

# **Pop Blocks** for wood blocks (3 players) & electronics

Stephen de Filippo | 2023

# Pop Blocks

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for wood blocks (3 players) & electronics

Duration: 9'36"

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*for line upon line*

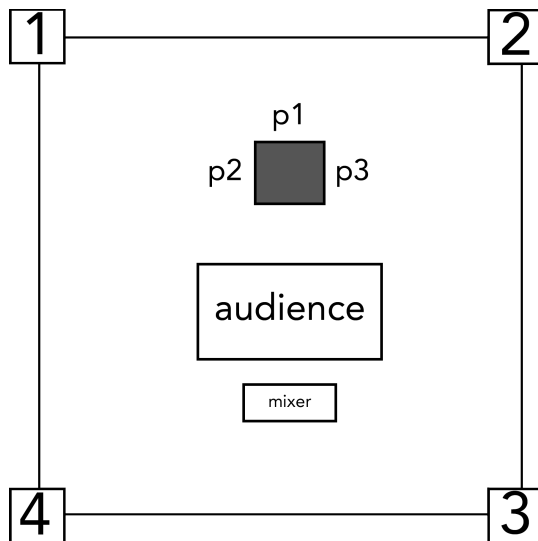
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# Performance Notes

## Instrumentation

- **Percussion 1:** wooden agogo | wooden rod
  - agogo to be connected with a contact mic
- **Percussion 2:** 3 wood blocks (high, medium, low) | hard mallets
- **Percussion 3:** 2 wood blocks (medium, lowest) | hard mallets

## Layout



# Electronics Setup/Technical Requirements

- This work is written for 3 performers, live electronics, and quadraphonic fixed media. The work can be performed with a single input (a contact mic attached to the middle of the wooden agogo) and a 4 speaker set-up.

## pop\_blocks.pd instructions

To run this patch, the user must have a working version of Pure Data. The PD application functions on both MacOS and Windows, and can be downloaded for free at: <https://puredata.info/downloads/>

A link to this composition's PD patch can be found at [www.stephendefilippo.com](http://www.stephendefilippo.com), on the Pop Blocks page. This patch was created by Rand Steiger, with edits and additions by myself.

1. Open Pop\_Blocks.pd  
this will open the patch. You will then be presented with 4 windows: Pop\_Blocks.pd, band, mixer, and player. Connection to hardware can be configured in PD's "audio" settings.
2. Enable "cues".
3. Press "play" in the player window to begin the piece.

Note:

- The patch is designed to open the fixed media and click track automatically. If either one of these do not load, then use either the "open\_FM" or "open\_click" to load either file.
- The click track will play from channel 5.
- You can use the "next" button or "jump" box in the Pop\_Blocks.pd window to jump through the electronics cues of this piece. This function can be used to test the volume and input of the microphone. Electronic cues are represented as boxed numbers in the score. This will allow you to hear the electronic processing of a particular measure. However, this does not support the fixed media.

## Microphone

For the premiere of this work, in addition to the contact mic, general amplification was used for the raw percussion audio. This audio was amplified through channels 1-2. The contact mic is placed between the two blocks of the wooden agogo. The image below shows the microphone attached to the agogo for reference. For the premiere, we used an AKG C411 microphone.





# Pop Blocks

for wood blocks (3 players)  
& electronics

Stephen de Filippo | 2023

0:30

**1** **26"**

**Electronics**

**Percussion 1**  
(Wooden Agogo)  
[contact mic]

high block  
centre  
low block

4"

wooden rod or timbale stick  
loose grip, rhythmic scraping, up and down the higher pitched head  
♩ = ca. 152-184

19" move from tip to butt of mallet ad lib. (to [A])

*sfz mf skipping, bouncing*

*p*

**Percussion 2**  
(3 Wood Blocks)

hard mallets

*sfz*

**Percussion 3**  
(2 Wood Blocks)

hard mallets

*sfz*

**A** 0:30 0:42

3

♩ = 60

**Elec.**

**4**  
**4** (same tempo)

**Perc. 1**

*sfz mf*

**Perc. 2**

*sfz*

*mf exchanging w/ perc. 3*

**Perc. 3**

*sfz*

*mf exchanging w/ perc. 2*


**B**


0:42


0:50


0:54

6

Elec. 

Perc. 1 

Perc. 2 

Perc. 3 

move from tip to butt of mallet ad lib (to [C])

*mf* *p*

*pp* *mf* *p*

0:54

1:06

9

Elec. 

Perc. 1 


Perc. 2 

Perc. 3 

*mp* *mp*

1:06 2 1:18

12

Elec.  *low pops* Perc. 1 DSP fading in and out


Perc. 1

Perc. 2 *pp* *mf* *p*

Perc. 3 *mf*

C 1:18 3 1:28

15

Elec.  *like [A], ♩ = ca. 152-184*

Perc. 1 *sfz mf*

Perc. 2 *mf* *f*

Perc. 3 *f sfz p* *rhythmic* *f*

3/4

1:28 4 18 Perc. 1 fades in again

Elec.

Perc. 1 4 moving from the shaft to the tip of the mallet freely

Perc. 2 *mf* *pp* *p*

Perc. 3 *f* *mf* *pp* *p*

1:39 5 D 21 + Perc. 1 delays quick pops

Elec.

Perc. 1 accel..... 3 4 quick scrapes *tr*

Perc. 2 *mf* *p* *f* *p* *ff* any blocks

Perc. 3 *sfz* *p* *f* *ff* *f* *p* *ff*

24 1:49 6 2:01 2:16

low drone fading in... perc 1 delays, blending with the drone

Elec.

Perc. 1 12" 4/4 rub mallet in centre groove

*n* 
<
>
 *mf*

*agitato*

*n* 
<
>
 *f*

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

3/4

29 E 7 8 2:32

perc 1 (m.2-5) sound fading in as a high sizzle perc 1 delays turns off

Elec.

Perc. 1 4/4 hit *mf* *pp* *p calmo* *pp*

*f*

*♩* = ca. 72 circles

*pp* 
<
>

*mf*

2:32

2:44

33

Elec.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

*mf*

*pp*

*pp*

$\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 72 \text{ circles}$

rall.....

9

2:44

2:56

36

Elec.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

perc 1 delays fades in again

*n* *mp* *f*

*swelling freely*

*tr*

*pp*

*mf*

delays off, backwards pops coming out of all 4 channels

bass swell

Elec.

Perc. 1 like [A], ♩ = ca. 152-184  
ebbing and flowing in tempo ad lib.  
*sfz mf skipping, bouncing*

Perc. 2 *f*  
*p cresc. poco a poco*

Perc. 3 *sfz pp* *sfz* *poco* *sfz*

sizzle fading in...

Elec.

Perc. 1 quick scrapes *tr*

Perc. 2 *rapido*  
*any blocks*  
*(mf) < f*

Perc. 3 *sfz sfz* *f*

**G** 11  
3:24  
46

3:40

**Elec.** rapid pops

**Perc. 1** hit

**Perc. 2**

**Perc. 3**

**H** 12  
3:40  
50 27"

**13**  
4:07  
13"

4:20

**Elec.** light tings, quieter reverse pops      pops fading in...

**Perc. 1**  $\text{ca. } 152-184$   
*sfz mf*      hitting (rebounding) against the centre      rall.....

**Perc. 2** *tr*      exchanging tiny swells w/ perc. 3, but diminuendo-ing swells  
*p*      *ppp*      <>      <>      <>      <>      <>      <>      <>      *n*



**Perc. 3** *tr*      exchanging tiny swells w/ perc. 2, but diminuendo-ing swells  
*p*      *ppp*      <>      <>      <>      <>      <>      <>      <>      *n*

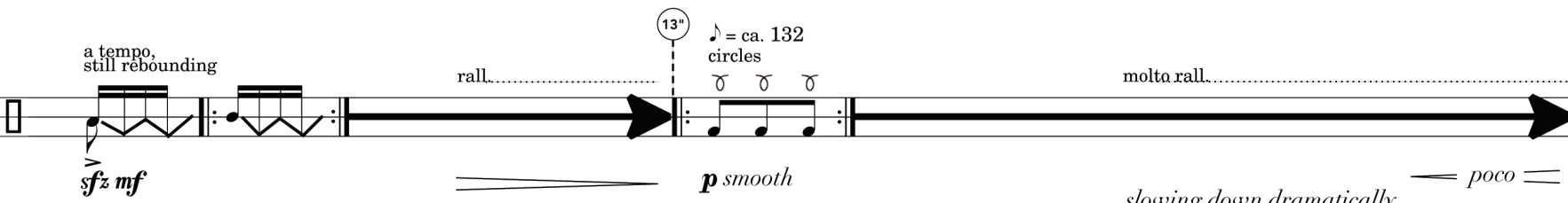


I


52

36"

Elec.  



Perc. 1 
  
a tempo, still rebounding *sfz mf* *rall.* *p smooth* *molto rall.* *slowing down dramatically* *poco*
  
13"  $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 132$  circles  $\text{♩}$   $\text{♩}$   $\text{♩}$

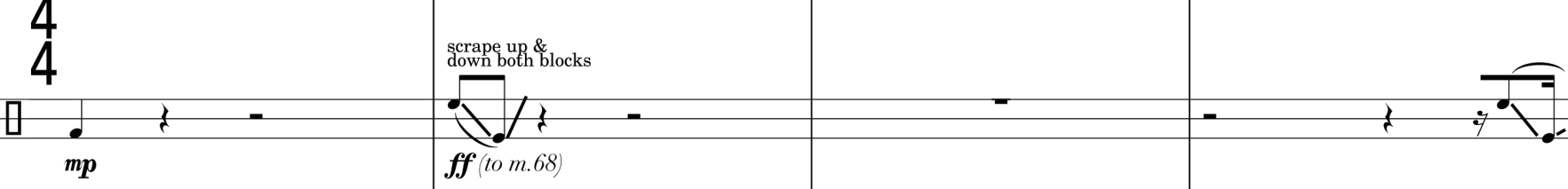
Perc. 2  $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 120$  *ppp* *metronomic* *p*


Perc. 3 

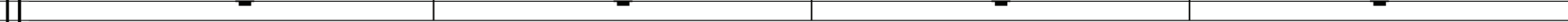
J

53

Elec.  

Perc. 1 
  
4/4 *mp* *scrape up & down both blocks* *ff (to m.68)*
  
DSP delays

Perc. 2 *exposed* 

Perc. 3 


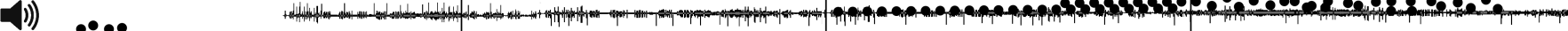
K  
57

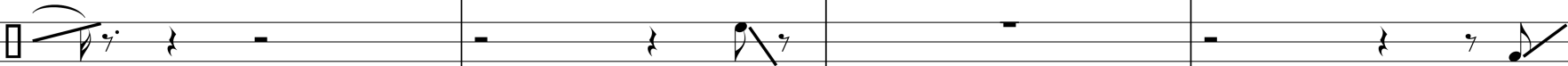
5:12

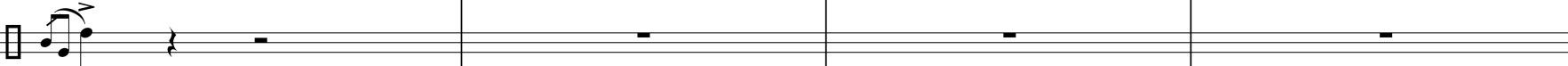
16


5:28

radio sounds fading in...

Elec.  

Perc. 1 

Perc. 2 


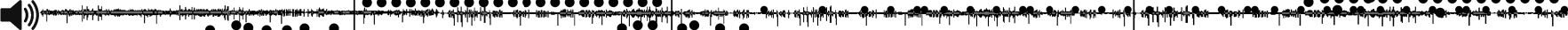
Perc. 3   
*sfz* *pp*

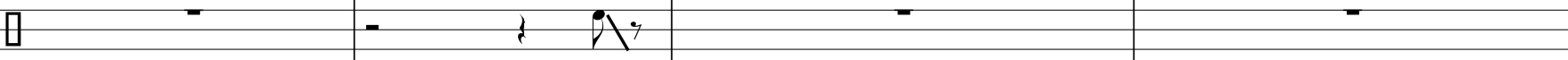
5:28

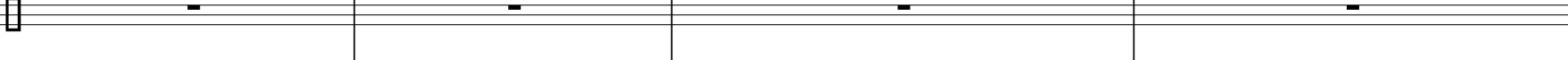
61


5:44

rhythmic pops

Elec.  

Perc. 1 

Perc. 2 

Perc. 3   
*pp*

65 ↓

**Elec.**

**Perc. 1**

**Perc. 2**

**Perc. 3**

tapping, like the mallet is a stylus

*p* *agitato* *f*

*pp*

6

69 ↓

**Elec.**

**Perc. 1**

**Perc. 2**

**Perc. 3**

using the mallet as a stylus, draw the shapes and lines depicted roughly in time

using the mallet like a stylus, tap and draw on the surface of the lowest block,

using the mallet like a stylus, tap and draw on the surface of the lowest block,

low pops, robotic radio messages lingering... high sizzle whoosh



*p - mf* *molto agitato, angular* *p* *p - mf* *f*


*pp* *mp* *pp* *f*

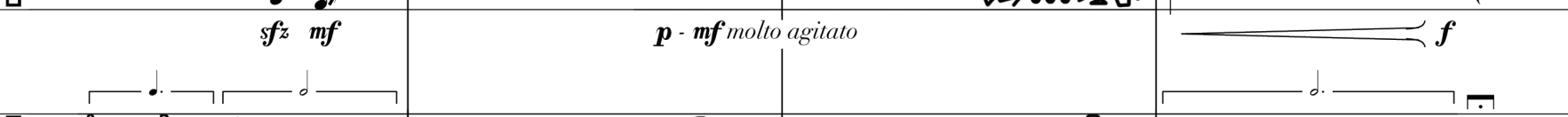
*p* *pp* *mp* *pp* *f*

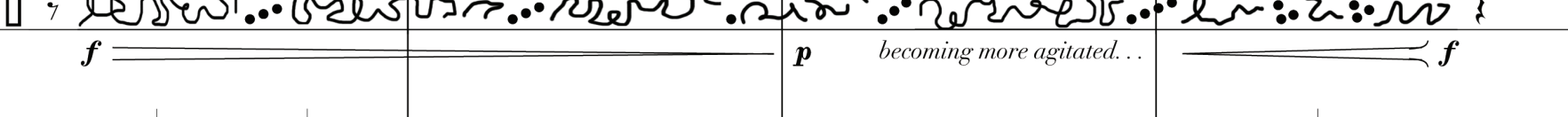
73

reverse pops

**Elec.**  



**Perc. 1**  hit *sfz mf* *p - mf molto agitato* quick scrapes **12"**

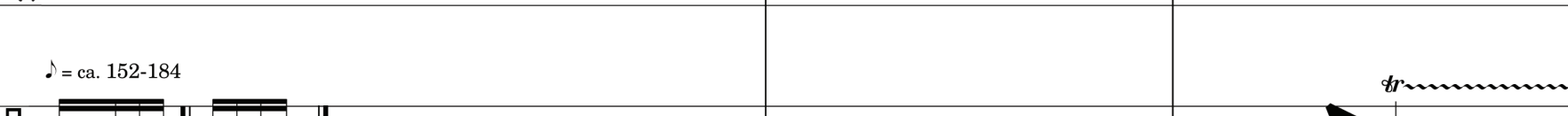
**Perc. 2**  *f* *p becoming more agitated...* *f*

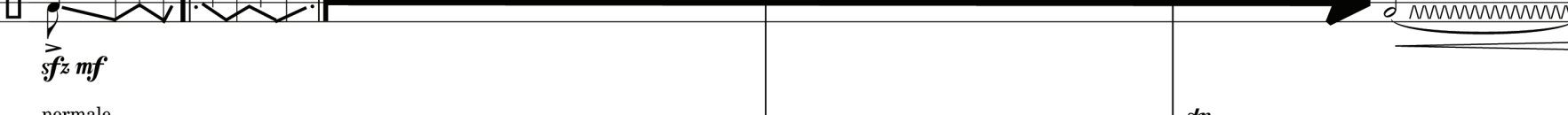
**Perc. 3**  *f* *p becoming more agitated...* *f*


77

7"

**Elec.**  

**Perc. 1**  *ca. 152-184* *sfz mf* *normale* *f* *p < f*

**Perc. 2**  *normale* *f* *p < f*

**Perc. 3**  *normale* *f* *p < f*

6:58

7:04

7:12

80

0

perc 1 reverb delays

light static

Elec.

3  
4

hitting (rebounding) against the centre  
♩ = ca. 152-184

4  
4

upper head only, no rebound  
a tempo

moving from shaft to tip ad lib (to m. 85)

Perc. 1

*sfz mf* *f* *sfz mf*

Perc. 2

*p* *f* *f*

Perc. 3

*p* *f* *mp* *f*

23

7:12

7:28

84

Elec.

Perc. 1

hitting (rebounding) against the centre

into circles  
rall. *♩* = ca. 92

*sfz mf*

rall.

Perc. 2

*pp* *mp*

rall.

Perc. 3

*pp* *mp*

24

7:28

7:45

88

Elec.

Perc. 1  $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 69$

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

3/4 rall.....

*sfz*

*f*

*f*

25

26

27

7:57

93

Elec. fast pops and electric sounds

rhythmic pops

Perc. 1 hitting (rebounding) against the centre  $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 240$

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

*f*


*sfz mf skipping, bouncing*


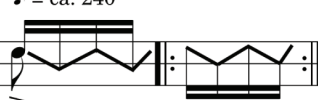
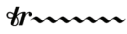
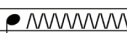

*f*




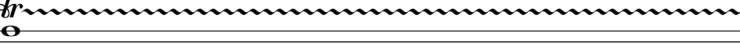
*f*


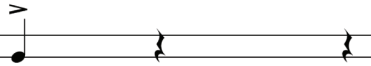
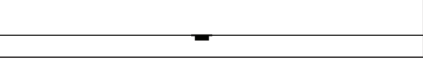

*f*

97

Elec.  . . . . .


Perc. 1   $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 240$   
*sfz mf*      
*f*


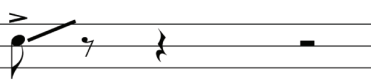
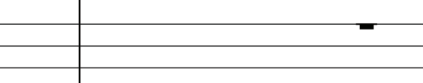

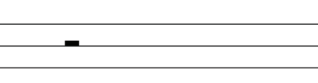
Perc. 2      
*tr*



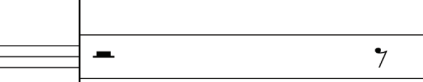
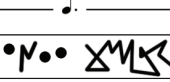
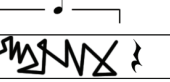
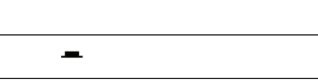
Perc. 3      
*f*




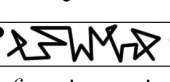
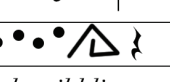

4  
4

100

Elec.  . . . . .

Perc. 1     

Perc. 2        
*f* frantic tapping and scribbling

Perc. 3        
*f* frantic tapping and scribbling

103 8:19 32 R 8:25 8:29

Elec.			
	3 4		4 4
Perc. 1			
Perc. 2		<p style="text-align: center;"><i>f</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>p</i> slower, calmer than before</p>
Perc. 3		<p style="text-align: center;"><i>f</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>p</i> slower, calmer than before</p>

106 8:29 33 8:41

Elec.			
Perc. 1		<p style="text-align: center;"><i>mf</i></p>	
Perc. 2		<p style="text-align: center;"><i>(p)</i> <i>f subito</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>p</i></p>
Perc. 3		<p style="text-align: center;"><i>(p)</i> <i>f subito</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>p</i></p>



8:41 8:53

109

Elec.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2 
  
*becoming increasingly agitated, more angular. . .*

Perc. 3 
  
*becoming increasingly agitated, more angular. . .*

*pp*

*pp*

*(p)*  
*angular*

8:53 34 9:01 9:05

112

Elec.

Perc. 1 
  
*mp* *ff sub.*

Perc. 2 
  
*mp* *ff sub.*

Perc. 3 
  
*mp* *ff sub.*

*light static*

*drawing and tracing lightly*

*ppp - mp shifting freely*

**35**

S

9:05

9:21

115

low pops

swirling lightly in the centre

*pp*

*pp*

*pp*

36

9:21

119

quick scrapes in centre

tr *ff* hit

*mp*

*ff<sup>z</sup>*

*mp*

*ff<sup>z</sup>*

*mp*

**9'37"**  
 Cambridge, Massachusetts  
 December 2022 - January 2023



**premiere:**

25th February 2023, John Knowles Paine Hall, Harvard University,  
Cambridge, Massachusetts, U.S.A

-

**Line Upon Line:**

Adam Bedell, Cullen Faulk, Matthew Teodori

**with thanks to:**

Harvard Group for New Music

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**[www.stephendefilippo.com](http://www.stephendefilippo.com)**