

Joseph Klein

Die Sternklare
(The Starry Woman)

character study after Elias Canetti

for solo percussionist

(2006)

- for Christopher Deane -

duration : c. 6'

Performance Notes

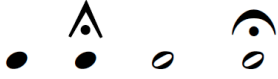
• distinct Break in sound



senza misura



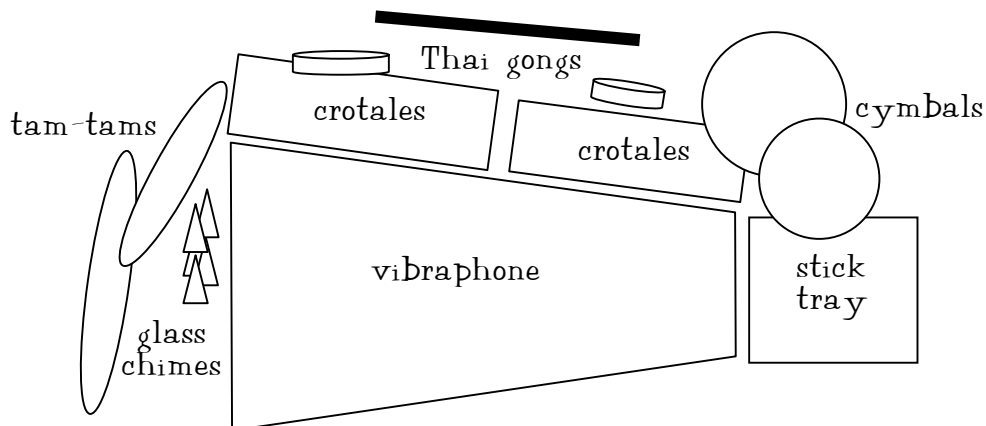
dead stick (*secco*)



Durational continuum within *senza misura* section: values arranged from shortest to longest (precise durations *ad libitum*)

- Accidentals apply only to the notes they immediately precede, with the exception of repeated pitches.
- In mm. 5-16 and 41-52, the Thai gongs and vibraphone should blend as if one instrument, though the former must maintain rhythmic regularity while the latter should flow in a freer and seemingly random manner. The change in intensity in the vibraphone part throughout these sections should be persistent but almost imperceptible.
- In m. 31 and m. 40, the events should seem to emanate from one another, as if a single gesture.
- Durations in the "Suspended" sections (mm. 2, 17, 26, 31, 40, and 54) are approximate, and should allow adequate time for the performer to make any necessary mallet changes.
- Striking implements: soft yarn mallets (3), hard plastic mallets (4), bass bow, metal rod (triangle beater).

Suggested Instrument Setup



Program Note

Die Sternklare (The Starry Woman) is the ninth in a series of short works for solo instrument based upon characters from *Der Ohrenzeuge: Fünfzig Charaktere (Earwitness: Fifty Characters)*, written in 1974 by the Bulgarian-born British-Austrian novelist Elias Canetti (1905-1994). Canetti's distinctive studies incorporate poetic imagery, singular insights, and unabashed wordplay to create fifty ironic paradigms of human behavior. This collection of works, begun in 1997, was inspired by the vividly surreal depictions of Canetti's characters and includes works for contrabass, violin, bass flute, ocarina, contrabassoon, glass harmonica, trumpet, percussion, bass saxophone, piccolo, organ, basset horn, and violoncello, among others. In Canetti's depiction of this character, The Starry Woman "shuns the crude light of the sun. [She] sighs in relief when the sun is gone and she wishes it would never come again... Her skin is as pure as the light of the sun. But she does not realize this in herself. Her only mirror is the illuminated night, and this mirror consists of so many dots that it has no unity."

Die Sternklare was completed in June of 2006 for percussionist Christopher Deane, who first performed the work at the University of North Texas on February 20, 2007.

Die Sternklare

(The Starry Woman)

The starry woman shuns the crude light of the sun. It is indiscreet, it is tactless, it is painfully bright; there is a great deal within, waiting for its moment, but it is ruthlessly yanked forth, spread out, lit up, and heated, until it is no longer to be recognized, just where was it really – in him, in her, in all?

The starry woman sticks to crystals, which cannot be opened. Even the transparent ones among them are certain of their hardness; and if you like to see a thing, you should not have it. The starry woman desires closure, on which weak and tested light falls. It may have found its way to her from the stars, but it knew nothing about her before finding her, and she listened in her reclusion for a long time until it came, and was herself uncertain and dark.

She has peered through a telescope only once in her life. How ashamed she was! She felt as if she were brazenly hurtling towards a star and forcing it to shine brighter than it cared to. She did not forget how lonesome it suddenly was, separated from the others, which gave it its stillness and equilibrium. She had plucked it out from all the heavens; her eye, ordinarily slow and quiet, glared at it, the way the sun glared at her in the daytime, she was afraid the star was destroyed now and lost from the sky. She tore herself away, she cursed the instrument, she did penance in her own way for weeks by making her eyes evade that cursed star. Then, when she dared to seek it again and found it, she was so happy that she purchased the telescope of her shame, smashed it, and scattered the parts and splinters in the night.

The starry woman sighs in relief when the sun is gone and she wishes it would never come again. She spends her days in dark places. She works only to make the days go by. Her skin is as pure as the light of the sun. But she does not realize this in herself. Her only mirror is the illuminated night, and this mirror consists of so many dots that it has no unity. Where can it start? Where can it stop? Can it be so clear without having seen itself?

The starry woman has thoughts, she keeps them to herself, she is afraid of losing them upon uttering them. But they do not freeze within her, they wax and wane, and when they have become so small again as to vanish from her, they awake in others.

– Elias Canetti, *Der Ohrenzeuge: Fünfzig Charaktere*
(translated by Joachim Neugroschel)

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Brazen ♩ = 180

Suspended

CROTALES c. 8"

VIBRAPHONE w/hard plastic (4)

f

sfz

w/bow

n

mf

Ad.

Ethereal ♩ = 40

THAI GONG

mp *sempre*

motor ON (moderately slow)
w/soft yarn (3)

p

(Ad.)

(sempre l.v.)

motor OFF

p *poco cresc. (quasi impercettibile)*

6

(poco cresc.)

(Ad.)

9

(poco cresc.)

(mp)

12

- (poco cresc.) -
 — (Ped.) —>

Suspended

17

GLASS CHIMES

CROTALES w/hard plastic (4)

Brazen ♩ = 180

mp

sfz

f

7/16 3/8 7/16

— (Ped.) —>

20

[Suspended (in tempo)]

sfz

f

7/16 4/4 7/16 9/16 5/16 4/8

Ped. —>

25

Suspended

c. 12"

sfz

w/bow

n —> *mf*

4/8 4/2

Ped. —>

27

Ethereal ♩ = 40

CYMBALS *p* 3

TAM-TAMS
 motor ON (moderately slow)
 w/soft yarn (2)

p

4/2

3 3 3

(Ped.) —>

Suspended

c. 10"
GLASS CHIMES

30 $\text{tr } 3$ $\text{tr } 3$

\emptyset *mp* w/bow motor OFF *n* mf

(*Lead.*)

32 **Brazen** $\text{♩} = 180$ ($\text{♩} = 90$)

w/hard plastic (4)

f *sfz* *sfz* *sfz*

CROTALES

35

sfz *sfz* *sfz*

(*Lead.*)

Suspended

c. 15"

GLASS CHIMES

TAM-TAM w/bow

mp

38

\emptyset *n* mf

(*Lead.*)

Ethereal $\text{♩} = 40$

THAI GONG w/soft yarn (3)

mp *sempre*

40b

CYMBALS w/metal rod on crown

mp *poco* *n* mf

w/bow (*sempre l.v.*)

(*Lead.*)

42

mf *poco dim. (quasi impercettibile)*

(Rit.)

47

(poco dim.) *mp*

(Rit.)

50

(poco dim.)

(Rit.)

53

Suspended
c. 12"
GLASS CHIMES (noticeably slower and gentler rustling than before)

p

(Rit.)

55

c. 5" c. 7" *lunga poss.*

sfz *sfz* *sfz*

w/hard plastic (4)

(Rit.)