

# Composing "Break": Extended Techniques as Tools for Creating Timbral Ambiguity

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## Summary

"Break" is an ensemble piece featuring clarinet in Bb, violin, violoncello, and contrabass. This spectral piece explores the timbral range inherent to each instrument, primarily through the use of extended techniques.

## Timbre's Role in "Break"

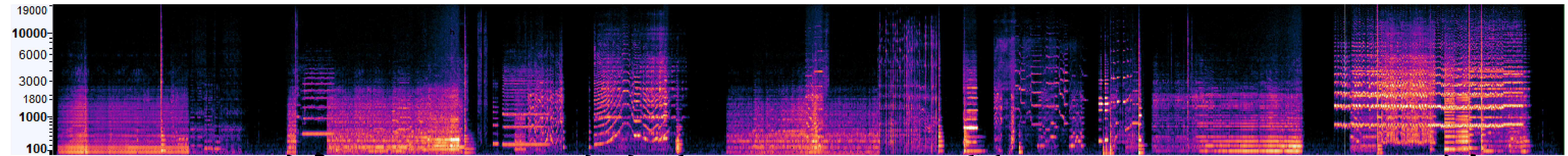
Timbre plays a crucial role in sound perception by providing unique qualities that differentiate sounds [1]. It influences the grouping of sounds into perceptual units [2]. In "Break", this influence is evident as the ensemble uses timbral variations to create diverse sonic textures.

Timbre's interaction with pitch influences how listeners perceive tension and release [3]. This interaction is explored in "Break," with the overall tonal color and perceived tension of the composition.

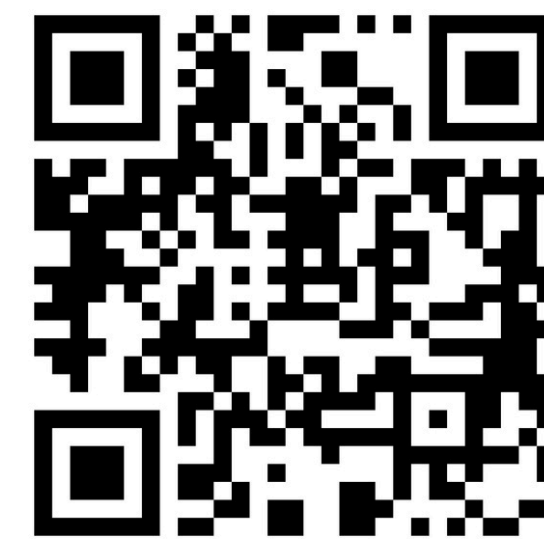
## Methodology

1. Conducting instrumental experiments with performers.
2. Documenting noteworthy sounds.
3. Structuring the composition based on selected sounds.
4. Refining decisions and composing the piece.
5. Recording and implementing necessary adjustments.
6. Concluding the composition.

The sonogram of "Break".



Example 1 (above): mm. 12-17



Scan here to see the full score.



Scan here to listen to the piece.

Example 2 (above) mm. 30-34

Example 3 (above) mm. 48-51

Example 4 (above) mm. 76-83

(Note for the clarinet part: the barrel is attached to the bell, and the performer's teeth swipe up and down on the reed)

## References

- [1] McAdams, S. (2013). Chapter 2 - Musical Timbre Perception. In *The Psychology of Music* (Third Edition, pp. 35-67). Academic Press. <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-381460-9.00002-X>.
- [2] Deutsch, D. (2013). Chapter 6 - Grouping Mechanisms in Music. In *The Psychology of Music* (Third Edition, pp. 183-248). Academic Press. <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-381460-9.00006-7>.
- [3] Thompson, W. F. (2013). Chapter 4 - Intervals and Scales. In *The Psychology of Music* (Third Edition, pp. 107-140). Academic Press. <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-381460-9.00004-3>.