

MARTIN SCHEUREGGER

Black Swans

for small ensemble

2013

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Composer's Note

A flock of white swans will look all the whiter when a single black swan flies amongst them. This idea of vivid clarity achieved by complete contrast, inspired this piece.

In *Black Swans*, motifs, gestures and sections are juxtaposed for impact and in attempt to achieve a sense of motivic clarity. However, whilst just one black swan is needed to brighten a white flock, here there are many contrasting ideas interacting in a rather schizophrenic way. A successful performance will highlight this sense of erraticism: moments of sudden change should be embraced and, if anything, exaggerated.

The opening section sets the melody of the anonymous fifteenth-century Spanish song 'Al alva venid, buen amigo'. This should be song-like and the piano allowed a high degree of rhythmic and dynamic freedom.

From section B ('snappy'), there should be a sense of rhythmic-drive and absolute precision. The main beats of the bar do not always correspond to the phrases of every instrument, as imitative entries overlap and imply different metric settings. A sense of unified pulse is crucial, but individual metres may appear to arise.

At section D ('desolate'), there should be a sense of great distance as a changing texture develops underneath the flute solo. This distance lessens throughout sections F and G as the melody of the opening returns.

Section I sees the return of the main theme. With an added motif in the strings and left hand of the piano, the sense of contrast should now be made apparent vertically. By section J, the lower instruments have coalesced providing a counterweight to the flickering melodies above. As they develop a more consistent dotted-crotchet pulse, the feeling of two simultaneous metres should be felt.

The bar before section L marks the climax of the section which began at I. The piano takes on a dramatic role, as it musically 'scares away' all the themes and ideas that have flocked behind the initial Spanish melody. From section L, the violin provides the only constant theme: it is the single black swan left flying on its original path, as the other instruments show past themes 'flying' into the distance. The violin should be heard with a degree of stridency above the other instruments. The final piano gesture cuts this theme off not violently, but abruptly and definitely. Although no pause bar is marked, a held silence after this gesture is encouraged.

Martin Scheuregger
York – March 2013

Instrumentation

Flute
Clarinet in B \flat
Violin
Cello
Piano

This piece was written for the ensemble Dark Inventions to be recorded on their debut EP, 'Hinterland', in April 2013.

Duration: ca 7'30"

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With increasing clarity ♩ = 50

Flute

Clarinet in Bb

Violin

Violoncello

Piano

ppp

ppp

IV ^{45^{mo}} (e)

p cantabile, freely

♩ = 50

4

Fl.

Cl.

Vln. 1

Vc.

Pno.

pp < *p*

pp < *p*

p < *mp* < *p*

IV ^{45^{mo}} (e)

p < *pp* < *mf*

mf

poco rit.

A Close ♩ = 108 subito

Musical score for section A, measures 8-17. The score is for Flute (Fl.), Clarinet (Cl.), Violin I (Vln. I), Violoncello (Vc.), and Piano (Pno.). The tempo is marked as ♩ = 108 subito. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The time signature changes from 3/4 to 2/4, then 3/8, then 4/4, and finally 3/4. Dynamics include *p*, *f*, *ff*, and *pp*. The piano part includes a section marked *u.c.* (una corda) starting at measure 15.

B Snappy ♩ = 108

Musical score for section B, measures 18-27. The score is for Flute (Fl.), Clarinet (Cl.), Violin I (Vln. I), Violoncello (Vc.), and Piano (Pno.). The tempo is marked as ♩ = 108. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The time signature changes from 3/4 to 2/4, then 4/4, then 3/4, and finally 2/4. Dynamics include *f*, *p*, *ff*, *fp*, *mf*, *sfz*, and *p*. The piano part includes a section marked *Ped.* (pedal) starting at measure 18.

25

Fl. *f* *f* *fp* *mf* *f*

Cl. *p* *f* *fp* *f* *f* *fp*

Vln. 1 *ff* *p* *mf* *p* *f* *mp* *f*

Vc. *p* *f* *p* *I* (\sharp) *p*

Pno. *ff* *f* *mf* *ff* *mf* *f*

Led. *Led.*

30

Fl. *p* *f* *fp* *f*

Cl. *f* *mp* *f* *p* *ff*

Vln. 1 *p* *fp* *f*

Vc. *ff*

Pno. *mp* *f* *ff* *mf*

C

34

Fl. *p* ————— *ff* *f* ————— *pp*

Cl. *mf* < *f* > *p* *f* ————— *pp*

Vln. 1 *mf* < *f* > *p* *mf* ————— *ff*

Vc. pizz. *f* l.v. *mf* ————— *ff* arco

Pno. *f* *mf* *f* *f* ————— *p*

8^{va}

Ped.

39

Fl. *p* ————— *mf* ————— *ff* ————— *p*

Cl. *p* ————— *mf* < *ff* > ————— *p*

Vln. 1 *mp* ————— *ff* *p* ————— *ff* ————— *p*

Vc. *mp* ————— *ff* *p* ————— *ff* ————— *p* *pizz.* *mf*

Pno. *pp* *p* ————— *f* *f* ————— *mp* *mf* ————— *p*

Ped.

44

Fl. *ppp* *mf* *fp* *ff* *mp*

Cl. *ppp* *ff* *p* *f* *p* *f*

Vln. 1 *mf* *f* *pp* *ff* *pp*

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

Pno. *p* *f* *f* *mp* *mf*

pizz. *arco*

49

Fl. *mf* *ff* *p* *mf* *ff*

Cl. *mf* *ff* *p* *mf* *ff*

Vln. 1 *mf* *ff* *mp* *ff* *mf* *f* *ff*

Vc. *mf* *ff* *mp* *ff* *mf* *ff*

Pno. *ff* *p* *f* *pp* *pp* *mf*

arco *pizz.*

poco rit. **D** Desolate ♩ = 50 subito

Musical score for measures 54-58. The score is for Flute (Fl.), Clarinet (Cl.), Violin I (Vln. 1), Viola (Vc.), and Piano (Pno.).

- Fl.:** Measure 54 has a triplet of eighth notes with a forte (*f*) dynamic. Measures 55-58 are mostly rests, with a *pp* dynamic marking at the end of measure 58.
- Cl.:** Measures 55-58 feature a sustained note with a *pp* dynamic in measure 55, which changes to *mp* in measure 58.
- Vln. 1:** Measures 55-58 are marked *arco* with a *p* dynamic in measure 55 and *mf* in measure 58. A *#e* fingering is indicated.
- Vc.:** Measures 55-58 are marked *arco sul pont.* with a *p* dynamic in measure 55 and *mf* in measure 58. Triplet markings are present.
- Pno.:** Measures 54-58 feature complex textures with dynamics ranging from *f* to *ppp*. Triplet markings and fingering (3, 5, 6, 15^{ma}) are included.

Musical score for measures 59-63. The score is for Flute (Fl.), Clarinet (Cl.), Violin I (Vln. 1), Viola (Vc.), and Piano (Pno.).

- Fl.:** Measures 59-63 feature a melodic line with dynamics *f*, *mf*, and *p*.
- Cl.:** Measures 59-63 feature a melodic line with dynamics *p*, *mf*, *p*, *mp*, *ppp*, *mf*, and *p*.
- Vln. 1:** Measures 59-63 feature a melodic line with dynamics *p*, *mf*, *p*, *pp*, and *mf*. A *#e* fingering and a *III* marking are present.
- Vc.:** Measures 59-63 feature a melodic line with dynamics *p*, *mf*, *p*, and *p*. Triplet markings and fingering (5, 8^{va}) are included.
- Pno.:** Measures 59-63 feature complex textures with dynamics *mp*, *ppp*, *p*, *mf*, *p*, *mf*, and *p*. Triplet markings and fingering (15, 8^{va}) are included.

63 rit. accel.

Fl. *pp* *f* *mf*

Cl. *f* *p* *f* *p*

Vln. 1 *p* *f* *p* *f* *p*

Vc. *f* *p* *f* *pp* *pp* sul pont.

Pno. *pp* *f*

E ♩ = 100 subito

66

Fl. *pp* *ff*

Cl. *ff*

Vln. 1 *pp* *ff* *ff* pizz.

Vc. *ff* *ff* pizz.

Pno. *ff* *f* *mf*

Ped.

F Bright ♩ = 72

Fl. *pp-f > pp* *sfz > p < f* *p* *f* *mf* *p* *f*

Cl. *pp-f > pp*

Vln. 1 *arco* *pp-f > pp* *pp* *pp < mf*

Vc. *arco norm.* *arco* *pp-f > pp* *p* *mf = p*

Pno. *mf < f* *mp < mf* *p < mp*

3 *3* *3*

ped.

G Plaintive ♩ = 72

Fl. *mf* *p* *ppp*

Cl. *pp* *p* *poco* *poco* *poco* *poco* *poco*

Vln. 1 *p* *ppp* *sul pont.*

Vc. *sul pont.* *ppp* *p*

Pno. *pp* *p* *pp* *pp* *p* *(p)*

3 *3* *3* *3* *3* *3*

8va

83

Fl.

Cl.

Vln. 1

Vc.

Pno.

p

pppp

pppp

88

Fl.

Cl.

Vln. 1

Vc.

Pno.

pp

mf

poco rit.

sul pont.

H Hushed (♩ = 72 (♩ = 144))

93

Fl. Cl. Vln. 1 Vc. Pno.

ppp *p*

pizz. *mf* *f* *mf* *f*

mp *p* *mp* *p mp*

℞₂₀

Detailed description: This system covers measures 93 to 97. The Flute and Clarinet parts are mostly rests, with the Clarinet playing a low, sustained note in measures 94 and 95. The Violin 1 part is silent. The Violoncello part features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with triplets, starting in 3/8 time and moving to 4/4 and 5/4. Dynamics range from *mf* to *f*. The Piano part has a complex texture with triplets and chords, with dynamics from *mp* to *p*. The bottom staff shows a figured bass line with a '℞₂₀' marking.

98 (♩ = 108)

Fl. Cl. Vln. 1 Vc. Pno.

f *pp* *ff* *pp* *ff*

pizz. *f* *ff*

mf *f* *mf* *f*

8^{va} 3 3 3

℞₂₀

Detailed description: This system covers measures 98 to 102. The Flute part has a melodic line with a triplet in measure 98 and a dynamic range from *f* to *ff*. The Clarinet part has a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with a dynamic range from *mf* to *ff*. The Violin 1 part has a few notes in measure 98 and then rests, with a dynamic of *f*. The Violoncello part has a few notes in measure 98 and then rests, with a dynamic of *ff*. The Piano part has a complex texture with triplets and chords, with dynamics from *mf* to *f*. The bottom staff shows a figured bass line with a '℞₂₀' marking and an 8^{va} marking.

I With renewed vigour (♩ = 108)

Musical score for measures 104-111. The score is for Flute (Fl.), Clarinet (Cl.), Violin I (Vln. 1), Violoncello (Vc.), and Piano (Pno.). The key signature is B-flat major. The time signature changes from 3/4 to 6/16 and back to 3/4. Dynamics include *f*, *fp*, *ff*, *mf*, *sfz*, *pizz.*, and *arco*. The piano part includes a *Red.* marking.

Musical score for measures 108-115. The score is for Flute (Fl.), Clarinet (Cl.), Violin I (Vln. 1), Violoncello (Vc.), and Piano (Pno.). The key signature is B-flat major. The time signature changes from 3/4 to 4/4 and back to 3/4. Dynamics include *p*, *f*, *mp*, *sfz*, and *ff*. The piano part includes a *Red.* marking.

112 G.P.

Fl. *f*

Cl. *f*

Vln. I *mp* *mf* *p* arco

Vc. *mp* *mf* *ff* *pp* arco

Pno. *pp* *p* *f* *mf* *ff*

117

Fl. *pp* *f* *p* *f*

Cl. *pp* *f* *p* *f*

Vln. I *f* pizz.

Vc. *f* pizz.

Pno. *mp* *pp* *f* *p*

J

121

Fl.

Cl.

Vln. 1

Vc.

Pno.

ff *f* *f* *mp* *f* *mp*

126

Fl.

Cl.

Vln. 1

Vc.

Pno.

ff *ff* *f* *p* *norm.* *norm.* *f* *ff*

norm. *p*

130 **K**

Fl. *p* *mp* *f* *mp* *mf*

Cl. *p* *mp* *f* *mf*
arco
sul pont.

Vln. 1 *sfz* *p* *mp* *ff* *p*
sul pont. pizz. arco
sul pont.

Vc. *sfz* *p* *mp* *f* *p*
sul pont. pizz. arco
sul pont.

Pno. *mp* *f* *mp*
Ped. Ped.

135

Fl. *ff* *p* *mf* *f*

Cl. *ff* *p* *mf* *f* 3

Vln. 1 *f* *p* *f* *mp*

Vc. *f* *p* *f* *sfz* *mp*

Pno. *ff* *p* *f* *mf*
3 3 3 3 *pp* *ff* *mf*
Ped. Ped.

139

Fl. *ff* *rit.*

Cl. *ff*

Vln. 1 *f* *sfz*

Vc. *f* *sfz*

Pno. *f* *ff*

8^{va}

Red.

L Increasingly distant ♩ = 50 subito

142

Fl. *ppp*

Cl. *ppp* *pp*

Vln. 1 *ppp* *p*

Vc. *pizz.* *p* *arco* *pp*

Pno. *pp* *p*

finger damp note (+)

8^{va}

149

Fl.

Cl.

Vln. 1

Vc.

Pno.

p

p

ppp

p

pizz.

arco
(e)
I

152

Fl.

Cl.

Vln. 1

Vc.

Pno.

pp *subtone*

ppp

mf

p

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