I, Jennifer Wang, hereby submit this work as part of the requirements for the degree of:

Master of Music

in:

Composition

It is entitled:

wind in her hair

This work and its defense approved by:

Chair: Joel Hoffman
Mara Helmuth
Michael Fiday
WIND IN HER HAIR
for alto flute, vibraphone, electric guitar, voice, piano, violin, violoncello, and tape

Jen Wang
wind in her hair was commissioned by NeXT Ens, an electro-acoustic music ensemble founded in October 2003 by pianist Shiau-uen Ding. The piece is inspired by my teenage habit of walking through my hometown whenever I was angry or restless. Part of the vast Los Angeles urban sprawl, it’s an ugly town by day. But at 2 AM, it takes on an odd gritty beauty. Rows of orange streetlamps turn the hazy sky a deep purple and cast houses and people in a murky monochrome. Broken glass glitters on the asphalt, and wilting trees cast wild, twisted shadows. It’s quiet, except for the sound of cars, but the city seems to hum with latent energy. In the night, it is magical, full of possibility and mystery.

wind in her hair was premiered in Cohen Family Studio Theater at the College-Conservatory of Music, University of Cincinnati on May 4, 2004.
A conductor is recommended for this piece.

While the piece can be performed successfully with any vocal type, it was written with a non-operatic singer in mind—specifically, Mona Kayhan, who appears on the recording enclosed with this score.

Finding a way for the electric guitar to blend with the rest of the ensemble can be a challenge. One solution is to use a clean, “acoustic” sound until the final measures of the piece (“gritty”).

Beginning at rehearsal D, the balance between tape and live musicians should be such that the intricate contrapuntal instrumental parts are partially submerged in the ambient tape part. It may be tempting to perceive the tape part as too loud since some elements of the instrumental lines are lost, but this is a desired effect.

Despite being in stereo (2-channel) audio, the tape part is best presented in four channels, to enhance its ambient role.

The tape part is divided into seven sections, to facilitate coordination between instruments and tape. It is necessary to have a performer trigger the entrance of each tape section in some way. (Each tape section naturally fades out, so there is no need to stop the sections.)

There are many different ways to realize the tape performance. For the first performances of this piece, the sections were triggered using a Max/MSP patch. Performers who do not own Max/MSP can use Max/MSP Runtime, available as a free download from http://www.cycling74.com. The Max/MSP patch and the sound files for the tape part are enclosed with this score.
wind in her hair
for SCAr Eno

Mysterious, icy (q = 60)

Alto Flute
Vibraphone
Electric Guitar
Mysterious, icy (q = 60)
Violin
Violoncello
Tape

A. Fl.
Vib.
E. Gtr.
Vln.
Ve.
Tape

A. Fl.
Vib.
E. Gtr.
Vln.
Ve.
Tape

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A. Fl.

Vib.

E. Gtr.

Voice

Pno.

Vln.

Vc.

Tape

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A. Fl.

Vib.

E. Gtr.

Voice

Pno.

Vln.

Vc.

Tape

---

Vib.

Tape part 3

(sbegins on second beat)
70 E. Fl. A. Fl.  
 senza vibrato

71 Vib.  
 light, detached, with slight pedal throughout

72 Pno.  
 mf

73 Vln.  
 senza vibrato

74 Vc.  
 p

75 Tape  
 detached, precise mild distortion

D Tape part 4

76 A. Fl.  
 detached, precise mild distortion

83 E. Gtr.

84 Pno.  
 sweep, lyrical

85 Vln.  
 broad, lyrical

86 Vc.  
 mf

87 Tape  
 sforzando

88 D (Tape part 4)

89 A. Fl.  
 detached, precise mild distortion

90 E. Gtr.

91 Pno.  
 sweep, lyrical

92 Vln.  
 broad, lyrical

93 Vc.  
 mf

94 Tape  
 sforzando
A. Fl.  
Vib.  bell-like (let all vibrate)  
E. Gtr.  very gritty  
Voice  rich, bright hum  
Pno.  plaintive  
Vln.  plaintive  
Vc.  
Tape  

127  soft mallets  
* slowly fade away  
Vib.  
Voice  distant, but intense  
Pno.  
Tape  

mp  overblow in swells  
pp  niente  

mp plaintive  

soft  

soft mallets  

soft mallets  

soft mallets