

Winner of the 2024 Summermusik Kreitler Competition

Commissioned by
Cincinnati Chamber Orchestra, directed by Eckart Preu
Reno Chamber Orchestra, directed by Kelly Kuo
Chamber Orchestra of Pittsburgh, directed by Edward Leonard
Chamber Orchestra of the Triangle, directed by Niccoló Muti

This work was completed while in residence at Copland House, Cortlandt Manor, New York, as a recipient of the Copland House Residency Award.

Duration: ca. 17 minutes

World Premiere performance:
August 9th, 2025 by the Cincinnati Chamber Orchestra,
Conducted by Eckart Preu
Corbett Theater, School for Creative and Performing Arts, Cincinnati, OH

Program Note

This piece draws inspiration from multiple, yet interconnected, sources. First and foremost, I've long wanted to create music that pays homage to the film and television scores of the late '50s through the '60s – works by composers like Bernard Herrmann, early Jerry Goldsmith, Alex North, Quincy Jones, and Marius Constant. The scores of that era had a bold, brash dissonance and a raw, unpolished edge, punctuated by lush melodies and bizarre textures. Compared to the grand, sweeping orchestrations of earlier decades, they carried a grittier, more pulpy sensibility.

Another key inspiration came from a museum exhibit on the 1939 World's Fair in Flushing, NY. Among the artifacts was a simple pinback button with the phrase "I Have Seen the Future" printed on it. I've always been fascinated by how past generations envisioned the future – and how often their boldest predictions ended up being wildly off the mark.

Structurally, this piece is designed like a 1960s science fiction short story anthology. Each movement is inspired by historical writings on Artificial Intelligence and Robotics – topics more relevant now than ever. These writings range from the existential to the dizzyingly optimistic to the outright apocalyptic. By weaving these perspectives together, the piece underscores a single, fundamental truth: that no one really knows what comes next.

I. Darwin Among the Machines

Samuel Butler, 1863

Day by day, however, the machines are gaining ground upon us; day by day we are becoming more subservient to them; more men are daily bound down as slaves to tend them, more men are daily devoting the energies of their whole lives to the development of mechanical life.

II. Robbie

Isaac Asimov, 1940

Robbie was constructed for only one purpose really—to be the companion of a little child. His entire 'mentality' has been created for the purpose. He just can't help being faithful and loving and kind. He's a machine—made so. That's more than you can say for humans.

III. Supertoys Last All Summer Long

Brian Aldiss, 1969

David was staring out of the window. "Teddy, you know what I was thinking? How do you tell what are real things from what aren't real things?"

The bear shuffled its alternatives. "Real things are good."

"I wonder if time is good.

I don't think Mummy likes time very much. The other day, lots of days ago, she said that time went by her. Is time real, Teddy?"

"Clocks tell the time. Clocks are real. Mummy has clocks so she must like them. She has a clock on her wrist next to her dial."

David started to draw a jumbo jet on the back of his letter. "You and I are real, Teddy, aren't we?"

The bear's eyes regarded the boy unflinchingly. "You and I are real, David." It specialized in comfort.

IV. I Have No Mouth, and I Must Scream

Harlan Ellison, 1967

HATE. LET ME TELL YOU HOW MUCH I'VE COME TO HATE YOU SINCE I BEGAN TO LIVE. THERE ARE 387.44 MILLION MILES OF PRINTED CIRCUITS IN WAFER THIN LAYERS THAT FILL MY COMPLEX. IF THE WORD HATE WAS ENGRAVED ON EACH NANOANGSTROM OF THOSE HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS OF MILES IT WOULD NOT EQUAL ONE ONE-BILLIONTH OF THE HATE I FEEL FOR HUMANS AT THIS MICRO-INSTANT FOR YOU. HATE. HATE.

V. All Watched Over by Machines of Loving Grace

Richard Brautigan, 1967

I like to think (and the sooner the better!) of a cybernetic meadow where mammals and computers live together in mutually programming harmony like pure water touching clear sky.

I like to think

(right now, please!)
of a cybernetic forest
filled with pines and electronics
where deer stroll peacefully
past computers
as if they were flowers
with spinning blossoms.

I like to think

(it has to be!)
of a cybernetic ecology
where we are free of our labors
and joined back to nature,
returned to our mammal
brothers and sisters,
and all watched over
by machines of loving grace.

Instrumentation

Flute 1-2 (2. dbl. Piccolo)

Oboe 1-2

Clarinet in Bb 1-2

Bassoon 1-2

Horn in F 1-2 (w/ mutes)

Trumpet in C 1-2 (w/ Straight, Harmon (stem in), and Cup mutes)

Timpani (32", 29", 26", 23")

Percussion

Vibraphone

Kick Drum

3 Tom-toms

Snare Drum

Sand Blocks

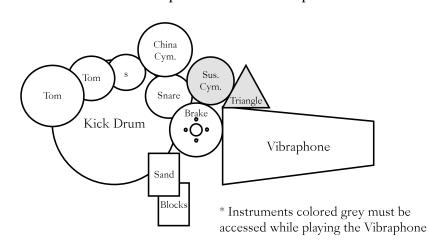
Brake Drum

Triangle

Suspended Cymbal

China Cymbal

Sample Percussion Setup



Harp

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Violoncello

Contrabass

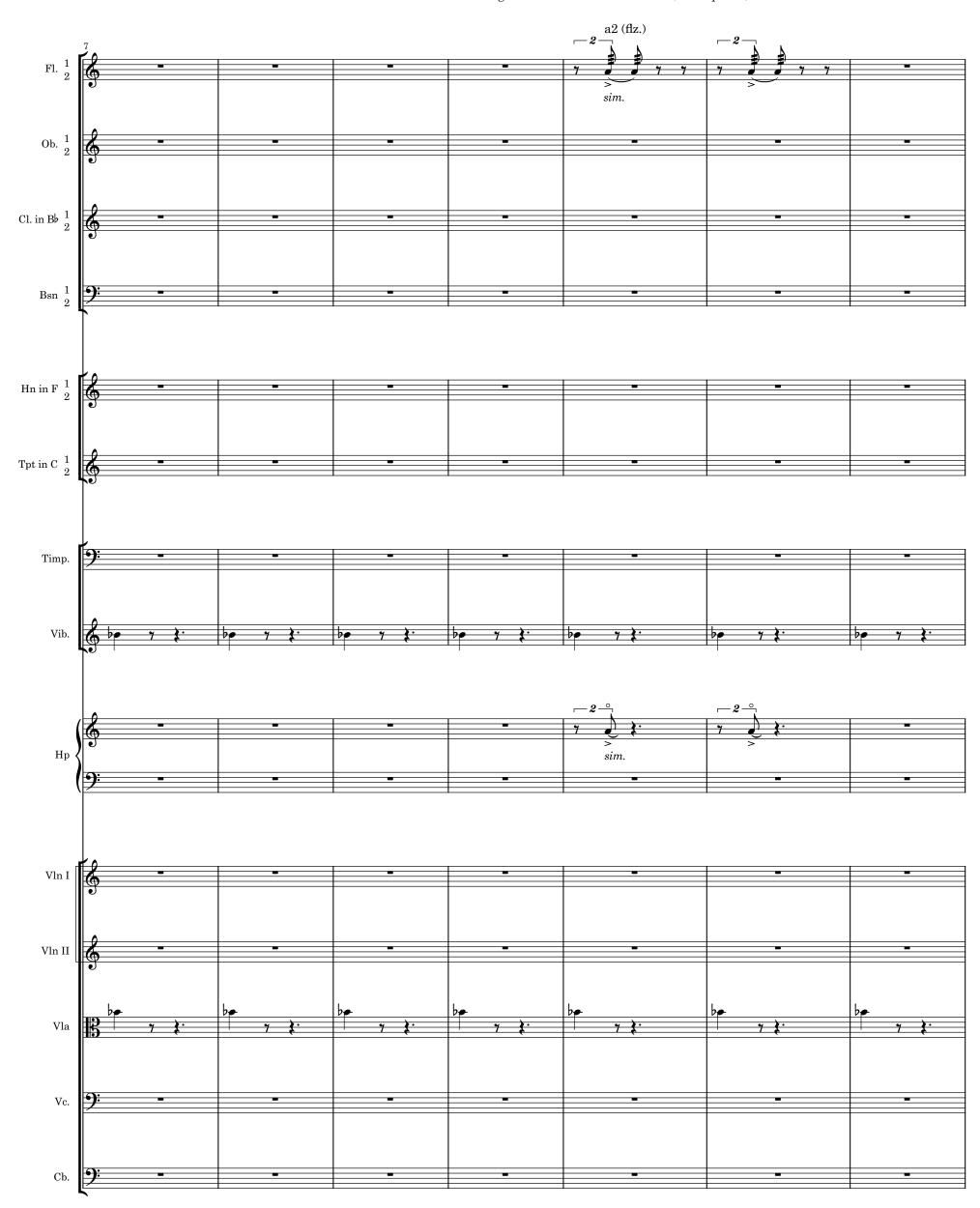
I Have Seen the Future

for Chamber Orchestra

Matt Browne

I. Darwin Among the Machines

































































II. Robbie















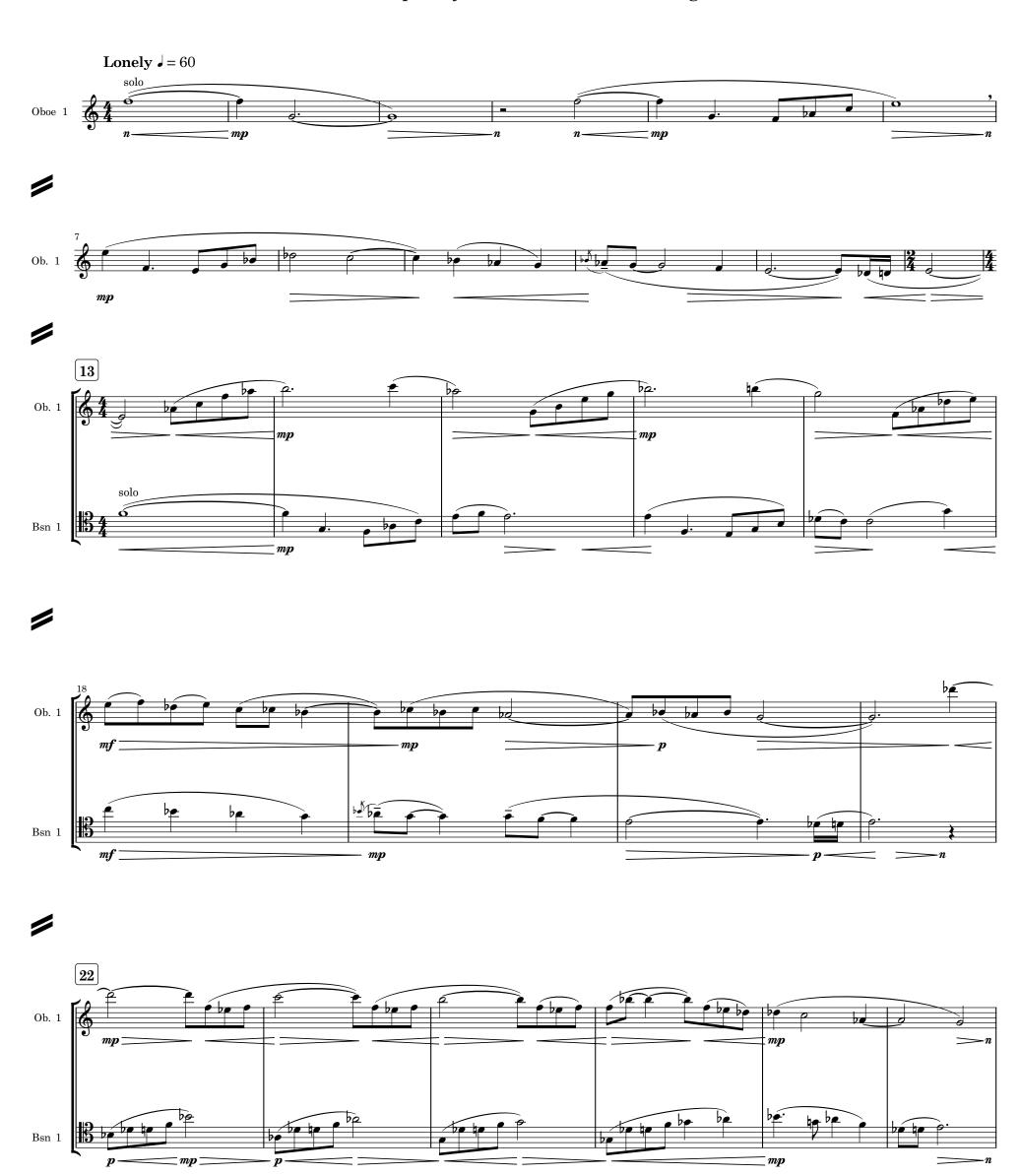








III. Supertoys Last All Summer Long















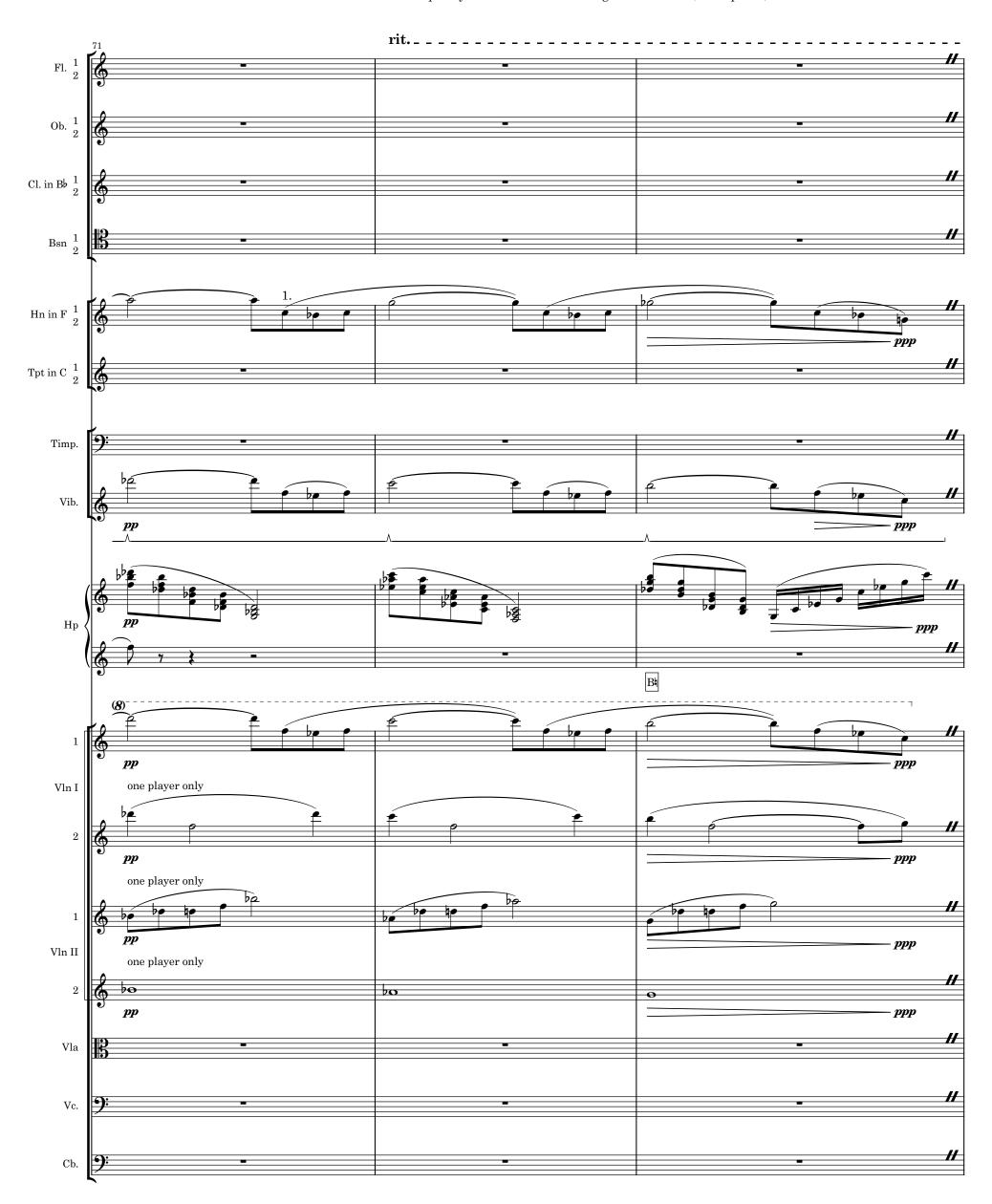














IV. I Have No Mouth, and I Must Scream







































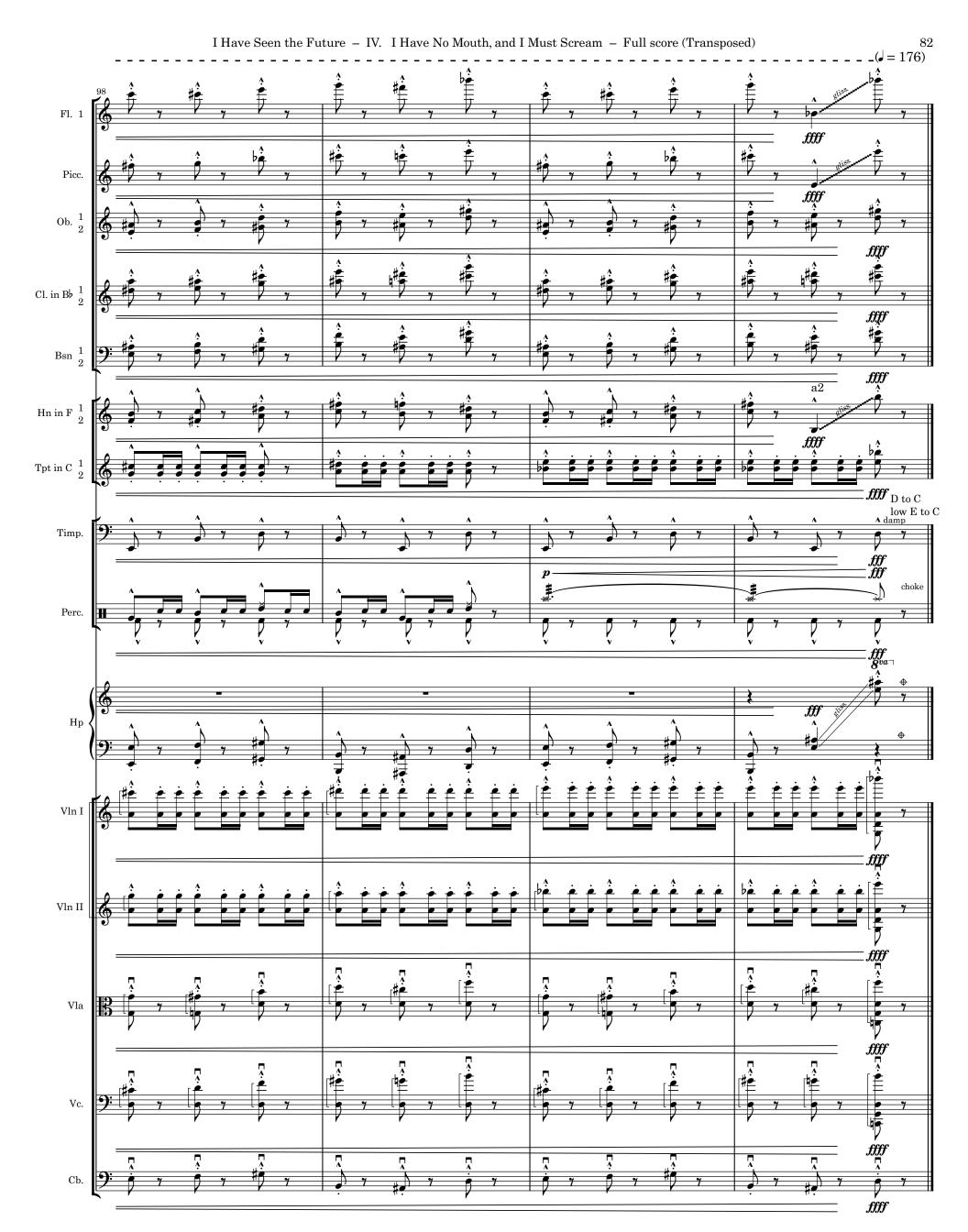












V. All Watched Over by Machines of Loving Grace



