

Israel Lai (2019)

# Blindspot

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for chamber ensemble and video

*Blindspot* is a collaboration between the composer and a video artist for the ANIMA project at Oxford, starting from scratch to craft a work that truly belongs to both creators. The video is shot in the woods through a convex mirror to present an alternate reality. Since it is so easy to overlook details in a repetitive landscape like a woodland, the convex mirror is treated as a special lens, through which to observe minute things and motions in this environment. At the same time, the distorted imagery inside the mirror, combined with the music, makes the audience question what they are looking at, and how real it is. The music alternates between a calm flow and an unsettling atmosphere, including an extended microtonal passage that takes the listener away from reality.

Markers describing certain events in the video are provided in the score for syncing purposes.

*Blindspot* was premiered on 31 May 2019 in the Jacqueline du Pré Music Building by the ANIMA ensemble, conducted by Chris Roe.

### Instrumentation

flute  
alto saxophone  
pedal harp  
2 violins  
viola  
cello

Score in C

## Performance notes

Harp harmonics are notated at the sounding pitch.

Quarter-tones are notated using arrows; players may treat entire phrases or sections as transposed up or down a quarter-tone, in order to aid performance.

# Blindspot

Video: Willow Senior

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The musical score for "Blindspot" is written for a chamber ensemble. It begins with a tempo marking of quarter note = 80. The score is divided into two systems. The first system includes parts for Flute, Alto Saxophone, and Harp. The Flute part starts with a *flz.* (flautissimo) dynamic, followed by *ff* and *pp* dynamics, and includes articulation like *slap-tongue* and *air tone*. The Alto Saxophone part starts with *ff* and *pp* dynamics. The Harp part starts with *ff* and *p* dynamics, featuring *bisbigliando* and a *gliss.* (glissando). The second system includes parts for Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, and Violoncello. The Violin 1 part starts with *f* and *pp* dynamics, including *gliss.* and *sul pont.* (sul ponticello) markings. The Violin 2 part starts with *f* and *pp* dynamics, including *gliss.* and *sul tasto* (sul tasto) markings. The Viola part starts with *f* and *pp* dynamics, including *gliss.* and *sul tasto* markings. The Violoncello part starts with *mp* and *p* dynamics, including *gliss.* and *sul tasto* markings. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings.

Blindspot

9

Fl.

A. Sax.

Hp

D#, E $\flat$ , G#, A $\natural$

Vln 1

Vln 2

Vla

Vc.

*gliss.*

Detailed description of the musical score: The score is for measures 9 through 16. The Flute (Fl.) and Alto Saxophone (A. Sax.) parts feature melodic lines with slurs and ties, starting with a measure rest in measure 9. The Harp (Hp) part consists of a sustained chord voicing of D#, E $\flat$ , G#, and A $\natural$ . The Violin 1 (Vln 1) part begins with a glissando (gliss.) and is followed by a melodic line with slurs and ties. The Violin 2 (Vln 2) part also starts with a glissando and has a more active melodic line. The Viola (Vla) and Violoncello (Vc.) parts both begin with glissando markings and have melodic lines with slurs and ties. The score is written in treble clef for the woodwinds and strings, and grand staff for the harp.

# Blindspot

18

Fl.

A. Sax.

Hp

Vln 1

Vln 2

Vla

Vc.

**A**

Second box appears  
00:00:57:20

Boxes overlap  
00:01:01:04

Solo  
*mf*

*f* *mp*

*gliss.*

*sul pont.*

*ord.*

*sul C* *gradually sul pont.*

*pp* *mp*

Blindspot

25

*bisbigliando*

Fl.

*mp*

A. Sax.

*mp*

*mf*

*mp*

*f*

G $\sharp$  A $\flat$  E $\flat$  D $\sharp$

Vln 1

*gliss.*

Vln 2

*ord.*

*gliss.*

Vla

*ord.*

*gliss.*

Vc.

Blindspot

Second box disappears  
00:01:40:08

New scene  
00:02:00:14

Fl. 32 *pp* *mf* *p* *pp*

A. Sax. *pp* *mf* *p* *mf*

Hp D b A b

Vln 1 *sul tasto* *ord.* *pp*

Vln 2 *sul tasto* *gliss.* *ord.* *pp*

Vla *sul tasto* *ord.* *pp*

Vc. *sul tasto* *ord.* *pp*



Blindspot

41 **B** Second box appears 00:02:04:21

Fl. *p* *mf* pizz.

A. Sax. *pp* flz. 3 *mf*

Hp. *f* *p* *flz.*

Vln 1 *p* sul D

Vln 2 *pp* *cresc.* *mp* sul tasto

Vla *p* sul tasto

Vc. *p* col legno

produce different pitches  
using bow position

49

Fl.

ord.  
*p*

A. Sax.

ord.  
*pp* *mp* *f*

Hp

*mf*

D#, C#, B#, A b

Vln 1

sul tasto

sul pont.

Vln 2

0 2

Vla

col legno

ord.

Vc.

ord.

col legno

3 3 3

Blindspot

56

Fl. *flz.*  
*p*

A. Sax. *mp*

Hp

Vln 1 *ord.*

Vln 2 *ord. 8va*

Vla *sul tasto*  
0 2 0 2

Vc. *Solo*

W.T.

**C**

*pizz.*  
*mp*

*f*

*mf*

*D<sup>♯</sup>, G<sup>♯</sup>*

*f*

*mf* > *pp*

*pizz.*  
*p*

*arco*

Blindspot

64

Fl.

A. Sax.

D $\flat$  - D $\sharp$  - D $\flat$   
G $\flat$  - G $\sharp$  - G $\flat$       C $\sharp$ ,  
A $\flat$  - A $\sharp$  - A $\flat$       E $\sharp$ , F $\sharp$ , A $\sharp$       B $\sharp$

Hp

pedal slide

*mp*

*ff*

*p*

*f*

Solo

70

**D**

Fl.

A. Sax.

Hp

Vln 1

Vln 2

Vla

Vc.

*mp* *ff* *p*

D $\sharp$ , B $\flat$   
E $\flat$ , A $\sharp$

ord.

*f* *mp*

p.d.l.t.

*f* *mp*

sul E  
*f* *mp*

gliss.

gliss.

gliss.

gliss.

gliss.

gliss.

tap top of cello

slight overpressure

*f*

Sudden change of scene  
00:03:50:06

74

Fl.

A. Sax. *p* Solo *mp*

Hp

Vln 1

Vln 2 *pp* *f* gliss.

Vla *pp* *mf* *pp*

Vc. gliss.

Blindspot

77

Fl.

A. Sax.

Hp

Vln 1

Vln 2

Vla

Vc.

mf

B $\flat$

*gliss.*

*mf*

*mf*

*gliss.*

*gliss.*

*gliss.*

*gliss.*

79

Fl. *sing*

A. Sax. *p*

Hp *mp* *gliss.* *gliss.*

Vln 1

Vln 2

Vla *Solo* *ff* *3* *pizz.*

Vc. *gliss.* *gliss.* *gliss.* *gliss.*

Detailed description: This page of a musical score, numbered 16, is titled 'Blindspot'. It features seven staves: Flute (Fl.), Alto Saxophone (A. Sax.), Harp (Hp), Violin 1 (Vln 1), Violin 2 (Vln 2), Viola (Vla), and Violoncello (Vc.). The Flute part begins at measure 79 with a melodic line and a 'sing' instruction. The Alto Saxophone part has a few notes, including a dynamic marking of *p*. The Harp part features a glissando and a dynamic marking of *mp*. Violin 1 plays a complex, fast-moving melodic line with many accidentals. Violin 2 is mostly silent. The Viola part has a 'Solo' instruction, a dynamic marking of *ff*, and includes a triplet of notes. The Violoncello part consists of glissando markings. The score is written in a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature.



81

Fl. *p* *p* *p mp p mp* *f*

A. Sax. *mp*

Hp. *E#, A#* *p* R.H. *pp* *mp*

Vln 1 *molto vib.* *ppp* *fp*

Vln 2 *p* *pp* *sul pont.* *ppp* *fp* *ord.*

Vla *arco* *ppp* *fp*

Vc. *ppp* *fp*

Annotations: *gliss.*, *simile*, *3* (triplets), *E* (box), *pp*, *mp*, *f*, *ppp*, *fp*, *molto vib.*, *sul pont.*, *ord.*, *arco*.

Split screen  
00:04:30:19

87

simile

Fl. *p mp p mp* *f*

A. Sax. *mp*

Hp *pp* *mp* *gliss.* *gliss.* *gliss.*

Vln 1 *molto vib.* *ppp* *fp* *pp* *gliss.*

Vln 2 *sul pont.* *ord.* *ppp* *fp* *pp* *gliss.*

Vla *ppp* *fp* *pp* *gliss.*

Vc. *ppp* *fp* *pp* *gliss.*

96

Fl.

A. Sax.

Hp

Vln 1

Vln 2

Vla

Vc.

105 **F**

Fl.

A. Sax.

Hp

Vln 1

Vln 2

Vla

Vc.

*gliss.*

Blindspot

112

Fl.

A. Sax.

Hp

Vln 1

Vln 2

Vla

Vc.

*gliss.*

*gliss.*

*gliss.*

*gliss.*

*increasingly wide vib. non cresc.*

*increasingly wide vib. non cresc.*

*increasingly wide vib. non cresc.*

*increasingly wide vib. non cresc.*

Blindspot

120 **G** *simile* *flz.* *p mp p mp* *mf* *W.T.* **Fade to black** 00:06:16:14

Fl.

A. Sax.

Hp

B b, A# *p*

Vln 1

Vln 2

Vla

Vc.

*ppp*

*ppp*

*ppp*

*ppp*

*ppp*

Detailed description: This page of a musical score for the piece 'Blindspot' contains measures 120 through 124. The score is arranged in a system with seven staves: Flute (Fl.), Alto Saxophone (A. Sax.), Harp (Hp), Violin 1 (Vln 1), Violin 2 (Vln 2), Viola (Vla), and Violoncello (Vc.).  
- **Flute (Fl.):** Measure 120 begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a time signature of 3/4. It features a melodic line with three triplet eighth notes, marked with dynamics *p mp p mp*. A *simile* instruction is placed above the first triplet. The line continues with a half note marked *flz.* and a half note marked *mf*.  
- **Alto Saxophone (A. Sax.):** This staff is mostly silent, with a few notes appearing in measure 124, marked with dynamics *pp* and *mp*.  
- **Harp (Hp):** The harp part is silent until measure 123, where it plays a triplet of eighth notes marked *p*. The notes are Bb, A#, and B. This is followed by a series of chords in measures 124-125.  
- **Violins (Vln 1, Vln 2):** Both violin parts play a sustained, arched note in measure 123, marked *ppp*.  
- **Viola (Vla) and Violoncello (Vc.):** Both parts play a sustained, arched note in measure 123, marked *ppp*.  
- **Other markings:** A box containing the letter 'G' is placed above the first measure. A 'W.T.' (Wah-Tah) marking is above the first measure of the violin and viola parts. A 'Fade to black' instruction with the timecode '00:06:16:14' is in the top right corner.