

Joseph Klein

Phosphenes

(2021)

modular fanfare for flute choir

To Priscilla Ocran Holt
and the Greater Dallas Youth Orchestra Flute Choir

duration: c. 2'

Symbols

accelerando/ritardando

durational continuum in senza misura sections (shortest to longest)

∅ senza misura

, short break in sound

ff | *mf* sudden dynamic change

play grouping rapidly

jet whistles (with varying pitch and dynamic contours)

tongue ram

Performance Notes

Instrumentation: 2-3 piccolos, 4-8 C flutes, 2-4 alto flutes, 2-4 bass flutes

The score is transposed.

The work is comprised of five discrete and contrasting modules:

- Module A: Ascending flourishes that ripple through flutes, altos, and basses. Players enter in sequence as indicated and may begin either at point [1] or [2]. It is not necessary to align or coordinate the note groupings. Duration of a given iteration may range from one to four measures (i.e., two complete cycles). This module serves primarily as a textural backdrop.
- Module B: Ornamented “birdsong” figures that are intensely focused around a D#/E semitone. While this module is more harmonically static than Module A, the rhythmic energy is similar. Players may begin together either at point [1] or [2]; entrances may also be staggered by 1-2 seconds, either individually or in pairs. It is not necessary to align the parts throughout. Players may end at any point, either together in a clean cut-off or staggered, depending on the musical context. A given iteration may last between one and two complete cycles of the module.
- Module C: An angular chordal line that constitutes the primary fanfare “theme”; this module is always dominant, regardless of which others are playing simultaneously. Fragments of no fewer than three notes from this module may be interjected at any time. Players may begin on any downbeat and continue for up to 14 measures (approximately 25 seconds).
- Module D: High, sweeping gestures that provide coloristic and dynamic support for other modules. These gestures should be used judiciously in order to enhance their effectiveness. Two to six gestures, of varying contours and fundamental tones, may be played in a given iteration.
- Module E: Low, percussive popping figures that punctuate the texture. Similar to Module D, these should be used sporadically, perhaps at climactic points in the piece.

These five modules may be presented in any order, repeated *ad libitum*, and combined in a variety of ways, at the discretion of the performers/director. Performers are encouraged to explore a range of possible combinations, though it is recommended that they should strive for a general increase in density and intensity as the brief work progresses. The work should conclude with all five of the modules sounding simultaneously, in a climactic burst of energy. With a smaller ensemble, it may be necessary for some of the parts to be excluded from Modules A, B, D, and E, or for players to quickly interject gestures from Modules D and E into Modules A and B; however, it is absolutely imperative that all five parts in Module C remain intact at all times. It is also strongly recommended that performers in Module C end the piece on one of the higher and longer chords in the module (marked with an asterisk in the score), which may be reiterated and/or sustained in order to punctuate the conclusion.

Program Note

phos•phene /fäs-fën/ *n.*

A luminous image produced by mechanical stimulation of the retina, as by pressure applied to the eyeball when the lid is closed.

The notion of phosphenes—a kind of private fireworks or light show within the eyes—came to mind when I was commissioned by Priscilla Ochran Holt to compose this short fanfare for the Greater Dallas Youth Orchestra Flute Choir. The unpredictability of these visual stimuli (taking the form of starbursts, swirls, spirals, squiggles, and similar abstract patterns) is also suggested by the modular nature of this work, which is comprised of five discrete and contrasting musical units that may be organized and combined in various ways. The pitch material is based on a non-octave scale generated by a recursively modulating tetrachordal sequence, thus resulting in different key regions within each register of the ensemble.

Phosphenes

modular fanfare for flute choir

A

Exuberant (c.10" per line)

Musical score for section A, titled "Exuberant" with a tempo of approximately 10" per line. It features four staves for different flute parts: FL (Flute), FL (Flute), AFL (Alto Flute), and BFL (Bass Flute). The score is in 2/4 time and consists of two measures. Each measure has two first endings, labeled [1] and [2]. The dynamics range from *mp* (mezzo-piano) to *f* (forte). The music is characterized by rapid sixteenth-note passages and slurs.

B

Restless (c.15" per line)

Musical score for section B, titled "Restless" with a tempo of approximately 15" per line. It features four staves: two for Piccolo (PC) and two for Flute (FL). The score is in 2/4 time and consists of two measures. Each measure has two first endings, labeled [1] and [2]. The dynamics range from *f* (forte) to *mp* (mezzo-piano). The music includes complex rhythmic patterns, slurs, and dynamic markings such as *poco* and *slow* to *fast*. The Piccolo parts feature rapid sixteenth-note passages.

C

Resolute ♩ = 100

The first system of the musical score consists of five staves. From top to bottom, they are labeled PC, FL, FL, AFL, and BFL. Each staff begins with a treble clef and a common time signature. The tempo is marked as 'Resolute' with a quarter note equal to 100 beats per minute. The dynamic marking is 'f marcato'. The PC staff features a melodic line with several notes marked with an asterisk (*). The FL and AFL staves provide harmonic support with chords and moving lines. The BFL staff is a bass line. The system concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

The second system of the musical score continues from the first system, also consisting of five staves labeled PC, FL, FL, AFL, and BFL. It maintains the same tempo and dynamic marking. The melodic line in the PC staff continues, with asterisks marking specific notes. The harmonic parts in the FL, AFL, and BFL staves continue their respective parts. The system ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.

End the work on one of the pitches marked by an asterisk (*), which may be repeated and/or sustained (see prefatory notes for details).

D

Hurling

Fundamental tones
(*ad libitum*)

FL
AFL

[1] > , [2] ^ , [3] ^ ,

sfz *sfz* *ff*

Play jet whistles independently and in any order; 2-4 players at a time.
Avoid playing the same fundamental pitch and pitch contour.

E

Erratic, explosive

AFL

[1] [2]

fz *fz* *fz* *fz* *fz* *fz*

BFL

[1] [2]

fz *fz* *fz* *fz* *fz* *fz*

Tongue rams sound a major 7th lower than written.
1-2 players per part (2-4 total), distributed between sections [1] and [2]. Repeat *ad libitum*.

05/18/21