

Joseph Klein

# **Chain of Circumstances**

(2020)






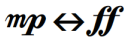





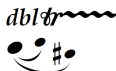


for solo piano or piano four hands,  
with optional dancer and/or interactive computer music

To Richard Shuster and Jordan Fuchs  
Supported by a grant from Texas Woman's University

duration: variable (c.7-15')



## Symbols

	accelerando/ritardando	
	durational continuum in senza misura sections (shortest to longest)	
	fermata continuum (shortest to longest)	
	senza misura	
	metered notation: beat units are fixed, measure units fluctuate	
	play within the dynamic range indicated	
	fluctuate around given dynamic	
	let the sound ring	
	double trill: rapidly alternate between the three pitches indicated	
		

## Performance Notes

*Chain of Circumstances* is a modular work consisting of a series of distinctive, contrasting, and relatively static “states,” which comprise the raw materials to be arranged and integrated at the discretion of the performer(s):

- The performer(s) should consider all manner of ways that the various modules may relate to one another when organizing the work.
- Modules may return any number of times during a given realization.
- A given module may interrupt any other module—or may itself be interrupted, fragmented, and reorganized.
- Gestures or fragments from any of the individual modules may be interpolated into a contrasting module at any time, in order to “perforate” the prevailing texture.
- Various modules may be combined to form larger units, which themselves may be considered discrete episodes or movements within the overall realization of the work.
- The only fixed element in the piece is Module 1/8, which is to serve as a prologue and epilogue to the piece. Other than this one formal consideration, there is no particular order that the interior modules must occur.
- The overall duration of the work is dependent on how frequently modules recur, as well as the degree to which the performer(s) dwell upon any given state; however, the duration is also dependent upon whether the work is performed with one or two pianists, with the optional solo dancer and/or interactive computer music, as these factors may influence the manner and degree to which the various states are explored.

The arrangement of these raw materials may either be determined ahead of time by the performer(s), or spontaneously determined during performance. When working with a dancer, a pre-determined arrangement of materials (with fairly consistent timings) may be desired—unless the choreography itself is of an improvisational nature, in which case a more spontaneous realization may be preferred.

## Program Note

*Chain of Circumstances*, for solo pianist or piano four hands (with optional solo dancer and/or interactive computer music), is one of a series of open-form compositions that have occupied my creative interest in recent years. As with the other related works, *Chain of Circumstances* explores aspects of recombination, modularity, and non-linear musical structures. In this instance, the work is conceived as a series of disparate, distinctive, and relatively static musical states that provides an ever-changing sonic canvas, which the pianist(s) may alter at will. In performances that include solo dancer and/or electronics, the result is a kind of dynamic and unpredictable “feedback loop” between the various elements.

*Chain of Circumstances* was supported by a grant from Texas Woman’s University and composed in February-March 2020 for pianist Richard Shuster and dancer/choreographer Jordan Fuchs.

# Chain of Circumstances

Joseph Klein  
2020

Module 1/9  
(Prologue/Epilogue)

**Obsessive, resolute** ♩ = 52

- This module must always begin and end the work.
- The performer may start playing at any measure; however, the duration of the first and final iterations must be no longer than one complete cycle.
- The performer may return to this module (sparingly) at any time during the performance; however, iterations other than the first or last must be no longer than four measures in duration (including rests).
- The performer may choose either of the pitches indicated, but may not change pitches within a given iteration. If proceeding directly to or from Module 2: choose B $\flat$  to elide with section A; choose D $\sharp$  to elide with section B.

# Chain of Circumstances

## Module 2

**A** Suspended, languid (12-15" per system)

The first system of music consists of two staves. The treble clef staff begins with a whole rest, followed by a quarter note G#4, a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, and a quarter note C5. The bass clef staff begins with a whole rest, followed by a quarter note B3, a quarter note A3, a quarter note G3, and a quarter note F3. The dynamic marking *mp±* is placed above the first measure. A first ending bracket is placed above the first measure, with a repeat sign and a fermata. A second ending bracket is placed above the last measure, with a repeat sign and a fermata. The instruction *Ped. (sempre)* with an arrow points to the first measure.

The second system of music consists of two staves. The treble clef staff begins with a whole note G#4, followed by a whole note A4, a quarter note B4, and a quarter note C5. The bass clef staff begins with a quarter note B3, a quarter note A3, a quarter note G3, and a quarter note F3. A first ending bracket is placed above the first measure, with a repeat sign and a fermata. A second ending bracket is placed above the last measure, with a repeat sign and a fermata. The instruction *-(Ped.)* with an arrow points to the first measure.

The third system of music consists of two staves. The treble clef staff begins with a quarter note G#4, a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, and a quarter note C5. The bass clef staff begins with a quarter note B3, a quarter note A3, a quarter note G3, and a quarter note F3. A first ending bracket is placed above the first measure, with a repeat sign and a fermata. A second ending bracket is placed above the last measure, with a repeat sign and a fermata. The instruction *-(Ped.)* with an arrow points to the first measure.

B

The musical score for Section B consists of three systems of piano music. Each system is written for a grand piano with a treble and bass clef staff. The first system begins with a dynamic marking of *mp*± and includes a *Ped. (sempre)* instruction with an arrow pointing to the right. The second system begins with a *(Ped.)* instruction with an arrow. The third system also begins with a *(Ped.)* instruction with an arrow. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, accidentals, and dynamic markings like *8va* and *b0*.

- The performer may begin at any point in this module, and should play no more than three complete cycles in a given iteration.
- While the dynamic level is primarily *mezzo-piano* throughout, the performer should feel free to occasionally accentuate random notes (*ad libitum*), which should punctuate the otherwise placid state of the prevailing texture.
- The performer may choose to play either section A or section B, and may not change sections within a given iteration.
- The overall effect of this module should be like that of wind chimes gently sounding in the breeze.

# Chain of Circumstances

## Module 3

Fitful, uneven (6-8" per system)

Musical notation system 1, featuring a grand staff with treble and bass clefs. The music is in a key with one sharp (F#) and one flat (Bb). It begins with a double bar line and a repeat sign. The first measure contains a complex chord with a fermata. The notation includes various articulations such as accents, slurs, and dynamic markings. A dynamic marking *mp* ↔ *ff* (ad lib.) is present below the staff.

Musical notation system 2, continuing the piece. It features a grand staff with treble and bass clefs. The notation includes various articulations such as accents, slurs, and dynamic markings. A dynamic marking *8vb* is present below the staff.

Musical notation system 3, continuing the piece. It features a grand staff with treble and bass clefs. The notation includes various articulations such as accents, slurs, and dynamic markings. A dynamic marking *8vb* is present below the staff.

Musical notation system 4, continuing the piece. It features a grand staff with treble and bass clefs. The notation includes various articulations such as accents, slurs, and dynamic markings. A dynamic marking *8vb* is present below the staff. A date stamp "09/07/20" is visible in the bottom right corner.



## Chain of Circumstances — Module 3

- The performer may begin at any point in this module, and should play no more than one complete cycle in a given iteration before proceeding to the next module.
- Fragments of this module may be interjected at any time during the performance, typically acting as a disruptive element.
- In addition to playing this module as notated on the previous page, the performer may freely play these chord complexes (indicated below from lowest to highest) in any order, applying any of the gestures at the bottom of this page to any of the chords. In such cases, the character of the resulting music should always be similar to that on the previous page.

Chords 1 through 10 are presented in a single system in bass clef. Each chord is shown as a vertical stack of notes with a double slash indicating a full chord. Chord 1 is in B-flat major. Chords 2-5 are in B-flat minor. Chords 6-8 are in B-flat major. Chord 9 is in B-flat minor. Chord 10 is in B-flat major. A dashed line labeled '8vb' is positioned below the first five chords.

Chords 11 through 20 are presented in a single system in treble clef. Each chord is shown as a vertical stack of notes with a double slash indicating a full chord. Chords 11-15 are in B-flat major. Chords 16-17 are in B-flat minor. Chords 18-20 are in B-flat major.

Chords 21 through 29 are presented in a single system in treble clef. Each chord is shown as a vertical stack of notes with a double slash indicating a full chord. Chords 21-24 are in B-flat major. Chords 25-28 are in B-flat minor. Chord 29 is in B-flat major.

Seven musical gestures labeled I, IIa, IIb, IIIa, IIIb, IVa, and IVb are shown in a single system. Each gesture consists of a vertical stack of notes with a double slash, followed by a dynamic marking 'sfz' (sforzando) and a downward-pointing triangle. Gestures IIIa, IIIb, and IVa include curved lines above the notes, suggesting a sliding or gliding motion.

# Chain of Circumstances

## Module 4

Flowing, crystalline ♩ = 76-84

- The performer may begin playing at any point in the descending chord sequence.
- The sequence may be repeated at the performer's discretion.
- The performer may restart the descending sequence at any point, with three conditions: (a) at least two sequential chords must be played before restarting; (b) the performer must go back at least two chords whenever restarting the sequence; and (c) each new sequence must begin *mezzo-forte* and *poco diminuendo* throughout. For example:

- This section may be initiated or terminated by "freezing" any of the given chords within the sequence through a sustained tremolando; this should be performed with the pedal depressed throughout. For example:

# Chain of Circumstances

## Module 5

### Brittle, nervous

RH (a)

Musical notation for RH (a) in treble clef, starting at measure 15. The notation consists of eighth notes with stems pointing up. Fingerings are indicated below the notes: 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, 2, 3, 4, 3, 2, 3, 4.

RH (b)

Musical notation for RH (b) in treble clef, starting at measure 15. The notation consists of eighth notes with stems pointing up. Fingerings are indicated below the notes: 5, 1, 4, 2, 3, 2, 4, 1, 5, 2, 4, 3, 4, 2.

RH (c)

Musical notation for RH (c) in treble clef, starting at measure 15. The notation consists of eighth notes with stems pointing up. Fingerings are indicated below the notes: 1, 3, 2, 4, 3, 5, 3, 4, 2, 3.

***ff*** *e secco, sempre*

- Either of the two-handed runs at the left may be played to initiate this module (optional).
- Each pattern may be repeated *ad libitum*; player may move from one pattern to another at any point.
- Player may begin on the first note of any broken-slurred grouping.
- Any of the right-hand patterns (above) may be combined with any of the left-hand patterns (below), *ad libitum*.
- Each hand moves independently, with erratic and uneven rhythm throughout. Performer should avoid any sense of alignment between the two hands.
- The overall duration of any iteration of this module should be no less than 10 and no more than 30 seconds.
- The composite effect should be that of heavy rain hitting a tin roof.

***ff*** *e secco, sempre*

LH (a)

Musical notation for LH (a) in treble clef, starting at measure 15. The notation consists of eighth notes with stems pointing down. Fingerings are indicated above the notes: 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, 2, 3, 4, 3, 2, 3, 4.

LH (b)

Musical notation for LH (b) in treble clef, starting at measure 15. The notation consists of eighth notes with stems pointing down. Fingerings are indicated above the notes: 5, 1, 4, 2, 3, 2, 4, 1, 5, 2, 4, 3, 4, 2.

LH (c)

Musical notation for LH (c) in treble clef, starting at measure 15. The notation consists of eighth notes with stems pointing down. Fingerings are indicated above the notes: 1, 3, 2, 4, 3, 5, 3, 4, 2, 3.

09/07/20

1)

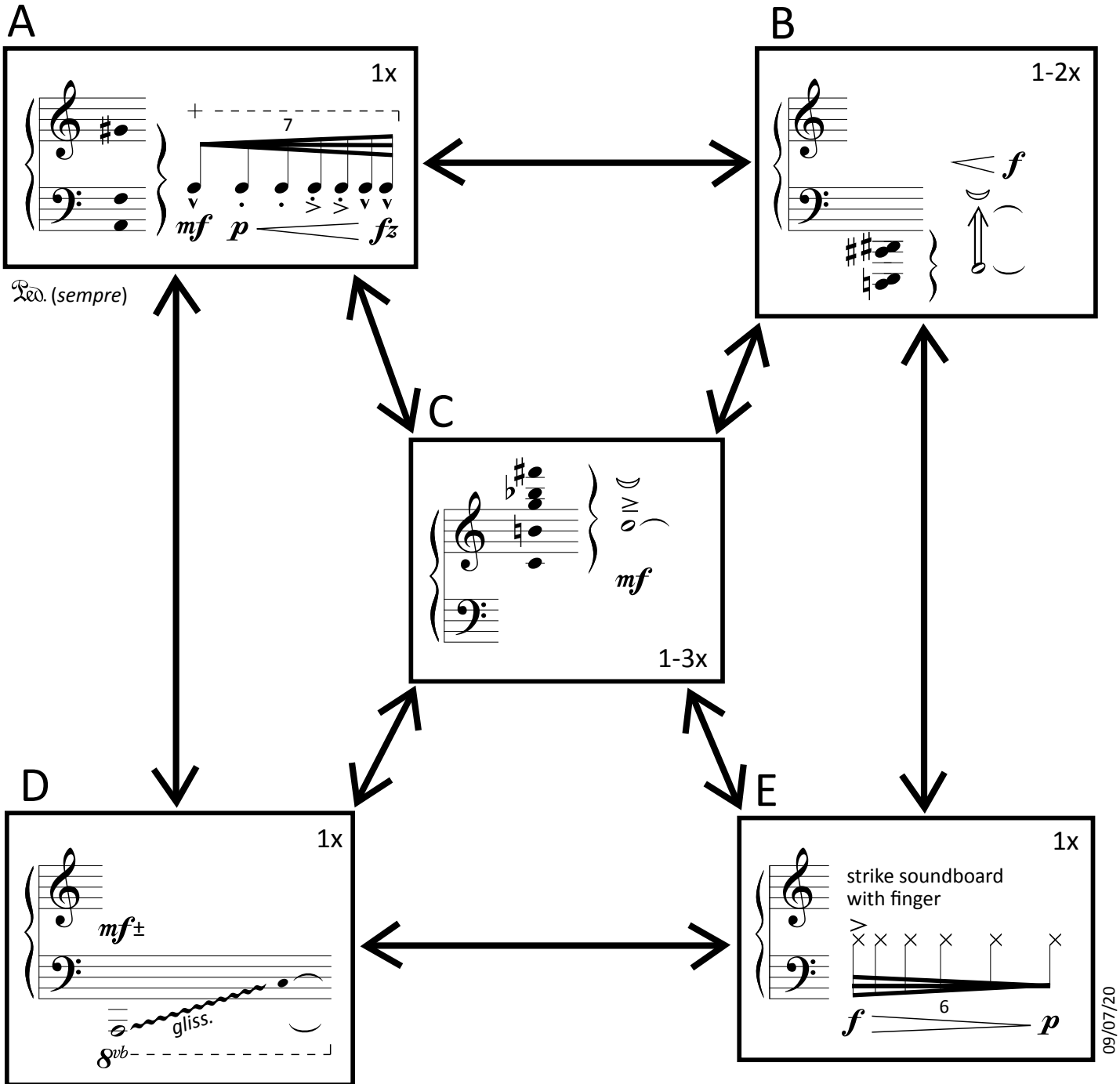
Two-handed musical notation for pattern 1, starting at measure 8. The left hand plays a series of eighth notes with stems pointing up, and the right hand plays a series of eighth notes with stems pointing down. The notation is marked with a forte *f* dynamic.

2)

Two-handed musical notation for pattern 2, starting at measure 8. The left hand plays a series of eighth notes with stems pointing up, and the right hand plays a series of eighth notes with stems pointing down. The notation is marked with a forte *f* dynamic.

# Chain of Circumstances

Module 6  
(Event-complex)



09/07/20

- Performer may begin at any place in the score and proceed according to the arrowed lines.
- In contrast to the other modules, all events within this module require play inside the piano
- The events in boxes A, B, and C may be played on any of the pitches indicated in the grand staff; it is recommended that the hammers be marked with color-coded stickers in order to aid the performer.
- The events in boxes B and C may be reiterated before proceeding to the next gesture. The number of successive iterations of any given event is indicated in the boxes (1x, 1-2x, 1-3x).
- Any of these events may be freely interpolated into one or more of the other modules at any time during the performance.
- In a given iteration of this module, none of the events may be played more than three times before proceeding to another module.
- The pedal is to be depressed throughout this entire module.

# Chain of Circumstances

## Module 7

a)                      b)                      c)

Still, serene ♩ = 180 (♩ = 90; ♩. = 60)

- The performer may select any of the three chords indicated at the top of the page, but may not change chords within a given iteration of this module.
- The performer may begin playing at any measure; however, a given iteration may include no fewer than three measures and no more than eleven measures (not including repeated measures; see below).
- Any of the 5/8 or 7/8 measures may be (optionally) repeated three to seven times before proceeding, as if stuck in a loop; this may occur no more than twice within any given iteration of this module. Such repeats may not occur in successive measures; i.e., there must be at least one measure separating repeated measures. For example:

- The overall effect of this module should be that of church bells chiming in the distance.

# Chain of Circumstances

## Module 8

Florid, shimmering (*molto rubato*)

**A**

The musical score consists of three systems of piano music, each with a treble and bass clef. The first system begins with a box labeled 'A' and includes the instruction *mp* ± (*ad libitum*) and *Red.* below the bass staff. The second system starts with a measure number '5' and includes a *4''±* *dbl tr* instruction above the treble staff. The third system also includes a *4''±* *dbl tr* instruction above the treble staff. The music is characterized by long, sweeping melodic lines with many accidentals (sharps and flats) and dynamic markings such as *mp* and *dbl tr*. The notation includes various ornaments and trills, and the overall style is highly decorative and expressive.

**B**

11

14

18

10/03/20

- The performer may start at the beginning of either section A or section B, returning to the top once reaching the end.
- A given iteration of this module may be no less than one complete section and no more than three: e.g., A, B, AB, BA, ABA, BAB.
- Tempo and dynamics should be constantly fluctuating throughout, *ad libitum*;
- The duration of the double-trills should average around 4 seconds, but should fluctuate *ad libitum* between 3 and 6 seconds.  
The effect should be an unpredictable suspension of the arpeggiated figures, and must always avoid falling into a regular pattern.
- Fragments of this module may be interjected at any time within another episode; in such instances, no more than three (consecutive) measures may be used.