



Program Note:

Stairs is made entirely of sounds from my staircase, primarily from its metal hand-railing. To extract a wide selection of textures, I used yarn mallets, broomcorn brushes, chopsticks, fabric, and a double bass bow, as well my palms and knuckles. Once recorded, the sounds were arranged and processed digitally with delay, reverb, equalization, pitch-shifting, and some global effects, namely multi-band compression. The dry/wet balance was determined by the intention to enhance, but not drastically alter the sonic character of individual elements.

Structurally, the piece uses repetitive layering to develop a hypnotic flow. *Stairs* seeks to be an intriguing, while also evocative experience, eliciting both foreign and tribal qualities. “Space safari” - Kevin Gutierrez.

Subject Overview:



Employed Devices:



Microphones: Korg CM-300 (pair), AKG C214 (pair), Shure SM57, iPhone 12.

Elements Guide:

Bowed:

Shorthand:	Source:	Articulation:
“High”	iPhone, 2.a	Legato
“Low”	iPhone, 1.b	Legato
“Low-Fast”	iPhone, 1.b	Rapid, light down-bowing
“Animal Sounds”	AKGs, 1.c	Détaché + heavy delay
“Other_1,2,3”	AKGs, 4.b, 2.b, 3.c	Legato + hand-muting

Mallets:

Shorthand:	Source:	Articulation:
“Chords”	AKGs, 4.b	Reversed hit
“Crackling”	SM57, Steps (edge)	Wood handle + delay & sped up
“Hide Drum”	AKGs/Korgs, 3.b + 4.a	Dampened hits (using fabric)

Other:

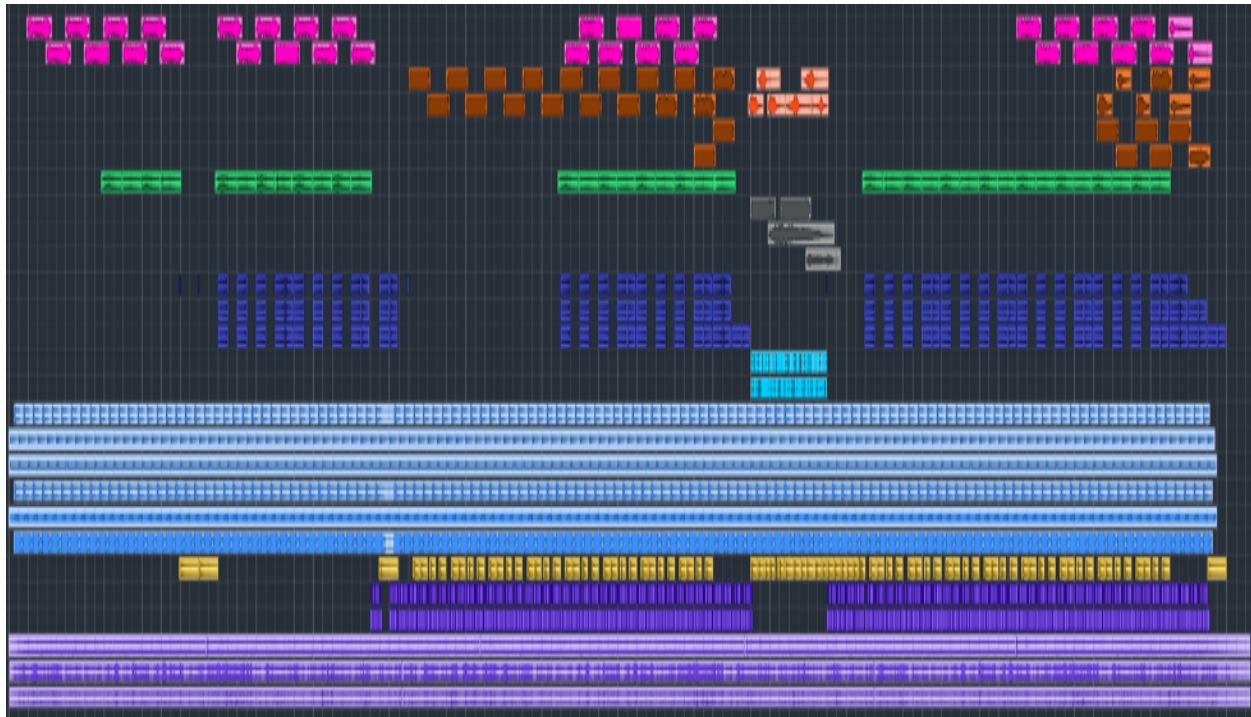
Type:	Shorthand:	Source:	Articulation:
Chopsticks	“Chopsticks”	SM57, 3.a	Aggressive tapping
Hands	“Tribal Drum”	AKGs, 4.a	Palm & knuckle hits
Brushes	“Brushes”	AKGs, 4.a	Consistent brushing
Chopsticks	“Dragging”	AKGs/Korgs, 4.b	Consistent dragging

Notes: Regarding timbre, there was minimal difference in parallel rungs, assuming equal length and thickness. Each bar revealed a slight variability in pitch; however, digital pitch modification rendered this property moot. Therefore, for the sake of consistency, the top two bars were favored (apart from 2.b, due to ergonomics). The conclusion of extensive sampling and experimentation was that in the use of the sources above, a satisfyingly rich array of textures was achieved - without compromising compositional practicality (i.e., asset selection fatigue).

Additionally, I utilized adhesive tape and notes to mark playing locations, and dictate specific techniques while recording. This was due to the bars’ extreme sensitivity to angle and velocity, particularly when bowing. For example, 1.b was bowed approximately 2/3rds NE, at a moderate intensity to produce the “Low” sound. Other positions or intensities resulted in radically divergent frequencies (see “Low-Fast”).

Nuendo (DAW) Session:

Transients are visually exaggerated within events.



- High
- Other_1-3
- Chopsticks
- Low
- Chords
- Tribal Drum
- Low-Fast
- Crackling
- Brushes
- Animal Sounds
- Hide Drum
- Dragging