

Paul Cantrell

the broken
mirror of
memory

Bass Clarinet and Piano. ~19 min.

Winner of the International Clarinet
Association Composition Prize

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The Broken Mirror of Memory

written for Pat O'Keefe

Paul Phillips Cantrell

1

submerged under piano *surfacing*

B. Cl. (concert pitch) *growl* *fp* *sempre p* *mf* *f*

Allegro molto agitato (♩ ≈ 142 / ♩ ≈ 284)

Pno. *f*

*Ped. *Ped. *Ped. simile ad lib.*

fp submerged *cresc.* *surfacing* *mf* *f* *f molto cantabile*

A *8va*

B *mp*

16

sf *marcattissimo*

cresc. *f*

C

21

sf *f*

8va

D

26

f molto cantabile

8va *8va*

E

32

Musical score for measures 32-36. The system consists of three staves: a single treble clef staff at the top, and a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) below. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The time signature is 7/16. The music features a melodic line in the upper treble staff and a complex accompaniment in the grand staff. Measure numbers 32, 35, 36, and 37 are indicated at the beginning of their respective measures.

37

Musical score for measures 37-41. The system consists of three staves: a single treble clef staff at the top, and a grand staff below. The key signature has one flat. The time signature is 7/16. The music continues with melodic and accompanimental lines. Measure numbers 37, 38, 39, 40, and 41 are indicated. Performance markings include *dim.* (diminuendo) and *p* (piano). A box labeled 'F' is placed above the first staff in measure 37. A dashed line labeled *8vb* is below the grand staff in measure 38.

42

Musical score for measures 42-47. The system consists of three staves: a single bass clef staff at the top, and a grand staff below. The key signature has one flat. The time signature is 7/16. The music continues with melodic and accompanimental lines. Measure numbers 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, and 47 are indicated. Performance markings include *poco cresc.*, *poco a poco cresc.*, and *mf* (mezzo-forte). A box labeled 'G' is placed above the first staff in measure 45. A dashed line labeled *8va* is above the grand staff in measure 45.

48

Musical score for measures 48-52. The system consists of three staves: a single bass clef staff at the top, and a grand staff below. The key signature has one flat. The time signature is 7/16. The music continues with melodic and accompanimental lines. Measure numbers 48, 49, 50, 51, and 52 are indicated. Performance markings include *emphatic*, *mf*, and *cresc.*. A box labeled 'H' is placed above the first staff in measure 50. A dashed line labeled *8va* is above the grand staff in measure 48, and a dashed line labeled *8vb¹* is below the grand staff in measure 51.

54

f *sf* *ff* *poco riten.*

8va

ff *poco riten.*

8vb

59

riten. *dim.*

8va

cresc. *riten.* *dim.*

8vb-1

65

p

8va

69

sempre p e legato *dim.*

K *sempre p*

Ped. 8vb-1

(no pedal changes)

*

77 *pp* *espressivo* *sf* *subito f* **L**

pp *subito f*

Ped. **Ped. simile ad lib.*

84 *8va* **M** *cresc.*

8va *cresc.*

88 *cantabile* *molto rallentando* *ff* *8va* *molto rallentando* *ff* *sf* *8vb-1*

cantabile *molto rallentando* *ff*

8va *molto rallentando* *ff* *sf*

8vb-1

2

Largo misterioso (♩ ≈ 46)

Pno. *p legato* *poco a poco cresc.*

Red. sempre

4 *f* *sing* ♦ notes (transpose as needed)

A Very freely; urgently

8va

8vb¹

7 B.C.I. *poco a poco calando* *lip down* *molto esp.* *mf* *cresc.*

11 B.C.I. *f* *pesante stretto.* *riten.* *gradually trembling* *mp*

B *+* *8vb - 1* **C** *8va* *p* *8vb¹*

15 B.C.I. *indeterminate pitches ad lib* *f* *marcatissimo* **D** Lento con moto *f* very broadly; cantabile

18 *poco accel.* *a tempo* *accel.* *allargando* *ff*

21 *molto esp.* *floating, otherworldly*
niente < p *mp* *p* *p* (sing ♠ notes)
E *Più largo* **F** *Tempo I*
ff *mp* *sfz*
8va *8va*
**Ped. sempre* (no pedal change)

29 B.C.I. *p* *mp* *p*
8va
dim. *p dolce*

32 *niente* *p* *mf* *cresc. e accel.*
G *Very freely*

35 *f* *straight* *more freely* *p*
tr

39 **H** *Tempo I* (hidden breaths as needed) *pp* *8va* *attaca:*
damp L. + *sfz* *sfz* *sfz*
8vb

3

B. Cl. *p* *dim.* *mf*

Moderato con moto (♩ ≈ 84 / ♩ ≈ 168)

Pno. *mp* *molto legato* *8^{vb}*

Ped. **Ped.* **Ped.* **Ped. simile ad lib.*

5

A

9

f

13 *breathy - - norm.* *sub. niente* *mp* *p* **B** *molto marcato* *mf*

p *8^{va}*

8^{vb}

17

20 *8vb-1*

23 *8va* *legato e cantabile* *mp* *C* *15ma* *mp* *marcato ma poco leggero* *8vb-1* ** meno Ped.*

26 *15ma* *mp* *Ped.* ***

29

Musical score for measures 29-31. The system includes a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The piano part features a complex texture with many accidentals and dynamic markings. The vocal line is in a higher register, indicated by an *8va* marking. The piano part includes a *Ped.* marking and an *8vb¹* marking.

più Ped. ad lib.

8va

8vb¹
Ped.

32

Musical score for measures 32-34. The system includes a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The piano part features a complex texture with many accidentals and dynamic markings. The vocal line is in a higher register, indicated by an *8va* marking. The piano part includes a *Ped. ad lib.* marking and a *loco* marking. The vocal line includes a *rit.* marking.

Ped. ad lib.

8va

loco

f

mf

rit.

35

Musical score for measures 35-38. The system includes a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The piano part features a complex texture with many accidentals and dynamic markings. The vocal line is in a higher register, indicated by an *8va* marking. The piano part includes a *8vb¹* marking. The vocal line includes a *p* marking, a *poco riten.* marking, and a *rit.* marking. A box labeled **D** contains the instruction *Più lento e rubato*.

p

poco riten.

rit.

D Più lento e rubato

8va

p

poco riten.

dolce

rit.

8vb¹

39

Musical score for measures 39-41. The system includes a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The piano part features a complex texture with many accidentals and dynamic markings. The vocal line is in a higher register, indicated by an *8va* marking. The piano part includes a *8vb¹* marking. The vocal line includes a *poco riten.* marking. The piano part includes a *a tempo* marking, a *cresc.* marking, and a *poco riten.* marking.

a tempo

poco riten.

a tempo

cresc.

poco riten.

8vb¹

43

E

p *mp* *p*

mf

8va-1

48

F

p

loco

**Ped.*

52

p *cresc.*

**Ped. ad lib.* *8va-1*

56

G

p *poco a poco cresc.* *mf*

8va-1 *Tempo I*

mf

*

61

subito *p*

H

p

8va

subito *p*

65

mp

mf

subito *mp*

8vb1

69

p subito

molto *cresc.*

f

mf

I

marcato e pesante; *l'istesso tempo*

cresc.

f

molto

* quasi senza ped.

8vb1

8vb1

73

8vb1

8vb1

8vb1

76 *mp*

79 *f* *mf non troppo* (piano has primary melody)
meno Ped. *Ped. ad lib*

82 *f*

86 *mp* *f* *ff* (b. cl. has primary melody)
subito mp cresc. *ff* *Ped.* *sf* (no pedal changes)

8va 7
8vb - 1

89

dim. - - - - - *p* *echoing, distant, out of reach*

dim.

8vb

92

B.Cl. *dolce e sempre sotto voce*

pp *now close, intimate*

P. *pp* *legatissimo*
(pedal still down!)

**Ped. ad lib.*

95

mp

sempre pp

**Ped. sempre al fin.*

99

pp *sempre legato*

M

ghostly and indistinct

102

breathy

more clearly *rit.* *exhale* *inhale*

rit. *smorzando* *

4

solo; molto esp. e rubato

B. Cl. *mp* *f* *mp*

Molto adagio cantabile (♩ ≈ 32)

Lento (♩ ≈ 48) **A**

Pno. *mp*

Red. ad lib.

6 *p* *mf* *p*

11 *p* *mp* *cresc.* **B** *cresc.*

15 *subito mp, as if distant* **C** *8va* *15ma* *8va* *sub. mp* *mf* **Red.* **Red.* **Red. simile ad lib.*

19

p dolce *dim.*

8va *loco* *8va* *loco* *p*

8vb

22

D *mp* *poco a poco cresc.* *mf* *mp*

pp *mp* *poco a poco cresc.* *lush and delicate* *p*

8vb **Ped.* **Ped.* **Ped.* **Ped.* *8vb¹* **Ped.* *8vb* **Ped.*

28

p *poco cresc.* *mp* *p* *dim.*

8va *8vb* **Ped.* *8vb* **Ped.* *8vb*

32 *pp*

E

8^{va} - - - - -

Poco più mosso

p

35 *con forza*

mp *mf*

F

poco a poco cresc.

mf *con forza*

38 *cresc.* *f*

3 4 5 2 3 2 4 5 1

cresc. *becoming less detached*

Ped. ad lib.

41

fp *rit.* *f*

G Broadly, poco meno mosso

rit. *f*

**Ped.* *8vb* **Ped. ad lib.*

44

rit. *poco accel.* *rit.*

rit. *fp* *poco accel.* *rit.* *f*

8vb-1 **Ped.*

46

f *growl*

H Con fuoco ma lento

f *growl*

Ped. *8vb-1* **Ped.* *8vb-1* **Ped.* *8vb-1* **Ped.*

with suddenly intimate intensity

49

subito *mf*

sf p

mp

sf

poco a poco cresc.

8vb

*Ped.

*Ped. sempre

52

p

f con fuoco (ma tempo giusto)

riten. pesante

8va

poco stretto

f³

sempre f

riten.

mp

8va

(no ped. changes)

56

p

niente

mp

mf

p

lunga

8va

Molto lento; Innig

p

cresc.

lunga

pp

8vb

ppp

*Ped. ad lib.

*Ped.

Notes on the Piece

Entanglement, soliloquy, tango, flight: each movement poses a problem from which the next unfolds. Themes continually resurface, transformed, as the music reinvents its own past — the endless process Gabriel García Márquez described as “piecing together the broken mirror of memory from so many scattered shards.” The coda gathers everything together, grappling, burning down — and then, from the embers, a simple benediction emerges, present all along, now laid bare. We discover in retrospect that the music’s destination has always been its source.

If you wish to play this piece ... thank you! I strongly recommend studying the recording — not as a model to imitate, but as a starting point, a way to hear all the music that is not on the page.

I wrote the bass clarinet part for Pat O’Keefe. He is a wise and gracious collaborator, the rare sort of polyvalent musician a composer dreams of. This piece would not exist without his help.

Part 1

The bass clarinet is entangled in the piano’s dense web throughout, with the lead role constantly shifting. At times, the bass clarinet fuses with the piano to create the impression of a single instrument (e.g. **C**). Sometimes (e.g. mm. 1-2) it is submerged, subtly recoloring the piano’s swirling waters. Sometimes it soars anthematically over the surface, only to plunge back in.

There is a driving energy throughout, but don’t take it so virtuosically fast that the piano’s shifting sonorities blur into an indistinct mass, or the bass clarinet’s melodies become glib.

On notes marked **x**, either produce an unpitched vocal growl while playing the note, or use slap tongue.



Part 2

The introduction, and the similar sections at **F** and **H**, have a sense of slow, steady pulse. In contrast, the bass clarinet monologues have a flexible, speech-like cadence. Despite this flexibility, the duple / triplet distinctions remain clear.

Piano notes with **+** above are damped. Before the hammer strikes, place one or two fingertips on the string, about 2cm from the agraffes, to produce a resonant thump.



When singing into the bass clarinet, you may change the sung pitch to suit your vocal range. The effect should not be of two distinct and harmonious notes; instead, the pitches fight inside the instrument, producing a rough texture with strange overtones.

Part 3

The melodic lines are romantically expressive throughout. The ostinato is restless and flowing, but never rushes. The *marcato* passages (bass clarinet at **B**, piano at **C**, both at **I**) have a strong rhythmic drive, but do not speed up; on the contrary, they almost hold back against the tempo, as if pushing a heavy object. The unaccented staccatos are very light, almost ghost notes.

The *ghostly and indistinct* passage at **M** need not be rhythmically precise, so long as the passage ends at approximately the right time. The exhale / inhale is through the instrument.

Part 4

The initial bass clarinet solo is very slow and expressive, but still communicates the feeling of five. The foreground / background

role shifting of the first movement returns, but what was entanglement is now sinuous intertwining.

Throughout the canon, **A–G**, lines play against the downbeat. Each preserves its own sense of phrasal emphasis, without trying to conform to the time signature. The larger downbeat naturally emerges — or remains elusive — on its own.

In the coda (**H** and **I**), don’t hold back; allow both instruments to form a large sound mass. If the bass clarinetist is human, they will probably need a breath before the low C at m. 57, but don’t let the energy die! The coda forms one long arc into **J**.

Notation Conventions

Accidentals

All accidentals apply until either the next barline or the end of the system, whichever comes first. They do not apply to notes in different octaves or different staves. I occasionally add redundant accidentals for clarity, particularly when there are no barlines.

Pedaling

Since it is common in my pieces for the pedal to stay down for extended periods, I *always* show pedal releases — either with an explicit release *****, or with *Ped. ad lib.* If you do not see one of these notations following a *Ped.*, the pedal stays down. I sometimes write *Ped. sempre* to emphasize that there are no changes throughout a section, but the *sempre* is only for emphasis and does not change the meaning. Of course, pedaling is a subjective and situational art, so adjust my instructions to your taste.

Grace notes

References disagree wildly. My conventions: slashed grace notes steal time from the *preceding* note, and unslashed ones from the *following* note. Both have the same duration as if they were full size; no rules like “half the duration” or “as fast as possible” apply.

However, these rules are approximate. Grace notes are intentionally ambiguous — if I intend precision, I notate precisely. Let the ornament be flexible, so that it fits in a graceful, organic way.

Interpretation

The past century gave us a school of thought that musicians must “respect the intentions of the composer” by treating scores with a reverential literalism, striving to play everything exactly as marked and to add nothing. As a composer, I want you to be free from that literalism. You have not only my permission, but my entreaty: please don’t treat my music that way! The score is only the skeleton of the music. The intention of this particular composer is for performers to *interpret* the score: stretch the pulse; stretch the dynamics; shape every phrase; play expressions that aren’t on the page; contradict expressions that are; summon every color and nuance of your instrument in the service of musicality; take liberties; take risks!

That’s not to say you should ignore the score. I notate very carefully, and every mark on the page is there for a reason. That reason, however, is not pedantic literalism. Consider what’s written, internalize it, and let something new emerge that reaches beyond the score and into yourself. Make something poetic, passionate and personal. Make it your own.