Bruegel

(A Composition in Four Movements)

by

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of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Music

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ABSTRACT

*Bruegel* is a four movement composition inspired by the paintings and engravings of Flemish artist Pieter Bruegel the Elder (1525-1569). It is scored for Bass Clarinet in Bb, Electric Guitar, One Percussionist (Glockenspiel, Woodblock, Snare, Kick Drum, and Brake Drums), Piano and String Quartet. Each movement explores a painting or engraving from Bruegel’s catalog of works and attempts to embody each piece of art through the use of certain compositional techniques.

*The Cripples* (Movement I) explores layered rhythms and disjunct melodic fragments which play on the idea of Bruegel’s painting of crippled men trampling over each other and stumbling. Small moments of balance are found throughout only to be lost. *Patience* (Movement II) is based on an early engraving of Bruegel, which depicts a lone woman who represents a virtue, in this case patience, surrounded by sin and vices. Juxtaposed textures are presented with patience eventually finding itself victorious to temptation. *Children’s Games* (Movement III) explores a painting which depicts a large number of children playing a plethora of different games. The movement uses graphic notation and plays with the idea of games to create a compositional “game” for the ensemble. *Big Fish Eat Little Fish* (Movement IV) depicts a large fish eating several smaller fish. A process is introduced which plays on the idea of increasing density and lasts for the bulk of the movement.
For my parents, whose patience and love is a well that never dries,
for my sisters, whose encouragement and support was and is always appreciated,
and for Clarice Collins, my north star.
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INSTRUMENTATION

Bass Clarinet in Bb
Electric Guitar
Percussion
(Glockenspiel, Wood Block, Snare, Kick Drums & 3 Brake Drums)
Piano
Violin 1, 2
Viola
Cello

Duration ca. 15’00”
INSTRUCTIONS AND INFORMATION FOR PERFORMERS

*Bruegel:* Although a conductor is recommended, it is not essential. Some movements, e.g. movement III, can be performed without a conductor. In addition, there are four video works which accompany the music (one for each movement). For more information on the videos or obtaining the video works for performances, please visit [www.villaltamusic.com](http://www.villaltamusic.com).

*The Cripples* (Movement I): The electric guitar requires a loop pedal (with overdubbing functions), a flanger pedal, and a distortion pedal. No specific brand or model is needed. *Patience* (Movement II): The dotted line between norm. and sul pont. or vice versa, indicates a gradual shift between the two bow positions. This applies to all the strings for the entirety of the movement. *Children’s Games* (Movement III): The form of the piece is as follows: A-B-A-B-C. Instruments can transpose given material to any octave. Indicated instruments begin the movement by choosing a circle in the A section. Stay on the circle for the duration of the section. Repeat fragments in the circle in any order, leaving the specified amount of space between the repetitions (See Score). Percussionist (or conductor) keeps time and indicates when to move to section A, B, or C. If the performer is in the middle of a fragment and the percussionist or conductor cues, the performer should finish the fragment and continue to the following section. When returning to a section, do not perform a circle previously played. Dynamics of each circle is indicated beneath each heading unless otherwise stated. (See circles 4. and 5.) No two performances should sound the same. Score is in C. An optional transposed score for Bass Clarinet in Bb and Viola is available.
FLANGER ON
rate 70%
depth 65%
e. level 50%
*with hammer-ons
and pull-offs
con sord., sul tasto
always mf
Suddenly finding balance

\[140\]

Suddenly finding balance

\[150\]
II. Patience

Cold and sharp $\cdot = 120$

**Bass Clarinet**

**Brake Drums**

**Electric Guitar**

**Bass Clarinet**

**Violin I**

**Violin II**

**Viola**

**Violoncello**

**Piano**

*Dotted line indicates strings should gradually move between norm. and sul pont.*

B. Cl.

B. D

E. Gtr.

Pno.

Vla. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.
IV. Big Fish Eat Little Fish

From the depths $\frac{1}{4} = 100$

Bass Clarinet in Bb

Glockenspiel

Electric Guitar

Piano

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Violoncello

From the depths $\frac{1}{4} = 100$

With force
APPENDIX A

THE CRIPPLES
APPENDIX D

BIG FISH EAT LITTLE FISH