

John Oliver

Contemplating
Motion

for clarinet, bass trombone, harp, violin, cello

johnolivermusic.com

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(2010)

Duration: 6:00

Commissioned by Turning Point Ensemble,
with funding from Turning Point Ensemble

Program Note

This work is inspired by listening to a single sound and its harmonic (overtone) structure: contemplating the motion inside sound (difference tones) when two or more instruments play in unison. Difference tones create fluctuating beating and additional sounds in the air. So we hear more than the notes that are played. Similarly, when sounds are so low that they go below our threshold of hearing, they turn into beating patterns. Rhythm and pulse are just a continuum at the low end of our hearing. This short piece explores the sound based on two notes, C and D, and then combines them in the end, culminating in a slowing down that represents the transition from pulsed listening to harmonic listening.

Contemplating Motion

Very free: timings approximate;
musicians cue events among themselves.

John Oliver

$\text{♩} = 60$

Clarinet in B \flat : *one breath* **ppp** (TACET)

Bass Trombone: *one breath* (TACET)

Harp: *ff* *gliss.* *let vibrate* (TACET)

Violin: *one bow* **ppp** (TACET)

Violoncello: *IV. nat. one bow* *rall.* *if possible... even if only bow sound is left...*

pp *f* *gliss.* *p* *pp*

Musicians read from full score.

Boxed capitalized text with instrument name followed by letter "Q" means that musician give the cue.

Material within a box is to be repeated freely for the duration of the following line.

A note with the number "7" indicates the natural minor seventh: lower the pitch slightly.

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② (TACET)

Cl. *Add sung note ad lib; spectral shaping ad lib ("ooo" ↔ "eee").*
(or 8va ba)

B. Tbn. *ppp* *pp ↔ mf*

Hp. (TACET) *l.v. Rhythmically free* *l.v.* *l.v.* (TACET)

Vln. *sul tasto* *f* (TACET)

Cello/Vc. *pp < f > pp* *sul tasto* *ord.* *let pitch bend under bow pressure.*
pizz *arco* *very still, without nuance* *ff* *pp*

③ (TACET)

Cl. *bend pitch (embouchure) ad lib.* *alt key* *p* *mf* *> p* *ppp*


B. Tbn. *ff* (TACET) *ppp* *pp ↔ f* (TACET)


Hp. (TACET) *(Also 8va)* *mf* *HARP Q* *Steady pulse, slow* *mf*

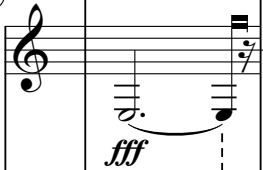
Vln. *sul tasto* *Free bowing.* *pp* *sul tasto* (TACET)

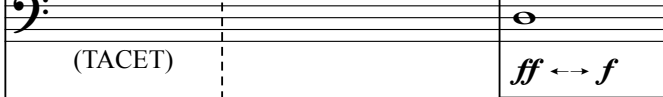
Vc. *Free bowing.* *p* *ppp*

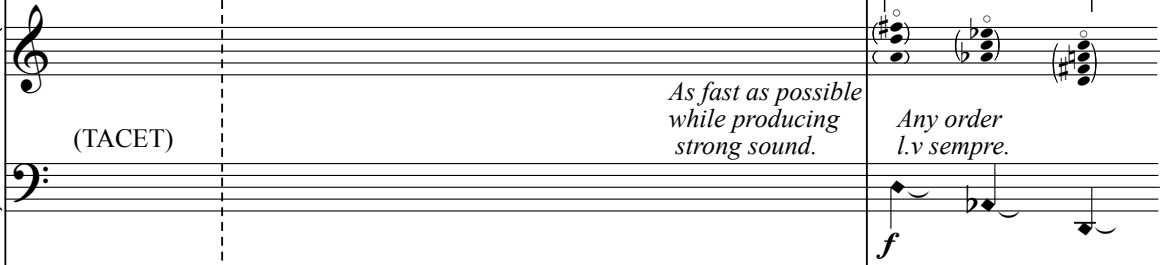
5

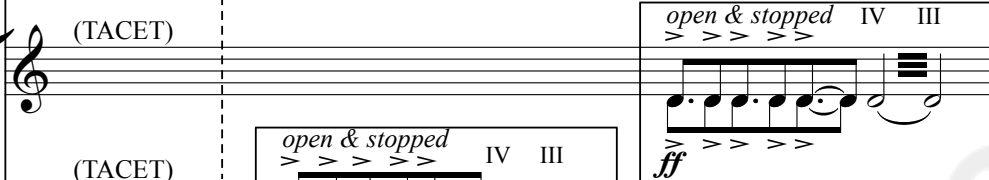
add flutter tongue ad lib.
fl.t. 


fl.t. 

Cl. 

B. Tbn. (TACET) 

Hp. (TACET) 

Vln. (TACET) 

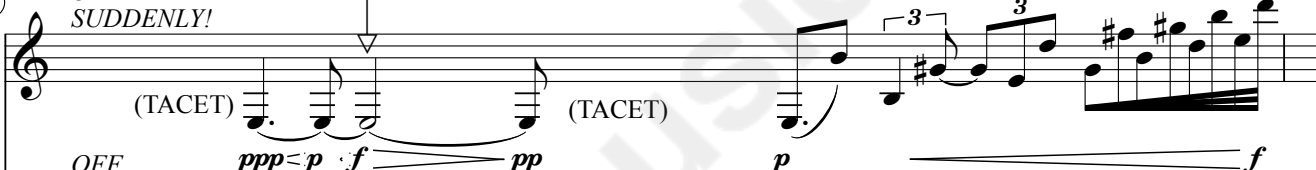
Vc. (TACET) 

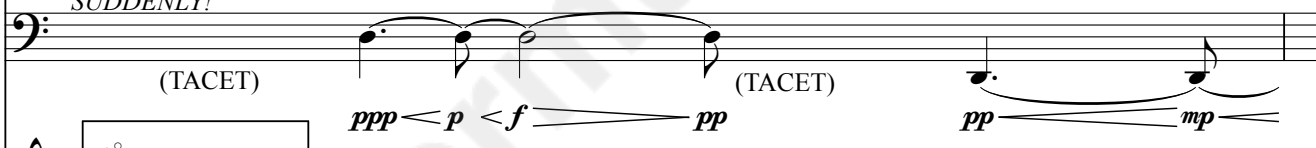
Play any high harmonic
As fast as possible while producing strong sound.
Any order l.v sempre.


6


OFF SUDDENLY!

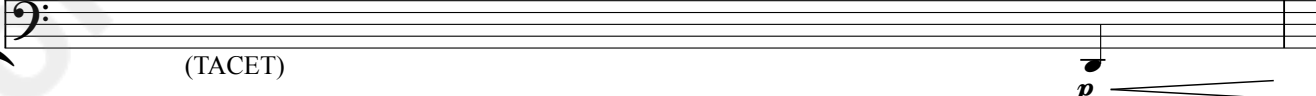
CLARINET Q

Cl. (TACET) 

B. Tbn. (TACET) 

Hp. 

Vln. (TACET) 

Vc. (TACET) 

OFF SUDDENLY!

OFF SUDDENLY!

VIOLIN Q

7

Cl. (TACET)

B. Tbn. *f* *pp* *p* *f* *pp* *pp* *p* *p* *p*
Steady pulse, slow
sung note; "ooo" ↔ "eee" (TACET) *sung note; "ooo" ↔ "eee"*

Hp. *mf*

Vln. (TACET) *mp* *p* *mf*
sul tasto IV III *sul tasto IV III*

Vc. *f* *p* *p* *mf*

8

Cl. *p* *f*

B. Tbn. *f* *pp* *ppp* *pp* *mf*

Hp. *f*

Vc. *ppp* *p* *f*

TROMBONE Q

mf = 60

11

Cl. *p* *f*

B. Tbn.

Hp.

Vln.

Vc.

13

Cl. *p* *f*

B. Tbn. *mf* *p*

Hp. *gliss.* *ff* *fff*

Vln. *legato*

Vc.

15

Cl. *p* *f*

B. Tbn.

Hp.

Vln. *measured* *f* *unmeasured*

Vc. *f* 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6

17

Repeat many times

Cl. *f*

B. Tbn.

Hp. *ff* 3

Vln.

Vc. 6 6 6 6

Gradually slow down, and lose synchronisation.

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


Gradually slow down, and lose synchronisation.

Gradually slow down, and lose synchronisation.

Gradually slow down, and lose synchronisation.

20

Gradually slow down, and lose synchronisation.

Pick either note.
fl.t. 

pp < *p* < *f* > *pp*

Play any high harmonic

Rhythmically free Any order l.v sempre.

f

Vc.

p *f* *p* *f*

p *f* *p* *f*

22

sung note; "ooo" ↔ "eee"

one breath

ppp

Eventually, a last breath.

B. Tbn.

ppp ↔ *pp* ↔ *mf*

one breath

pp

Eventually, a last breath.

Rhythmically free slowing down ... eventually stopping

(TACET)

Eventually, a last bow.

one bow

ppp

Eventually, a last bow.

one bow

pp