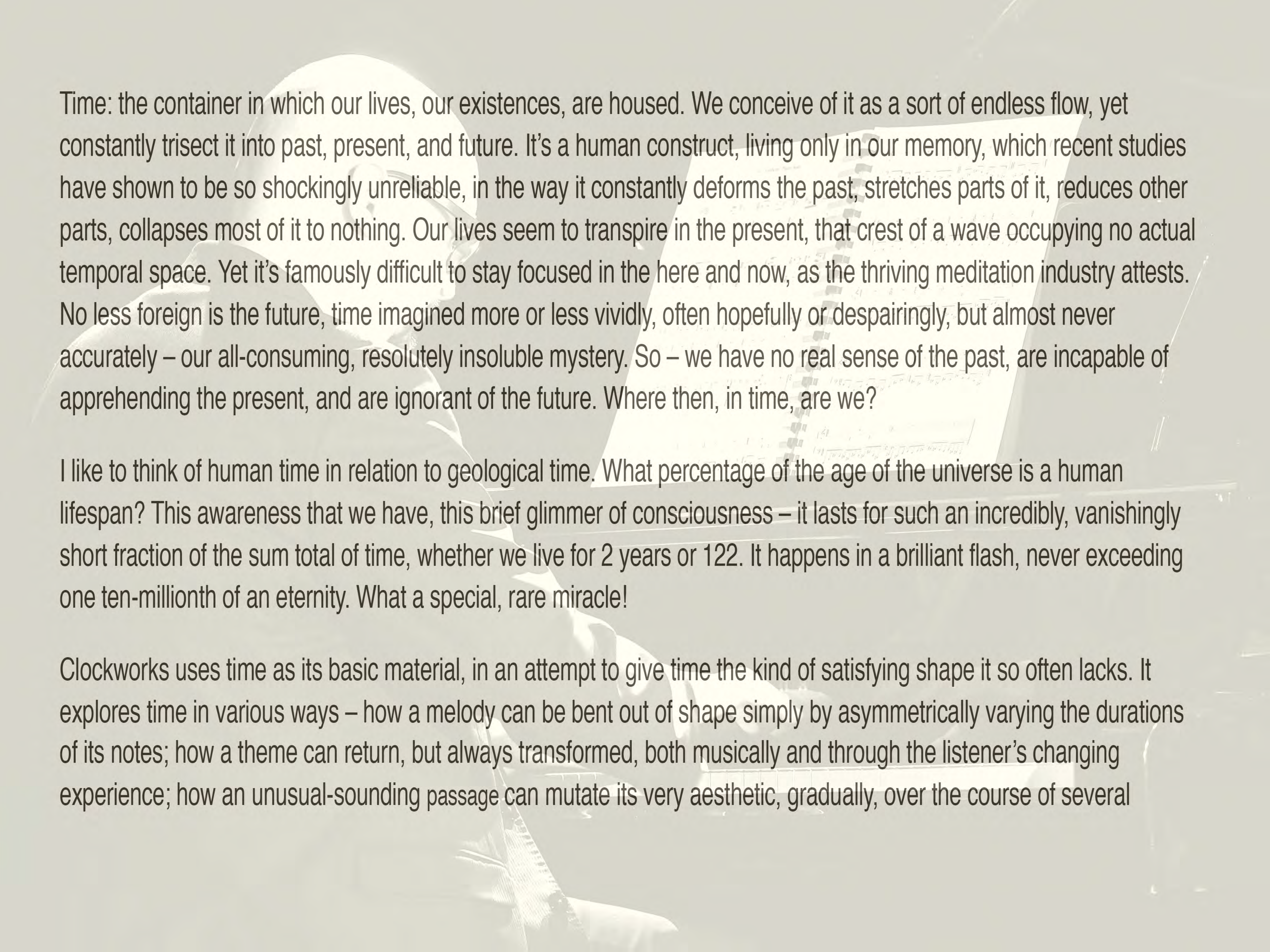
Musician photos: Michael Yu

Design: Jordan Bent

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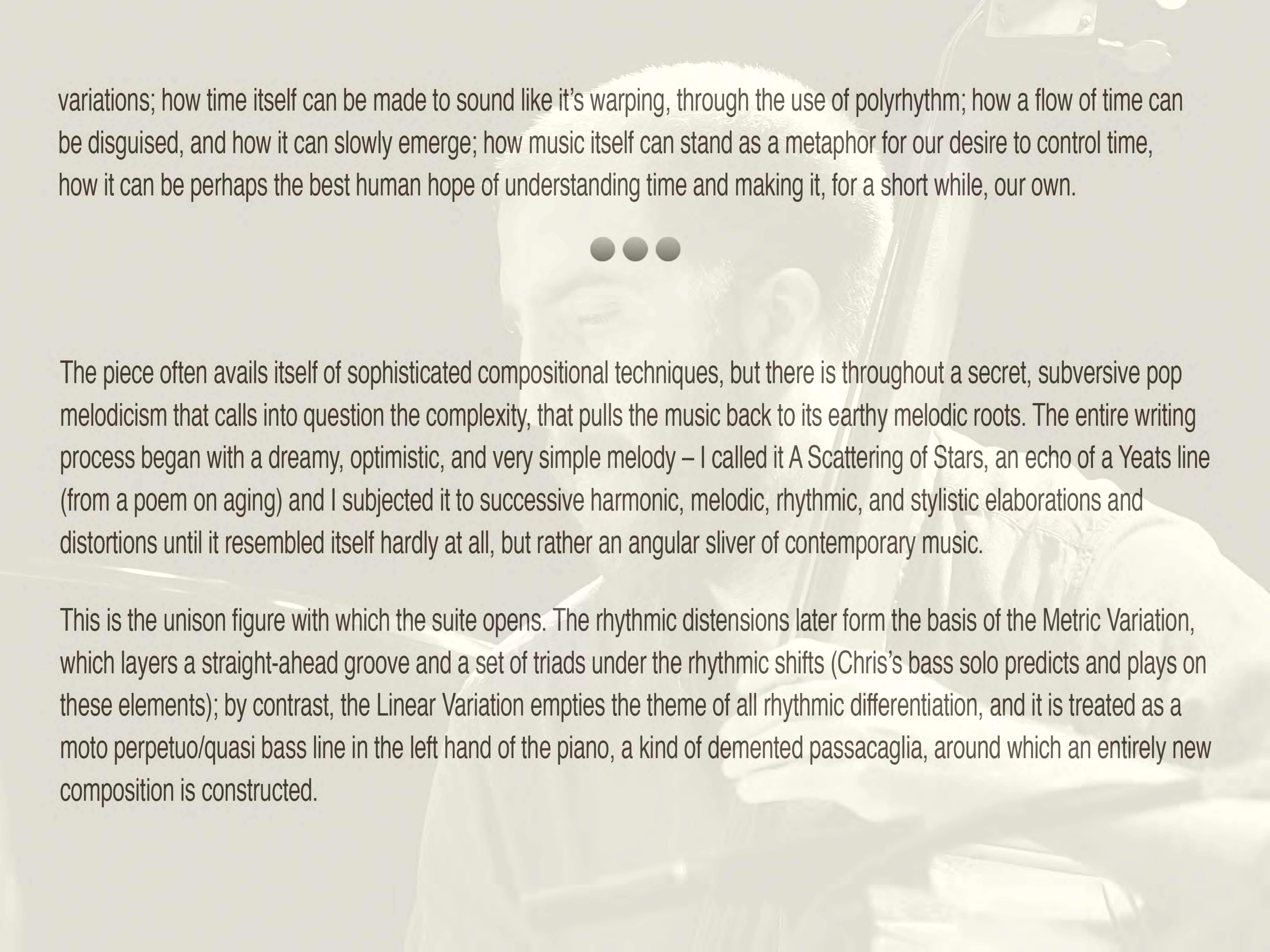
Special Thanks to Seth Abramson for his major help and support on the recording and to Tony Reif for his consistent championing and amazing work on behalf of my music over a period of 20 years.



Time: the container in which our lives, our existences, are housed. We conceive of it as a sort of endless flow, yet constantly trisect it into past, present, and future. It's a human construct, living only in our memory, which recent studies have shown to be so shockingly unreliable, in the way it constantly deforms the past, stretches parts of it, reduces other parts, collapses most of it to nothing. Our lives seem to transpire in the present, that crest of a wave occupying no actual temporal space. Yet it's famously difficult to stay focused in the here and now, as the thriving meditation industry attests. No less foreign is the future, time imagined more or less vividly, often hopefully or despairingly, but almost never accurately – our all-consuming, resolutely insoluble mystery. So – we have no real sense of the past, are incapable of apprehending the present, and are ignorant of the future. Where then, in time, are we?

I like to think of human time in relation to geological time. What percentage of the age of the universe is a human lifespan? This awareness that we have, this brief glimmer of consciousness – it lasts for such an incredibly, vanishingly short fraction of the sum total of time, whether we live for 2 years or 122. It happens in a brilliant flash, never exceeding one ten-millionth of an eternity. What a special, rare miracle!

Clockworks uses time as its basic material, in an attempt to give time the kind of satisfying shape it so often lacks. It explores time in various ways – how a melody can be bent out of shape simply by asymmetrically varying the durations of its notes; how a theme can return, but always transformed, both musically and through the listener's changing experience; how an unusual-sounding passage can mutate its very aesthetic, gradually, over the course of several



variations; how time itself can be made to sound like it's warping, through the use of polyrhythm; how a flow of time can be disguised, and how it can slowly emerge; how music itself can stand as a metaphor for our desire to control time, how it can be perhaps the best human hope of understanding time and making it, for a short while, our own.



The piece often avails itself of sophisticated compositional techniques, but there is throughout a secret, subversive pop melodicism that calls into question the complexity, that pulls the music back to its earthy melodic roots. The entire writing process began with a dreamy, optimistic, and very simple melody – I called it A Scattering of Stars, an echo of a Yeats line (from a poem on aging) and I subjected it to successive harmonic, melodic, rhythmic, and stylistic elaborations and distortions until it resembled itself hardly at all, but rather an angular sliver of contemporary music.

This is the unison figure with which the suite opens. The rhythmic distensions later form the basis of the Metric Variation, which layers a straight-ahead groove and a set of triads under the rhythmic shifts (Chris's bass solo predicts and plays on these elements); by contrast, the Linear Variation empties the theme of all rhythmic differentiation, and it is treated as a moto perpetuo/quasi bass line in the left hand of the piano, a kind of demented passacaglia, around which an entirely new composition is constructed.

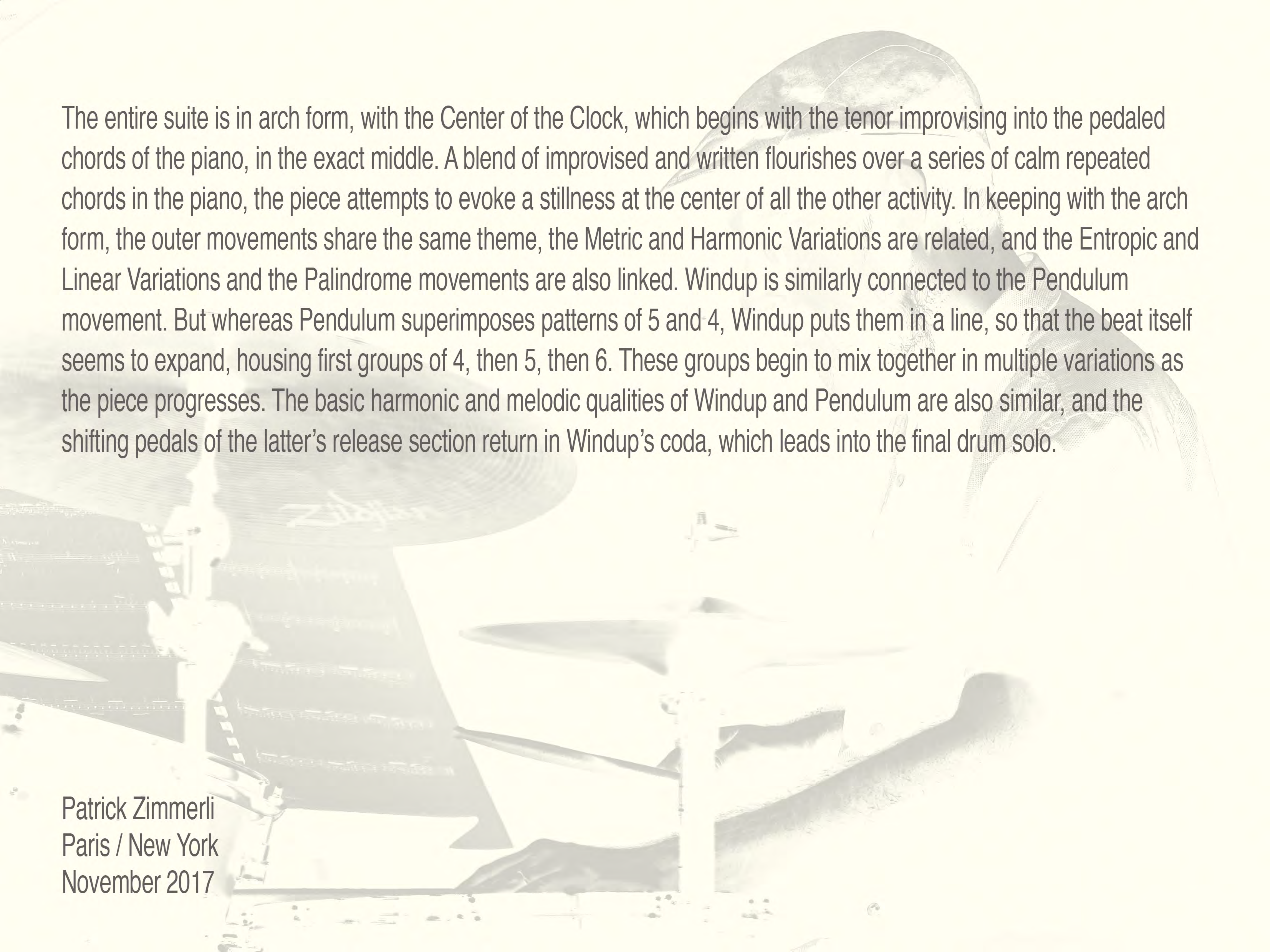
The Entropic Variation is a midpoint in the inevitable trajectory of the melody back towards its initial, more melodic state. Slower and less frenetic than the opening statement, it still features pointillism, and off-balance entries and exits in the saxophone.

The Harmonic Variation puts the melody in a context still more nearly approaching its original. It features a written-out chordal ostinato, with the theme creeping in in the bass register of the piano. Before the piece begins Ethan plays a free “chorus” using the harmonic and melodic materials of the movement.

A Scattering of Stars (Theme) features the theme in its simplest form, in a slow rubato that sneaks in under John’s drum solo. The piano and bass enter with broadening harmonies as the piece builds to its finish.

The intervening movements all take as their inspiration polyrhythmic ideas. Pendulum starts with an undulating line of 16th notes (4 to a beat) grouped in 5’s; they are set against a bass groove, based in triplets (3 to a beat), grouped in 7’s. Using only 16ths and triplets in this way, Ethan’s two hands, and various parts of the ensemble with them, wander fairly far away from each other.

The Polyrhythmic Palindrome movements are based on simple polyrhythms and their reciprocals – the Waltz uses a 5:4 and a 4:5, which, in succession, form a 9-beat cycle of fluctuating speed. The Boogaloo takes 3:4 and 4:3 as its departing proportions, forming a similar 7-beat cycle. In the case of the Waltz the complexity is ramped up when the melody comes in putting the polyrhythms in reverse order and playing them against each other.



The entire suite is in arch form, with the Center of the Clock, which begins with the tenor improvising into the pedaled chords of the piano, in the exact middle. A blend of improvised and written flourishes over a series of calm repeated chords in the piano, the piece attempts to evoke a stillness at the center of all the other activity. In keeping with the arch form, the outer movements share the same theme, the Metric and Harmonic Variations are related, and the Entropic and Linear Variations and the Palindrome movements are also linked. Windup is similarly connected to the Pendulum movement. But whereas Pendulum superimposes patterns of 5 and 4, Windup puts them in a line, so that the beat itself seems to expand, housing first groups of 4, then 5, then 6. These groups begin to mix together in multiple variations as the piece progresses. The basic harmonic and melodic qualities of Windup and Pendulum are also similar, and the shifting pedals of the latter's release section return in Windup's coda, which leads into the final drum solo.

Patrick Zimmerli
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