

Joseph Klein

Der Tränenwärmer

(The Tear-warmer)

character study after Elias Canetti

for solo viola

(2020)

- for Michael Capone -

duration: c. 6'30"

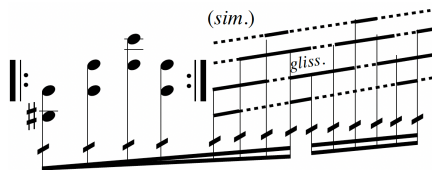
Performance Notes



accelerando/ritardando (number of beams indicates relative speed)



durational continuum (shortest to longest)



repeat previous pattern with continuous glissando and accelerando across multiple strings



senza misura

$p\pm$

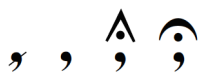
fluctuate around given dynamic (*ad libitum*)



fermata continuum (shortest to longest)

$f|mp$

subito dynamic change



rest/break continuum (shortest to longest)



quarter-tone high



slow pitch bend/glissando



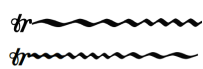
quarter-tone low



exaggerated vibrato: accelerating/decelerating



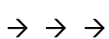
overpressure (scratch tone), downbow/upbow



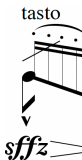
accelerating/decelerating trill/tremolo



highest pitches possible (double-stop)



gradual change from one mode of play to another



throw bow against string, sul tasto with glissando, to produce aggressive "crunch" sound with diffuse pitch content.

tasto \pm

fluctuate varying degrees of sul tasto (*ad libitum*)

Accidentals apply only to the notes they immediately precede, with the exception of repeated pitches.

It is important to adhere to the timings indicated in each section to achieve the proper pacing of the music: the Distressed and Furious sections are approximately 12-13 seconds per line; the Lachrymose sections are approximately 15-17 seconds per line; and the Joyful section is approximately 10 seconds per line.

The Lachrymose sections are characterized by exaggerated vibrato and sagging pitches. The Distressed sections are a more introspective extension of the Lachrymose sections, and should be interpreted as a kind of fretful muttering. The Joyful and Furious sections are brief departures from the general tone of the piece, providing sharp contrasts to the other sections. Physical gestures in the Furious section should be exaggerated, in order to intensify the agitated character of the material.

Program Note

Der Tränenwärmer (*The Tear-warmer*) is the nineteenth 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, piccolo, organ, basset horn, and violoncello, among others. In Canetti's depiction of this character, "the tear-warmer goes to movies every day.... all that counts is that they fulfill their purpose and elicit tears galore from him.... there were times when he was dependent on his own misfortune.... He tried any number of things, he even tried joys... [though] tears of joy do not go very far.... Nor do fury and anger prove to be any more productive. There is only one cause to be counted on: losses, whereby the irrevocable kind are preferable to all the rest, especially when happening to people who do not deserve them."

Der Tränenwärmer was composed in May 2020 for violist Michael Capone, who first performed the work on 20 February 2023 at the University of North Texas.

Der Tränenwärmer

(The Tear-warmer)

The tear-warmer goes to the movies every day. It doesn't have to be something new, he is also drawn to old films, all that counts is that they fulfill their purpose and elicit tears galore from him. You sit in the darkness, unseen by others, and wait for fulfillment. The world is cold and heartless, and a man wouldn't care to live without feeling the warm wetness on his cheeks. As soon as the tears begin to pour, you feel good, you are very still and you don't move a muscle, you wouldn't dream of wiping anything away with your handkerchief, each tear has to bestow its warmth down to the very lees, and whether it gets to the mouth or the chin, or whether it actually succeeds in running over the throat all the way down to the chest—he accepts it with thankful restraint and gets up again only after a good bath.

The tear-warmer was not always so well off, there were times when he was dependent on his own misfortune, and if it didn't come and kept him waiting, he often felt as if he were to freeze to death. He twisted about in life uncertainly, towards a loss, a hurt, and inconsolable grief. But people do not always die when you want to be sad, most of them have their tenacious lives and they balk. At times, he was all set for a moving experience, his limbs were already beginning to let go pleasantly. But then—he thought he was right on the verge—then nothing happened, he had wasted too much time, and he had to look around for a new opportunity, and start all over again with his expectation.

It took the tear-warmer many disappointments to realize that no man has enough unhappiness in his own life to get his money's worth. He tried any number of things, he even tried joys. But anyone at all versed in that area knows that tears of joy do not go very far. Even if they fill up the eyes, as sometimes happens—they do not really get flowing, and as for the permanence of their effect, it is a rather lamentable affair. Nor do fury and anger prove to be any more productive. There is only one cause to be counted on: losses, whereby the irrevocable kind are preferable to all the rest, especially when happening to people who do not deserve them.

The tear-warmer has a long apprenticeship behind him, but now he is a past master. Anything not granted to him he gets from others. If these people do not concern him at all, strange remote, beautiful, innocent, great, the effect increases ad infinitum. He himself, however, suffers no damage, he leaves the movie house and calmly goes home. Here, everything is as usual, he is not concerned about anything, and the next day will bring him no worries.

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

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Distressed

tasto ±
III
II
p ± (ad libitum)

2
f molto espress.

4
→ → → pont. (ord.)
mp *mf* *poco* *mf* *pp* *pp* *molto* *f*
→ → → → *tasto* ; (ord.)

6
mp *poco* *pp* *molto* *f* *mf* *mp* *mf*
→ → → → pont. (ord.)

9
f *mp* *mf* *poco* *pp* *molto* *f* *mp*
→ → → *tasto* ; (ord.) (ord.)

12
mf *mp* *poco* *f* sub. *mp* *mf* *poco* *pp* *molto* *f*
→ → → pont. (ord.)

14
mp *f* *n* *mp* *mf* *poco*
→ → → → *tasto* ; (ord.) *tr* pont. → → → ord.

16
mp *poco* *fmp* sub. *f* *f* *mf* *exuberant* *ff* *poco*
Joyful
tr

18 *f* *poco* *f* *poco* *f* *poco* *mf* *f* *mp* *f* *mf* *ff* *poco*

19 *f* *f* *mp* *f* *poco* *f* *f*

20 *f* *sub.* *f* *mp* *f* *mp* *f* *poco* *ff*

Lachrymose

21 *mf* *p* *mf* *sub.* *mp* *f* *n* *pp* *molto* *f*

→ → → *tasto* (ord.) → → → *pont.* → → → *tasto* ;

5" (ord.) V

Distressed

23 *mf* *p* ± (ad libitum)

→ → → → *tasto* ± V

Lachrymose

25 *f* *mp* *poco*

→ → → → *ord.*

molto espress.

27 *p* *mf* *mp* *mf* *n* *p* *mf*

→ → → → *pont.* (ord.) 5" → → → → *tasto* ; (ord.)

29 *mf* *sub.* *mp* *f* *sub.* *poco* *mp* *p* *sub.* *mf* *molto* *ff*

→ → → → *pont.* (ord.) V

Furious

30 *ff* *tasto* (ord.) *ff f* *ff f* *ff f* *sffz* *f* *ff* *gliss.* *ff*

*Exaggerate physical gestures accordingly throughout this section.

31 *f* *ff* *f* *ff* *f* *ff* *f* *ff* *f* *ff* *f* *ff* *f* *ff* *sffz*

Lachrymose

(ord.) 32 *mp* *mf* *pp* *ff sub.* *mp sub.* *mf* *pp* *f* *molto*

tasto *pont.*

34 *mp* *f* *mf sub.* *mp* *f* *mf* *pp*

tasto

35 *p* *mf* *mp* *pp* *molto* *f* *mp* *mf* *p*

pont. *tasto*

Distressed

(ord.) 38 *mf* *poco* *p± (ad libitum)*

tasto± *IV* *III*

40

41 *poco*