An Instant Conception

For small ensemble and percussion

Score in C

Ian Percy

An Instant Conception

[Three Plausible Scenarios and the Best of all Possible Answers]

For small ensemble and percussion

[10 musicians]

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2009

[Score proofread, edited and re-digitised: 2019]

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Flute
B♭ Clarinet
B♭ Bass Clarinet

Percussion [2 players]

Piano

String Quartet

Score in C

1st Movement: An Instant Conception ca. 5’ 48”
2nd Movement: Nameless Faces ca. 5’ 52”
3rd Movement: Fading Memories ca. 3’ 20”

Total: ca. 15’ 00”

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2009

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Percussion Plan

Player 1 [percussion stave 1]

1st mvt:

Congas [hands throughout]
Large suspended crash cymbal [bow]
Pair of hand held suspended temple cymbals [ca. 6cm]

2nd mvt:

Congas
Large suspended crash cymbal [bow]
Small hand held metal shaker

3rd mvt:

Congas
Large suspended crash cymbal [bow]
Temple cymbals

Player 2 [percussion stave 2]

1st mvt:

Suspended ride bell cymbal [light sticks and brushes]
Pair of maracas
Snare drum [light sticks]

2nd mvt:

Suspended ride bell cymbal [brushes and bow]
Pair of maracas
Orchestral bass drum [soft beaters]

3rd mvt:

Suspended ride bell cymbal [light sticks, brushes and bow]
Pair of maracas
Snare drum [light sticks]

Performance indications for wind and percussion

Coloured breath = Half note and half breath (marked with a diamond note head)
Breath = non-pitched breath (marked with a cross note head)

R = Roll
M = Multiphonic

Percussion with cross note head = mute
Percussion with diamond note head = mute, but release immediately

An Instant Conception

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The material for this three-movement work, approximately fifteen minutes in length, was originally intended for the third movement of a previous piece entitled *Natural Causality* for ensemble and percussion. It was indeed an Instant Conception, as one seemed to know exactly what form to compose, the instruments to use and the specific characters of the main compositional units, within a single cohesive thought: a rare moment of clarity.

The evolution of composition began within extra-musical inspiration based upon naturally occurring causalities: phenomenon generated by and relationships between a cause and its effect.

Cause:

The composer mused as to what would happen if one could take middle C (weight and mass suggested by pitch register) and drop it into a 'musical pond'? The height of the fall and velocity of impact could be related to dynamics and the effect should produce ripples through the ensemble. Some ripples would be individual to a specific event as a branch finally breaks from a tree and lands in the water, but others could be repeated e.g. the consistency of waves.

Effect:

Having established a cause, a way to generate and control the effect was required. After some deliberation the Fibonacci sequence was utilised:

0 – 1 – 1 – 2 – 3 – 5 – 8 – 13 – 21 – 34

This infinite pattern of integers, which literally reads like an expanding ripple, can be found in many forms of natural growth and breeding patterns. It provides a basis for pitch development; a way to determine the length of compositional units and the amount of repetitions (events), thus shaping form and proportion alongside pitch material and structure.

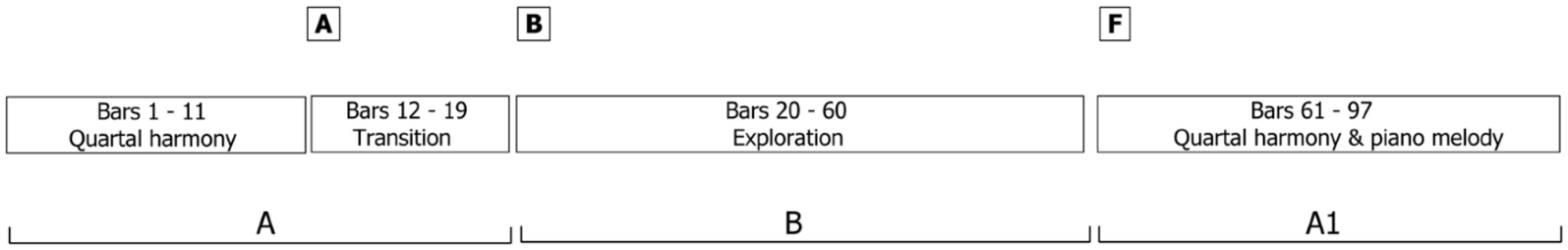
Middle C is the cause: Fibonacci sequence is the effect

Using a continuation of the Natural Causality Method Table, the material for this piece is heavily influenced by the perfect fourth interval (5 semi-tones) with proportional pitch and rhythmic references to the number five.

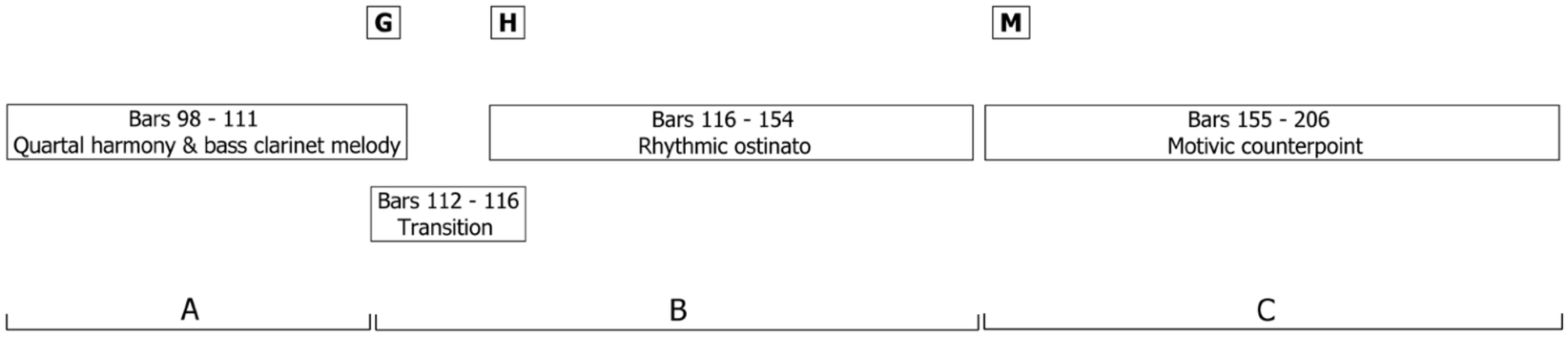
All three movements open with a passage of harmony based on the cycle of fourths. This could be referred to as quartal, plagal or equidistant harmony, but all labels are a little misleading. Atonality and pantonality would suggest chromatic dissonance; polytonality would imply a tonal language, so in this case, it seems that the label 'chromatic consonance' is perhaps most fitting: The cycle of fourths is an equidistant cycle of twelve-tone consonance. The first 4 chords on the piano contain all 12 tones without repetition and the rest of the piece is a fairly instinctive melodic and motivic exploration and harmonic reinterpretation of this material.

An Instant Conception Form

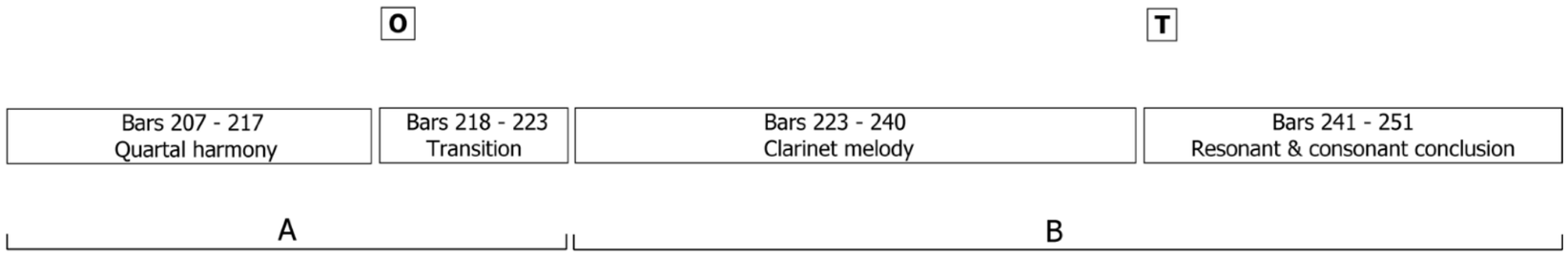
First movement: An Instant Conception



Second movement: Nameless Faces



Third movement: Fading Memories



An Instant Conception

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Ian Percy

1 **An instant conception - An enigmatic prologue: fluid & resonant...** ♩ = 88 **rit.** ♩ = 72

A **accel.** [♩ = 88] **rit.**

Flute

Bb Clarinet

Bb Bass Clarinet

[variable speed]

[variable speed tone trill]

[tone trill]

[breathy]

a niente

Percussion Player 1

[large sus. crash cym.]
[bow]

arco

l.v.

[extend decay with subtle fingernail trem.]

[to temple cym.]

[strike one cym. against the other and allow ricochet]

[oscillate cym.]

[to congas]

[upper note = high conga]

Percussion Player 2

[sus. ride bell cym.]
[light sticks]

[upper note = bell]

[encircle cym.]

[to snare]
[snare on]

[softly with hands]

[to maracas]
[leave snare on]

[speed increases with dynamic]

Piano

Ped.

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Violoncello

solo

pizz.

arco

[♩ = 60] **rit.** [♩ = 30] **B** ♩ = 50 **Back to the beginning: Introspective, but with fluid, confident growth & energetic gestures...** **accel.** [♩ = 66]

16

Fl.

[variable speed; slows with dynamic]

[keyclicks]

Cl.

[variable speed tone trill; slows with dynamic]

[keyclicks]

B.Cl.

[variable speed tone trill; slows with dynamic]

a niente

Perc. 1

[variable speed and muting; both hands & fingers]

[slows with dynamic]

[roll fingers]

[slap the muted skin]

Perc. 2

[to sus. ride bell cym.]
[brushes]

[to snare]

[sus. ride bell cym.]
[brushes]
[turn snare off]

Pno.

[a muted resonance]

[plucked string]

Vln.I

arco

Vln.II

pizz.

Vla.

[wide vib.& surface noise]
pizz. gliss.

Vc.

pizz.

[wide vib.& surface noise]
gliss.

27

C ♩ = 50 **... and all that is lost... poco accel.** [♩ = 56] **poco rit.** ♩ = 50

D **Some things should not be found... accel.** [♩ = 72] **rit.**

Fl.

Cl.

R [roll]

M [multiphonic]

B.Cl.

Perc. 1

[variable speed and muting]

[slap the muted skin]

[vary position & method of attack using thumb fingers & palms]

[variable speed and muting]

[slows with dynamic]

Perc. 2

[almost incidental ambience]

Pno.

[plucked strings]

[to keys]

[norm.]

Vln.I

Vln.II

Vla.

Vc.

arco

pizz.

gliss.

wide vib. & surface noise

gliss.

40

♩ = 50

E **Tension without release...**
rit.

[♩ = 36]

Fl.

Cl.

[slows with dynamic]

B.Cl.

[variable speed on edge of the skin]

[vary point of attack]

thumb. . . . . .

thumb. . . . . .

palms...

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

l.v.

Pno.

Vln.I

Vln.II

Vla.

Vc.

solo

arco

pizz.

a niente

F ♩ = 72 **Forgotten friends: Ethereal & elusive...**

61

Fl.

Cl.

B.Cl.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

[play with fingertips]

[to snare drum]
[snare on]

l.v.

[softly with hands]

[roll fingers]

[to large sus. crash cym.]
[bow]

Pno.

Ped.

F ♩ = 72 **Forgotten friends: Ethereal & elusive...**

Vln.I

Vln.II

Vla.

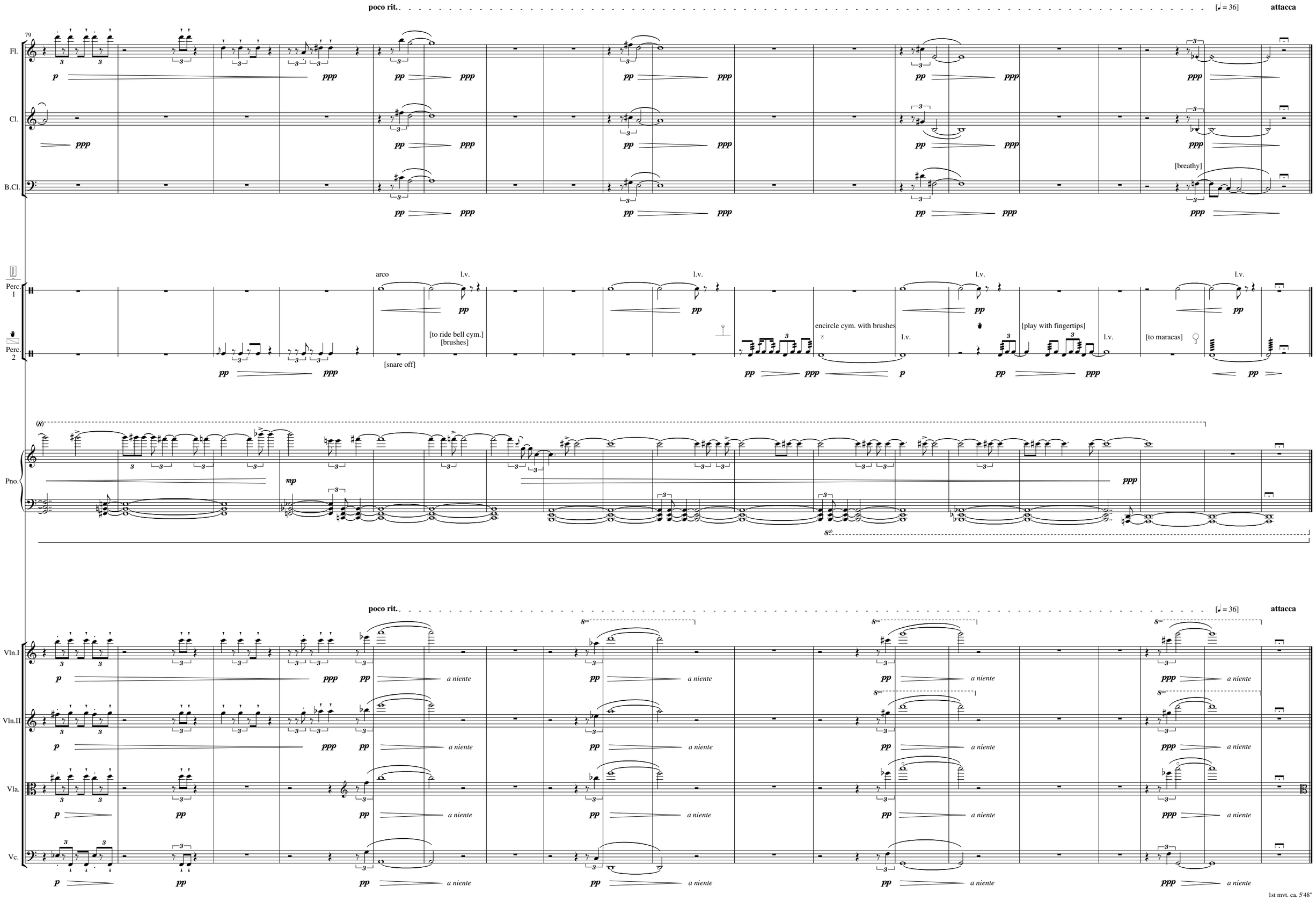
Vc.

pizz.

arco

arco

a niente



1st mvt. ca. 5'48"

2 ♩ = 60 **Nameless faces...** **Patient, lyrical, poignant & reflective...** **poco accel.** [♩ = 66] **poco rit.** [♩ = 52]

98

[flutter]

Fl.

Cl.

B.Cl.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

[to sus. ride bell cym.] [brushes]

l.v.

arco

[to brushes]

[to metal shaker]

[sus. crash cym.]

[with fingertips/nails]

As if in solitary reflection [though never lonely]...

Pno.

Ped

2 ♩ = 60 **Nameless faces...** **Patient, lyrical, poignant & reflective...** **poco accel.** [♩ = 66] **poco rit.** [♩ = 52]

Vln.I

Vln.II

Vla.

Vc.

arco

pizz.

relaxed... arco

a niente

111

G **A moment of hesitant recognition...**
poco accel.

H ♩ = 72 **Acquantance renewed: Positive & stable; fluid & consonant...**

poco accel.

Fl.

Cl.

B.Cl.

Perc. 1

l.v. [to congas] [flurry between fingers and hand] [slap the muted skin]

Perc. 2

l.v. l.v. [to maracas]

Pno.

Vln.I

[reminiscent of digital delay; 'synthesised repetition', but with relaxed pulse & stresses: can be played like a ricochet to increase the speed]

Vln.II

Vla.

Vc.

The formula..? A friendship remembered...

[♩ = 76] poco rit. I ♩ = 72 poco accel. ♩ = 76 poco rit.

120

Fl.

Cl.

B.Cl.

slaptongue norm. slaptongue norm. slaptongue

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Pno.

The formula..? A friendship remembered...

[♩ = 76] poco rit. I ♩ = 72 poco accel. ♩ = 76 poco rit.

Vln.I

Vln.II

Vla.

Vc.

pizz.

126

[♩ = 72] **poco accel.** **J** ♩ = 76 **With increasing curiosity...** **poco rit.** [♩ = 72] **poco rit.**

Fl.

Cl.

B.Cl.

Perc. 1

[roll fingers] [palm] [gentle thuds with side of clenched fist] [roll fingers] [palm]

Perc. 2

Pno.

[♩ = 72] **poco accel.** **J** ♩ = 76 **With increasing curiosity...** **poco rit.** [♩ = 72] **poco rit.**

(8)

Vln.I

Vln.II

Vla.

Vc.

133

[♩ = 60] **accel.** **K** ♩ = 76 **poco rit.** ♩ = 72

Fl.

Cl.

B.Cl.

[variable speed tone trill]

flutter

slaptongue

norm.

Perc. 1

[roll fingers]

Perc. 2

[to ride bell cym.]
[brushes]

l.v.

[to maracas]

Pno.

Vln.I

Vln.II

Vla.

Vc.

[reminiscent of digital delay; 'synthesised repetition', but with relaxed pulse & stresses: can be played like a ricochet to increase the speed]

arco

pizz.

L ♩ = 72 **A growing sense of conclusion...** **poco rit.** [♩ = 63]

141

Fl.

Cl.

slaptongue

norm.

B.Cl.

[to metal shaker]

Perc. 1

[to ride bell cym.]
[brushes]

Perc. 2

Pno.

(8)

L ♩ = 72 **A growing sense of conclusion...** **poco rit.** [♩ = 63]

Vln.I

Vln.II

Vla.

arco

Vc.

147

poco accel. ♩ = 66 poco rit. [♩ = 60] poco rit. [♩ = 54]

Fl.

Cl.

B.Cl.

Perc. 1

[speed increases with dynamic] [to congas]

Perc. 2

1.v.

Pno.

Ped.

poco accel. ♩ = 66 poco rit. [♩ = 60] poco rit. [♩ = 54]

aggressive

Vln.I

Vln.II

Vla.

Vc.

M ♩ = 66 **The best of all possible answers: Intrusive, obstinate & relentless...**

156

Fl.

Cl.

B.Cl.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

l.v.

l.v.

l.v.

[to orchestral bass drum]

Pno.

8vb

M ♩ = 66 **The best of all possible answers: Intrusive, obstinate & relentless...**

Vln.I

Vln.II

Vla.

Vc.

pizz.

arco

pizz.

arco

pizz.

171

Fl.

Cl.

B.Cl.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

[to ride bell cym.]
[brushes]

Pno.

Vln.I

Vln.II

Vla.

Vc.

arco

pizz.

poco rit. ♩ = 46

182

Fl.

Cl.

B.Cl.

a niente

Perc. 1

[to metal shaker]

[to large sus. crash cym.]
[bow]

Perc. 2

l.v.

l.v.

[to bass drum - hands]

[to sus. ride bell cym.]
[light sticks]

Pno.

(8)

Ped.

poco rit. ♩ = 46

Vln.I

pizz.

arco

pizz.

arco

Vln.II

arco

pizz.

arco

Vla.

Vc.

195

N ♩= 66 **poco rit.** ♩= 54 **poco rit.** ♩= 40 **poco rit.** ♩= 34 [♪= 68] **attacca**

Fl.

Cl.

B.Cl.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Pno.

(8)

N ♩= 66 **poco rit.** ♩= 54 **poco rit.** ♩= 40 **poco rit.** ♩= 34 [♪= 68] **attacca**

Vln.I

f *ff* violent *f* *mp* *pp* *p* *ppp* *p* > *a niente*

Vln.II

ppp *p* > *a niente*

Vla.

Vc.

pizz.

mf *p* *ppp*

2nd mvt. ca. 5'52"
Total ca. 11'40"

3 ♩ = 88 **Fading memories - An enigmatic epilogue: fluid & resonant...** **rit.** ♩ = 72

O **accel.** [♩ = 88] **rit.**

207

Fl.

Cl.

B.Cl.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Pno.

Ped.

Vln.I

Vln.II

Vla.

Vc.

[variable speed]

[variable speed tone trill]

[tone trill]

[breathy]

[quite slow]

[tone trill]

solo

arco

l.v.

[to temple cym.]

[extend decay with subtle fingernail trem.]

[strike one cym. against the other and allow ricochet]

[oscillate cym.]

[to congas]

[encircle cym.]

[to snare]
[snare on]

[softly with hands]

[to maracas]
[leave snare on]

[speed increases with dynamic]

[to snare]

a niente

pizz.

8va

223

[♩ = 60]

P ♩ = 48 **Ambient, lyrical & conclusive...**

Q **There is always faith & good fortune...** **poco rit.**

Fl.

Cl.

B.Cl.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

[variable speed and muting; both hands & fingers]

[slows as volume decreases]

[vary method & placement of attack between thumbs, fingers & palms]

[thud with side of fist]

[to sus. ride bell cym.]
[brushes]
[snare off]

Pno.

[a muted resonance]

Vln.I

Vln.II

Vla.

Vc.

arco

pizz.

a niente

R ♩ = 40 **A sonorous shimmer...** **S** **poco rit.** **T** ♪ = 60 **... and So..!** **rit.** ♪ = 30

235

Fl.

flutter

[tone trill]

Cl.

[variable speed tone trill]

[variable speed tone trill]

a niente

B.Cl.

a niente

Perc. 1

[to temple cym.]

[strike one cym. against the other] [allow ricochet]

[oscillate cym.]

[oscillate cym.]

Perc. 2

l.v.

[to bow]

arco

rotate fingernail around cym.

l.v.

[extend decay with subtle fingernail trem.]

l.v.

Pno.

[plucked string]

Vln.I

Vln.II

arco

Vla.

Vc.

arco

a niente

R ♩ = 40 **A sonorous shimmer...** **S** **poco rit.** **T** ♪ = 60 **... and So..!** **rit.** ♪ = 30

3rd mvt: ca. 3'20"
Total: ca. 15'00"

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