

My Very Educated Mother Just Served Us *Nothing*  
(Pluto's Lament)

By Michael Flynn



# Performance Notes

## *General Information:*

- Tube material is performed by the vocalist:
  - Tube should be tuned to F-natural (or as close as possible).
  - A microphone should be placed inside the tube, which will be run through a Max/MSP patch.
  - *Regular note heads* indicate striking the tube with a drum stick.
  - *Triangle note heads with a glissando line* indicate scraping the side of the tube with the drumstick for the indicated duration.
- Electronics are operated by the violist:
  - Electronics are operated through a Max/MSP patch, which plays fixed media segments and contains inputs for vocals, viola, viola vocals, and tube, which are all amplified and run through a reverb/delay.
  - Fixed electronics segments and effects scenes are triggered by a foot pedal. Numbered pedal cues and click track are indicated on the "Electronics Cues" staff.
  - The violist will wear an ear piece/headphones, which feeds a click track leading into tempo changes, important moments for coordination with electronics, etc. The main click is routed to its own separate output. A fader that routes the click to the main two channels (for rehearsal purposes) is also provided.
- The "Fixed Electronics" staff gives a general view of the pitch and rhythmic material of the fixed electronics.
- The text for this piece is adapted from these two Wikipedia pages:
  - [New Horizons](#)
  - [Pluto](#)
  - Sections B and C feature a litany of the names of the following trans-Neptunian objects: [15760 Albion](#), [47171 Lempo](#), [20000 Varuna](#), [136199 Eris](#), and [134340 Pluto](#).

## *For the Vocalist:*

- Spoken text is notated on a three-line staff:
  - Text below empty bars indicates freely spoken text.
  - Text with notated rhythms is to be performed within the rhythmic values indicated:
    - Text marked "strict" should be spoken very rhythmically and somewhat robotically
    - Text marked "loose" should be treated very loosely, with rhythmic values providing a general guide for speed of speech and syllabic stress.
    - As a general vibe for this loose/strict dichotomy, think Laurie Anderson in "O Superman" meets Harold Hill from *The Music Man*.
    - In terms of character, think of yourself as a semi-malfunctioning instructional robot from the future.
- Vocal fry is indicated with X note heads.
- Sung text is notated on a regular five-line staff:
  - General vibe for the sung material is operatic and somewhat overdramatic.
  - In Section C, you're directly quoting Purcell's "When I am Laid in Earth."

### *For the Violist:*

- Bow placements (sul tasto, sul ponticello, molto sul pont., ordinario) are abbreviated after first appearance (s.t., s.p., m.s.p., ord.).
- Gradual shifting between bow placements is indicated with dotted arrows above the staff.
- Scratch tone is indicated with *square note heads*. Timbre should be scratchy and unpitched. The idea is to blend with the vocalist's vocal fry.
- In sections C and D, text should be spoken freely over the bars indicated on the "Text" staff. General vibe for the text is calm and matter-of-fact, like you're delivering a somewhat dry lecture.

*For SpacePants*  
**My Very Educated Mother Just Served Us *Nothing***  
(Pluto's Lament)

Michael Flynn

Calmly, matter-of-fact-ly ♩ = 86

The musical score is arranged in a system with five staves. The top staff is for Mezzo-soprano, the second for Tube (tuned to F<sub>4</sub>), the third for Viola, the fourth for Text, and the fifth for Fixed Electronics. The tempo is marked as 'Calmly, matter-of-fact-ly' with a quarter note equal to 86 beats per minute. The time signature is 4/4. The Mezzo-soprano, Viola, and Text staves are currently empty. The Tube staff has a single note in the second measure, marked *mp*. The Fixed Electronics staff features an 'upward alien flourish' in the first measure, consisting of a series of notes with 'x' marks below them, and a 'click track' in the second measure, consisting of a series of notes with '0' and '1' in boxes above them. The bottom staff also contains a series of notes with 'x' marks below them, and a series of notes with '0' and '1' in boxes above them.

5

M-S.

Vla.

Elec. Cues

Fixed Elec.

*Spoken, freely:* New Horizons is an interplanetary space probe that was launched as part of NASA's New Frontiers program.

8

M-S.

Vla.

Elec. Cues

Fixed Elec.

*semprmf*

*pp*

*mp*

no vibrato sul tasto

normal vibrato (s.t.)

ord.

chirps

very loosely metered, hide the rhythm somewhat.

more metered

The space-craft was launched in two-thou-sand-six with the pri ma-ry mis sion to per - form a fly by stu-dy of the

13 strictly metered closed M very loosely metered again

M-S. *Plu-to sys t'm in twen-ty fif-teen and a se-con-da-ry mis sion to fly by and stu-dy one or more o-ther Kui-per belt ob-jects in the*

Vla. *ord. -----> sul ponticello*  
*mf* 3 *p* s.p. *p*

Elec. Cues

Fixed Elec. *alien flourish*

17 strictly metered robotic vocal fry

M-S. *de-cade to fol low which be-came a mis- sion to four eight six nine five eight A - - - - ro - koth.*

Tube *scrape* *f*

Vla. *s.p. -----> ord.*  
*mp* *robotic pizz.* *arco scratch tone* *f* *mf*

Elec. Cues

Fixed Elec. *gurgling*

♩ = 88

M-S. *Spoken freely: It is the fifth space probe to achieve the escape velocity needed to leave the Solar System.*

Tube

Vla. *freely* *ord.* ----- *s.p.*

Elec. Cues

Fixed Elec.

*p* *pp*

**2**

**A**

**A little bit more urgent**

M-S. *loose*

Vla. *s.p.* ----- *ord.*

Elec. Cues

Fixed Elec. *(Apollo 13 theme)* *alien flourish*

*pp* *p* *mp*

On Jan - u - a - ry nine-teenth two-thou - sand-six, New Hor - i - zons was launched from Cape Can av' - ral



27

M-S. *3* *3* *3* *3* *3*  
 Space Force Sta-tion by an At - las Five ro-cket di-rect - ly in - to an Earth and so - lar e-scape tra-jec-to - ry

Vla. (ord.) -----> s.p. pizz. arco ord.  
*mf* *3* *3* *p* *pp* *p*

Elec. Cues

Fixed Elec. (more Apollo 13)

30

M-S. *strict* *3* *3* *robotic* *vocal fry* *still strict*  
 with a speed of a-bout six-teen point two six kil-o - me-ters per se- cond. It was the

Tube *scrape* *f*

Vla. *robotic pizz.* *arco scratch tone* *pizz.*  
*mp* *mf* *f* *mf*

Elec. Cues

Fixed Elec. *gurgling* (even more Apollo 13)