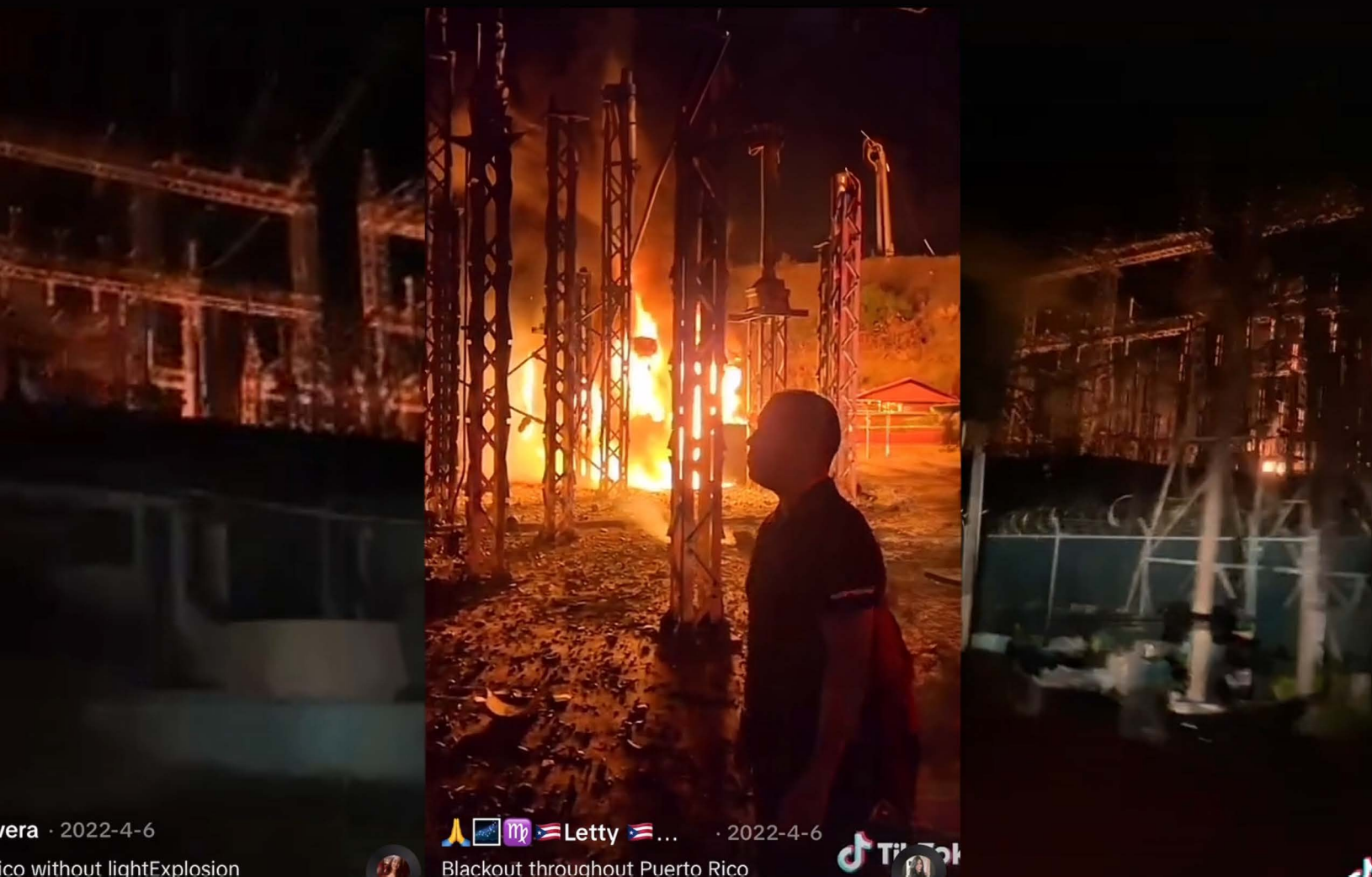




BLACKOUT| Christian Quiñones (2023-2024)
for chamber ensemble, motion sensors, visuals, and live electronics



Program Notes:

Since 2020 Puerto Rico has been experiencing constant power outages. A combination of a very old power grid, continuous damage caused by natural disasters and the lack of maintenance by the first private company to take over the power grid, have made these Blackouts a part of the everyday life for a lot of people. Power generators have become a necessity and uncertainty a common sentiment.

The friction between LUMA Energy (an American-Canadian company) and Puerto Rico have become a parallel to the current colonial situation. From press conferences where they refuse to speak in Spanish or even have translators, white-savior complex attitude, to a virtual monopoly for what was supposed to create a competitive market, for many LUMA has become a reminder of the status of the country.

This piece explores a lot of my own memories during those constant power outages. The complete blackouts where you could only hear the nature outside, the mechanical hum of all the nearby generators, the constant light flickering due to low voltage, and sudden bursts of light and sounds as the power would come back on momentarily.

All of these memories are examined through two proximity and movement sensors that I made. In the piece, the two sensors translate movement into light and sound. A small rotation or putting your hand in front of it, completely transforming the soundscape into sounds that I associate with those memories. Accompanied and enhanced by the rest of the ensemble, the sensors highlight the idea of proximity (to other people or humanness) as a light source.

DURATION:

9 - 10 mins.

INSTRUMENTATION:

Flute

Bass Clarinet

Sensor 1 (Soprano)

Sensor 2 (Percussion: Bass Drum)

Violin

PERFORMANCE SETUP:

It is highly recommended that the ensemble is amplified for this piece.

Equipment:

- 2 motion and proximity sensors (provided by the composer)
- Audio Interface (2 outs minimum, 4 outs recommended)
- Laptop
- Projector
- DMX Lights (with an ENTTEC Box, this can be provided by the composer)
- Ableton Live (a Trial version will work)
- TouchDesigner (a Trial version will work)
- 2 Speakers, placed in front of the ensemble

About the motion sensors:

This piece makes extensive use of two custom-made motion and proximity sensors. The sensors measure relative movement, acceleration of the performer's hand, and proximity to any object.

For a demo of the sensors [click here](#)

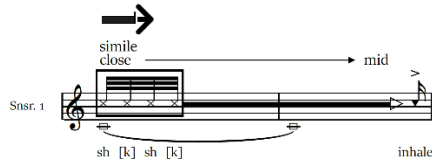
These sensors are used in the piece to produce the live electronics, trigger the DMX lights and the live visuals. **The sensors are utilized by two members of the ensemble, the soprano, and the percussionist.**

DISTANCE:

If you **cover the sensor** with your hand this will **mute** the sound (and turn off the lights). Every time there are rests remember to mute the sensor, unless otherwise indicated.

The words **close**, **mid**, and **far** are used to describe how far your hand should be from the sensor.

NOTE: the audio processing is *not* random. Therefore, the direction and proximity indicated in the score is very important to achieve each sound and texture. Apart from that there is still room for improvising and making your own sounds, as long as you're mostly following the general directions!

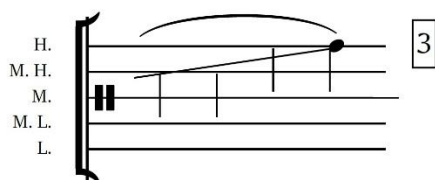


PERCUSSION SENSOR:

This sensor **only registers proximity**. Because of this, it is notated differently, where each staff line represents how close your hand should be to the sensor (labeled as low, mid-low, medium, medium-high, and high).

To **mute** the sensor, just remove your hand. If the sensor is not detecting an object, it will not play any sounds or generate any visuals.

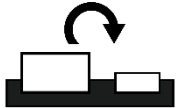
The **boxed numbers** indicate when you must press *spacebar* in the computer to trigger the next visual cues and to change the 'sound set' that the sensors are utilizing. You will have a visual counter on the computer screen, so you can always know in which cue the piece is currently in!



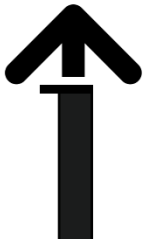
NOTATION NOTES:



Default position of the sensor (both sensor pointing to your music stand)



Rotate sensor on the indicated direction (left or right)



Sensor pointing up (the two tiny sensors should now be pointing towards the ceiling)



Sensor pointing down



Sensor pointing right



Move sensor in an erratic manner (point into all directions quickly)

transposed score

for TAK Ensemble

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A

18''

Flute

Bass Clarinet

Sensor 1

Bass Drum

Violin

First sample: "what is happening with Puerto Rico's power grid?" (in an American AI accent). Second sample: "the power went out, ladies and gentlemen do not worry, if there is no electricity we'll light up the room with candles!"

Tense, Lights Out! ♩ = 80

percussive pitchless sounds. Blend in with the high-frequency electronics (doesn't have to be those syllables, that is just a suggestion). You don't have to be in-sync with Charlotte

pitchless air sound

tongue ram (T.R)

2

Fl.

sh [k] sh [k]

fp

pitchless slap tongue

ff

ff *p*

B. Cl.

ff *p*

Snsr. 1

close

sh [k] sh [k]

mid *f*

fp *fp* *fp* *ff*

inhale

a [r] a [r]

Sensor

2 superball, blend in with the bassy electronics

mp *mf*

B. Drm.

scratch tone

ff *pp*

pp *ff*

Vln

fp *ff*

pitchless air sound

tongue ram (T.R.)

'glitchy' tremolo (tremolo as fast as possible with erratic dynamics tip of the bow, blend in with the electronics)

* the notes inside the parantheses indicate suggested notes that also appear on the electronics, but feel free to choose other notes

Fl. simile
sh [k] sh [k]

B. Cl. 'sh' air sound *ff* *p* *ff* sh air sound

Snsr. 1 simile close mid as in m. 5
sh [k] sh [k] inhale a [r]

B. Drm. B. Drm. Sensor *mp* *mf*

Vln. *ff* *pp* *pp* *ff* *ffp* *f* simile

'glitchy' erratic articulation

this is just here to give you an idea, it doesn't have to be these exact rhythms

alternate between, flutter, double tonguing, and ordinario, airy, and pitchless sounds

(flutter)

12

Fl.

sh [k] sh [k]

fp < *fp* < *f* < *fp* < *f* < *ff*

B. Cl.

ff

close → mid remove you hand

Snsr. 1

sh [k] sh [k]

(drop mallet so you can trigger the next electronic cue, take your time)

H.
M. H.
M.
M. L.
L.

B. Drm.

mp

f

Vln

ff < *pp*

Kingdom Hearts Intermission

B

Fl. 17

B. Cl.

Snsr. 1

H.
M. H.
M. L.
L.

Vln

point up

simile

close

mp

B. Drm. 3 4

gliss.

ff

'sh'

fp *fp* *f* *fp*

swell multiphonic that contains G

ff mid

Sensor (freeze sample sound when the sensor is off)

ff

ff *p* *ff*

ff *fp* *ff*

(same multiphonic)

f *ff*

similar to the 'glitchy' tremolo, but adding ricochet

pp *ffp* *ff*

f *pp* *f*

22

T.R

3 6

26

Fl.

B. Cl.

Snsr. 1

H.
M. H.
M.
M. L.
L.

B. Drm.

Vln

fp *fp* *f*
(same multiphonic)

f *pp*

swipe from left to right

ff

(oscillate your hand in the middle)

(scratch tone gliss)

ffp *fff*

ffp *ff*

f *pp* *f*

30

Fl.

B. Cl.

Snsr. 1

H.
M. H.
M.
M. L.
L.

Vln

B. Drm.

Sensor

ff

ff

mf swiie from right to left

ff

ffp

35

Fl.

B. Cl.

Snsr. 1

H.
M. H.
M.
M. L.
L.

Vln

B. Drm.

Sensor

ff

ff

ff

mp

f

ppp

loud and nastier multiphonic
(if it doesn't have G that's fine)

move the sensor erratically

move the sensor erratically

jet

C

2/4

4/4

(overblown)

Fl.

T.R.

D

B. Cl.

fp — *ff*

Snsr. 1

voice gets more erratic and intense use a lot of breath

unpitched percussive sound it doesn't have to be those exact same syllables

Sensor

5

B. Drm.

Vln

ff *gliss.* *ff* *arco* *ffp* *ff* *ff* *gliss.* *ff* *pp*

44

Fl.

ff — *p* *ff* — *p* *f*

B. Cl.

ff

Snsr. 1

[k] [a] sh

H. M. H. M. L. L.

Vln

ff *gliss.* *ff* *gliss.* *mf* *3* *ff* *gliss.* *pp*

48

Fl.

B. Cl.

Snsr. 1

6 Intermission

H.
M. H.
M.
M. L.
L.

Vln

15 s.

E

ff

fff

draw a circle

point down

7

wild gliss up and down

6

ffp

fff

50

Fl.

B. Cl.

Snsr. 1

H.
M. H.
M.
M. L.
L.

Vln

F Freeze Intermission 20 s.

G Bitcrush Drone 10 s.

COVER Sensor: it will freeze the last sound

Quickly uncover and cover sensor to change the frozen sample

8

52 H Menacing

Fl. *f* > *p* split tone *f* > *p* *f* > *p* split tone *fp* <

B. Cl. *f* *pp* < *ff*

Snsr. 1 exhale sh [k] [r]

H. M. H. M. M. L. L.

Vln *ff* > *pp* *ff* > *pp* *mp* < *ff* > *pp*

56 T.R.

Fl. *ff* > *p* *f* > *p* *ffp* *ff*

B. Cl. split tone *f* pitchless air sound

Snsr. 1 exhale sa sh [k]

H. M. H. M. M. L. L.

Vln *ff* > *pp* *ff* > *pp*

59

I

Fl.

B. Cl.

Snsr. 1

H.
M. H.
M.
M. L.
L.

Vln

airly, but with a bit of pitch

f > *p*

pp 6 6 *ff*

close mid

sh [a] [t] sh [k]

9

ff > *pp* *ff* > *pp* *ff* > *pp* *ff* > *pp*

62

Fl.

B. Cl.

Snsr. 1

H.
M. H.
M.
M. L.
L.

Vln

f

close mid

[a] [p] [k] [r] erratic [æ]

ff > *pp* *ff* > *pp* *ff* > *mf* *ff* > *pp*

gliss.

65

Fl.

f > *p* *f* > *p* *ffp* < *ff*

B. Cl.

pp 6 6

Snsr. 1

(sensor: move erratically) simile

[æ] [æ] [æ]

H.
M. H.
M. M.
M. L.
L.

Vln

ff > *pp* *mp* < *ff* > *pp* *ff* > *pp* *ff* > *pp* *ffp*

68

Fl.

fp < *ff* *fp* < *ff*

B. Cl.

ff *ffp* < *ff* < *ff* *f* > *p*

Snsr. 1

explore: full range of the sensor *fp* < *ff* *fp* < *ff*

[i] [i]

H.
M. H.
M. M.
M. L.
L.

ord.

Vln

fff *ff* > *pp* *f* *p*

70

Fl.

fp *ff* *fp* *ff* *f* *p*

B. Cl.

ff *ffp* *ff*

Snsr. 1

fp *ff* *fp* *ff*

H.
M. H.
M.
M. L.
L.

Vln

ff *pp* *f* *mf*

72

Fl.

fp *ff* *fp* *ff*

B. Cl.

pp *ff* *ffp* *ff*

Snsr. 1

fp *ff* *fp* *ff*

H.
M. H.
M.
M. L.
L.

Vln

ff *pp* *f* *p* *ff*

K TikTok Intermission

Visuals: TikTok videos of the power grid on fire

10

74

Fl.

fp *ff*

B. Cl.

pp *ff* *ffp* *ff*

Snsr. 1

fp *ff*

[i]

H.
M. H.
M.
M. L.
L.

Vln

ff *pp* *mf* *ff*

3

L Night Music

15 s.

11

77

Fl.

B. Cl.

Snsr. 1

H.
M. H.
M.
M. L.
L.

Vln

78

Fl.

fp *fp* *f*

B. Cl.

f

Explore: slowly morph sounds, dovetail from the electronics

Snstr. 1

f *f* *f* *f*

Explore: slowly morph sounds

12

H.
M. H.
M.
M. L.
L.

'glitchy' erratic tremolo like at the beginning (not at the tip of the bow)
doesn't have to be these exact rhythms, feel free to interact with the electronics

Vln

fp *fp* *fp* *fp* *ff* *fp* *ff*

"Power is back"
"It was about time"

81

Fl.

fp < *ff*

fp < *f*

B. Cl.

alternate ad lib between ord. trill and half-air trill

fp < *mf* < *fp* < *mf*

shimmering, flickering

Snsr. 1

f

H.
M. H.
M.
M. L.
L.

13

Vln

(Fp sempre)

3

ff

84

Fl.

fp < *fp* < *ff*

B. Cl.

pp

"only Puerto Rico understands"
followed by a black screen

Snsr. 1

14

15

H.
M. H.
M.
M. L.
L.

ord.

III
IV

gliss.

(nat. harmonic gliss)

gliss.

fp < *fp*

ffp < *ff*

90

Fl.

B. Cl.

Snsr. 1

H.
M. H.
M.
M. L.
L.

Vln

fp $\leftarrow$ *f* *p*

" look, how awful! Everything is going to get damaged because of the low voltage"

16 17

ord. 3

96

Fl.

B. Cl.

Snsr. 1

H.
M. H.
M.
M. L.
L.

Vln

fp $\leftarrow$ *fp* $\leftarrow$ *f*

(no flickering trills)

mp

f

18

senza vib. $\rightarrow$ wide vib. (crazy improv)

100

Fl.

B. Cl.

Snsr. 1

H.
M. H.
M. L.
L.

Vln

fp *fp* *ff*

(mp)

ord.

senza vib.

3

3

103

Fl.

B. Cl.

Snsr. 1

H.
M. H.
M. L.
L.

Vln

f

(keep moving the sensor, the patch will automatically mute you)

19 20 21 22 23 24

wide vib. (crazy improv)

108

Fl.

B. Cl.

Snsr. 1

25

H.
M. H.
M.
M. L.
L.

Vln

N O P Q

5 s. 10 s. 10 s. 5 s.

111

Fl.

B. Cl.

Snsr. 1

26

H.
M. H.
M.
M. L.
L.

Vln

mp

look for a steady tone
very close → a bit further → mid → (bass starts emerging) → far (stay here)

breathe as needed

115

R 5 s. S 20 s.

Fl.

B. Cl.

Snsr. 1

27

H.
M. H.
M.
M. L.
L.

Vln

f

ff

slowly rotate to point right point right point up

U **Improvise with the electronics**

1 min.

T **Drum Break**

20 s.

glitchy erratic articulation using these pitches in no particular order. Alternate freely between pitch and non-pitched in an active and chaotic way (blend-in with the electronics)

117

Fl.

B. Cl.

Snsr. 1

H.
M. H.
M.
M. L.
L.

28

29

Vln

flickering 'glitching' tremolo with the following pitches feel free to include any other pitches if needed as ornamentation. Alternate freely between pitch and non-pitched in an active and chaotic way (blend-in with the electronics)

start reading text at a frenetic and urgent pace. Change between whispering, reading and singing ad lib. Feel free to make pauses for breathing as needed
sensor: erratic

glitchy erratic articulation using these pitches, mainly use double stops but you can play them individually. Alternate freely between pitch and non-pitched in an active and chaotic way (blend-in with the electronics)

1 min.

V **Outro**

30 s.

119

Fl.

B. Cl.

Snsr. 1

H.
M. H.
M.
M. L.
L.

30

Vln

COVER! (it will freeze the last sound)