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Threads of the moment

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THREADES OF THE MOMENT

by

Rebecca C. Pape

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the Master of Arts
degree in Music in the
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Professor Sivan Cohen Elias
ABSTRACT

Just as a strand of thread is composed of many smaller threads, so too are there many factors in a single musical moment. *Threads of the Moment* explores three of these factors: the roles of composer, performer, and listener.

The first movement “Composer” seeks to reflect the often messy and disorganized compositional process. Contrary to popular belief, it is not as simple as putting notes on a page and calling that “music.” To compose one must explore and experiment with every sound, big or small, and find the beauty in each so that those sounds can be brought together. There are times where the sounds blend and complement one another, but at other times they create sharp contrasts and dissonance as the composer seeks to find music within the chaotic exploration.

The second movement “Performer” explores the idea of a performer being one who interprets and presents the music of the composer. However, while the performer does play based on the composer’s intentions and instructions, there is also room for interpretation. A performer brings new life to a piece by discovering new potential within it and adding his or her voice. To reflect this the cellist acts as the composer, at first leading and inspiring the bass clarinet as the performer, but later the bass clarinet starts to branch off and finds its own interpretation of the melody that it expands on.

The final movement looks at the role of listener not only in regards to the audience, but also to the performers themselves who listen to one another’s parts. No one hears the music the exact same way and there are times when a listener is fully engaged, but other times the listener begins to “drift” and lose themselves in the music. For this movement this is reflected in the clarity of certain sections in regards to melody that fractures and enters into hazier sections where the performers are in their own worlds, ending with one last thought from each of them.
PUBLIC ABSTRACT

Just as a strand of thread is composed of many smaller threads, so too are there many factors in a single musical moment. *Threads of the Moment* explores three of these factors: the roles of composer, performer, and listener.

The first movement “Composer” seeks to reflect the often messy and disorganized compositional process. To compose one must explore and experiment with every sound, big or small, and find the beauty in each so that those sounds can be brought together. There are times where the sounds blend and complement one another, but at other times they create sharp contrasts and dissonance as the composer seeks to find music within the chaotic exploration.

The second movement “Performer” explores the idea of a performer being one who interprets and presents the music of the composer. A performer brings new life to a piece by discovering new potential within it and adding his or her voice.

The final movement looks at the role of listener not only in regards to the audience, but also to the performers themselves who listen to one another’s parts. No one hears the music the exact same way and there are times when a listener is fully engaged, but other times the listener begins to “drift” and lose themselves in the music.
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Instrumentation:

Bass Clarinet
Piano (includes keys and in-piano techniques)

- Items Needed:
  1. 2 paper clips (preferably metallic material and 1-2 inches)
  2. 1 mallet (medium hard like a vibraphone mallet)
  3. 2 glass marbles, preferably a larger 1" size
  4. Tabs, tape, chalk, or other substance to mark strings
  5. Voice (Soprano or Mezzo-Soprano)
  6. Cello

Note: Piano and Voice should be amplified with microphone

The theatric commands create an atmosphere of interaction between the players. The cello is the "composer" and the other instruments are inspired by the cellist's actions and sounds. Sometimes this means following, but other times the other instruments have a chance to lead. The performers are not only restricted to the given commands, but have the freedom to add their own actions to sounds, moments of inspiration, etc.

**Explanation of Theatric Commands:**

- C2, B2, C3, F4, Gb6, C6, Ab6, Gb6, Bb6, C7

Strings are split into 4 sections (see diagram for how to mark)

To Prepare Piano:

- Piano (Soprano or Mezzo-Soprano)

  - 2 glass marbles, preferably a larger 1" size
  - 1 mallet (medium hard like a vibraphone mallet)
  - 2 paper clips (preferably metallic material and 1-2 inches)

- Bass Clarinet

  - Items Needed:
    - Piano (includes keys and in-piano techniques)
Bass Clarinet:

- Multiphonics (+ trill): use given fingering to produce multiphonic, lift trill key to initiate the trill while still playing the multiphonic.
- Nasty note: Play harsh and ugly sounds (can include squeaks, growls, etc.) and hold for indicated duration.
- Flutter tongue: occasionally paired with a growl.
- Paper clip slide: use paper clip side and press to 2 strings, moving farther down those 2 strings based on dynamics given.
- Plucked glissando: use paper clip and drag across strings in a glissando motion adjusting speed based on rhythm indicated.
- Plucked 2 notes: use both paper clips to pluck 2 strings.

Cello:

- Vibrato: shows the rate and width of vibrato.
- Pitch bend: shows the contour of the pitch bend.
- Change in bowing pressure: marking indicates an increase or decrease in bowing pressure.
- Bowing pressure: marking indicates pressure applied to the bow.
- Slap tongue: harsh, "pop" sound.
- Flat tongue: occasionally paired with a growl.
- Paper clip: grab 1 paper clip (unless 2 are specified) and use the section the area points to for action (sliding or plucking).
- 1-line staff: non-pitched percussive elements.
- Full staff: implies the technique has specific pitches.
- 2-line staff: shows placement and melodic motion within a region with random pitches.

Note: These techniques are shown exclusively in the top staff labeled "Strings."
Piano (continued):

Alternating palm hits: using palms of both hands and alternate hitting lower strings.

Fingers tapping: use both hands and rapidly tap with nails on the strings similar to playing the piano.

Mallet symbol: shows the part of the mallet in the action. Similar to playing the piano, rapidly tap with nails on the strings.

Mallet hitting lower strings:

Mallet symbol: shows the part of the mallet used in the action.

Marble on string: take a marble and slide it. Marble hits: use a marble of hand to hit the strings, creating a low booming sound (up = slide away from the performer, down = slide towards the performer).

Pedal hard lift: sharp motion upwards to make the release audible.

Continuous to hit crossbars with mallet head:

Mallet hit crossbars: use mallet head to hit crossbars over the lower strings.

Mallet gliss: slide mallet head over strings following the indicated pattern.

Hit strings, try to catch at 2, 3 if possible:

Mallet hit strings: use mallet head to hit strings in a section then use other hands to mute the section withing or am depending on spacing of chord.

Chord finger pluck: use three fingers and pluck (with nails) 3 notes, can adjust fingers depending on pitch selected.

Finger tremolo: use two fingers and rapidly alternate plucking between two strings (preferably close together) to create a tremolo effect.

Muted pluck: mute string with one hand then pluck with paper clip and let it ring.

Muted keys: use one hand/arm to mute the strings in a section then use other hands to play on the keys.

Muted chord: play chord on keys and mute pluck with paper clip and let it ring down the string. Clipping small end of paper clip slide down the string.

Both hands and alternate hitting lower strings:

Pluck and drag: pluck with clip then drag down the string.

Muted keys: use one hand/arm to mute the strings in a section then use other hands to play on the keys.
Voice:

- a sharp, percussive attack with very little pitch

Foot stamp

Hiss: using the tongue (similar to a snake)

towards their position on the stage

Snap fingers: snap fingers either at self or if other performer is indicated,

Hand clap: adjust strength and sharpness based on dynamics and articulation

Air sound: use only air with indicated syllable or word, no pitch,

order from highest to lowest: i, e, a (middle line), u, o

by changing mouth shape with different vowels

Tongue clicks: flick tongue to make a light popping sound, adjust „pitch“

Vibrato: the line indicates the rate and width of the vibrato

Fragmented syllable comes from and is pronounced as it is in that original word

Vocal pronunciation: the word in parentheses is what the
Program Notes:

Just as a strand of thread is composed of many smaller threads, so too are there many factors in a single musical moment. Threads of the Moment explores three of these factors: the roles of composer, performer, and listener.

Movement 1:

A composer draws on personal experience and inspiration to create a piece of music, often in order to communicate a concept or message. A composer's work is personal and unique, reflecting the composer's personal experiences and thoughts. The composer is the originator of the musical ideas, and their creativity and imagination play a crucial role in the composition process.

Movement 2:

A performer presents a musical work and brings the composer's music to life, following the composer's wishes, but also adding personal interpretation. The performer interprets the composer's work, bringing their own style and expression to the music. This process involves not only playing the notes accurately, but also conveying the emotion and meaning behind the music.

Movement 3:

A listener is exposed to the performer's interpretation of the composer's music and seeks to understand the purpose of the music, an understanding directly impacted by the perspective of the listener. A listener is exposed to the performer's interpretation of the composer's music and seeks to understand the purpose of the music, an understanding directly impacted by the perspective of the listener.

These definitions were ones I created and derived the vocal text from according to each movement.

Texts:

Thoughts from each of them:

Threads of the Moment explores three of these factors: the roles of composer, performer, and listener. Each movement delves into a different aspect of the musical process, highlighting the unique contributions of each role.

Movement 1: Composer

A composer draws on personal experience and inspiration to create a piece of music, often in order to communicate a concept or message. A composer's work is personal and unique, reflecting the composer's personal experiences and thoughts. The composer is the originator of the musical ideas, and their creativity and imagination play a crucial role in the composition process.

Movement 2: Performer

A performer presents a musical work and brings the composer's music to life, following the composer's wishes, but also adding personal interpretation. The performer interprets the composer's work, bringing their own style and expression to the music. This process involves not only playing the notes accurately, but also conveying the emotion and meaning behind the music.

Movement 3: Listener

A listener is exposed to the performer's interpretation of the composer's music and seeks to understand the purpose of the music, an understanding directly impacted by the perspective of the listener. A listener is exposed to the performer's interpretation of the composer's music and seeks to understand the purpose of the music, an understanding directly impacted by the perspective of the listener.

These definitions were ones I created and derived the vocal text from according to each movement.

Texts:
With curiosity, q = 60

watch cellist

2

look thoughtful

3

look at music, take a deep breath

4

reach into piano

5

look over at pianist

6

look over at vocalist

Threads of the Moment

Composer

Duration: approx. 4:20
Threads of the Moment

- Watch cellist nod
- Pitch up, dip down string
- Watch vocalist for nod
- Shake head
- Pitch bend

Threads of the Moment

- Watch cellist nod
- Pitch up, dip down string
- Watch vocalist for nod
- Shake head
- Pitch bend

Threads of the Moment

- Watch cellist nod
- Pitch up, dip down string
- Watch vocalist for nod
- Shake head
- Pitch bend
Threads of the Moment
Threads of the Moment
Thread of the Moment
Threads of the Moment
Threads of the Moment
Threads of the Moment
Hit strings with mallet, if possible hit two simultaneously
Make awful sounds, squeaks, can be any pitch or lack of pitch
Make disgusted sounds, shake head, then look at cellist
Make disgusted sounds, shake head, then look at cellist
Make disgusted sounds then when others all look at you, nod to cue the next measure
Slowly gliss. and make your voice a brighter tone
Threads of the Moment
With precision

II. Performer
Threads of the Moment
Threads of the Moment
Threads of the Moment
Threads of the Moment

Wait for the sound to fade

use stick of mallet to gliss across strings

B. Cl.
Pno.
Vc.

\[ \sum \]

\[ \sum \]

\[ \sum \]
Threads of the Moment
Threads of the Moment
Threads of the Moment
Threads of the Moment

Sustain (can breath as needed) until all players are sustaining-
release with piano cue for next measure

Use one marble to slide up and down on a single string and cue for piano cue

Release with piano cue and all players are sustaining

Susanin (can breath as needed)
Threads of the Moment
threads of the moment

- RH grab marble
- Gliss. with marble on highest strings moving up and down gradually slowing down the motion

∑ 54

B. Cl. S Pno. Vc.