

vladimir nikolaev

Gutta-percha Music

for five performers and conductor

flauto
clarinetto (B)

accordeon (баян)

violino
violoncello

vn acc cl
vc dir fl

Explanatory notes

The performance of the piece presumes the reproduction of the text of the music organically connected with a plasticity of movement of all the performers including the conductor. From the first to the last sound of the piece each musician is involved in a certain emotional and plastic action. Even the page turns are conceived of in the context of the performers.

The piece begins with the musicians and the conductor settling down on stage and laying out their music. The conductor, after placing the score on the stand, lowers hands and continues standing motionlessly. The accordionist, settling down across from the conductor, also sits down motionlessly. The other musicians seem to start tuning their instruments, but in reality this is already the beginning of the music. It must not be made clear to the audience at what precise time the music of the piece actually begins.

From the moment of the first entrance of the strings and the subsequent (already repeated) entrance of the flute and clarinet at rehearsal number 1 a general rule comes into effect during the pauses the musicians do not put down their instruments (bows), do not “tune out” of the emotional context of the piece. They seem to freeze in the position they were when their playing was interrupted by a pause (remember the children's game “The sea is turbulent, since...”). The musicians remain in this motionless condition until their next entrance.

Contrariwise, during their playing, the musicians are always in a state of motion (albeit sometimes barely discernible). As a rule, these movements are dictated by the character of the music. If the music is soft, if soft movement predominates and a minimum of musical events take place, as is the case in the first sections of the piece, then the plastique of the performers' movements is correspondingly smooth, lazy and devoid of active gestures. The audiemnce may not even discern the performers' plastique for a certain amount of time, and this is normal.

A necessary peculiar feature in performing this piece is that the conductor does not show the musicians their entrances and does not mark the beats of the measures or seconds, with the exception of a few places. The musicians cope with these challenges themselves while playing from their part-scores. The page turns of the parts (or the scores) should be carried out in seeming slow motion, without losing contact with the emotional musical context of the piece. If the page was performed from both of its sides it could be tossed elegantly onto the floor.

The sections of the instruments' parts where the musicians play following the conductor are marked with a grey tint in the background.

Beginning from rehearsal number 3 the conductor comes out of the state of motionlessness. The cellist reacts to the movement of the conductor's left hand (sub. ppp). Following this, with suave movements of the left hand the conductor indicates all the crescendos and diminuendos (the dynamic circumflex) in the cello part. Starting from rehearsal number 4 the conductor interacts in an analogous way with the violinist, in this case by means of the right hand.

Beginning from rehearsal number 7, the conductor “draws out” the dynamic circumflex, by means of the freed right hand.

Starting from page 5, in the parts of the woodwinds the repeating phrases are drawn out more and more distinctly, each of which presents a sort of breathing in and out. The flutist and clarinetist emphasize this by their plastique. For example, during the crescendos (the “breathing out”) the instruments' bell-mouths are turned up, whereas during the diminuendos (the “breathing out”) the bell-mouths go down. Hence, the more changes are there in the dynamics, the more this is reflected in the plastic movements of the instrumentalists'.

In this section (starting from rehearsal number 11) the conductor can echo the woodwind performers, but only by real breathing in and out, which should be observed by the audience by the movements of the conductor's back. On this “stage” the latter presents someone who is led, rather than the leader.

Beginning from rehearsal number 11 the conductor indicates to the flutist and clarinetist their moments of starting and stopping their long notes, as well as their dynamic circumflexes.

At rehearsal number 14 the conductor demonstrates by the plastique of the hands the lines of the violinist and the cellist, emphasizing the sonorous and diffused character of the music.

At rehearsal numbers 15-18 the conductor indicates to the string players all the moments of the changes of intervals. At rehearsal number 15 the woodwind players carry out their quasi dialogue by means of plastic movements in a very emotional and expressive manner, despite the fact that they are playing almost soundlessly. Towards the end of rehearsal number 15 the expressivity of their movements gradually dwindles to nothing. Starting from rehearsal number 16 they are almost motionless. At rehearsal number 18 they start playing repeated phrases. Like at rehearsal number 9 these present sorts of “breathings in” (at the first two notes of the phrases) and “breathings out” (at the third and fourth notes), which should also be reflected in the plastique.

At rehearsal numbers 19-23 the conductor continues to interact with the string instruments. At that, the conductor's gestures become extremely detailed, as he “draws out” each sound or quasi phrase in the air with the left hand for the cellist and with the right hand for the violinist.

The woodwind players, starting from rehearsal number 24 and the string players, starting from rehearsal number 25 and until the end of the piece play with a minimal amount of movements. On the other hand, the performance plastique of the conductor and accordionist at rehearsal numbers 26-27 is extroversive and expressive. The conductor shows here the dynamic circumflex of the accordionist, with active, chaotic gestures, endowed with an unpredictable character.

Before rehearsal number 28 the accordionist and cellist, upon finishing their lines, freeze in motionless poses along with the other musicians, while the conductor, gesticulating actively, continues directing the performance of inaudible music for a brief time longer (about seven seconds).

0'' 5'' 10'' 15'' 1

fl *mp*

cl (B) *mp*

vn *mf*

5'' 10'' 15'' 20'' 25''

fl *mf*

cl *mf*

vn

vc *mf*

2 0'' 5'' 10'' 15'' 20''

acc *p* *ppp* *pp* *pppp*

vn

vc

25'' 30'' 35'' 40'' 45'' 3 0''

acc *p* *ppp* *mp* *pp* *p*

vn

vc *mf* *sub. ppp*

5'' 10'' 15'' 4 0'' 5''

acc *p* *ppp* *pp* *pppp* *p* *pp*

vn *sub. ppp* *p*

vc *p* *ppp* *pp* *pppp* *p* *pp*

10''15''20''25''

5

0''

Length of sounds similar to eighth notes in a moderate tempo

fl

acc

vn

vc

5''10''15''0''5''10''

6

0''

fl

cl

acc

vn

vc

15''20''25''30''0''

7

0''

fl

cl

vn

vc

5''10''

8

0''

Play the notes indicated by a cross soundlessly

fl

cl

acc

vc

[illegible]

fl

cl

vn

vc

12

p *pppp* *p* *pppp* *p*

pppp *p* *pppp* *p* *pppp*

mf *p* *mf* *mf* *pp* *mf* *f* *p* *mp* *pp* *mp* *f* *ppp* *mp*

mf *p* *mf* *mf* *pp* *mf* *f* *p* *mp* *pp* *mp* *f* *ppp* *mp*

poco rubato *(non rub.) sul pont. (s.p.)* *poco rub. s.t.~*

simile pp ↔ mp

fl

cl

acc

vn

vc

13

pppp *p* *pppp* *p* *pppp*

p *pppp* *p* *pppp*

poco a poco accelerando *poco rub. s.t.~* *s.p.* *pp ↔ mp* *f* *pp ↔ mp* *ff* *ppp ↔ mp*

a tempo ♩ = 192 *p* *mf* *mp* *p* *mf* *mp*

Continue in the same manner *Play random pitches in the indicated range, not abiding by the tuning* **s.t.~*

fl

cl

acc

vn

vc

14

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

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

p *ppp ↔ mp* *fff* *pp ↔ mp* *crescendo* *~8/8*

ppp ↔ mp *fff* *pp ↔ mp* *crescendo* *~8/8*

fl *p* \triangleleft *mf* \triangleright *mp* \triangleleft *mf* \triangleright *mf* \triangleright *mp* \triangleleft *f* \triangleright *mf* \triangleleft *ff*

cl *p* \triangleleft *mf* \triangleright *mp* \triangleleft *mf* \triangleright *mf* \triangleright *mp* \triangleleft *f* \triangleright *mf* \triangleleft *ff*

vn *p* \leftrightarrow *mf*

vc *p* \leftrightarrow *mf*

играть без пауз to play without pauses

15

0" (♩ = 105) 5" 10"

fl $\emptyset \leftrightarrow ppp$

cl $\emptyset \leftrightarrow ppp$

vn *pppp* *p*

vc *pp* *pppp* *p*

15" 20" 25"

fl *ppp* \leftrightarrow *p*

cl *ppp* \leftrightarrow *p*

acc. $\{$ All of the swelling chords are to be played by stretching out the bellows $\}$ *fff*

vn *pppp* *p*

vc *pppp*

16

0" 5" 10"

fl $\sim pp$

cl $\sim pp$

acc. $\{$ Sound of compressed bellows $\}$ *fff*

vn *pppp* *p*

vc *p* *pppp*

18

$\text{♩} = 88$ poco rubato

сыграть фразу 10 раз play the phrase 10 times

fl

cl

acc

vn

vc

ppp

pp

mp

p

pp

fff

fff

p

pp

p

ppp

Loosen E string "by ear" (without checking it subsequently) about a tritone down

Loosen G string "by ear" (without checking it subsequently) about a tritone down

fl

cl

acc

25''

30''

35''

40''

Switch to compression of bellows as gently as possible

ff

Ø

19

poco a poco ritardando →

fl

cl

vn

vc

0''

5''

10''

15''

20''

Indication of pitch and rhythm

Indication of dynamics

20

fl

cl

vn

vc

0''

5''

10''

15''

20''

21

fl

cl

vn

vc

acc.

0''

5''

25''

30''

35''

~pp

sempre

10''

15''

20''

25''

30''

Here and onwards play the previous chord

22

0''

5''

10''

15''

20''

Pass beyond the limits of the indicated range. The violinist extracts sounds on the D string without changing position

Pass beyond the limits of the indicated range. The cellist extracts sounds on the D string without changing position

23

10"

15"

acc

25"

0"

5"

vn

c4

c3

vc

Fis

C

20"

25"

30"

35"

40"

acc

ppp

pp

pppp

pp

ppp

p

vn

c4

c3

vc

Fis

C

Tune the E string back to the previous pitch "by ear" (without checking it out afterwards)

Tune the G string back to the previous pitch "by ear" (without checking it out afterwards)

24

0"

5"

10"

15"

fl

p

cl

p

acc

ppp

mp

p

mp

ppp

25

20"

0"

5"

10"

15"

fl

cl

acc

p

p

p

p

p

p

vn

p

vc

p

Natural octave harmonics on all strings

Natural major third harmonics on all strings

The sound of the approximately tuned string

The sound of the approximately tuned string

20'' 25'' 26 0'' 5''

fl

cl

vn

vc

acc

sul A

pp

p

pp

p

pp

p

The entire pitch range of the instrument

Dynamic range

fff

p

10'' 15'' 20'' 25''

fl

cl

acc

vn

vc

ppp ↔ p

ppp ↔ p

ppp ↔ p

ppp ↔ p

ppp ↔ p

With the left hand

l.

sempre ff

27 0'' 5'' 10'' 15''

fl

cl

acc

vn

vc

ppp

sul A

Half-harmonic sound of an indefinite pitch in the highest register

20'' 25'' 30'' 28 0'' 5'' 5''

acc

vc

Endnotes:

* p.3: In the parts of the flutist, clarinetist and cellist from the beginning until rehearsal number 3, and in the part of the violinist until rehearsal number 4, the music is endowed with the character of a quasi tuning of the instruments. Here an approximate rendition of the music text is permissible. It is advisable to play not looking at the music.

* p.5: Upon the absence of barlines, accidentals affect groups of notes under one bracket.

* p.6: s.t.~ (sul tasto) rounded movements by the bow over the fingerboard without pressing strongly on the strings.

* p.9: The indication of the limits of the range for the musician to play. Below is the indication of the dynamic range.

** p.9: Play single-voiced pitches and intervals (within the limits of a minor third), close to the handle of the bow, not limited to the 12-tone equal temperament. The violin plays on the E and A strings, while the cello plays on the G and C strings. Avoid sounds resembling glissandi. The bow should also be pressed against the strings, even during pauses. The movements of the right hand are short, restrained and abrupt, becoming more energetic during loud moments. The changes of the bow can be arbitrary.

In this section a precise correspondence of the playing with the graphical depiction is not mandatory. The rhythm and the character of performance of concrete sounds and phrases are set by the conductor by the movements of the hands. The music is in many ways endowed with an improvisatory character. However, it is necessary to preserve the dramaturgy of the entire section (rehearsal numbers 19-23), expressed in the correlation between the soft and loud sections, to emphasize the culminations in rehearsal numbers 22 and 23, and to “evaporate” at the end.

*** p.9: The sound of the accordion has an unstable, wavering character, which is achieved by a constant barely discernible twitching (jerking) of the left hand. The accordion sounds as a certain distant reverberation of the duo of the violin and cello.

c.11: Sounds of compression and extension of the bellows, disorderly in their strength and rhythmic contour, but, in general, very energetic. Outwardly this should resemble a performance of some kind of very loud and emotional music. The sounds from pressing the keys appear only in certain moments and in certain places of the keyboard, which are indicated in the music by special flourishing symbols. The pressure on the keys is carried out during the process of a disorderly movement (gliding) of the right hand along the keyboard, due to which as if unexpectedly for the performer himself there appear either short, abrupt glissando passages, or separate short notes and chords. A combination of both is possible.

One flourish corresponds approximately to one sixteenth note of duration; two correspond to an eight; three to a dotted eighth. The register, in which the keys are depressed, is determined approximately by a higher or lower displacement of flourishes on the space which indicates the instrument's range.