

oberlin night sketches

nocturne for clarinet and percussion

Isaac Santos

instrumentation

1 clarinet in B ♭

1 percussion (instruments and key on next page)

performance note

This piece should be played with a lot of patience, and with special attention towards the pacing between different ideas. As a general rule of thumb, the music should always be played a little bit behind the beat.

program note

oberlin night sketches was conceived in collaboration with the clarinet and percussions studios at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music.

In writing this piece, I wanted to capture a walk I sometimes take in the dead of night in Oberlin, Ohio. I happen to work a second shift at a food place, so I usually get off anytime between 12:30 am and 2:30 am. During those early hours of the morning, Oberlin is completely empty: one car every 10 minutes, maybe one other person if even. It is eerily peaceful, but at the same time super-alive. You can hear your heart beat, the wind hitting the trees, raccoons scurrying across the street- in and out of the sewer, occasionally other students partying in the distance, etc. Oberlin by no means has the typical nightlife of other cities (actually quite the contrary, with very few places open after 9:00 pm and no clubs Oberlin is a little vanilla); however, to me there is something exuberant about it.

The clarinetist and percussionist are in constant dialogue, and certain points in the piece have their own things to say. In sketching and preparation, I wrote a short little poem whose narrative structure the piece is designed around:

*strolling through Oberlin in the dead of night,
3:00 am- not a human in sight*

*raccoons scurry in and out of the sewers;
back and forth accross the street.*

...silence becomes sound...

I can hear my heart beating...

percussion key

A musical staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The staff contains several notes and rests, each with a label in a box pointing to it:

- bass drum (b.d.)**: A quarter note on the first space (F4).
- tam-tam (tam)**: A quarter note on the second space (G4).
- tenor drum /tom-tom (t.d.)**: A quarter note on the second line (F4).
- bongos (2) (bon.)**: A quarter note on the third space (A4).
- woodblocks (3) (wdbkls.)**: A quarter note on the third line (G4).
- suspended cymbal (sus. cym.)**: A quarter note on the fourth space (B4).
- bottles (4-low to high pitch) (btl.)**: A quarter note on the fourth line (A4).

A musical staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The staff contains several notes and rests, each with a label in a box pointing to it:

- crotales (crot.)**: A quarter note on the first space (F4).
- vibraphone (vib.)**: A quarter note on the second space (G4).

for the 2023 compositional explorations project

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♩ = 52 (±4) moderate; quiet and mundane

clarinet in B ♭

suspended cymbal

suspended cymbal \otimes

bass drum

b.d.

n *pppp* *n* *pppp* *n*

l.v.

Detailed description: This system shows the first four measures of the piece. The clarinet part is mostly silent. The suspended cymbal part features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with a dynamic range from *n* (noisy) to *pppp* (pianissimo). A box labeled 'suspended cymbal' with a symbol is above the first measure. A box labeled 'bass drum' is above the second measure. A box labeled 'b.d.' is above the fourth measure. The tempo/mood is indicated as 'moderate; quiet and mundane'.

cl. in B ♭

b.d.

air

less air, more tone

sim.

b.d.

pppp *n* *pppp* *n*

Detailed description: This system covers measures 5 through 8. The clarinet part has a melodic line starting at measure 5, with performance instructions 'air' and 'less air, more tone'. The bass drum part continues the rhythmic pattern from the previous system, with dynamics *pppp* and *n*. A box labeled 'b.d.' is above the eighth measure. The tempo/mood is indicated as 'moderate; quiet and mundane'.

cl. in B ♭

tam

tam-tam

(dampen)

woodblocks (3)

pp *n* *pp* *f* *pp* *sub⁴f* *pp*

p *pp*

A

Detailed description: This system covers measures 9 through 12. The clarinet part has a more complex melodic line with triplets and a dynamic range from *pp* to *f*. The tam-tam part has a simple rhythmic pattern with dynamics *p* and *pp*. A box labeled 'tam-tam' is above the first measure, a box labeled '(dampen)' is above the second measure, and a box labeled 'woodblocks (3)' is above the third measure. A box labeled 'A' is above the eighth measure. The tempo/mood is indicated as 'moderate; quiet and mundane'.

13

c. in B b

mf *ff with attitude* *fff* *pp reserved*

bongos (2) bon. wdblks.

bon.

p sneaky *f* *mf*

tenor drum

16

c. in B b

sfz *pp* *dolcissimo* *poco mf*

3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

sus. cym. (scrape with butt of mallet shaft)

to: sus. cym. (bowed) to: tam-tam

bon.

n *mf*

20

c. in B b

pppp

3 3 3

tam b.d. tam

sus. cym.

n *pppp* *n*

B

24

c. in B b

pp *mf* *pppp*

10

sus.cym.

sus. cym.

pp *mf* *ppp* *p* *pp*

tam crotales

27

cl. in B \flat

p *pppp* *mf* *pppp*

vuota

crot.

(l.v.) tam crot. sus.cym. crot. vuota

ppp *p* *pp* *ppp* *p*

30

C

bon.

bottles (4)

wdblks.

(*ppp*) *p* *t.d.* *f* *p* *< sf*

33

cl. in B \flat

p *f* *ppp* non-cresc.

tam

ppp *f*

36

cl. in B \flat

n *pp* *n* *mf* *n sub.ppp*

sus.cym. b.d.

n *pppp* *n* *pppp* *n*

64 **E**

cl. in B b *ff*

tam *ppp* **tam** *p* **crot.** *pp* *ppp*

67 *pp* **accel.** *fff*

cl. in B b

crot. *f* **sus. cym.** *f* **vibraphone** *ff* *Red.*

69 **tempo 1°** *ppp distant* *non cresc.* *f*

cl. in B b

tam *ppp*

72 *ppp* *f* *sub ppp*

cl. in B b

F ♩ = 63 faster; raccoons scurrying

73

btl.

btl.

sus. cym.

f *p* *pp* *f*

N.B.
clarinet: play second time only!
percussion: play both times!

77

cl. in B b

sus. cym.

tam

btl.

pp *p* *f* *mf* *ff*

79

cl. in B b

btl.

bisbig.

pp *f* *mf* *f*

bon. wdblks. t.d. b.d.

N.B.
same as last repeated section.

81

cl. in B b

tam

pp

tam

pp

btl.

f

wdblks.

mf

fff

p

83

cl. in B b

fff

mf

ppp

bon.

bon.

b.d.

t.d.

sus. cym.

fff

mf

fff

G

86

cl. in B b

fff

bon.

mf

p

t.d.

b.d.

pp

89

cl. in B b

pppp

bon.

wdblks.

f

p

ff

f

p

← ♩ = ♩ →

♩. = 126 (±6) rhythmic

92

cl. in B♭

perc.

bon.

mf

p

f

95

cl. in B♭

perc.

p suave

sus. cym.

bon.

b.d.

t.d.

bon.

pp

p

f

p

99

cl. in B♭

perc.

wdblks.

bon.

ff

pp

p

fp

fp < f

102

cl. in B♭

perc.

tam

bon.

b.d.

t.d.

mf

ff

f

pp

p

f

p

106

cl. in B \flat

perc.

p *p* *ff pesante*

bon. b.d. t.d. bon.

p *f* *p*

110

cl. in B \flat

perc.

fff *fff* *ffff*

b.d. wdblks. to: vibraphone long

fff *fp < fff* *ffff*

long

H tempo 1° (♩ = 60) patient and introspective

vibraphone

113

vib.

p *mf* *f* *p*

ped.

117

cl. in B \flat

vib.

f *pppp* *pp*

ped.

121

cl. in Bb

vib.

5:4

3

3

p

ped.

resolute

123

cl. in Bb

vib.

release gently

ffff

ppp poss.

n

pppp

ffff

pp

mf

pp

l.v.

ped.

128

cl. in Bb

Cym.

pp

n

sus.cym.
(scrape with butt of mallet shaft)

mf

n

pp

fff

tam

pp

sfz

n

crot.

5

mf

morendo

(vib. ped.)

dur. ca. 7'00"
Oberlin, OH
01/15/2023