A Strange Flower for Birds and Butterflies

for Clarinet, Violoncello, and Piano

Kirk O'Riordan

Kirk O'Riordan (b. 1968)

A Strange Flower for Birds and Butterflies (2012)

Notes

a strange flower
for birds and butterflies
the autumn sky

~Matuso Basho

A Strange Flower was commissioned by Marianne Gythfeldt, Lawrence Stomberg, and Holly Roadfeldt. The trio gave the world premiere on February 5, 2013 at the Williams Center for the Arts at Lafayette College.

It is both a privilege and a challenge to compose for musicians who can play anything. Having worked with all three musicians fairly extensively, I knew that each is an experienced and gifted chamber musician. I wanted, then, to give them a piece that would feature that aspect of their playing by writing what amounts to a giant cadenza. The piece is not (traditionally) metered, though there are some very rhythmic passages, and the musicians often react to beginnings and endings of another's phrases.

The title is not a direct representation of the piece--the sounds themselves are not what I would consider to be strange. It is, though, for a variety of reasons, an unusual piece in my catalog. I found the haiku while researching Basho's work for a song cycle I composed which set fifteen of Basho's haiku.

This work is, in fact, structured in the 5-7-5 syllabic form of a haiku. The outer, 5-syllable, sections are lyrical and revolve around the opening gesture. The middle section is more rhythmically active; its seven sub-sections are presented in a loose arch form.

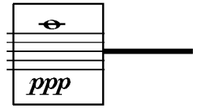
Approximate duration: 14 minutes.

Performance Notes

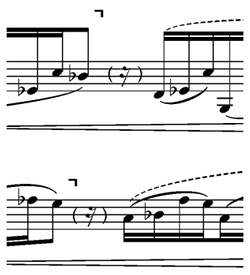
All performers should perform from the score. In general, music which lines up vertically should be understood to occur simultaneously. Dotted vertical lines are used to indicate exact simultaneity. In other cases, such as the passages on page 3, the musical events are to occur in the same amount of time, but not necessarily be aligned metrically.

Diminuendos into rests should be performed *al niente* in all cases.

Phrase markings in potentially ambiguous passages are indicated with dotted slurs.



Gestures notated within boxes should be repeated *ad libitum* for the duration of the line connected to the box.



Rests in parentheses are used to indicate places where the performers may take additional time to re-coordinate the ensemble. The durations indicated are proportional, and not metrically exact.

H and N are used to indicate primary and secondary voices, *a la* Schoenberg.

for Marianne Gythfeldt, Lawrence Stomberg, and Holly Roadfeldt-O'Riordan

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Klrk O'Riordan (2012)

gentle, fluid; very freely (♩ = 50)

Clarinet in B♭

dolcissimo

ppp

Clarinet in B♭

Violoncello

ppp

Piano

ppp

Ped.

Cl.

Vc.

Pno.

A

ppp *p*

ppp *p*

mp

mf

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Clarinet in B♭

pp

Violoncello

ppp

Pno.

mp

poco meno mosso

8va

ppp

6-8"

8-9"

pp

ppp

emerge from clarinet

B

Clarinet in B♭

espressivo, con rubato

p

brief

N

p

Violoncello

espressivo

H

p

Piano

mp

pp

C

moving forward

Cl.

moving forward

Vc.

delicatissimo e legatissimo

8va

moving forward

ppp *in tempo with the clarinet and cello*

Pno.

D **tempo primo (♩ = 50)**

Clarinet in B♭

Cl.

mf ***p***

ppp

Vc.

mf ***p***

(8)

Pno.

mf ***p***

***rests are used to facilitate the coordination of the arrival at D.*

3-4"

Cl.

floating

ppp *p*

5-6"

ppp *pp*

4-5"

Violoncello

floating

ppp *mp*

Pno.

floating

mp *mf* *mp*

(Ped. sempre)

Clarinet in B♭

ppp *pp*

ppp *pp*

Violoncello

p *mp*

p *mp*

Pno.

mf

pp

Cl.

dolcissimo

ppp ***p*** ***ppp*** ***p***

Vc.

non vib. *vib. ord.*

pp ***mf***

Violoncello

sf ***p*** ***ppp***

Pno.

mp

Vc.

Clarinet in B♭

pp

sf pp

Pno.

ppp

E **poco piu mosso (♩ = 56)**

Cl.

Vc. *legato sempre* ***mp***

Pno. ***pp***

8vb

Clarinet in B♭

legatissimo

mp in the same tempo as the cello

3-4"

Clarinet in B♭

legatissimo

p (in the same tempo as the cello)

(interrupt the pattern--lengthen a rest-- to turn the page if necessary, but do so as quickly as possible)

Piano

p ***p***

Ped. *lightly*

Cl.

sim.

mf

Violoncello

mf

Pno.

Cl.

Vc.

Pno.

F

Cl.

Vc.

Pno.

mf

mf

mp

8va

Clarinet in B♭

f

Violoncello

f

(8)

Pno.

f

f

Clarinet in B♭

f

Violoncello

f

Pno.

Cl.

Vc.

Clarinet in B♭

f

Violoncello

f

Piano

f

Cl.

Vc.

f *ff*

Piano

f *ff*

G **slowly, shimmering and very free (♩ = 40)**

Cl.

ppp

Vc.

ppp

8va

Pno.

pp *pp* *legatissimo sempre* *pp* *pp* *ppp* *pp* *pp* *ppp*

Ped. *lightly*

H

Cl.

Vc.

Pno.

(8)

ppp

p

long

I tempo primo (♩ = 56)

pulling back

p

Violoncello

pp legato, as before

8va

legatissimo

pp pp

Piano

Ped. l.v.

Cl.

Vc.

pp

cresc. poco a poco

cresc. poco a poco

Piano

ppp

Cl.

Vc.

Pno.

sim.

mf

sim.

Cl.

Vc.

Pno.

Piano

p

f

f

J

mp

mf

Clarinet in B♭

f

Violoncello

f

8va

Pno.

f

Cl.

f

Vc.

f

Pno.

Clarinet in B♭

Violoncello

Cl.

Vc.

Pno.

f

K

ff

L **gentle, fluid; very freely (♩ = 40)**

Cl.

Vc.

con sord.
5-7″

ppp

emerge from the resonance of the piano (allow the piano to dissipate by 40% before beginning)

Pno.

5-7″

ppp

gradually add Ped. ---------- Ped. *l.v.*

Violoncello **M**

pppp

Pno.

ppp

una corda

Clarinet in B♭

espressivo, con rubato

brief

brief

N

floating

ppp

Vc.

(senza sord.)

Pno.

floating

pp

p

Cl.

pp

ppp

pp

dolcissimo

ppp *p*

floating
senza sord.

Vc.

p *mp*

p

mp

Pno.

mf

pp

mp

Cl.

Vc.

Pno.

delicatissimo

ppp *p*

pp

mp

flowing, but gentle

O

p

pp

flowing, but gentle

Cl.

Violoncello

non vib.

P

vib. ord.

ppp

mf

rall.

Pno.

mp

mf

pp

ppp

pppp