

lightly against the fabric

for clarinet quartet

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Notes

This is a text score. With the exception of text intended to be spoken (see below), the text provided is a stimulus for devising sounds used in the piece.

The piece is of indeterminate length. For shorter durations, performers will need to be carefully selective about the material to create an effective result.

Instrumentation: the principal instrumentation for the premiere is 4 bass clarinets. In addition to this, sections of the piece may be doubled on Eb or Bb clarinets (if Bb, the upper register &/or focus on multiphonics should be the focus).

For the premiere venue (a small rectangular room), the layout instructions are as follows: the room should be as dark as possible, the performers should be spaced around the audience. The performers should have one stand with a stand-light. The ensemble may also experiment with performers in the basement area. For other venues, other creative approaches may be adopted appropriate to the piece.

Preparation & performance:

Players should research & select a small number of multiphonics (no more than 3 each for any performance) to use in rehearsal & performance.

Prior to the performance, the ensemble should devise an approach to the given material that will suit the required duration & any other situation relevant; this approach should be based on the following information:

The score is divided into 4 sections: one spoken section (red), & 3 texts to interpret as sound (black). Each player should deliver their spoken text once during the piece. 2 spoken texts may overlap once during the performance, but otherwise should be well separated. The players may move through the 3 sound-texts as they wish, independently of one another but aware of each other's sounds. These black sections may be played in any order & it is not necessary for any performer to complete all 3 black sections within one performance (or to play every sound-text in a section). However, a section cannot be returned to once left.

The general dynamic level should be very quiet, a median level of *pp-ppp*, with some elements even quieter & some slightly louder; *p* should be the loudest dynamic reached, although in some circumstances a rare *mp* may be acceptable.

With the majority of the piece being improvised, the harmonic & melodic content is open to a variety of approaches. Performers should however avoid too conventionally tonal an approach. Microtones are welcome, & performers could also explore working with slightly different tunings across the group. Other sonic expansion techniques (e.g. timbral trills, altered colours/textures/timbres) are likewise welcomed.

One player may use a stopwatch to avoid the piece over- or under-running. A pre-arranged musical signal should indicate the piece coming to a close (this may include the player simply finishing playing & standing silently & other players gradually following suit).

Clarinet 1

1

2

3

flat gaze forms images

altered light,

a signal from far away

time no longer eats you

the halting lexicon

of itinerant ghosts

patterns veiled and obscure,

trickling in from the corners

say ocean, o exile

cold & distant

ribboning

very slowly

*dissolving,
fragmenting*

somewhere beyond the horizon

moments of reaction

fragility

*a liminal point
between stillness &
movement*

abraded sound

Clarinet 2

1

2

3

moth dialects

a gossamer motion against glass

acts of memory enter the structure

ice binds

promises pool across the surface

a glass fortune seeded in smoke

the tongue sticks to language

a succession of figures

traversing the horizon

beginning at the edges

scattered points

coalescing

the sound holds still

pressing lightly against the fabric

a gradual erosion

distant but warm

*fading in
& out*

eddying

Clarinet 3

1

2

3

threshold of the lip

a sleeping form

collapses light around you

fold on fold of thought

**iridescent, the night folds in on
itself to reveal another,**

a new arrangement,

**unfamiliar arrivals
sliding across each other**

reshaped from dreamwork

residue of sound

a rotation of elements

slow action

at the threshold of disintegration

flickering in & out

a gradual emergence

aggregates

gossamer threads, floating out

sound collapses in on itself

Clarinet 4

1

2

3

breath exposes the liminal spaces

metalled surfaces run under the hand

shadow catalyst

small sounds of cooling metal

a quiet breathing in the dark

misted threshold

a gradual erasure

curl, loop, furl

a subtle shuddering

held in stasis

gauzy

melting

tiny fluctuations

particulate, granular