

Stefan Kristinkov

Wood, Air, Metal, Repeat

Wood, Air, Metal, Repeat by Stefan Kristinkov, inspired by a short sci-fi movie, is an exploration of how a single acoustic instrument can transcend its conventional identity and become an entire cinematic sound world. Conceived as an experimental work for solo clarinet, every sound heard in the recording — melodic material, rhythmic figures, percussive attacks, sustained sonorities, and atmospheric textures — originates exclusively from the single B♭ clarinet. Rather than treating the instrument solely as a melodic voice, the composition approaches it as a complete sonic ecosystem whose acoustic properties are transformed into an evolving narrative. The result is a work that blurs the boundaries between instrumental performance, electroacoustic sound design, and cinematic scoring, creating an immersive listening experience from an intentionally constrained palette. The piece reflects Stefan's continuing interest in extending the expressive possibilities of familiar instruments through inventive compositional thinking, performance practice, and studio production techniques.

The title itself refers to the three physical elements responsible for generating every sound in the work. *Wood* represents the clarinet's resonant body, whose natural acoustic properties provide warmth, depth, and a distinctly organic timbre. *Air* is the essential energy source behind every gesture, emphasizing breath not merely as a technical requirement but as an expressive parameter capable of conveying vulnerability, tension, intimacy, and human presence. *Metal* refers to the instrument's keywork and mechanical components, transformed from functional hardware into an independent layer of rhythmic and percussive expression. Together, these materials become the fundamental vocabulary from which the entire composition is constructed, while *Repeat* points toward the work's organizing principle: repetition as a process of continual variation and gradual transformation rather than simple recurrence.

From a technical perspective, the recording demonstrates an extensive exploration of extended instrumental techniques alongside contemporary multitrack production methods. Conventional clarinet tones coexist with key clicks, breath noise, percussive key taps, multiphonics, overblown harmonics, pitch inflections, and subtle articulatory gestures. Individually, these sounds might be perceived as incidental artifacts of performance, but through careful layering, editing, spatial processing, and dynamic shaping, they assume structural and expressive functions. The studio becomes an extension of the compositional process, allowing the clarinet to function as a virtual ensemble in which individual layers fulfill roles analogous to those found in orchestration. Some establish rhythmic ostinati, others provide harmonic resonance or pedal textures, while still others serve as ambient atmospheres, transitional effects, or dramatic punctuation. In this way, the recording process itself becomes an act of orchestration, enabling a single acoustic instrument to occupy sonic territories more commonly associated with electronic synthesis, percussion, or a chamber ensemble while preserving the unmistakable character of its acoustic source.

Repetition serves not simply as a formal device but as a means of shaping musical perception. Rather than presenting static loops, recurring rhythmic and timbral patterns undergo continuous processes of variation through subtle changes in articulation, density, register, dynamics, texture, and spatial imaging. This gradual evolution invites the listener to perceive transformation over time, encouraging attention to details that accumulate into larger expressive gestures. Such techniques share aesthetic affinities with post-minimalist composition, where incremental change generates momentum without relying on conventional thematic development. At the same time, the pacing resembles cinematic editing, in which seemingly modest visual or sonic changes gradually alter dramatic meaning. Familiar gestures repeatedly return in transformed contexts, creating cycles of anticipation, tension, release, and renewal that propel the musical narrative forward.

This deliberately restricted sonic palette also serves a significant emotional function. Because every sound shares the same acoustic origin, the composition possesses an unusual degree of timbral cohesion and

psychological intimacy. Rather than relying on contrasts between different instruments, emotional development emerges through evolving texture, gesture, density, and spectral color. The clarinet's natural warmth provides a stable emotional anchor, while its continually transformed identities challenge the listener's expectations. Mechanical key sounds evoke movement, machinery, or ritualized rhythm; breath textures create an immediate sense of physical proximity and vulnerability; sustained resonances expand into spacious cinematic environments. The emotional trajectory therefore arises less from overt thematic statements than from the careful manipulation of timbre, texture, pacing, and dynamic contrast, allowing the listener to experience the work almost as an unfolding psychological landscape.

Within a cinematic context, *Wood, Air, Metal, Repeat* demonstrates how narrative can emerge through the organization of sound itself rather than through conventional melody or large-scale orchestration. The work functions much like a through-composed film cue in which texture, gesture, and evolving sonic perspective become primary storytelling devices. Its shifting layers readily evoke states of contemplation, discovery, uncertainty, isolation, quiet determination, or suspended tension, while intentionally leaving narrative interpretation open to the listener. In this respect, the composition occupies a space between contemporary concert music, electroacoustic composition, post-minimalist aesthetics, and modern film scoring. It illustrates how limited source material, when subjected to imaginative development and rigorous structural design, can generate a remarkably expansive emotional vocabulary.

Ultimately, *Wood, Air, Metal, Repeat* is both a compositional study and a demonstration of creative possibility. By constructing a richly layered cinematic environment entirely from the physical properties of a single clarinet, the work challenges conventional assumptions about instrumentation while revealing the expressive potential embedded within even the most familiar acoustic sound sources. It illustrates how performance, compositional design, recording technology, and sound architecture can function as equal partners in musical storytelling. Wood, air, and metal cease to be merely the physical components of an instrument and instead become the elemental materials from which an evocative and emotionally resonant cinematic narrative is built.

Wood, Air, Metal, Repeat is scheduled to be released in Hi Fidelity Stereo and Dolby Atmos 7.1.4 formats on August 27th, 2026.

Stefan Kristinkov is an eclectic composer, known primarily for his work in independent films, and a clarinetist with an extensive international performing background, currently based in the New York City.

His music is characterized by its inventiveness in combining diverse, often unexpected musical elements, blurring the boundaries of styles and genres. Regardless of being an accomplished musician, music producer and an ambitious composer with years of professional experience, Stefan retains a profound curiosity allowing him to consistently explore new ideas and pursue unique creative solutions.

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