

Music with Airports

for brass quartet and airfield

Eliza Brown
2021

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*Commissioned by Classical Music Indy
And supported by the Indy Arts and Culture Restart and Resilience Fund:
An Arts Council of Indianapolis program made possible by Lilly Endowment Inc.*

SCORE IN C

Instrumentation

- Trumpet, trombone, bass trombone, tuba

Duration

- Variable – ca. 8-18

Location

- Outdoors, on or near an active airfield, where planes can frequently be heard taxiing, taking off, and landing
-or-
- Indoors, with a live feed or single-take recording of an active airfield

Performance Process

Overview and modules

Music with Airports is a process of musical interaction among instrumentalists and the sounds of an active airfield. It has 13 musical modules that can be played in various orders and combinations. The modules reflect sound events recorded on the Indianapolis International Airport airfield, turning plane, wind, and bird sounds into “musicalized” interpretations or responses. Performers choose which modules to play in the moment, in response to the instrumental and airfield sounds they hear. Active listening and responding are thus very important parts of performing this piece.

Module groups and cycles

Modules are organized into four groups: taxis, takeoffs, interludes, and landings. Each group contains 2-4 numbered modules, and is assigned to a specific player for choosing and cuing:

- Taxis: trumpet
- Takeoffs: tuba
- Interludes: trombone
- Landings: bass trombone

Modules are grouped into cycles in performance. A full cycle is one module from each group, in this order: taxi, takeoff, interlude, landing. A complete performance contains >2 cycles.

Choosing and cuing modules

Each player chooses and cues modules from their assigned group. When it is their turn in the cycle, players should select a module from their group, indicate its number by holding up that number of fingers, and cue the group into the selected module. Making clear cues and smooth transitions between modules should be a substantial rehearsal focus. Players should get to know the modules in their group well so they can make informed musical choices.

Modules can be selected multiple times in one performance. A complete performance need not contain all available modules. Any module can be played in any cycle, regardless of number.

For example, a hypothetical pair of cycles could be:

Cycle 1: Taxi 1 – Takeoff 3 – Interlude 2 – Landing 4

Cycle 2: Taxi 1 – Takeoff 2 – Interlude 3 – Landing 1

Players may choose a module for any reason, so long as the selection is somehow a response to sounds heard in performance – both the modules already played, and the activity of planes and other environmental sound sources. For instance, players could choose modules with the goal of contrasting, matching, making space for, repeating, answering, challenging, complicating, honoring, contemplating, counterpointing, etc. what they hear.

Starting and ending the piece

The trumpet player is responsible for deciding and cuing the start and end points, but non-verbal communication may be used among players to make these decisions collaboratively.

To start: when everyone is ready and surrounding sounds seem opportune, the trumpet player cues a Taxi module.

To end: once two cycles have been played, any Landing module, or environmental sounds that occur *after* a Landing module, could end the piece. During the empty bar at the end of a Landing module, the trumpet player holds up a closed fist to indicate no Taxi will follow. All listen to environmental sound until the trumpet player lowers their fist and the piece is over.

Planes and other sound sources

The planes, pilots, air traffic controllers, and other sources of airfield sound are part of the piece. They do not know they are playing chamber music. They may drown out instruments, enter at the “wrong” time, or make unexpected sounds. These caprices are part of the game, and should be willingly accepted. They increase the chance that serendipitous moments of sonic magic will occur, and are invitations to respond creatively through module selection and musical interpretation.

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Taxi 1

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♩ = 60, patient

trumpet in B♭

repeat until tuba cues takeoff (attacca)

repeat until tuba cues takeoff (attacca)

tenor trombone

repeat until tuba cues takeoff (attacca)

flz.

bass trombone

repeat until tuba cues takeoff (attacca)

tuba

after at least 1 repeat, cue a takeoff (attacca)

p *mp* *p*

p *mp* *p*

p *mp* *p*

p *mp* *p*

Detailed description: This musical score is for the 'Taxi 1' section. It is written in 4/4 time with a tempo of 60 beats per minute and a 'patient' feel. The score includes parts for trumpet in B♭, tenor trombone, bass trombone, and tuba. The trumpet and tenor trombone parts feature melodic lines with dynamics of *p* (piano), *mp* (mezzo-piano), and *p*. The bass trombone part is marked 'flz.' (flourish) and consists of rhythmic patterns with dynamics of *p*, *mp*, and *p*. The tuba part is mostly silent, with a cue to take off after at least one repeat. Rehearsal marks indicate 'repeat until tuba cues takeoff (attacca)' for the trumpet, tenor trombone, and bass trombone parts.

Taxi 2

♩ = 60, patient

tpt

repeat until tuba cues takeoff (attacca)

repeat until tuba cues takeoff (attacca)

tb

repeat until tuba cues takeoff (attacca)

b.tb

repeat until tuba cues takeoff (attacca)

tba

after at least 1 repeat, cue a takeoff (attacca)

p *mp* *p*

p *mp* *p*

p *mp* *p*

Detailed description: This musical score is for the 'Taxi 2' section. It is written in 4/4 time with a tempo of 60 beats per minute and a 'patient' feel. The score includes parts for trumpet (tpt), tenor trombone (tb), bass trombone (b.tb), and tuba (tba). The trumpet and tenor trombone parts feature melodic lines with dynamics of *p* (piano), *mp* (mezzo-piano), and *p*. The bass trombone part is marked 'flz.' (flourish) and consists of rhythmic patterns with dynamics of *p*, *mp*, and *p*. The tuba part is mostly silent, with a cue to take off after at least one repeat. Rehearsal marks indicate 'repeat until tuba cues takeoff (attacca)' for the trumpet, tenor trombone, and bass trombone parts.

Takeoff 1 - little propeller

tpt

flz.

tb

flz.

b.tb

tba

p *mf* *f*

p *mf* *f*

f

Detailed description: This musical score is for the 'Takeoff 1 - little propeller' section. It is written in 5/4 time. The score includes parts for trumpet (tpt), tenor trombone (tb), bass trombone (b.tb), and tuba (tba). The trumpet part features a melodic line starting with a flourish (flz.) and dynamics of *f* (forte). The tenor trombone and bass trombone parts are marked 'flz.' and consist of rhythmic patterns with dynamics of *p* (piano), *mf* (mezzo-forte), and *f*. The tuba part is mostly silent, with a flourish (flz.) and dynamics of *f* at the end. Rehearsal marks indicate 'after at least 1 repeat, cue a takeoff (attacca)' for the tenor trombone and bass trombone parts.

repeat until tbn cues interlude

cue an interlude after any number of repeats

repeat until tbn cues interlude

repeat until tbn cues interlude

blow air through instrument irregular trill with valve 2

tr ○○○○

tr ○○○○

Detailed description: This system contains four staves. The Tpt staff starts with a *mp* dynamic. The Tbn staff has a *flz* marking and dynamics of *mp*, *p*, *mp*, and *p*. The b.tbn staff has dynamics of *mp*, *p*, *mp*, and *p*. The tba staff has a *flz.* marking, triplets, and dynamics of *mp*, *p*, and *mp*. There are trill markings with four dots (○○○○) on the tba staff.

Takeoff 2 - titanic jet

cuivré → norm.

cuivré → norm.

irregular trills with slide

tr

tr

tr

Detailed description: This section features four staves. The Tpt staff has dynamics of *mf*, *ff*, and *p*, with markings for *cuivré* and *norm.*. The Tbn staff has dynamics of *p*, *mf*, *ff*, and *p*, with markings for *cuivré* and *norm.*. The b.tbn staff has dynamics of *p*, *pp*, *mf*, and *ff*, with markings for *flz*, *cuivré*, *norm.*, and irregular trills with slide. The tba staff has triplets and a *ff* dynamic.

repeat until tbn cues interlude

cue an interlude after any number of repeats

repeat until tbn cues interlude

repeat until tbn cues interlude

blow air through instrument on "sh" sound vary oral cavity shape to filter sound ad lib.

blow air through instrument on "sh" sound vary oral cavity shape to filter sound ad lib.

increasingly airy sound

all air, no pitch

tr ○○○○

tr ○○○○

Detailed description: This system contains four staves. The Tpt staff starts with a *pp* dynamic. The Tbn staff has a *mp* dynamic. The b.tbn staff has dynamics of *mf* and *mp*. The tba staff has dynamics of *mf* and *p*. There are trill markings with four dots (○○○○) on the tba staff.

Takeoff 3 - propeller into wind

Score for Takeoff 3 - propeller into wind. Instruments: tpt, tbn, b.tbn, tba. Time signature: 5/4.

Dynamic markings: *mp*, *mf*, *f*.

Performance instructions: *flz*, *5*, *6*.

Score for the interlude section. Instruments: tpt, tbn, b.tbn, tba. Time signature: 4/4.

Dynamic markings: *mf*, *mp*, *fp*, *p*.

Performance instructions: *increase air in sound*, *diffuse, airy sound*, *repeat until tbn cues interlude*, *cue an interlude after any number of repeats*.

Takeoff 4 - bird rides wake turbulence

Score for Takeoff 4 - bird rides wake turbulence. Instruments: tpt, tbn, b.tbn, tba. Time signature: 5/4.

Dynamic markings: *mp*, *f*, *sub.*, *mf*, *flz*, *mp*, *f*, *fp*, *mf*, *mp*, *p*, *irregular tremolo*, *fuzzy pitch is ok!*, *like an echo*.

Performance instructions: *blow air through instrument on "sh" sound vary oral cavity shape to filter sound ad lib.*, *irregular tremolo fuzzy pitch is ok!*, *like an echo*.

harmon mute

repeat until tbn cues interlude

cue an interlude after any number of repeats

repeat until tbn cues interlude (1st time only) all air, no pitch

repeat until tbn cues interlude

mostly air sound, little pitch

mostly air sound, little pitch

p

p

p

tr

mp

Interlude 1 - across time and space

molto sostenuto (minimal vibrato)

p

mp

p

mp

mf *mp*

p

mp *p* *mp*

p

mp

mf *mp*

b.tbn cues landing "in time" during these measures

b.tbn cues landing "in time" during these measures

cue a landing "in time" during these measures.

b.tbn cues landing "in time" during these measures

mf

p

mp

f

mf

mp

f

mf

mp

f

mf

mp

f

fiz

Interlude 2 - chorale

poco piu mosso (minimal vibrato)

Musical score for Interlude 2 - chorale, measures 1-4. The score is in 4/4 time and features four parts: trumpet (tpt), trombone (tbn), baritone trombone (b.tbn), and tuba (tba). The tempo is marked 'poco piu mosso (minimal vibrato)'. Dynamics range from mezzo-piano (mp) to mezzo-forte (mf). The music consists of sustained notes with some melodic movement.

b.tbn cues landing "in time" during these measures

Musical score for Interlude 2 - chorale, measures 5-8. The tempo is marked 'rall.' and changes to a quarter note equal to 60 (♩ = 60). Dynamics range from forte (f) to piano (p). The music features more complex phrasing and dynamics. The tuba part includes a cadenza-like passage.

b.tbn cues landing "in time" during these measures

cue a landing "in time" during these measures.

b.tbn cues landing "in time" during these measures

Interlude 3 - air cadenza

10-60" b. tbn determines duration by listening and cues a landing

long gentle swells of air sound ad lib. - adjust air timbre and dynamics in response to environment - leave space between swells

tpt

10-60" b. tbn determines duration by listening and cues a landing

long gentle swells of air sound ad lib. - adjust air timbre and dynamics in response to environment - leave space between swells

tbn

10-60" determine duration by listening and cue a landing

long gentle swells of air sound ad lib. - adjust air timbre and dynamics in response to environment - leave space between swells

b.tbn

10-60" b. tbn determines duration by listening and cues a landing

air and valve cadenza: create intermittent, fluttery, irregular air gestures by blowing air through instrument and moving any/all valves gestures can reflect sounds you hear around you or add new sounds to the environment.

tba

Interlude 4 - airfield cadenza

ALL TACET 10-60" b. tbn determines duration by listening and cues a landing

tpt

tbn

b.tbn

tba

Landing 1 - Doppler effect

tpt

tbn

b.tbn

tba

p ————— *f* ————— *mf*

p ————— *f* ————— *mf*

wild, fast trill *mf* ————— *f* ————— *mf*

f poss. *f* *mf*

tpt

tbn

b.tbn

tba

mp ————— *p*

mp *p*

blow air through instrument on "sh" sound
vary oral cavity shape in quarter note pulse

mp *p*

slow, irregular trill

p [3]

cue a taxi or end of piece

tpt cues a taxi or end of piece

tpt cues a taxi or end of piece

tpt cues a taxi or end of piece

Landing 2 - engine counterpoint

trumpet (tpt) part: *mf*, *mp*, *f*, *mf*. Includes markings for *cuivré* and *norm.*

tenor trombone (tbn) part: *mf*, *mp*, *f*, *mf*. Includes markings for *cuivré* and *norm.*

baritone trombone (b.tbn) part: *mf*, *f*. Includes markings for *cuivré* and *norm.*

tuba (tba) part: *f*, *mf*. Includes marking for *rips*.

trumpet (tpt) part: *mf*, *mp*. Includes markings for *vib.* and *(non vib.)*

tenor trombone (tbn) part: *mp*, *p*

baritone trombone (b.tbn) part: *mf*, *mp*, *p*. Includes marking for *flz.*

tuba (tba) part: *mp*, *p*. Includes marking for *melt into air sound* and *air only*

trumpet (tpt) part: *p*, *pp*. Includes marking for *cue a taxi or end of piece*

tenor trombone (tbn) part: *cue a taxi or end of piece*

baritone trombone (b.tbn) part: *mp*, *p poss.*. Includes marking for *cue a taxi or end of piece*

tuba (tba) part: *cue a taxi or end of piece*. Includes instruction: *blow air through instrument on "sh" sound vary oral cavity shape slowly to filter sound*

Landing 3 - gear friction

tpt *f* *ff*

tbn *f* 3 5 5 5 *ff*

b.tbn *f* *ff*

tba *f* 3 3 3 *ff* flz

tpt *mp* *molto vib.*

soar!

exuberant glisses down - gesture and contour important; pitch, rhythm, sound irregularities welcome

tbn *mp* 3

exuberant glisses down - gesture and contour important; pitch, rhythm, sound irregularities welcome

b.tbn *mp*

tba flz (norm.) *f* *mf* *p*

tpt *mp* *p* *p* *mf* non vib. poco vib. cue a taxi or end of piece

tbn *mp* *p* *p* *mf* tpt cues a taxi or end of piece

b.tbn *mp* *p* *mf* tpt cues a taxi or end of piece

tba *mp* *p* *mf* tpt cues a taxi or end of piece

Landing 4 - little propeller glides in

blow air through instrument on "sh" sound
vary oral cavity shape in given rhythm

mp < > tr (1st valve trill) tr (4th valve) tr (1st valve trill)

f poss. > < f > < > f poss. >

harmon mute

tpt cues a taxi or end of piece

tbn cues a taxi or end of piece

tpt cues a taxi or end of piece

tongue rams (articulate without buzzing; air sound only)

f poss. > < p < > f poss.