

Contrabassoon Extension Guide
for *Extinction Events* by Liza Lim
Compiled by Ben Roidl-Ward

This document is intended to serve as a guide for creating and using an F0 Contrabassoon extension for the last note of Liza Lim's *Extinction Events and Dawn Chorus*. This particular method was used for a performance with the Lucerne Festival Contemporary Orchestra on November 21st, 2021 using a Fox contrabassoon. Adjustments for other instruments or contexts may be necessary.

Please feel free to contact ben.roidl.ward@gmail.com with any questions.

Materials:

- 1m length of plastic pipe - .075m diameter (far left, *Figure 1*)
- 0.7m length of plastic pipe - .075m diameter (second from the left, *Figure 1*)
- 45° hard plastic connecting tube - .075m diameter (bottom right, *Figure 1*; *Figure 2*)
- Rubber connecting washer - 0.075m diameter (top right, *Figure 1*; *Figure 3a + b*)
- Gaffer tape
- Hercules Instrument Stand
- 2 Sandbags
- Weight (to secure end)
- Blocking box



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3a



Figure 3b

Notes:

All pipe materials were purchased at the REKAG building supply store in Lucerne, Switzerland and should be available for purchase in similar stores elsewhere.

In order to avoid using a blocking box, it may be advisable to select a shorter length for the short pipe and a longer length for the long pipe. This would achieve the same total length without necessitating the instrument to be elevated off of the ground. This was done in order to achieve the appropriate angle for insertion into the bell.

Assembly:

1. Connect the short and long tubes to one another with the 45° hard plastic connecting tube. Each connection should be made firmly using a large amount of gaffer tape.
2. Attach the rubber connecting washer to the open end of the shorter tube.
3. Place the long tube on the ground and set the end of the short tube with the connecting washer in the arm of the instrument stand (set to desired height).
4. Secure the instrument stand and long tube using sandbags and weights as needed to make the assembly as sturdy as possible.
5. If used, place the blocking box beneath the end of the tube at an angle that enables the performer to use it as a support for the end pin.





Insertion/Use

The use of the extension is rather nerve-wracking and takes careful practice. It is most easily achieved by starting with an end pin setting that is much too high, then carefully lowering the bell of the contrabassoon onto the rubber washer while shortening the height of the end pin. In this process, great care should be taken to ensure that the bell of the contrabassoon fits snugly around the washer in order to create an air-tight seal. Once the bell has been seated on the washer, the end pin should be tightened at its new height. The seal can then be checked and improved by hand (the performer should take care to move the body of the instrument as little as possible in this process). Now the contrabassoon has been extended and F0 glory can be unleashed!

For a video of the process of inserting and using the extension, please see the video below:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h1isvyCB8Xo>