

Three Family Photos

for brass quintet

Matthew Chamberlain | April 2015 | Buffalo, NY

Notational Idiosyncrasies


(Dynamics) The majority of this piece works within a rather confined dynamic range of *p* to *mf*, often with little or no dynamic coordination between the parts. As such, it is very important that each performer seeks to render their dynamic instructions precisely, and understands exactly how their dynamic compares with that of the other ensemble members at any given moment. Beyond these issues, special attention must be paid to the dynamic contour of each sound's onset and ending. To describe these details, I use the following symbols:

[and] Applied to dynamics, an opening bracket — [*p*, for example — indicates that a sound should begin *immediately* at the given dynamic. Closing brackets are always applied to rests that end sounds, and indicate that a rest's silence should be sudden, that the preceding sound should be played with a strict *non diminuendo*. In other words, like on an organ, the dynamic must be totally even for the sound's duration, especially at its end. This should both feel and sound somewhat tense.

<*p* Applied to dynamics, a < indicates that a player should sneak into a texture, beginning as softly as possible and then very quickly crescendoing to the given dynamic, masking the entrance as much as possible. When a sound should fade out at its end, I have used the customary harpin.

pp-mf When two dynamics are separated by a dash, the player should sustain the first dynamic for just long enough to make clear the difference between it and the subsequent dynamic. The change between the two dynamics must be as sudden as possible, avoiding the sensation of crescendo or diminuendo.

Occasionally, articulation marks will imply a dynamic contour for the entire duration of a sound, especially for short sounds. In such cases, I have omitted the otherwise ubiquitous brackets and <'s.

 (*De-tuned pitches*) Accidentals with downwards- or upwards-pointing arrows should be understood as indicating a pitch that is ‘a bit flatter’ (or sharper) than the normal form of the accidental would describe. This detuning needn’t be precise, but should be less than or equal to 20¢. In the horn and tuba parts there are also quarter-tones, which are notated in the standard fashion. Whenever feasible, these detunings should be achieved by alternate fingerings, or adjustments of tuning slides.

(Specified fingerings) Where possible in the horn and tuba parts, I have included fingerings that should produce the desired pitch. These fingerings are notated above the staff, in brackets. For example, [T23] in the horn part indicates that a pitch may be played by depressing the trigger as well as the second and third valves. These fingerings should always be understood as nothing more or less than suggestions. In the case of quarter-tones, however, the provided fingerings should be used to precisely render the extreme detuning. Such instances always make use of the 11^o partial of one of the instrument’s fundamentals.

(duration) ca. 8 minutes.

for the Meridian Arts Ensemble

I

A ♩ = ca. 60

The musical score is written for four staves. The top three staves are in treble clef, and the bottom two are in bass clef. The music is in 4/4 time and features various dynamics and articulations.

Staff 1 (Treble Clef): Starts with a half note G4, followed by a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, and a quarter note C5. Dynamics include *[mp neutral]*, *[p]*, *<mp*, *[]*, *<mp*, *>*, *<mp*, *>*, *[mf mp sub.]*, and *[mp]*.

Staff 2 (Treble Clef): Starts with a half note G4, followed by a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, and a quarter note C5. Dynamics include *<mp neutral*, *>*, *[mp]*, *>*, *[mp]*, *>*, *<mp*, *>*, *<mp*, *p sub.*, and *<mp*.

Staff 3 (Treble Clef): Starts with a half note G4, followed by a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, and a quarter note C5. Dynamics include *[p-mp]*, *pp sub.*, *<mp neutral*, *>*, *<mp*, *>*, *[mp pp-mp]*, *[]*, and *[mp]*.

Staff 4 (Bass Clef): Empty.

Staff 5 (Bass Clef): Empty.

19

<mp

[p] *pp dolce sub.* *[pp dolce]* *[p]* *mp sub.*

mp *[mp]* *p sub.* *[pp dolce]* *[p]* *mp sub.*

<mp *p* *[mp]* *<poco f* *[fff]*

(a bit louder than feels right)

(never accented unless otherwise indicated)

[fff] *(much, much louder than seems appropriate)*

[p] *[3]*

35 *Accel.*

The musical score consists of five staves. The first staff is in treble clef with a 3/4 time signature. The second staff is also in treble clef with a 3/4 time signature. The third staff is in treble clef with a 3/4 time signature. The fourth staff is in bass clef with a 3/4 time signature. The fifth staff is in bass clef with a 3/4 time signature. The score includes various dynamics such as *[mp]*, *[fff]*, *[0]*, *p*, and *[mp]*. Performance instructions include *(never accented unless otherwise indicated)*, *[fff sostenuto!] (entirely too loud)*, *sim.*, *fretfully*, and *(mp) non cresc.*. The score also features a 3-measure triplet in the second staff and a *[0]* marking in the third staff.

[mp] *[fff]* *(never accented!)*

(never accented unless otherwise indicated) *[fff sostenuto!] (entirely too loud)* *sim.*

[0] *p* *[mp]*

sim. *fretfully* *(mp) non cresc.*

sim.

41 $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 130$ Pochiss. Rit.

The musical score consists of five staves. The first staff (treble clef) starts with a dynamic of *J* and *(fff)*. The second staff (treble clef) has a dynamic of *fff* and a performance instruction *less than 10¢ sharp.* The third staff (treble clef) includes dynamics *fff*, *momentarily brutal*, *(ord.)*, and *con tutta forza*. It also features articulations *[T]* and *[0]*, and a triplet of eighth notes. The fourth staff (bass clef) has dynamics *ff sub.* and *fff*, with instructions *(in response to horn)* and *(entirely too loud)*. The fifth staff (bass clef) has the instruction *con tutta forza*. The score includes time signature changes from 2/4 to 5/4 and back to 4/4.

II

C ♩=60

(at least 15¢ sharp! If problematic,
you might try an extremely flat E[♯])
(in tune)

D

(in tune)

The musical score consists of five staves. The first staff is in treble clef with a 5/4 time signature. The second staff is also in treble clef. The third staff is in treble clef. The fourth staff is in bass clef. The fifth staff is in bass clef. The score is divided into measures by vertical bar lines. Dynamics include *[mp]*, *[mf]*, *[p]*, *[pp]*, and *[mf]*. Performance instructions include accents (>), slurs, and specific notes marked as *p sub.* and *[13]*. The tempo is marked as C ♩=60. The key signature is one sharp (F#).

9

[mp] > [p] <mp pochiss. [mp] > p [p] [mp]

> <p mp [mp] p > [mp] > <mp > p]

(not accented) [pp] fff] [p] [p] > [pp]] [p] mp [13] [13] [0] [mp espress.]

p] <p > [mp] < p] [p] mp poco espress. [p]] <p muttering parlando

] [p]] <mp > [p]] mp] poco [mp] <p

E

16

[p] \rceil mp

> <pp] <mf] [mp > [p]

[p] > [p] <mp > [mf] > [mp] > <p

[2]] <p mp ppp sub. [p] [p]] [p]

[T23] poco

poco

> p > [mp neutral] > [mp]

] poco [p] > [p] > [pp]] [pp]] [p]] sim. (p)

very uncertainly simply, confidently

III

F ♩ = ca. 60

♩ = ♩
50 60

seeking perfect balance
legato, but *always* articulated

The musical score consists of five staves. The first three staves are vocal lines in treble clef, and the last two are piano accompaniment in bass clef. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings. Performance instructions are provided for several sections.

Performance instructions for the vocal lines:

- Staff 1: *[p]* *always* *this shape*
- Staff 2: seeking perfect balance
legato, but *always* articulated
- Staff 3: seeking perfect balance
legato, but *always* articulated

Performance instructions for the piano accompaniment:

- Staff 4: *<p* *] always* *this shape*
- Staff 5: seeking perfect balance
legato, but *always* articulated

Other markings include triplets (3) and fingering numbers [134], [12], [124], and [3].

G

10

ppp poss.
always, and without respect to balance

ppp poss.
always, and without respect to balance

ppp poss.
always, and without respect to balance

ppp poss.
always, and without respect to balance

[12] [0] [0] [134]

p]
still: always—
this shape; now without respect to balance

40 60

20

21

22

23

24

[24]

[124]

[24]

[23]

Detailed description of the musical score: The score consists of five staves. The first staff is in treble clef and starts with a measure rest. The second staff is in treble clef and contains a melodic line with slurs and triplets. The third staff is in treble clef and contains a melodic line with slurs. The fourth staff is in bass clef and contains a melodic line with slurs and triplets. The fifth staff is in bass clef and contains a melodic line with slurs and triplets. The time signature changes from 5/4 to 4/4 at measure 21. Fingerings [24], [124], [24], and [23] are indicated in the fifth staff.

♩ = 50

♩ = 70

♩ = 60

27