

Mathew Fuerst

The Drift of Things  
*for solo piano*



## MATHEW FUERST

### *The Drift of Things*

*for solo piano*(2009)

*The Drift of Things* was written for pianist Vicky Chow during the winter of 2008-2009 in Hillsdale, MI and was premiered in New York City in May, 2009. That first year at Hillsdale was a difficult one. As much as I was enjoying my new job and teaching college students, I had a very hard transition leaving my home in New York City and moving to a small, rural town like Hillsdale. When Vicky approached me about writing a piece for her, I felt this was a great opportunity to try to capture some of the difficulties and anxieties I had as I was adjusting to my new life.

I was introduced to Miles Davis' album *Bitches Brew* around the same time as my move to Hillsdale and was impressed by the improvisatory power and raw energy of the music. At that time, I was also attracted to the paintings of Jackson Pollack for many of the same reasons. I wanted to write a work that would be similarly raw, and strove to create a piece that was more spontaneous. This required me to compose something that was not as formally planned out or motivically controlled. For example, there are many passages in which the rhythm, direction, and range of a gesture are given, but not the specific pitches. However, I still wanted to try to create balance structurally. To achieve this, I calculated the climax to happen at the Golden Section of the work by writing the ending first, counting the number of eighth-notes used, then figuring out how many eighth-note beats I would need in the piece to make it work.

The title comes from an excerpt from Robert Frost's poem *Reluctance*, which I felt expressed my frame of mind at the time of composing this work:

Ah, when to the heart of man  
Was it ever less than a treason  
To go with the drift of things,  
To yield with a grace to reason,  
And bow and accept the end  
Of a love or a season?

Excerpt from "Reluctance," from the book THE POETRY OF ROBERT FROST edited by Edward Connery Lathem.  
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for Vicky Chow  
The Drift of Things

Allegro molto ritmico e fuoco ♩ = 124

Mathew Fuerst

Piano

*fff p*

*senza Ped.*

*8vb*

Pno.

*mf p*

*p sim.*

Pno.

*mf p*

*p sim.*

Pno.

*mf p*

*p sim.*

Pno.

*mf p*

*p sim.*

Pno.

*mf p*

*p sim.*

\* All music in boxes should be played as quickly as possible and the hands should not be coordinated with each other. The boxed numbers represent the beat numbers and off-beats per measure.

7

1 + 2 3 + 4

Pno.

(8<sup>vb</sup>) →

8

1 + 2 3 + 4 +

Pno.

(8<sup>vb</sup>) →

9

1 + 2 3 + 4

Pno.

(8<sup>vb</sup>) →

10

1 + 2 3 e + a 4 +

Pno.

(8<sup>vb</sup>) →

11

1 2 3 + 4

Pno.

(8<sup>vb</sup>) →

12

1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +

Pno.

(8<sup>vb</sup>) →

13

1 2 3 + 4

Pno.

(8<sup>vb</sup>) →

14

1 2 + 3 + 4

Pno.

violent

f

mf

p

mf

p sim.

(8<sup>vb</sup>) →

15

1 + 2 3 + 4

Pno.

(8<sup>vb</sup>) →

16

1 + 2 + 3 + 4

Pno.

(8<sup>vb</sup>) →

17

1 + 2 3 4 +

Pno.

(8<sup>vb</sup>) →

18

1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +

Pno.

(8<sup>vb</sup>) →

\* The performer can play any note as long as it mirrors the gesture written and remains within the general range written.

19 \* **1** *violent* **2** **3** **4**

Pno. *f* *f*

(8<sup>vb</sup>) →

20 **1** **+** **2** **3** **+** **4**

Pno. *molto dim.* *mf* *p sim.*

(8<sup>vb</sup>) →

21 **1** **2** **3** **4** **+**

Pno. *p sim.*

(8<sup>vb</sup>) →

22 **1** **+** **2** clusters *f* *ff* *f* *ff*

Pno. *loco* *15<sup>ma</sup> 8<sup>va</sup>* *15<sup>ma</sup> 8<sup>va</sup>*

(8<sup>vb</sup>) → *8<sup>vb</sup> Ped.* \*

27 *f* *fff*

Pno. *15<sup>ma</sup> 8<sup>va</sup>* *8<sup>vb</sup>*

(8<sup>vb</sup>) →

\* See note page 3.



30 1 + 2 3 4 +

Piano score for measures 30-31. The score is in bass clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). Measure 30 contains four measures of music, with the first measure marked with a circled '1' and a plus sign, and the second with a circled '2'. Measure 31 contains four measures, with the first marked with a circled '3' and the second with a circled '4' and a plus sign. The dynamics are *ffffz* and *molto dim.*. A sub-octave sign  $(8^{vb})$  with an arrow points to the right.

31 1 2 3 + 4

Piano score for measures 31-32. The score is in bass clef with a key signature of two sharps. Measure 31 contains four measures, with the first marked with a circled '1' and the second with a circled '2'. Measure 32 contains four measures, with the first marked with a circled '3' and the second with a circled '4' and a plus sign. The dynamics are *(molto dim.)* and *mf*. A sub-octave sign  $(8^{vb})$  with an arrow points to the right.

33 1 + 2 + 3 4

Piano score for measures 33-34. The score is in bass clef with a key signature of two sharps. Measure 33 contains four measures, with the first marked with a circled '1' and the second with a circled '2' and a plus sign. Measure 34 contains four measures, with the first marked with a circled '3' and the second with a circled '4'. A sub-octave sign  $(8^{vb})$  with an arrow points to the right.

34 1 2 3 + 4 1 + 2 3

Piano score for measures 34-35. The score is in bass clef with a key signature of two sharps. Measure 34 contains four measures, with the first marked with a circled '1' and the second with a circled '2' and a plus sign. Measure 35 contains three measures, with the first marked with a circled '3' and the second with a circled '4'. A sub-octave sign  $(8^{vb})$  with an arrow points to the right.

36 1 2 3 + 4 1 2 3 + 4

Piano score for measures 36-39. The score is in bass clef with a key signature of two sharps. Measure 36 contains four measures, with the first marked with a circled '1' and the second with a circled '2' and a plus sign. Measure 37 contains four measures, with the first marked with a circled '3' and the second with a circled '4' and a plus sign. Measure 38 contains four measures, with the first marked with a circled '1' and the second with a circled '2' and a plus sign. Measure 39 contains four measures, with the first marked with a circled '3' and the second with a circled '4' and a plus sign. The dynamics are *f* and *mf*. A sub-octave sign  $8^{vb}$  with a dashed line and arrow points to the right.

42 *15<sup>ma</sup>* → 1 + 2 3 4 1 + 2 3 + 4

Pno. *8<sup>va</sup>* → *ff* *molto dim.* *mp* *pp sim.*

44 *(15<sup>ma</sup>)* → 1 + 2 3 4 1 + 2 3 + 4 +

Pno. *(8<sup>va</sup>)* → *mp*

46 *(15<sup>ma</sup>)* → 1 + 2 3 + 4 +

Pno. *(8<sup>va</sup>)* →

47 *(15<sup>ma</sup>)* → 1 2 + 3 + 4 +

Pno. *(8<sup>va</sup>)* →

48 *(15<sup>ma</sup>)* → 1 + 2 3 + 4 1 +

Pno. *(8<sup>va</sup>)* → *molto dim.*

*Ped. sempre*

51 *(15<sup>ma</sup>)* →

Pno. *(8<sup>va</sup>)* → *(molto dim.)* *pp leggero*

Pno. *5* (15<sup>ma</sup>) → *8<sup>va</sup>* →

*ppp*  
*ppp senza ped.*  
*n*

Pno. *6* (15<sup>ma</sup>) → 1 + 2 3 + 4 1 + 2 3 4 + *8<sup>va</sup>* →

*mp*  
*ppp sim.*  
*mp*  
*ppp sim.*

Pno. *6* (15<sup>ma</sup>) → 1 2 3 4 *8<sup>va</sup>* →

*poco cresc.*

Pno. *7* (15<sup>ma</sup>) → *8<sup>va</sup>* →

*p leggiero*  
*ped. sempre*

Pno. *8* (15<sup>ma</sup>) → *8<sup>va</sup>* →

*n*

Pno. *8* (15<sup>ma</sup>) → *8<sup>va</sup>* → *p*

*slowly lift pedal* → \*

94 (15<sup>ma</sup>) → 1 + 2 3 + 4

Pno. *mf* *p sim.*

(8<sup>va</sup>) → *mf* *p* *mf* *p sim.*

95 1 + 2 3 4 1 2 3 + 4

Pno. (8<sup>va</sup>) →

97 (15<sup>ma</sup>) → 1 + 2 + 3 4

Pno. (8<sup>va</sup>) →

99 (15<sup>ma</sup>) → 1 2 3 + 4 1 + 2 3 + 4

Pno. (8<sup>va</sup>) →

101 (15<sup>ma</sup>) → 1 2 3 + 4 clusters *ff* *p misterioso*

(8<sup>va</sup>) → *p senza Péd.*

105 violent and sudden *ff* *p misterioso*

(8<sup>ba</sup>) → *Péd.* *senza Péd.*

\* See note on page 3

111 *violent and sudden*

Pno.

*ff* *p misterioso*

*8<sup>va</sup>* → *8<sup>va</sup>*

*Led.* *senza Led.*

117 *clusters*

Pno.

*ff* *p*

*8<sup>va</sup>* → *8<sup>va</sup>*

*Led.* *p Led.*

123

Pno.

*8<sup>va</sup>* → *8<sup>va</sup>*

128

Pno.

*15<sup>ma</sup>* → *senza Led.*

*8<sup>va</sup>* → *8<sup>va</sup>*

130

Pno.

*mf* *p sim.*

*15<sup>ma</sup>* → *8<sup>va</sup>* → *8<sup>va</sup>*

132 *violent and sudden*

Pno.

*ff* *p* *mf* *p sim.*

*15<sup>ma</sup>* → *8<sup>va</sup>* → *8<sup>va</sup>*

\* See note on page 3

Pno.

(15<sup>ma</sup>) → 1 + 2 3 4 + 1 + 2 3 + 4

135

(8<sup>va</sup>) →

Pno.

137

15<sup>ma</sup> →

1 + 2 3 4

8<sup>va</sup> →

*f*

Pno.

141

8<sup>va</sup> →

*più f*

*ff*

8<sup>va</sup> →

Pno.

146

8<sup>va</sup> →

*fff*

*pp*

*fff*

*pp*

Pno.

155

8<sup>va</sup> →

*cresc. poco a poco*

[*p*]

(8) →

161

Pno.

[mp]

166

Pno.

*mf*

169

Pno.

*ffff*

174

joyous

Pno.

*ffff*

*Ped. sempre*

*l.v.*

*8ba*

177

Pno.

*l.v.*

*8ba*

179

Pno.

*l.v.*

*8ba*

\*- The pattern in the box should continue as the performer gradually ascends the keyboard. It should sound like the box notation material from earlier in the work, except now presented like a slow *gliss*. The clusters should be played as the cluster chords before, and the performer should make sure to continue the box notation material when not playing the clusters. The gesture should ascend all the way up the keyboard.

182

Pno.

186

Pno.

188

Pno.

Passages in the right hand should be played like the music on pg. 11 (see note). The range for the notes should be within the range given above the staff. The player need not follow the general patterns written, but the rhythms must be accurate.

Pno.

194

Pno.



Piano score system 1. The right hand features a melodic line with a *15<sup>ma</sup>* (15th measure) bracket and a *dim.* (diminuendo) marking. The left hand includes *clusters* and a *ff* (fortissimo) dynamic. An *l.v.* (lento) marking is present. An *8<sup>va</sup>* (8va) marking is at the top left. A *15<sup>ma</sup>* marking is at the top right.

Piano score system 2. The right hand continues with a melodic line and a *ff dim.* marking. The left hand features a *ff dim.* marking and an *8<sup>vb</sup>* (8vb) marking. An *l.v.* marking is present.

Piano score system 3. The right hand has a *15<sup>ma</sup>* bracket and a *mf* (mezzo-forte) dynamic. The left hand includes *l.v.*, *8<sup>ba</sup>* (8ba), and *dolce* markings. Triplet markings (*3*) are present in the right hand.

Piano score system 4. The right hand has a *15<sup>ma</sup>* bracket and a *dim.* marking. The left hand includes *dolce*, *l.v.*, and *dolce* markings. Triplet markings (*3*) are present in the right hand.

Piano score system 5. The right hand has a *15<sup>ma</sup>* bracket and a *mp* (mezzo-piano) dynamic. The left hand includes *dolce*, *dolce sim.* (dolce similitudine), *l.v.*, and *8<sup>vb</sup>* markings. Triplet markings (*3*) are present in the right hand.

220 <sup>(15<sup>ma</sup>)</sup> →

Pno.

l.v. l.v. l.v. dim. 8<sup>vb</sup>

224 <sup>(15<sup>ma</sup>)</sup> →

Pno.

l.v. l.v. 8<sup>vb</sup>

228 <sup>(15<sup>ma</sup>)</sup> →

Pno.

l.v. p dim. 8<sup>vb</sup>

231 <sup>(15<sup>ma</sup>)</sup> → very peaceful until the end

Pno.

pp dim. 8<sup>vb</sup> l.v. 8<sup>vb</sup> l.v.

233 <sup>(15<sup>ma</sup>)</sup> →

Pno.

8<sup>vb</sup> l.v. 8<sup>vb</sup> 8<sup>vb</sup>

236 <sup>(15<sup>ma</sup>)</sup> →

Pno.

8<sup>vb</sup> l.v. 8<sup>vb</sup> 8<sup>vb</sup>

239 (15<sup>ma</sup>) →

Pno.

242 (15<sup>ma</sup>) →

Pno.

245 (15<sup>ma</sup>) →

Pno.

247 (15<sup>ma</sup>) →

Pno.

250 (15<sup>ma</sup>) →

Pno.

253 (15<sup>ma</sup>) → non rit.

Pno.

254 (15<sup>ma</sup>) →

Pno.