

## **Useless box (2023)** for box operator and electronics. Duration: 13'

*The god Prometheus stole fire from heaven to give to the human race, which originally consisted only of men. To punish humanity, the other gods created the first woman, the beautiful Pandora. As a gift, Zeus gave her a box, which she was told never to open. However, as soon as he was out of sight she took off the lid, and out swarmed all the troubles of the world, never to be recaptured. Only Hope was left in the box, stuck under the lid. Anything that looks ordinary but may produce unpredictable harmful results can thus be called a Pandora's box.*

"Definition of PANDORA'S BOX." Merriam-Webster, Merriam-Webster, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Pandora%27s%20box#:~:text=To%20punish%20humanity%2C%20the%20other,world%2C%20never%20to%20be%20recaptured>. Accessed August 2023.

The piece starts with the resonant knocking of a wooden box. At first, it sounds like an empty and useless box, but as it reveals its contents, it transforms from real to fantastical worlds, from Pandora's box to Schrödinger's cat in a box thought experiment, and into places where the strange, the enigmatic, the amusing, the theatrical, and the terrifying all blend together, creating a story that is replete with vivid mental images and associations. Through a combination of spectromorphological, spatiomorphological and transcontextual manipulations, the sounds like emanating from the box take on a life of their own, becoming imbued with symbols, meanings, shapes, and forms. Each sound, from the eerie whistles to the booming thuds, has a distinct purpose and contributes to the piece in its own unique way. "Useless Box" both begins and ends with a quote from "Entry of the Gladiators," a military march composed by Julius Fučík in 1897. The box operates within a three-stage paradigm: Sense, Think, and Act. Equipped with an array of sensors including infrared, gyroscope, piezo, and switches, it transmits data to the "Think" part, which is a MaxMSP program with machine listening capabilities. This component then controls the actuators, which make the third part, "Act". Various physical computing and digital fabrication techniques were employed to fabricate the essential hardware for both sensors and actuators, which include a fan, pump, vape pen, motors, and lights.