

a radiance scored with shadow

for percussion quartet

seth cluett (2007)
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Instructions:

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General

flexibility on the one hand and interpretive freedom on the other. This is quiet, slow music and at no time should any form of groove feel locked in. It will pass in and out of points that feel locked in during the natural course of things. The music is also meant to be a collaboration between me (through my score) and the ensemble (as interpreters). Any changes, alterations, interpretive decisions, or crazy ideas are always welcomed though not required; if possible I would love this to be a dialogue. Though its not necessary to the interpretation of the piece, much of the material comes various interpretations of Samuel Beckett's character Molloy from the novel of the same name. His strange memory, fixations, the way it feels to read his words, and the formal rhythm of the prose. The passage from which the title comes is printed below:

I must have fallen asleep, for all of a sudden there was the moon, a huge moon framed in the window. Two bars divided it in three segments, of which the middle remained constant, while little by little the right gained what the left lost. For the moon was moving from left to right, or the room was moving from right to left, or both together perhaps, or both were moving from left to right, but the room not so fast as the moon, or from right to left, but the moon not so fast as the room. But can one speak of right and left in such circumstances? That movements of an extreme complexity were taking place seemed certain, and yet what a simple thing it seemed, that vast yellow light sailing slowly behind my bars and which little by little the dense wall devoured, and finally eclipsed. And now its tranquil course was written on the walls, a radiance scored with shadow, then a brief quivering of leaves, if they were leaves, then that too went out, leaving me in the dark. How difficult it is to speak of the moon and not lose one's head, the witless moon. - Samuel Beckett from *Molloy*

Instrumentation

Both paper parts will be amplified and the paper should be on a table in view of the bass drum.

Thick paper/Air – a large (22X30) sheet of cold press water color paper, standard at all art stores, I can provide if needed. You'll be cutting a hand sized piece of the paper away and moving it against the large sheet at the direction and speed indicated in the score. The air part is a standard can of compressed air for dusting electronics, available from a computer store or electronics store.

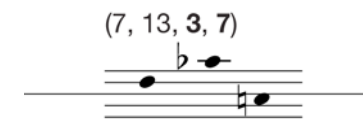
Tissue paper – uses a package of standard package wrapping tissue paper from any greeting card store. Using one sheet on the table and a second sheet in your hand move it against the large sheet at the direction and speed indicated in the score.

Bass Drum – the larger the better. Preferably a horizontal suspended 32" orchestral bass drum, but a kick drum horizontal on a stand would be fine as well. The bass drum should be played with an obscenely soft mallet

Cymbal – the cymbal should be a 20" ride cymbal to start with (size change is fine, the cymbal should blend with the ensemble). The cymbal should be placed upside down on the horizontal bass drum. It should be placed centrally, though if it moves towards the edge its fine, and even hitting the edge is ok just move it back casually. Mallets should make for a seamless articulation-free roll.

Notation

When you see this

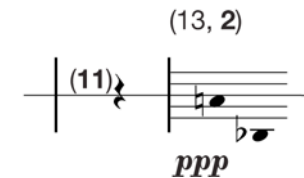


it means that in this group you have three pitches (D, Ab, A), two durations in seconds (plain text 7 + 13), and two rests in seconds (bolded text 3 + 7) to choose from in any combination; performers may choose any of these pitches and durations in any order alternated with any of the given rests. For example, a performer may play an Ab for 13 counts and rest for 7, then play a D for 7 counts and rest for 3, then play an A for 7 counts and rest for 3, then play an A for 13 counts and rest for seven, etc.; this continues in the same manner until you reach your next group of pitches/durations/rests or you are cued by another player to move on.

Next to each group of pitches is a sign indicating the octave in which the pitches may be played like so:

- play pitches at the octave written
- + play pitches at or above the octave written
- play pitches at or below the octave written
- +/- play pitches at, above, or below the octave written

The rest like this one



are cued from the actions of another part as coordinated by the vertical dashed lines. This notation indicates that from the cue, you count (in this case eleven) and then come in with your part as notated (as explained above).

Timing and Coordination

It is possible to coordinate this piece in a number of different ways. This piece is not about micro-timings but rather about large-scale pacing. As such, the performers cue one another in a causal but not strictly timed manner. Using your ears and cuing each other with a timer nearby is likely to be the easiest way move through the form.

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♩ = 60 warm, distant, concentrated, like a machine made of crisp snow and steam

0'00"

c. 8'00"

change shape gradually following arrow

thick paper

10 sec/cycle

1'30" - 2'30"

in this time blow compressed air with your free hand into a towel or other mute just under and only while the bass drum is audible

sempre **ppp**

5 sec/cycle

mf

pp

2 sec/cycle

tissue paper

change shape gradually following arrow

5 sec/cycle

2'00" - 3'30"

in this time crumple a second sheet of tissue in your free hand blending just under the bass drum or vib/crotale articulations

sempre **ppp**

1 sec/cycle

mp

pp

p

slowly cresc/decrec becoming slower and quieter until end

bass drum

following player 1 hit bass drum at the same point along cycle

alternate 2, 3, and 5 cycles throughout

c. 5'50"

mf

continue following player 1 every 5 or 7 cycles

the speed of morse code

pppp tap near rim until end

20" ride upside down on drum

ppp

p

pp

mf subito niente, tacet until end

bowed vibes

(2, 4, 7, 3, 11, 15)

(4)

(7, 9, 17, 2, 3, 11)

(9, 11, 2, 3)

ppp

ppp

mp let ring

pp