

# HOUSE

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For Flute and Electronics

-DOUGLAS MCCAUSLAND-



## Program Note:

Written in early 2017, *House* is a work for solo flute and electronics that reflective of, and influenced by Mark Z. Danielewski's 2000 novel *House of Leaves*. Additionally, this piece was written as part of a collaboration with Michigan-based flutist Alex Hoelzen, whose guidance for flute technique was absolutely critical for the piece's creation.

When reading *House of Leaves*, the reader develops an intimate relationship with the text as a direct result of Danielewski's experimentation with the relationships between language and visual media, as well as his approach to the structure of the novel's narrative, which often disregards or defies common syntactic relationships. These qualities of the novel directly influenced the creation of *House*, and led me to experiment with the piece's formal scheme in a way that was reflective of the novel. Originally, this piece was intended to be modular 'fragments', with sections being performed in any order, and the inclusion or exclusion of sections being controlled explicitly by the performer. While this aspect of the piece was somewhat lost over the process of its creation, the end result is a piece that interlocks excerpted (and adapted) spoken segments of the original novel with musical fragments of flute and electronics. These fragments are not explicitly representational of the text, but they are reflective of the text and the experience of reading Danielewski's work. Musically, these fragments explore different timbral qualities of the flute beyond the standard repertoire of techniques. As such, the sound and gestural implications of techniques such as whistle-tones, text spoken through the instrument, as well percussive plosives and fricatives, formed the building blocks of the piece to create macro-scale ideas out of micro-organized timbral events. The result is a piece that is not excruciatingly demanding of the player, while still achieving a rich sonic palette through acoustic timbral exploration and real-time electronic manipulation of the flute material.

The electronics for *House* are a mixture between triggered sections of fixed-media track, and real-time computer processing of the flute and spoken text. All of the electronics are performed using a patch created by the composer in Max/MSP 7.

## Performance Notes and Optional Patch Operation:

Time-stamps paired with brief descriptions of the electroacoustic sound events and live-processes are provided within the score in order to aid the performer in understanding the electronics, and how their role as a performer interacts with the electronics. In performance with the patch, the flute should ideally still be lightly amplified through the same sound system used to perform the electronics; this serves to help the two voices blend more cohesively and to aid in balance. This amplification can be achieved within the patch (which negates the need of a mixing console if desired), or with the use of a mixing board. The audio levels for performance should generally be set *respectably* loud in order to allow events to have the impact desired, but not to a degree that creates a dangerous listening environment.

Levels of various processes within the patch have been set preemptively as best as they can, but adjustments can be made within the patch, and having a mixer to control audio levels on the fly is recommended for optimum performance. Optionally, a performer can control the patch via MIDI; if this is desired you may contact the composer at 'domccau@gmail.com' to pursue a patch specified for a MIDI controller or other device. One version of the patch exists which is already optimized to utilize a Korg NanoKontrol2 MIDI controller, with faders assigned to mixing levels within the patch. After initial setup, operating the patch requires minimal action from a patch operator, such as spacebar presses and a few mouse-clicks. A master volume control has been integrated for overall control of patch volume, this starts at a default level of '0' and must be raised before the patch can be heard; this parameter is controlled with the master fader within the patch – or with the rightmost fader on the Korg NanoKontrol2.

To start the piece, the following steps must be taken:

1. Open the patch in Max/MSP
2. Turn on 'Digital Signal Processing' (lower right-hand corner)
3. Adjust volumes to desired level if preemptively set levels are undesirable for the performance (as seen in the mixer section at the center of the patch)
4. Press the number key for the desired fragment (1, 2, 3, etc.), and then the space bar to begin each fragment; at this point, the space bar will advance cues within for the duration of the fragment.
5. During sections of spoken text, the keys 'q, w, e, r, t, y, u, and i' all trigger different ambient soundscapes or materials to augment the spoken text.
6. Continue...

-At the end of the piece...-

1. End with the final cue.
2. After final fadeout, lower output volume
3. Turn off "Digital Signal Processing" (lower right-hand corner)
4. Close the patch

Note: In performances utilizing the patch, it is HIGHLY recommended to thoroughly test performance beforehand. If the patch starts to generate feedback the volume can be lowered using the built in mixer. If a full failure of the patch should occur, cease digital signal processing immediately to avoid damage to audio equipment.

**Technical Requirements:**

The patch for this piece is not CPU-intensive, and though originally designed to run on a Mac platform running OS X Mavericks or newer, should be operable on most platforms that can run Max/MSP 7. Additionally the performance will require an appropriate microphone to amplify the flute performer, USB audio interface with a minimum of one channel in and two channels out, and finally a minimum of two speakers (if possible, it is encouraged for the work to be diffused to a larger speaker setup). The speakers should be placed in the front left and right corners of the room, so as to complement the overall image. Any questions or technical concerns can be directed to the composer at 'domccau@gmail.com'.

*Any* questions or concerns in regards to the successful performance of *House* can be directed to the composer at 'domccau@gmail.com'.

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# HOUSE

*This is not for you*

Douglas McCausland  
Alex Hoelzen

**Frenzied, manic** (♩ = 150 app.)

Elapsed Time

**Alto Flute**

**Electronics**

*In time* →

*ad-lib resonant key pops, should be clearly heard*

*(HT) tongue ram*

*flutter*

*(HT)*

*\*ad-lib low pitch*

*ad-lib aggressively sung gliss while playing note, pitch is general*

*slowly*

*air sound through flute*

*"hollow" sound*

*lip pizzicato, close to mic*

*Improvise high whistle-tones directly into mic, should be clearly picked up...*

*FM: Loud distortion shot, fades...*

*FM: High-tones fade in*

C. 1 LP: Spectral stretched 'K'

C. 2 LP: Rev.

C. 3 LP: Delay

C. 4 LP: Glitch / stutter processing

C. 5 LP: Delay, spectral stretching fades in...

C. 6 LP: Significant stretching and rev

C. 7

**A**

*flutter, match FM*

*fast*

*ad-lib aggressively sung gliss while playing note, pitch is general*

*niente*

*mf*

*ff*

*FM: Impact followed by modulated tones*

*FM: 'Impact' followed by distorted synth sweeps*

*FM: 'Click' hits followed by drone texture of a consonant open-voiced chord*

*Improvise wandering / free melodic line in E lydian that builds from the first given pitches. Should feel loose in regards to time, and strongly utilize the double leading tones of A-sharp and D-sharp.*

*A sudden juxtaposition, this is open for interpretation.*

*lip pizzicato, close to mic*

*harmonic slur*

*lower pitch is sung*

*FM: Low repeated bass tones at 68 BPM, higher hits notated accordingly - accompanied by textured synthesis.*

*LP: Low harmonization and delay*

C. 8 LP: Rev.

C. 9 LP: Spectral stretching feeds into delay

C. 10

C. 11

**B**

**Steady, unrelenting** (♩ = 68 app.)

*In time* →

*unpitched flutter*

*ad-lib upward sung gliss - lip pizzicato, close to mic*

*harmonic slur*

*lower pitch is sung*

*FM: Low repeated bass tones at 68 BPM, higher hits notated accordingly - accompanied by textured synthesis.*

*LP: Low harmonization and delay*

C. 10

C. 11

Slower (♩ = 58 app.)

C free-time until end...

Out of time →

ad-lib aggressively sung gliss while playing note, pitch is general

ad-lib downward sung gliss

'jet whistle'

*ff*

*fff*

*mp*

C. 12 LP: Rev.

C. 13 LP: Glitch / stutter processing

FM: Sudden tempo drop, aggressive synthesis sweeps - industrial

FM: Textured chords slowly fade out, with low rhythmic pulse

The score is written on two staves. The top staff is in treble clef with a 3/4 time signature. It begins with a vocal line marked 'ff' (fortissimo) and includes an 'ad-lib aggressively sung gliss' annotation. The melody consists of eighth and sixteenth notes with sharp signs indicating glissandi. A second vocal line follows, marked 'fff' (fortississimo), with an 'ad-lib downward sung gliss' annotation. This line includes a triplet of eighth notes and a 'jet whistle' annotation. The tempo is marked 'Slower (♩ = 58 app.)'. A box labeled 'C' indicates 'free-time until end...'. The bottom staff is in treble clef and contains electronic textures. It starts with a double bar line and a thick line, followed by a series of eighth notes. A section labeled 'C. 12 LP: Rev.' shows a series of eighth notes. A section labeled 'C. 13 LP: Glitch / stutter processing' shows a series of eighth notes with a 'jet whistle' annotation. The texture is marked 'mp' (mezzo-piano). The score ends with a double bar line.

*p*

*pp*

The score is written on two staves. The top staff is in treble clef and contains electronic textures. It begins with a series of eighth notes, followed by a section marked 'p' (piano). The texture is marked 'pp' (pianissimo). The score ends with a double bar line. The bottom staff is in treble clef and contains electronic textures. It begins with a series of eighth notes, followed by a section marked 'p' (piano). The texture is marked 'pp' (pianissimo). The score ends with a double bar line.



# HOUSE

The Minotaur

Douglas McCausland  
Alex Hoelzen

**Monolithic, ominous** (♩ = 60 app.)

Elapsed Time

12 seconds 8 seconds 6 seconds

Alto Flute

hard initial tongue, flutter  
*fp*

slowly transition into sustained air sound directly into flute, no whistle-tone

unpitched flutter

while fluttering, sing while following pitch contour of gesture - sung part should slowly decrease in intensity

*ff*

*mf*

normale →

C. 1 LP: Substantial Reverb Processing

C. 2 LP: Downward pitch-shift

C. 3 LP: Significant reverb resumes

Electronics

FM: Low frequency impact followed by droning bass heavy texture

FM: Low frequency impact followed by grating evolving timbral 'block'

8 seconds 6 seconds 4 seconds

Improvise high whistle-tones directly into mic, should be clearly picked up, tones should slowly decrease in intensity...

let note start slowly, flutter

flutter, slow vib

normale

(HT) tongue ram

*mp*

*f*

*p*

*mp*

*fp*

*f*

C. 4 LP: Delay processing fades in slowly...

C. 5 LP: Delay and reverb processing fade, allowing flute voice to be heard more prominently.

FM: Thick timbre slowly evolves to reveal high frequency content and low repeated mechanical sound...

4 seconds 4 seconds 5 seconds \* 9 seconds

flutter (HT) tongue ram sim. (HT) tongue ram

*mf*

*mp*

*p*

wait for mechanical noise to completely fade...

flutter

ad lib as needed

gliss. down

slow vib

*mf*

*mp*

C. 6

FM: Aggressive distortion followed by droning synth texture, other 'voices' continue to enter as the harmonic scape evolves.

6 seconds 6 seconds 8 seconds 6 seconds 5 seconds

flutter, fade into whistle tones

gradually begin flutter

slow harmonic gliss, maintain flutter if possible

gliss up, and down

*p*

*mf*

*mp*

*mf*

*f*

(HT) tongue ram

*p*

FM: New 'voice' enters with distortion

FM: Sim. until cue 7

12 seconds

while fluttering, sing while following pitch contour of gesture - sung part should slowly decrease in intensity

normale →

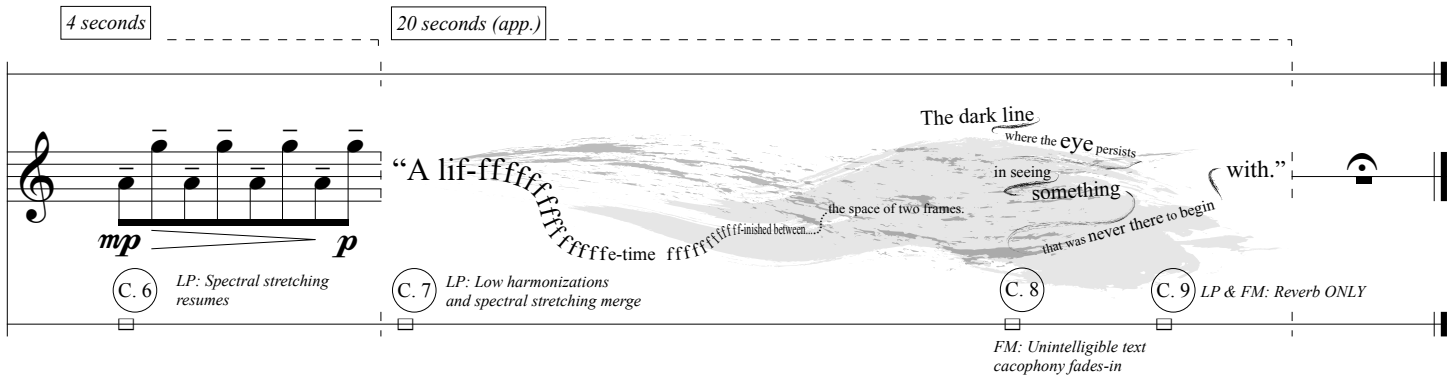
*mf*

Improvise high whistle-tones directly into mic, should be clearly picked up, tones should slowly decrease in intensity...

Match with evolving FM, as low frequencies fade

(C. 7) LP: Granular processing into reverb

FM: Low frequency impact followed by grating evolving timbral 'block'




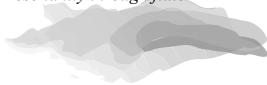
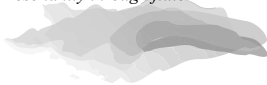

# HOUSE



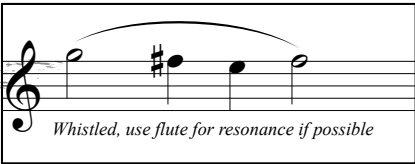

An Unremarkable White Screen

Douglas McCausland

Alex Hoelzen

**Ambient, nebulous ( free time )**

Elapsed Time	14 seconds (app.)	8 seconds (app.)	20 seconds (app.)
Flute	 <p>Whistled, use flute for resonance if possible</p>	<p>Repeat whistled tones 3x</p> 	<p>Breathe slowly and resonantly through flute</p>  <p>Improvise high whistle-tones directly into mic, should be clearly picked up...</p> 
Electronics	<p>C. 1 LP: Substantial Reverb Processing</p>	<p>C. 2 LP: Reverbed Delay Processing</p>	<p>C. 3 LP: Subtle pitch-shifting</p>

8 seconds (app.)	20 seconds (app.)	8 seconds (app.)
<p>Breathe slowly and resonantly through flute</p> 	<p>Improvise high whistle-tones directly into mic, slowly transition to following...</p> 	 <p>Whistled, use flute for resonance if possible</p> <p>Breathe slowly and resonantly through flute (2x)</p> 
<p>C. 4 LP: Spectrally pitch-shifted timbre</p>	<p>C. 5 LP: Spectrally pitch-shifted timbre</p>	<p>C. 6 LP: Processing END</p>