

*Trying to translate*  
(for piano, tape and live electronics, 1991)

*Katharine Norman*

So often pieces for instrument and tape concentrate on finding points of contact between two worlds, making some kind of aural translation between acoustic and electronic sound. I decided to explore the polarity between the instrument and the tape, treating the issue as a feature rather than a problem. At times the piano sound is processed 'live' to enhance its independence from the recorded sound. Piano and tape inhabit the same world, but differently.

The tape explores some speech which is itself about issues of translation; a speaker describes the problems of translating from gaelic to english, and also the way that gaelic music, in particular psalm-singing, has declined over this century. I was struck by the beauty of her voice, and the emotion behind her meaning. I also share her sorrow that these old ways of making and sharing music about, and for, everyday life seem to be disappearing, and we are perhaps no longer able to translate their relevance and deceptive simplicity into the music that we write today.

The speech used is from a Radio 3 *Soundings* documentary and is used by kind permission of the BBC. The piece was commissioned by the Mead/Montague duo with funds provided by the Arts Council of Great Britain

Preview File Only

# Trying to translate

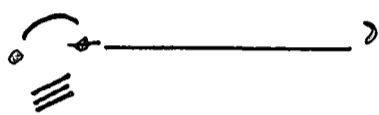
Katharine Norman

for piano, tape and live electronics (1991)

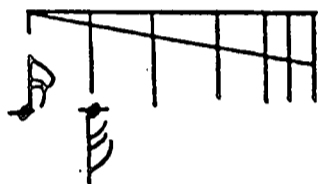
## PIANO: NOTATION



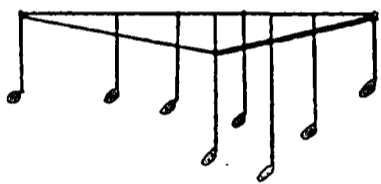
Presto tremolando, using both hands. Stopping at the ' , or at next event. On one pitch unless otherwise indicated. (e.g. bar 1)



Presto trill. Legato, continuing until ' or next event



Tremolando, starting slowly and increasing in speed.



Pattern moving slow → faster → slower (e.g.)



Sustain Pedal. mmm indicates half-pedalling to diffuse the sustained sound.



NB: Rhythmic notation is not strict and should be interpreted freely, taking any durations given as a guide to relative length.

- — hold, with Ped.
- • hold note down until next note

TAPE: Stereo Dat master. No EQ. Preferably diffused through front and back speakers (at least), emphasis on front speakers.

FX: SPX90, or similar effects module

Score: FX

①	① Dry signal (amplification of piano)
②	② Wet signal (output from FX: NB set FX mix 100% wet)
③	③ Program changes. Panning. Input to FX level.

## PROGRAMMES

	QT	QO	DD	GR1	GR 2
(edited SPX90)	SPX PGM 23 (P.C.C.)	SPX PGM 23	SPX PGM 7 (DELAY L,R)	SPX PGM 20	SPX PGM 20
	L PITCH 0	L PITCH 12	LCH DEL 460ms	RVB TIME 55"	RVT 2"
	R PITCH 0	R PITCH 11	LCH FB 40%	DELAY 35ms	DELAY 35ms
	L FINE 50	L FINE 50	RCH DEL 370ms	TRIGGER 68%	TRIGGER 30%
	R FINE -50	R FINE 50	RCH FB 45%	HOLD 15"	HOLD 6"
	L DELAY 160ms	L DELAY 50ms		RELEASE 5"	RELEASE 3"
	R DELAY 180ms	R DELAY 60ms			

# Trying to translate for piano, tape and live electronics

written for Philip Mead and Stephen Montague  
with funds provided by the ACGB

Dur c. 15 mins.

Katherine Norman

0" 10" 20" 30" 40"

TAPE  
(low, detuned, sustained) ppp [Trying to translate]

FX  
① 2 (slight amplification)  
② 0  
③ QT

PIANO  
8 f presto f mp sf sf mp sf f  
8ve L# Ped sff 8ve L# Ped sff

TAPE  
f f f f

FX  
①  
② 3  
③

PIANO  
f f f f mp f 3f  
8ve L# Ped sff 8ve L# Ped sff

Preview File Only

50" 60"

TAPE

FX ① ② ③

PIANO

mf

ff

mp

Ped 8vel

70" 80"

(speaking voice)  
[Idioms and proverbs and other figures of speech]

TAPE

FX ① ② ③

PIANO

mp

mf

mp

mf

mf

mp

mf

mf

mp

Ped #

Ped

90" 100"

TAPE

FX ① ② ③

PIANO

*f* *ff* *mf* *mp* *f* *f* *mp*

Ped

(A) 110" 120"

TAPE

FX ① ② ③

PIANO

(vocal, "Luh, L, L...") *mp* [ ] *mp* [ ] *mp* [ ]

*f* *mp* *f* *mp* *f* *mp*

(singing)

*rit:...* *p* *rit:...*

*mp* *f* *mp*

Ped

130" 140"

TAPE  
 mp "Luh, L, L... .. Luh, L, L... .. mf "Luh, L

FX  
 ①  
 ② 0  $\nabla$  3  
 ③

PIANO  
 non leg.  
 P  $\nabla$  mf  $\nabla$  p  
 (loco) (presto) rit...  
 f  $\nabla$  mf  $\nabla$  mp

mp Ped

150" 160"

TAPE  
 Luh, L... ..  
 ah  
 (speaking) "Life is so very different"  
 "Luh, L... .."  
 "Luh, L... .."

FX  
 ①  
 ② 0  $\nabla$  0  
 ③

PIANO  
 mf  $\nabla$  mp  
 mp  
 mp  
 mp  
 p

mp Ped



170" 180"

now from the home of  
+ the songs] [People sang for a purpose] [They either sang to tell a story]

TAPE *Luh, L. . . . .* *Luh, L. . . . .* *mp Luh, L. . .*

FX ① 0 2

FX ② 0

FX ③ Set up [DD(Bypass ON)] Pan ① L, L CENTRE → R, R

Piano *mf* *mp* *rit. . . . .* *mp* *mf* *p*

*mp* *Ped* *mf* *mp* *Ped*

"story" ↗

190" 200"

[or they sang to accompany  
their work, to lighten  
the work] [Or they sang for  
dancing] [or, for playing with  
& child]

TAPE *Luh, L. . . . .* *Luh, L. . . . .*

FX ① (2)

FX ② 0

FX ③ Pan ① R, R CENTRE → L, L

Piano *mf* *mp* *rit.* *p* *mf* *molto* *pp* *mf* *rit. . . . #*

*mp* *Ped* *mf* *mp* *Ped*

*presto poss.* *8ve b.* *mf* *molto* *pp* *mf* *rit. . . . #*

*Ped ('trem')* *Ped*

(B)

210" 220"

[or they sang with, to put a child to sleep (sleep, sleep...)]

f <sup>marc.</sup> [So much has happened] - mp [And I've learned that recently (with echo)]

TAPE

FX ①  
②  
③ CENTRE → R,R → L,R BYPASS OFF DD\*

Piano

mp, p, mp, mf, f, rit., Ped

PAUSE TAPE

with trying to translate

TAPE TACET

FX ① 0 (no amplification)  
② 0 (no wet sig output)  
③ (DD) 5 (input to FX) 0

Piano

loco, Tempo ad Lib: agitato, sec, (hold), ad lib accel., accel., legato, P, mp

(senza Ped.) Ped

\* make sure that only the piano F# is caught by the Digital Delay  
 (if two programmes can be linked, add Rvb: RVT c.3", slow rise and decay.)



TAPE

FX ① 0  
 ② 5  
 ③ 0

Molto lento

dolce, poco marc.  
 mp

c.5"

Agitato

Piano

TAPE

FX ①  
 ② 5  
 ③ 0

sec.

Molto lento

(hold)

dolce, marc.

(hold all notes)

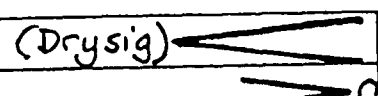
c.5"

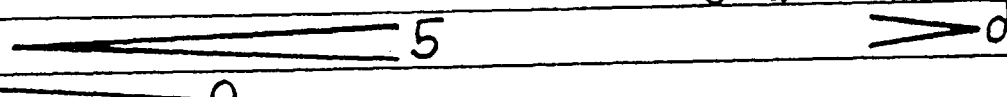
Piano

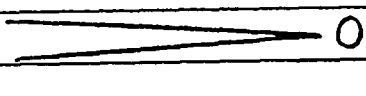
mp Legato

Ped

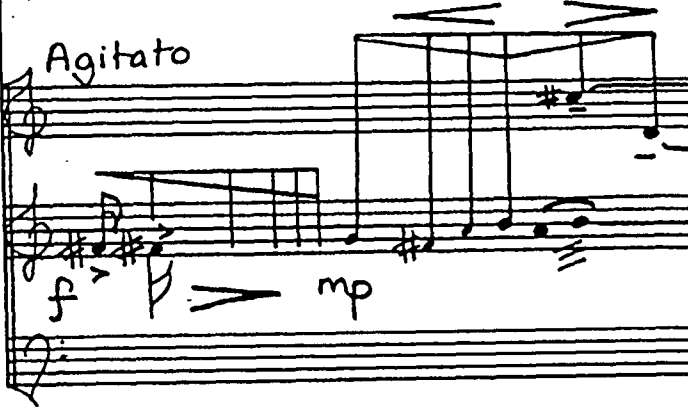

TAPE

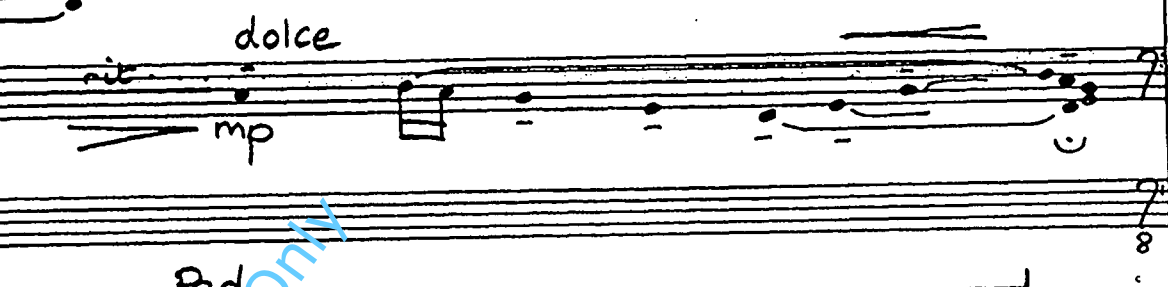
FX ① (Dry sig) 

FX ② 0 


FX ③ 5 

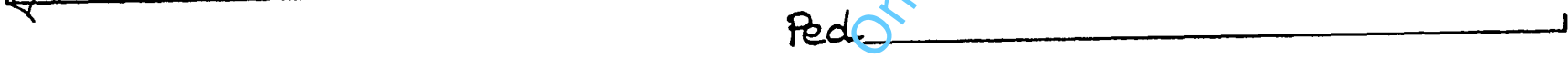
Piano

*Agitato*  *Lento* 

*dolce* 

*f* *mp* *mp*

*c. 3"* 

Ped 

Preview File Only

TAPE

FX ① 3 

FX ② 0 

FX ③ 0 

Piano

*Presto*  *mf* *dim. . . . mp* 

Ped  Ped  Ped 

©

TAPE

FX  
① 2  
② 0  
③ 5(DD)

Piano  
Agitato  
sec. f

Presto

1  
0

Ped Ped

mp f mp

TAPE

FX  
① 2  
② 0  
③ 5

Piano  
Agitato  
sec. f

8va  
presto  
meno mosso (rit)

Ped

mf P

TAPE

FX ① 1  
 ② 0  
 ③ 0 BYPASS ON

Piano

sec p  
 mf f sec f mp sec sf

Ped Ped Ped

TAPE

FX ① 0  
 ② 5  
 ③ BYPASS OFF 5\* (FX input) 0

Piano

mf p sf  
 mp legato

Ped Ped Ped

\* Digital Delay - capture C# only

