

Joseph Klein

Die Tischtuchtolle

(The Tablecloth-lunatic)

character study after Elias Canetti

for solo violin

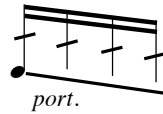
(1997/2010)

duration: c. 5'

Performance Notes



senza misura



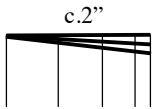
portamento (with measured tremolo)



metered notation: beat units are fixed, measure units fluctuating



allow sound to resonate



accelerando (for the given duration, if indicated)



grace note accelerando



left-hand pizzicato



durational continuum in *senza misura* sections: arranged from shortest to longest (precise durations *ad libitum*).



continuum of rests/breaks 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.
- Each line of music in spatial notation is approximately 20 seconds in duration.
- Broken slurs indicate note groupings while broken ties delineate connections between common tones; in both cases, bowings are not implied, but are *ad libitum* unless otherwise indicated.

Program Note

Die Tischtuchtolle (*The Table-cloth lunatic*) is the twelfth 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, alto saxophone, trumpet, percussion, bass saxophone, guitar, and piccolo, among others. In Canetti's depiction of this character, *The Tablecloth Lunatic* "is dazzling white and breathes in linen. Her fingers are strict, her eyes angular." However, when she happens upon a spot in the linens she obsessively inspects, "she turns dangerous, like a poisonous snake. Now she opens her mouth and shows dreadful fangs. Now she hisses before striking, the tiny spot takes its life into its hands."

Die Tischtuchtolle was composed in October of 1997 and revised in 2010. The work was first performed by violinist Nagina Stoyanova on 17 November 2001 in Sofia, Bulgaria.

Die Tischtuchtolle

(The Tablecloth-lunatic)

The tablecloth-lunatic is dazzling white and breathes in linen. Her fingers are strict, her eyes angular. As far back as she can remember, she has never had a cold, and yet her voice is slightly hoarse. She says she has never had a dream, and people believe her.

Some people come to her to get order. She is irresistible. She says little, but whatever she says has the dogmatic force of an entire church. It is not certain that she prays, she is her own church. When she celebrates the dazzling white, one is plunged into shame for living so long in filth. Compared with her, everything is filth, denials are futile. She opens her angular eyes wide, trains them undimmed on someone, and one senses a radiance from within. It is as though one had all her tablecloths inside, strictly folded, never spread, on a dazzling white heap, forever, forever.

But she is never fully satisfied, for even she finds spots in the dazzlement. One ought to see her when she unexpectedly stops short upon noticing a tiny spot. Now she turns dangerous, like a poisonous snake. Now she opens her mouth and shows dreadful fangs. Now she hisses before striking, the tiny spot takes its life into its hands. At times, it was so frightened of her that it vanished and she hunted it doggedly for hours on end. But at other times it does not vanish. The result is a hurricane. She grabs the dazzling white, she does not grab it alone, she grabs it together with twenty other dazzling whites, where it was stacked and she sets about rewashing the entire lofty pack at once.

At such moments, one is well-advised to leave her in peace, for her fury knows no limits. Anything within reach is also washed. Tables, chairs, beds, people, animals. It is like the Last Judgement. Now nothing finds grace in her angular eyes. Now animals and people have already been washed to death. Now it is like the time before the Creation of all beings. Now light and darkness are separated. Now God is no longer sure of what to do next.

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

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1 Pure
ppp *p*
flautando; senza espress.

2b *n* *pp* *p* *n*

3b *mf* *n* *p* *mp*
ord.; espress. subito
flautando; senza espress.

4b *f* *n* *mf* ord.; espress.

5b *n* *mf* *n* *pp*
flautando; senza espress.

7b poco *p*

7c *mf* *molto*

8 *f* ord.; *espress.* *c. 2.5"* **Furious** ♩ = 100+ *ff* (al tallone)

10

12b

15

17

19b *port.*

21

23b

26

28

31

fff feroce

Calm, fragile $\text{♩} = 25$

32

sfz

p

molto

(sim.)

33b

33c

mp

n