

DAVID NUNN

OBSCURE SORROWS

for alto flute, bass clarinet and piano

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Full score

(2019)

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i. anchorage

n. the desire to hold on to time as it passes, like trying to keep your grip on a rock in the middle of a river, feeling the weight of the current against your chest while your elders float on downstream, calling over the roar of the rapids.

ii. midding (one)

v. intr. feeling the tranquil pleasure of being near a gathering but not quite in it—hovering on the perimeter of a campfire, chatting outside a party while others dance inside, resting your head in the backseat of a car listening to your friends chatting up front—feeling blissfully invisible yet still fully included, safe in the knowledge that everyone is together and everyone is okay, with all the thrill of being there without the burden of having to be.

iii. opia

n. the ambiguous intensity of looking someone in the eye, which can feel simultaneously invasive and vulnerable—their pupils glittering, bottomless and opaque—as if you were peering through a hole in the door of a house, able to tell that there's someone standing there, but unable to tell if you're looking in or looking out.

iv. midding (two)

v. anecdote

n. a conversation in which everyone is talking but nobody is listening, simply overlaying disconnected words like a game of Scrabble, with each player borrowing bits of other anecdotes as a way to increase their own score, until we all run out of things to say.

Source: *The Dictionary of Obscure Sorrows* (© John Koenig)

<http://www.dictionaryofobscuresorrows.com/>

Scored for alto flute (doubling C flute and bass flute), bass clarinet (doubling contrabass clarinet), and piano. N.B. the piano part requires five pieces of nylon fishing line (with plenty of rosin), a credit card, and an elbow.

For Martin Fahlenbock, Shizuyo Oka and Klaus Steffes-Holländer.

Duration c. 12'30".

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OBSCURE SORROWS

i. anchorage

n. the desire to hold on to time as it passes, like trying to keep your grip on a rock in the middle of a river, feeling the weight of the current against your chest while your elders float on downstream, calling over the roar of the rapids.

$\text{♩} = 56$

breath → ord → breath
(11° of E)

af1

bcl

pno

harmonics:
fundamental notes:

mp

mf

pp

pp

mp

mf

pp

mute lower strings

mute

echo tone

tr

Detailed description: This system of music is for the first part of 'Obscure Sorrows'. It features three staves: af1 (flute), bcl (clarinet), and pno (piano). The tempo is marked as quarter note = 56. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 3/4. The af1 staff has a melodic line with dynamics p, mf, pp, and pp, including a trill. The bcl staff has an 'echo tone' with dynamics mp and p. The pno staff has harmonics and fundamental notes with dynamics mp, mf, and pp, and includes a 'mute lower strings' instruction.

||

6

breath → ord → breath
(11° of E)

breath → ord.

af1

bcl

pno

mf

f

pp

mf

pp

mp

gliss. (11° of Db)

harmonic

mp

mp

pp

mf

pp

mute

mute

pp

ord.

Detailed description: This system continues the music from the first system. It features the same three staves: af1, bcl, and pno. The tempo remains quarter note = 56. The af1 staff starts with a trill and has dynamics mf, f, pp, mf, and mp. The bcl staff has a glissando and a harmonic with dynamics p and mp. The pno staff has harmonics and fundamental notes with dynamics mp, pp, pp, mf, and pp, and includes 'mute' instructions.

4

12

tr

afll

mp

pp

mp >

bcl

overblow

mf

multiphonic:

p

pno

8va

mp

pp

f

p

f

mp

ord.

pp

8va

(P) (sub.) Ped.

16

afll

mp-

pno

mp

ppp placid

mp

p

8va

8va

8va

8va

8va

(P)

22

espressivo, molto vib.

afll

mf

>

<mf

mp < f

mp > pp

bcl

mp < f

3

3

pno

ppp

mp

with credit card on string

pp

mf

pp

8^{va}

Ped.

26

afll
3 *mp* *f* (*p*)

bcl
3 *mp* *pp* *p* *mf sub. pp* 3 *f*

pno
8^{va} *p* *ppp* *pp* *mp*
8^{va} 3 *pp* *mp*

(P) *ped.*

29

afll
f *mf* *mf* *p*

bcl
mp *mf* (*p*) *f*

pno
pp *mp* 7 3 8^{vb}

(P)

32

afll
flz. *pp* *mf* *p* *mp* *f*

bcl
3 *mp* 6 *mf* 3 3 *f* (*mp*)

pno
pp 3 3 3 8^{vb} 8^{vb} 3

(P)

6

35

afll

ff *(mp)* *mp* *f*

bcl

p *mf* *p* *mp* *f*

pno

mp *mf*

(P)

||

37

afll

to bass flute

bcl

sing:

to contrabass clarinet

play: *pp* *f*

pno

ppp placid

(P)

ii. midding (one)

v. intr. feeling the tranquil pleasure of being near a gathering but not quite in it—hovering on the perimeter of a campfire, chatting outside a party while others dance inside, resting your head in the backseat of a car listening to your friends chatting up front—feeling blissfully invisible yet still fully included, safe in the knowledge that everyone is together and everyone is okay, with all the thrill of being there without the burden of having to be.

♩ = 60
blow sharply
^ breath tone → ord.

bfl

sfzpp *p* *mf*

cbcl

ff

♩ = 60
arco, with fishing line

pno

mp *mp*

6

bfl

(7° of D \flat)

ff *f* *mf*

cbcl

flz.

mp *f* *pp* *mp*

pno

mf *pp*

arco, with fishing line

mf

10

bfl

breath tone bring harmonics out: bfl → afl

mp *mp*

cbcl

cbcl → bcl

pno

mute gradually plectrum/credit card slide

pp *mp*

iii. opia

n. the ambiguous intensity of looking someone in the eye, which can feel simultaneously invasive and vulnerable—their pupils glittering, bottomless and opaque—as if you were peering through a hole in the door of a house, able to tell that there's someone standing there, but unable to tell if you're looking in or looking out.

♩ = 80
♩ = 120
sharp, pointed

fl

p t k p t k p t k p t k p ka! t

f mp pp mf mp f mp mp < f

bcl

(slap)

p mp pp mp f pp

6

fl

mf ff

mp < f

p

becoming smoother

bcl

p mf pp < mp pp

11

fl

t k r k

sub. ff

sub. p

mf

mp < f

ff

mp < f

ka!

bcl

sub. f

sub. pp

mp

p < mf

mp

abrasive

fl

bcl

pno

6/16 7/16 5/16 8/16 5/16 6/16

f > *p* *ff* *mp* < *sfz* *ff* > *mp* ssh.

mf > *pp* *mf* < *f* *mp* *f* > *p*

f *f*



fl

bcl

6/16 5/16 6/16 8/16 7/16

sfz *ff* *mf* *ff* *mp*

mp f *ff* *mf* *ff* *p*



fl

bcl

pno

7/16 5/16 8/16 5/16 6/16

mf < *ff* *ff* *mp* < *sfz* *mp*

f > *mp* < *f* *mp*

ff *mf* *ff*

Red. Red.

10

34

fl *f* *mp* *sub. ff*

bcl *pp* *mp* *p* *pp* *sub. f*



38

fl tongue ram *ff* *ff* ka! *p*

bcl key clicks: *ff* *pp*

pno *ff* *mp* *ff*



43

fl *mf* *ssh* *ffp* *ffz* k t k t *mp* *ff*

bcl *mp* *f* *ff*

fl 47

bcl 8

pno

p *ff*

pp *ff* *mf*

ff *p* *ff* *p* *ff* *p* *ff*

dry: use pedal only for legato phrasing



pno

52

mp

8va



pno

56

f *mp* *pp* *sempre*

loco

sub. p *(ff)*

12

60

fl *mp* *mp*

bcl *pp* *pp*

pno

==

63

fl *mf*

bcl *p*

pno

==

66

fl *f* *ff*

bcl *mp* *f*

pno *ff* *mf pp*

8/16 6/16 8/16 6/16

70

fl *dim. gradually* (*mf*) (*p*)

bcl *dim. gradually* (*mp*) (*pp*)

pno *dim. gradually* (*mf*) (*p*)

74

pno *pp* *sub. ff* *pp*

79

fl *ff* *ff* *pp < sfz* *mp* *ssh* *sfz* *sfz*

bcl *f* *mf* *p* *pp* *mp < f* *mp*

85

fl *mp* t p t ka *ff* *mp* p ka *p* *mf*

bcl *mf* *p* *pp < mp*

pno *ff* *mp*

Ped.

90

fl *pp < mf* *p* *ssh* *mfp* *mf*

bcl *p* *mf* *p* *mp* *mf*

pno *ff* *mp*

cold, unsentimental

non ped.

Ped.

96

pno

pno

100

mf

p

cresc. gradually

15

Detailed description: This system contains the piano accompaniment for measures 100 to 105. The score is written for both the right and left hands. Measure 100 starts with a treble clef and a 6/16 time signature. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The music features a complex rhythmic pattern with many sixteenth notes. Dynamic markings include *mf* at measure 101, *p* at measure 102, and *cresc. gradually* starting at measure 103. The system ends at measure 105.



pno

105

8va

(mf)

ff

Ped.

Detailed description: This system contains the piano accompaniment for measures 105 to 110. The right hand part begins at measure 105 with a treble clef and a 6/16 time signature. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The music is characterized by a rapid sixteenth-note pattern. Dynamic markings include *(mf)* at measure 105 and *ff* at measure 107. A *8va* marking is present above the staff in measure 107. Pedal markings (*Ped.*) are shown at the bottom of the system. The system ends at measure 110.



fl

bcl

pno

110

pp

mf

p

(P)

Detailed description: This system contains the vocal and piano parts for measures 110 to 115. It includes staves for Flute (fl), Clarinet in Bass (bcl), and Piano (pno). The piano part is written for both right and left hands. The right hand part starts at measure 110 with a treble clef and a 6/16 time signature. The key signature has one sharp (F#). Dynamic markings include *pp* at measure 110, *mf* at measure 111, and *p* at measure 113. The vocal parts (fl and bcl) have dynamic markings of *mf*, *mp*, and *f* in the right hand, and *mp*, *p*, and *mf* in the left hand. A *(P)* marking is present at the bottom of the piano part in measure 110. The system ends at measure 115.

16

115

fl

bcl

pno

mf *ff* *mf*

mp *f* *p*

pp *f heavy*

(P)

119

fl

bcl

pno

ff *mp* *f* *ssh*

mf *pp* *mp* *mf* *sffz*

mp *f* *mp* *ff*

6

3 3 3

ff

(P)

Musical score for measures 123-127. The score is for Flute (fl), Bass Clarinet (bcl), and Piano (pno). The Flute part starts at measure 123 with a *ff* dynamic, followed by *mp*, *mf*, and *ff*. The Bass Clarinet part starts at measure 123 with a *ff* dynamic, followed by *mp*, *mf*, *f*, and *ff*. The Piano part features a sixteenth-note scale in the right hand (marked *6*) and triplet eighth notes in the left hand (marked *8va* and *3*). Dynamics for the piano part include *mf* and *mp*. A circled Φ is located below the piano part.

==

Musical score for measures 128-132. The score is for Flute (fl), Bass Clarinet (bcl), and Piano (pno). The Flute part starts at measure 128 and has a *ff* dynamic at the end of measure 132. The Bass Clarinet part starts at measure 128 and has a *mp* dynamic at the end of measure 132. The Piano part starts at measure 128 with a *pp* dynamic. A circled Φ is located below the piano part. A red watermark "Perusal score © all rights reserved" is overlaid diagonally across the page.

attacca

18

fl ¹³²

to alto flute Alto Flute
($\hat{\circ}$) blow sharply

mf mp p pp sfzpp

pno

(Φ)



iv. midding (two)

$\text{♩} = 60$
breath tone \rightarrow ord.

(7° of E \flat)

play: flz.
sing: flz.

harmonic: (overblow) flz.

pp p mf ff ff

$\text{♩} = 60$
arco, with fishing line

mute: +

(Φ)



attacca

8

(7° of D \flat)

bring harmonics out:

breath tone sing: play: *mf*

f < mf < mp

ff < f < pp < mp < pp

place elbow

l.v. **attacca**

(Φ) *(mf)*

v. anecdote

n. a conversation in which everyone is talking but nobody is listening, simply overlaying disconnected words like a game of Scrabble, with each player borrowing bits of other anecdotes as a way to increase their own score, until we all run out of things to say.

(♩ = 60)

afll

bcl

pno

(7° of Db)

play:

sing:

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

mp *ff* *mf* *mp* *pp*

mp *pp*

with string

(♯) *b* *b*

6

afll

bcl

pno

vocalise:

ssh

trill G# key
very breathy tone

p *sffz* *pp* *f* *mp*

mp

remove elbow

(♯) *mf*

20

Slower ♩ = 54

10

afll

play: *mf*

sing: *sfzpp*

overblow

bcl

sing: *ff*

play: *mf*

pno

Slower ♩ = 54 semi-staccato sim.

pp

5

(P)

||

12

afll

p

p

mf

3

3

3

3

bcl

mp

pno

(P)

||

14

afll

p

mf

3

3

6

mp

f

mp

bcl

pno

(P)

16

afll

bcl

pno

pp *f* *mp* *f*

mf *p* *mp*

cresc.

(P)

18

afll

bcl

pno

p *mp* *ff*

mf *pp* *ff*

dim.

(P)

20

afll

bcl

pno

mp *f* *mp* *mf*

mf *p* *mf* *mp*

pp

rit.

(P)

22 **Slower** ♩ = 45

afll *p* *mf* (*p*) *p* *mf*

bcl *p* *mp* (*p*) *pp*

pno **Slower** ♩ = 45 *cresc.*

(P) ^

24

afll *mp* *mp* *mf* *f*

bcl *mp* (*pp*) *pp*

pno *mp* *mf sempre cresc.*

(P)

26

afll (*mp*) *mp* *f*

bcl *mp* *pp* *mf* *p*

pno

(P) ^

5

28

aff

mp

mf

ff

3

bcl

sing:

mf

pp

pno

6

7

(P)

29

aff

3

mf

6

ff

3

sub. mp

bcl

sing:

mp

f

pno

7

7

8^{va}

(P)

30

ff

(mf)

ff

3

overblow

bcl

sfz

pno

8^{va}

8^{va}

8^{va}

8^{va}

9

10

ff sempre cresc.
furious

Slower ♩ = 40

Slower ♩ = 40

(P)

24

breathy tone

32

aff

(mp)

pp

p

bcl

breathy tone

pp

p

pno

ppp 5

una corda

Red.

34

aff

mf

bcl

mp

pno

ppp 5

una corda

Red.

Extremely slow (♩ = 35)

36

pno

pp 5

tre corde

ppp placid

una corda

5

p

Red.