Metaskype Performance Notes

The primary characteristic of Metaskype is that it is not to be performed by eight pianos that are in the recital hall. While the audience is in the recital hall listening to the piece, each of the pianos is required to be elsewhere. Their locations can range from somewhere else in the same building to halfway around the globe. Each of the pianos' sounds will be broadcast from their locations to the recital hall via the internet. In order to do so, each of the performers will be required to have access to the following equipment:

- An acoustic piano
- A microphone
- A Skype account
- An internet connection suitable for hosting a 3-way Skype video call
- A computer
- Headphones

Each player's microphone will be set up in the best position possible for picking up the sounds of the piano. It will then be routed into the computer either via the microphone jack, USB port, or through an audio interface. Once this is set up, each performer will log on to their Skype account and wait to be invited to a group video call by the conductor. Because Skype has limitations on how many people can efficiently participate in a group video call, four separate video calls will be made. Two performers and the conductor will participate in each call.

The conductor will begin the piece by displaying the cue card for section A to his webcams. This cue card will remain visible until section B starts. Every section of the piece will be introduced in this way, and no performer is to progress to the next section until they have been given the cue for that section.

In each section, a performer will do one of three things:

- Begin playing a pattern
- Continue playing the previous pattern
- Stop playing

An indication to begin playing a pattern looks like this:
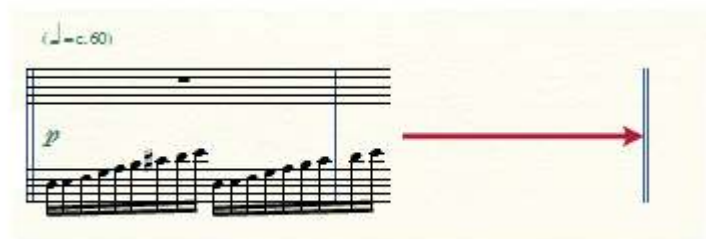
Firgure 1: Metaskype Piano 5, Cue E

For this example the performer would begin playing this ascending scale pattern at approximately 60 BPM. This same pattern would repeat until a cue was given that instructed the performer to play a different pattern or to stop playing. Some patterns have a pedal marking in them:
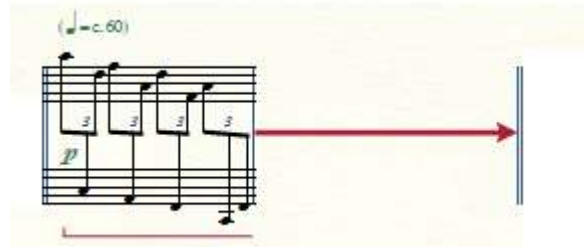

Firgure 2: Metaskype Piano 3, Cue C

For these, the performer will continue depressing the pedal until a cue to stop playing is given or a pedal up marking is given.

Cues to continue playing the previous pattern a represented by a long arrow progressing through the section. These long arrows can be seen in the rightmost parts of Figures 1 and 2.

Cues to stop playing are indicated by a measure containing only a whole rest followed by a long arrow:
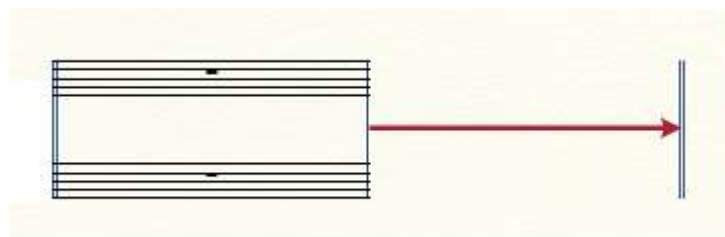
Figure 3: Metaskype Piano 2, Cue F

After such cue, the performer should play nothing until new cue containing music is given.

A cue like this is sometimes given immediately following a section of music:

Figure 4: Metaskype Piano 7, Cue T through U

For a section like Figure 4, the arrow signifies that the performer should stop playing, but keep the pedal depressed, letting the low Bb continue to ring. None of the music before this arrow should be repeated.

It is also important to note, that for sections that are not repeated like in Figure 5, the final note of the section should be held until the cue for the next section is given, regardless of the actual value of the note:

Figure 5: Metaskype Piano 5, Cue T

In Figure 5, the whole note in the third bar of this cue should be held until the next cue is given.

There are some important things all of the performers should keep in mind while playing this piece. The intention of the piece is to use the delay caused by Skype as an aleatoric element. Therefore, the performer should not be concerned with how their part is lining up with any of the other parts that they hear. In fact, there are times when different performers will be playing at different tempos altogether. Because of this independence, each performer should have a good idea of how fast each of the notated tempos is before the performance.