

***We Have Less Time Than You Think***

for violin and electronics

~8:30

composed by Howie Kenty

for violinist Adrianna Mateo

## *We Have Less Time Than You Think*

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### **Program Notes:**

*We Have Less Time Than You Think* deals with the fact that we humans do not really have long: on the smaller-scale, in terms of the things we attempt to immediately accomplish, and on relatively larger scales, in the time we can spend with each other, the duration of our individual existences, and the collective lifespan of the human race. One of the truer clichés, time passes in a blur, fluidly and easily escaping attempts to stop or slow its flow, with certain events standing out in hindsight as demarcations of structural points. In my own experience, the longer I have existed, the more the passage of time seems to speed up exponentially; I certainly feel like I have less time than I thought I did.

An audio recording of the piece is available at the following link online:

[http://hwarg.com/content/music/composition/h\\_kenty-we\\_have\\_less\\_time\\_than\\_you\\_think-adrianna\\_mateo-violin.mp3](http://hwarg.com/content/music/composition/h_kenty-we_have_less_time_than_you_think-adrianna_mateo-violin.mp3)

### **Technical Notes:**

Aside from the spoken words, all sounds in this piece were generated using only violin samples. After conceptualizing the piece, to create the electronic material, I needed recordings of a number of violin gestures. I created several prerecording scores of small sections detailing these gestures (included as Appendices 1-4), and recorded these samples with violinist Adrianna Mateo. These were then processed using pitch shifting, spectral convolution, filters, spacial processing, layering, manipulation via sampler, and so forth. In the score itself, there are two staves added in addition to that of the violinist: the grand staff indicates the approximate sounds of the electronics, while the staff below indicates the laptop operator's performance instructions, for live realization.

Accompanying this score are the files necessary to perform the live electronics for the piece, available at the online links below. The physical setup is simple, requiring a computer, an audio interface, a microphone set up for the performer that feeds into the computer's audio interface, a MIDI controller or two, and stereo speakers. The laptop operator accompanies the violinist using the software program Ableton Live (v8.1.3), along with iZotope's Iris software sampler (v1.00.748), triggering samples, adjusting volume controls as necessary, and adjusting live spacialization processing. The performer's microphone is fed into a track in Live, where compression, delay, and reverb are applied to the violin and spoken material.

In the laptop operator's instructions, notes indicated with standard noteheads are to be played on a keyboard and held for the durations indicated; this is to play the Iris sampler. Notes with X noteheads are used to trigger samples of the indicated name in Live, via MIDI controller, computer keyboard, or other method. In the included Performance Configuration diagram, I have shown the equipment I use for live performance, but any suitable substitution can be found for any of the parts. The Korg nanoKontrol's default button, knob, and slider parameters are mapped to the fourteen samples to be triggered, main volume, sample playback and sampler volumes, violin/speaking input monitor volume, and delay and reverb wet/dry signals, but any person familiar with a basic knowledge of Live can remap these to their own controller or computer keyboard in the program's "MIDI" mode. To successfully copy the Iris patch, search the hard drive for the "Iris Content" folder and place the included "Iris Library" folder there (merge as necessary with any existing folders). (It should be noted that all effects processing within Live is done using Live's own effects, except for iZotope's Ozone 4 mastering plugin, which is used on the master bus for general equalization and compression; this isn't strictly necessary, and lacking that plugin, the user can add EQ and compression as necessary.)

Electronic performance materials (Ableton Live project, Iris Patch, and PDF score) are available at the following online link:

[http://hwarg.com/content/score/h\\_kenty-we\\_have\\_less\\_time\\_than\\_you\\_think\\_electronic\\_performance\\_materials.zip](http://hwarg.com/content/score/h_kenty-we_have_less_time_than_you_think_electronic_performance_materials.zip)

# We Have Less Time Than You Think

Performance Configuration

Laptop running Ableton Live with iZotope Iris

Keyboard Controls Iris Sampler

USB Cables

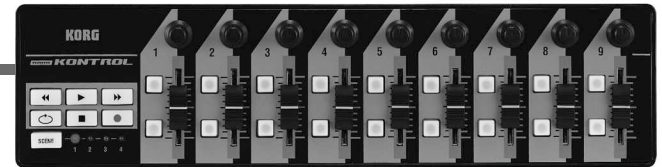


Violin/  
Speaking



MIDI Controller Controls:

- Triggering of Samples 1 - 14
- Main Volume
- Sample Playback and Sampler Volumes
- Violin/Speaking Input Volume
- Delay and Reverb Wet/Dry



USB  
Cable

Audio Interface/  
Microphone



Speaker L



Speaker R



Audio Cables, Includes All Output:

- Electronics
- Instrument Monitoring and Processing

# We Have Less Time Than You Think

Section 1

Spoken, as if praying (vary inflection):

"One."

~ 0:15

"Two."

Andante (~65 bpm), freely

---> sul tasto (w/ short tremolo flourishes/accents) "Three."

Violin

Musical notation for the Violin part, starting with a rest and then playing a melodic line with triplets and various dynamics.

Low drum sweep in (Drums always written 8<sup>vb</sup>)

*mp*

Electronics sounding

Musical notation for the Electronics sounding part, featuring a low drone and shimmering effects.

*p*

Low drone, shimmering (Vln transposed 15<sup>mb</sup>, alternating between 1st and 2nd harmonics, occasionally sweeping through higher overtones)

Electronics Performance

Trig: S1 Intro Hit Iris Synth

Musical notation for the Electronics Performance part, including a trigger event and a synth line.

*p*

Very sul tasto; begin each chord slowly, arpeggiate freely, add tremolo and dynamic flourishes/accents

normale

---> sul tasto

Vln

Musical notation for the Violin part in the second system, featuring dynamics and sul tasto markings.

*pp* < *mp* >

*mp*

*pp*

Shimmering doubler (Spectral convolution) Harmonics 8<sup>va</sup>

El nd

Musical notation for the Electronics sounding part in the second system, including shimmering doubler effects.

El erf

Trig: S2 Shimmery 1

Musical notation for the Electronics Performance part in the second system, including a trigger event.

# We Have Less Time Than You Think

As before: sul tasto, arp, trem with flourishes/accents... normale

Vln 13

*pp* < *mp*

Shimmering doubler  
Harmonics *gva*

El nd 13

El erf 13

Trig: S3 Shimmery 2

"Four." Sul tasto, trem with flourishes/accents... LISTEN FOR THESE CUES!

Vln 20

*pp* < *mp* < *pp* < *mf* < *pp* < *p*

String synth: *gva*

Harmonics *gva*

El nd 20

Fingernail tapping on vln back

Drum hit

El erf 20

*pp*

Trig: S4 Many things

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First Climax

**Largo (~55 bpm)**

Moving to sul pont, trem and dynamic flourishes/accents

(Echoes decay away)

Section 2

Andante (~65 bpm), freely

~0:35

More aggressively: "Five." (w/ short tremolo flourishes/accents)

Improvise short sneaky outburst phrases - sul pont, trem, etc!

Harmonic Dropping

Shimmering doubler

Computer responses: granulated versions of performer's phrases

Breath bowing (Bowed muted violin strings, *8vb*, slow downward slides, producing no pitch)

Drum hits; unmeasured, approx. every 5 beats

Trig: S5 Comp 1    Trig: S6 Comp 2    Trig: S7 Comp 3

# We Have Less Time Than You Think

~0:32

39 "Six." "Seven." "Eight." "Nine."

Vln *mf* *ff* *p*

Elnd *mf* *f* *p*

Elnd mp Fingernail tapping on vln back = Breath bowing Drum hits resume, irregularly

El'rf 39 Trig: S8 Comp 4 Trig: S9 Comp 5 Trig: S10 Comp 6 Trig: S11 Comp 7-8

Harmonic Rising

Shimmering doubler

~0:25

~0:13

51 "Ten."

Vln *sfp* *fff* *mp*

Elnd 51 *sfp* *fff* *mp*

Elnd All entrances *sfp*

El'rf 51

Pick either! With vibrato

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Section 3

Softly: "Nine." Trem flourishes/accents Getting louder: "Eight." *8<sup>va</sup>* Sul tasto, trem flourishes/accents... "Seven." "Six."

Vln *pp* < *mp* > *pp* < *p* > *mp* 3 *p*

El nd Shimmering doubler Low drone, shimmering *p* Shimmering doubler Harmonics *15<sup>ma</sup>*

El *p* Trig: S12 Shimmery 3 Trig: S13 Shimmery 4

*8<sup>va</sup>* **Largo (~55 bpm)** Distressed: "Five." LISTEN FOR THESE CUES!

Vln *mp* 3 0

El nd Shimmering doubler *mf* Drums, measured *mp*

El Trig: S14 Many things 2



Second Climax

67 *f* *mp* *rit.*

Vln

67 (With trills) *mf* *p*

Elnd

67 *8va*

El

erf

~0:25; vary rhythm and tempo

69 *accel.* *ff* *rit.*

Vln

69 Descending doublers enter, mimicking Vln's figures Increasingly dense and dissonant *f*

Elnd

69

El

erf



# We Have Less Time Than You Think - Appendix 1: PRs 1-5

Precordings 1-5 were used to general the "Low drone, shimmering" texture appearing in numerous places throughout the piece, most prominently from mm. 2 - 22 and mm. 55 - 64. These samples were fed into iZotope's Iris sampler and pitched shifted down several octaves, also lengthening them. Additionally, Iris's selective filtering was used to cut out all but certain partials, used to create both oscillation between the 1st and 2nd harmonics, the shimmering effect in the higher partials, and the whisper of the noise found between pitched partials.

The image displays five musical staves for violin parts, labeled PR1 through PR5. Each staff includes a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a dynamic marking. Above each staff is a horizontal line representing a time interval, with a duration indicated by a tilde and a number (e.g., ~0:20). Dashed arrows above these lines indicate vibrato instructions: 'no vibrato', 'slow vib', 'faster vib', 'vary speed + depth', and 'vary'. PR1 starts at *p* and ends at *mp*. PR2 starts at *mp*. PR3 starts at *mp*. PR4 starts at *pp*. PR5 starts at *mf*. The staves show musical notation with notes and stems, and some have a double bar line at the end.

PR1: ~0:20  
Violin *p* *mp*  
no vibrato → slow vib → faster vib → vary speed + depth → no vibrato → vary → slow vib → no vibrato

PR2: ~0:12  
Vln *mp*  
vary speed + depth

PR3: ~0:10  
Vln *mp*  
vary speed + depth

PR4: ~0:10  
Vln *pp*  
vary speed + depth → slow vib

PR5: ~0:05  
Vln *mf*  
no vibrato

## We Have Less Time Than You Think - Appendix 2: First Climax and PRs 6-9

Prerecordings 6-9 consist of the extra violins that make up the texture for the "first climax" of the piece, at m. 24. The first extra violin slides from the lowest note of the first chord (excluding the notes in the lead violin's line) to the highest note of the second chord, to the lowest of the third, and so on. The second extra violin slides from the highest note in the first chord to the lowest in the second chord, and so on, with the other violins taking up this pattern, or its inverse, with whichever notes remain in the chord. These were all recorded separately, and given light spectral, spacial, and filter processing. (Incidentally, many of the melodic elements found in the lead violin when playing solo are derived from the figures in these extra violins.)

**Largo (~55 bpm)**

Violin

PR6  
XVIn1)

PR7  
XVIn2)

PR8  
XVIn3)

PR9  
XVIn4)

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

*mf* *mp* *p*

*mf* *mp* *p*

*mf* *mp* *p*

Moving to sul pont, trem and dynamic flourishes/accents

## We Have Less Time Than You Think - Appendix 3: PRs 10-12

Prerecordings 10-12 were used for various textural elements. PR10 was edited and layered against itself, appearing at mm. 20-22, mm. 39-47, and at m. 72. Several transposed and lengthened versions of PR11 were filtered and layered against each other to form the bed of Section 2, mm. 27-49. The pizzicato plucks in PR12 were transposed down either two or three octaves and used to create all of the "Drum" sounds in the piece, including the intro hits in mm. 1 and 2, the climax harbinger in m. 23, the off-kilter irregular pulse in Section 2, mm. 27-48, and so on.

~0:45

PR10: Tapping fingernails: Beginning slowly and sparsely, drum fingernails on sounding board, creating *sneaky, furtive scutterings*; swell and recede in speed and volume, eventually becoming quite fast, with an overall *rit* at the end

Violin

Overall contour: ***pp*** ***mf*** ***mp*** ***f*** ***pp***

~0:30

PR11: 'Breath' tone: Muting string in several places, very *sul tasto*, bow lightly so that an unpitched 'breath' tone is produced; slide down the string slooowly...

Vln

arco

***p*** ***mf*** ***p***

~0:30

PR12: The plucked and muted metronome: ♩ = 55, straight 8ths; finger G#, and touch string lightly over A to dampen while plucking etc...

Vln

pizz.

***mf*** ***p***

# We Have Less Time Than You Think - Appendix 4: Second Climax and PRs 13-16

Prerecordings 13-16 are used in the same way PRs 6-9 are in the first climax, although the second climax, at m. 67, is transposed a half step higher, and the trills and tremolos give it a more active texture. Several versions of the lead violin lines occurring here in the third measure of the prerecording score were edited and layered over the lead violin, giving a thicker texture of descending thirds.

**Largo (~55 bpm)**

The image shows a musical score for a violin part and four prerecording (PR) tracks. The tempo is marked as **Largo (~55 bpm)**. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The score is divided into two measures. The first measure starts with a **f** dynamic for the Violin and **mf** for the PR tracks. The second measure features a **rit.** (ritardando) marking and a dynamic shift to **mp** for the Violin and **pp** for the PR tracks. The Violin part includes a trill in the first measure and a descending line with a trill in the second. The PR tracks (PR13, PR14, PR15, and PR16) each feature a trill in the first measure and a descending line with a trill in the second. The PR tracks are labeled as (XVln1), (XVln2), (XVln3), and (XVln4) respectively. The score is enclosed in a dashed box.

Violin

PR13 (XVln1)

PR14 (XVln2)

PR15 (XVln3)

PR16 (XVln4)

*f* *mf* *mf* *mf*

*mp* *pp* *pp* *pp* *p* *p* *p* *p*

*rit.*

# We Have Less Time Than You Think - Appendix 4: Second Climax and PRs 13-16

~0:25; vary rhythm and tempo

The musical score is divided into two systems. The first system contains the first violin part, and the second system contains four piano parts.

**First Violin Part:** The first system shows a melodic line starting with a triplet of eighth notes, followed by sixteenth-note runs. It includes dynamic markings *ff* and *mp*, and performance instructions *accel.*, *rit.*, and *8va*. The second system shows a sustained chord with a tremolo effect, marked with a forte *f* dynamic.

**Piano Parts:** The four piano parts in the second system each feature a sustained chord with a tremolo effect, marked with a forte *f* dynamic.