

Doyoon Yoon

Limbo

(2025)

for solo saxophonist and live electronics

Full score

Limbo (2025)

for Solo Saxophonist and Live Electronics — Alto & Soprano Saxophones

Neither punished nor redeemed, these souls exist in a state of incompleteness and uncertainty, which can be read as a metaphor for a life that belongs nowhere, including souls of infants who died before baptism, preserving a subtle sense of innocence and faint hope.

This composition originates from that sense of precarious, liminal existence. The saxophone is deliberately disassembled: the mouthpiece and neck are separated, with the neck placed in front of the performer. The dry airflow and slap-tongue sounds produced through the detached mouthpiece pierce the silence.

The work is structured in three movements, which proceed *attacca*, flowing continuously without pause. The soloist performs on both alto and soprano saxophones, with the alto saxophone prepared in the first and second movements. Inside the instrument's body, a transparent tube connected to a talk box is inserted, while a condenser microphone is mounted inside the bell. These devices interact within the saxophone, creating feedback that varies according to fingerings, the depth of the tube, and the angle of the instrument. A piezo microphone attached to the performer's throat is routed through the talk box and influences the feedback. The composer-designed frequency combinations interact with the natural feedback, producing relatively stable values while yielding unique sonic outcomes. In the second movement, a tape part is introduced, and all sound is amplified solely through the feedback between the talk box and microphones, as well as the resonance of the instrument itself—without any additional PA system.

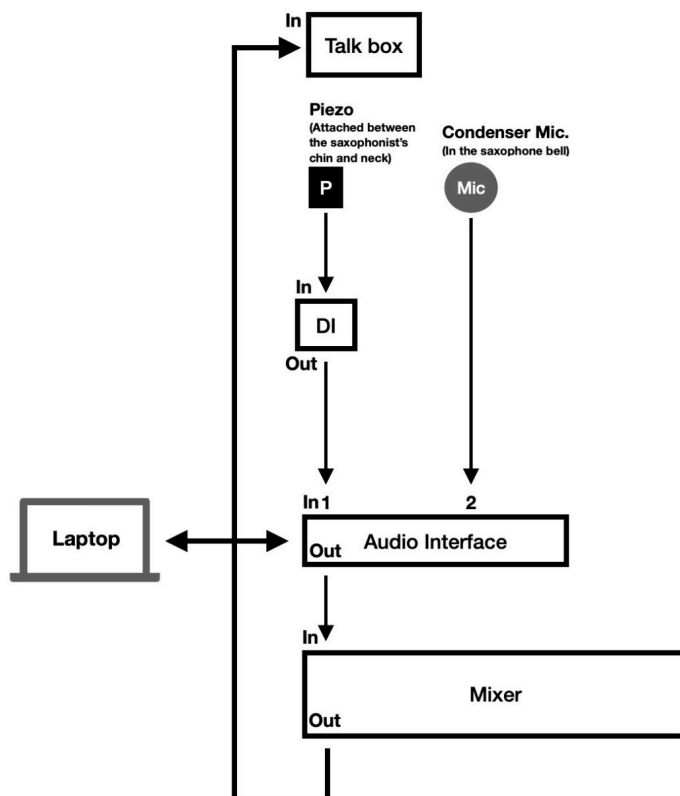
The third movement begins before the second movement concludes, featuring the soprano saxophone performing a high C6 (piano pitch) for approximately thirty seconds using circular breathing. This unidirectional outburst is a roar against a wall—a fragile, precarious exhalation. On a micro level, it reflects the composer's inner life; on a macro level, it mirrors societal and global unrest. They cannot be separated. They are connected. The sound resonates like a struggle to survive within an imperfect world. *Limbo* sonically embodies this state of liminality, conveying the unstable reverberations of an existence that cannot fully settle anywhere.

Setup Description

No PA required.

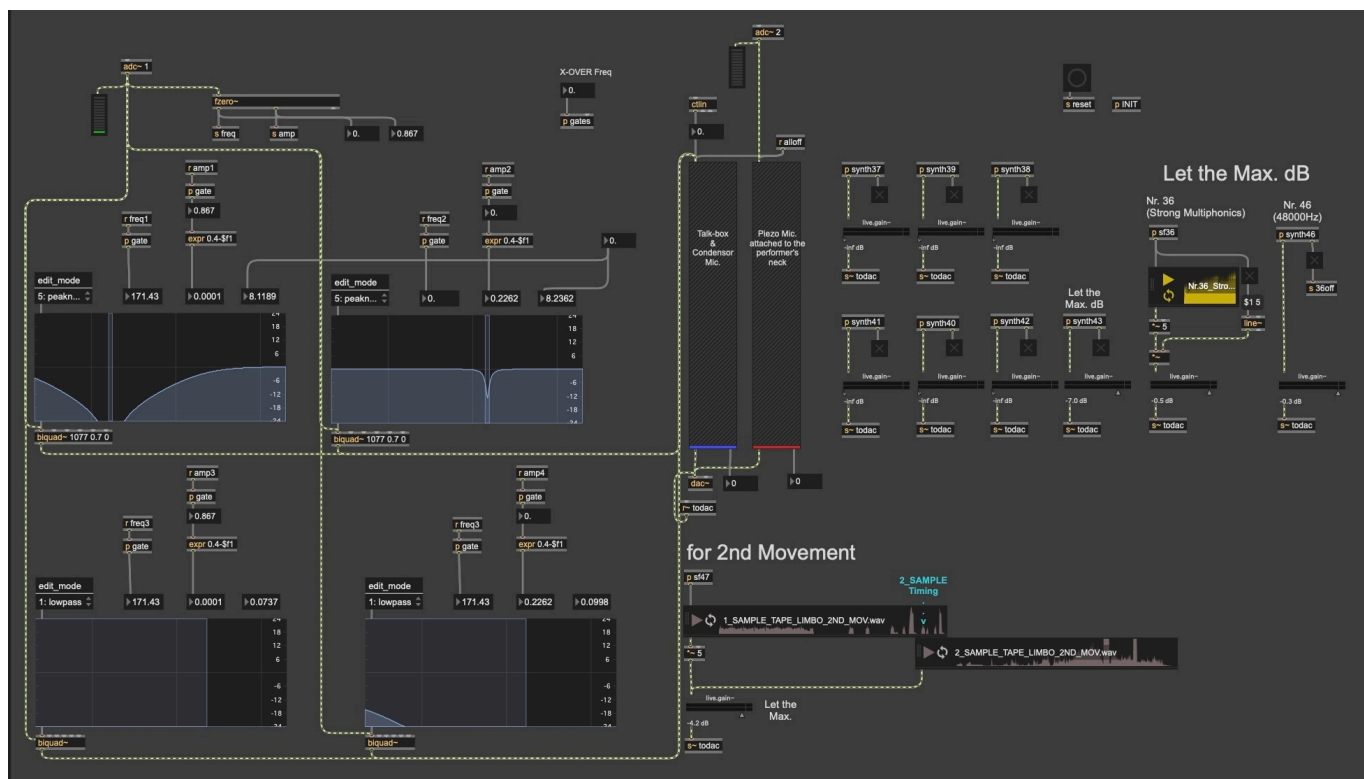
The sound in this work is not produced through a conventional output, but through a controlled feedback process inside the saxophone. A PVC tube is connected to a talk-box and inserted into the bell of the saxophone. Through this tube, air and subtle sounds are directed into the interior of the saxophone, where they interact with a microphone placed inside the bell, generating feedback. This feedback varies according to the performer's fingerings and the angle of the instrument and depending on how far the tube is inserted into the instrument, can be further shaped by close *live sound control*, combined with the *composer-made frequency combinations*, producing a highly precise and distinctive sonic outcome.

As a result, this work functions as a solo piece for the saxophonist or as a duo piece requiring a close interplay between the saxophone and electronics.



<< Max/msp Patch >>

- The initial setup of `live.gain~` in the patch is the same, as shown in the photo.



Electronic equipments

* No speaker needed



Contact microphone
(Piezo pickup)



Condenser microphone
(the t.bone Ovid System CC 100 RC)



- Mixer (Mackie Mix 5)
- Talk-box (Harley Benton Talk Box)

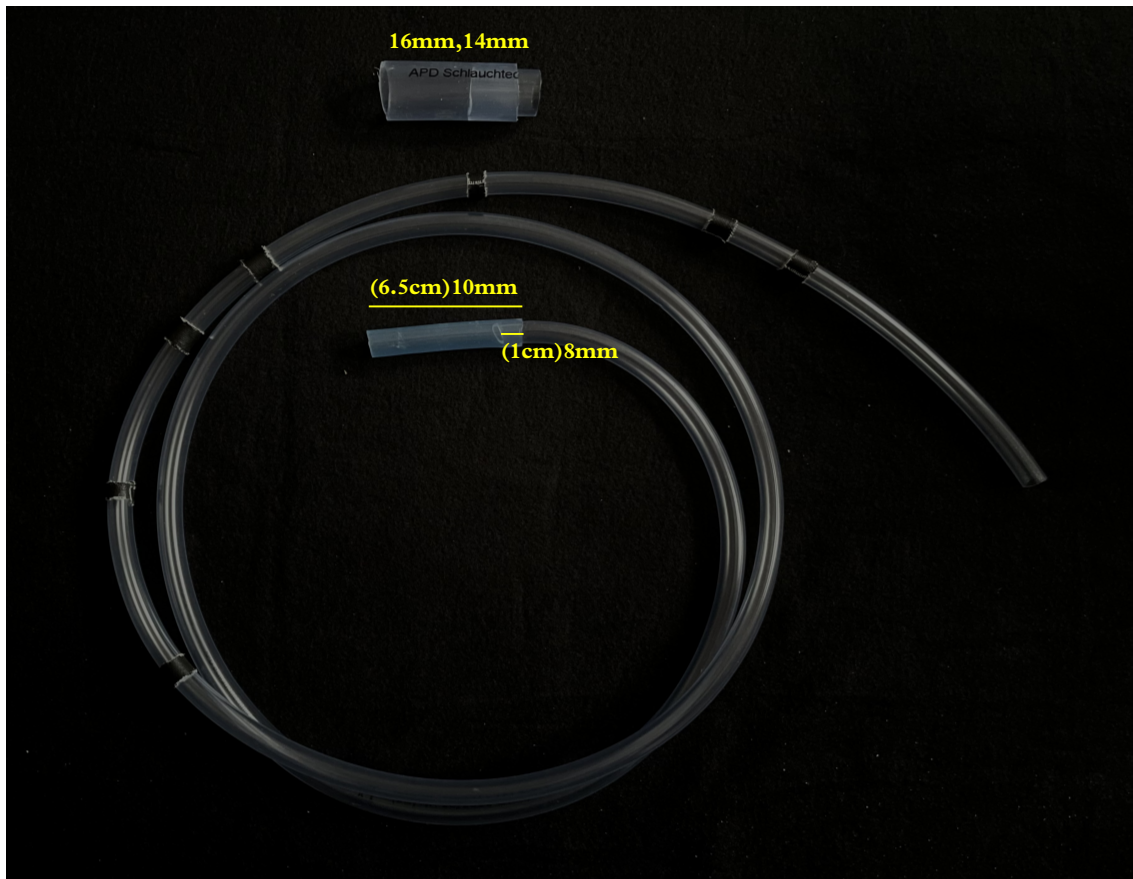


- Interface
- 2 TS (long)
- 2 XLR
- MIDI Key (NMSVE used)
 - > By changing the connected number in Max/msp it's possible to use different models.

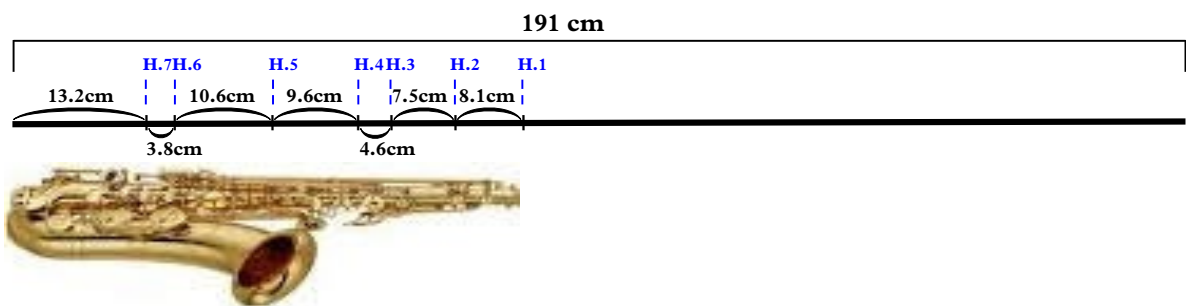
Prepared saxophone materials

* PVC Hose

- Total length (include a short 6.5 cm hose at the end): ca. 191 cm (+0.5-1.5 cm)
- Hose thickness: 8 mm, 10 mm, 12 mm, 14 mm, 16 mm



* Hose position marking



Movement I & II Setup

Movement I

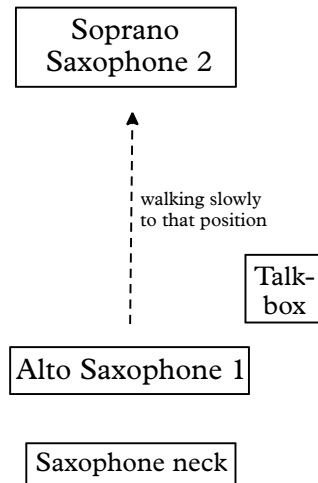
:The performer starts sitting on the stage floor.



Movement II



Movement III Setup



Audience

:Before the start of the third movement, be poitioned at Soprano Sax.2, holding the instrument, with your back turned to the audience. Playing facing backward, following the timing indicated in the score.

Notation

+ : Closed-mouth throat air sound

◦ : Half-open mouth

○ : Open mouth

× : Mouthpiece air sound

♣ : Slap tongue

⊙ : Tongue click (mouth closed)

▲ : Indeterminate pitch, adjust to match or complement the previous sound

~~~~~ : Very low, non-pitched throat growl

~~~~~ : Slightly wavering pitch

———— : Sustain

————→ : Change gradually

↔ : Alternate continuously between voice and mouth techniques (not so fast)

~~~~~ : In 2nd movement. Keep playing freely, staying with the flow.

H.1 (= Hose position 1) : Section marked as '1' starting from the first visible marking when the hose is fully inserted into the instrument body.

H.1 H.1↑ H.2 H.2↓ H.3 H.3↑

↑ ↓ : Up / Down

↙↘ : Rapid dynamic change

◯ ◯ : Niente (from Italian, meaning "nothing") — gradually fading to nothing

For further details, refer to the score and setup information page.

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for solo saxophonist and live-electronics
- in three movements -

I

