

Joseph Klein

Der Wasserhehler

(The Water-harbinger)

character study after Elias Canetti



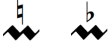
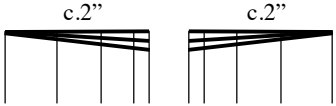

for solo ocarina

(1997/2000)

- for Helen Bledsoe -

duration: c. 4'

Performance Notes

	<i>senza misura</i>	, ,	pause/breath (very short/short)
	portamento between pitches indicated, by sliding finger(s) across hole(s)	T	stop tone abruptly with tongue
	inverted mordent (rapid alternation with half-step above)	+	covered or muffled tone
→ → →	gradual change from one mode of play to another	↑ ↓	highest pitch possible (overblow)
	accelerando/ritardando within the duration indicated		
	durational continuum within <i>senza misura</i> section: values arranged from shortest to longest (precise durations <i>ad libitum</i>).		
<i>n.v.</i> <i>s.v.</i> <i>o.v.</i> <i>f.v.</i>	vibrato continuum: no vibrato; slow vibrato; ordinary vibrato; fast vibrato.		

- The part is notated in concert pitch for ocarina in G.
- Accidentals apply only to the notes they immediately precede, with the exception of repeated notes.
- Each line of music is approximately 15 seconds in duration.
- Although not notated, it is assumed that pitches will be microtonally inflected in conjunction with the indicated dynamics: thus, passages marked piano or mezzo-piano will normally sound as written, while those marked pianissimo will sound slightly lower and those marked mezzo-forte will sound slightly higher; a crescendo will be accompanied by a corresponding rise in pitch, while a diminuendo will be accompanied by a corresponding fall in pitch.

Program Note

Der Wasserhehler (The Water-harbinger) is the third 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 Water-harbinger

"lives in fear that he is bound to die of thirst and so he collects water... He goes to his neighbor and asks for some water... [and] thereby spares his own faucet, which shares his sensitivity and closes before it is too late."

Der Wasserhehler was composed in July of 1997 and revised in September of 2000 for Helen Bledsoe, who first performed the work on 14 November 2000 in Sofia, Bulgaria.

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Der Wasserhehler

(The Water-harbinger)

The water-harbinger lives in fear that he is bound to die of thirst and so he collects water. His wine cellar looks well-stocked, but it is no wine cellar, all the bottles are filled with water, sealed by him personally, and arranged by year.

The water-harbinger is racked by the waste of water. That's how it started on the moon. "Water? Why save water? We've got enough from here to eternity!" So they left the faucets half-open, they kept dripping, people took a bath every day. That was a frivolous breed up there. And what became of them? When the first reports of the moon arrived, the water-harbinger was beside himself with excitement. He had always known it was because of the water, the men on the moon died out because of the way they wasted water. He had said so everywhere, and people laughed and thought he was crazy. But now, now they had been up there, and they could see in black and white, even in color. Not a drop of water and no human being anywhere! It was not hard putting two and two together.

The water-harbinger saves early. He goes to neighbors and asks for some water. They are glad to oblige, he comes again. He thereby spares his own faucet, which shares his sensitivity and closes up before it is too late. Anything they give him he puts in a safe place, not a single drop is lost en route. The bottles are lying ready in the kitchen, the labels with the year written on them, the wax for sealing. Actually, this is no longer a kitchen, you would have to call it a water studio. He already has fine reserves, and if worst comes to worst, he and his family could manage for a while. But he doesn't speak about it, he's afraid of burglars, and feels it is wiser to keep silent about his rich cellar.

The water-harbinger cries when it rains. Today was the Last Time, he whispers, we will remember this day for a long time. It does rain again, but he, a counter of drops, knows that there is less rain each time, soon it will stop altogether, the children will ask: What was rain like; and adults will have a hard time explaining it to them in the prevailing drought.

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

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(1997/2000)

Obsessive

The musical score consists of five staves of music in treble clef, starting with a common time signature (C). The notation includes various dynamics, articulation marks, and performance instructions.

Staff 1: Starts with a whole note on G4, marked *o.v.* and *p*. This is followed by a sequence of notes: a quarter note on A4, a quarter note on B4, a quarter note on C5, and a quarter note on B4. Above the first three notes are arrows pointing right, labeled *s.v.*, *f.v.*, and *s.v.* respectively. The final note is marked *n.v.*. The staff concludes with a quarter note on A4, marked *o.v.* and *n.v.*. Dynamics include *p*, *p*, and *mp*.

Staff 2: Starts with a quarter note on G4, marked *ft.* and *mf sub.*. This is followed by a quarter note on A4, marked *pp*, and a quarter note on B4, marked *mp*. Above the A4 note is a plus sign and a dashed line. Above the B4 note is a plus sign. This is followed by a quarter note on G4, marked *sf p*, and a quarter note on F4, marked *mf sub.*. Above the F4 note is a plus sign. The staff concludes with a quarter note on G4, marked *sf p* and *o.v.*. Dynamics include *mf sub.*, *pp*, *mp*, *sf p*, *mf sub.*, and *sf p*. A crescendo hairpin is shown below the staff, and a marking *c. 2.5"* is placed above the final note.

Staff 3: Starts with a quarter note on G4, marked *sf mp*. This is followed by a quarter note on A4, marked *pp*, and a quarter note on B4, marked *p*. Above the A4 note is a plus sign. This is followed by a quarter note on G4, marked *n.v.*, and a quarter note on F4, marked *o.v.*. Above the F4 note are arrows pointing right, labeled *o.v.*. Dynamics include *sf mp*, *pp*, *p*, *n.v.*, and *mp*.

Staff 4: Starts with a quarter note on G4, marked *mp*. This is followed by a quarter note on A4, marked *n*. Above the A4 note is a plus sign. This is followed by a quarter note on B4, marked *p*, and a quarter note on C5, marked *mp*. Above the B4 note is a plus sign. The staff concludes with a quarter note on B4, marked *p*. Dynamics include *mp*, *n*, *p*, *mp*, and *p*. A marking *c. 2"* is placed above the B4 note.

Staff 5: Starts with a quarter note on G4, marked *o.v.* and *mp poco*. This is followed by a quarter note on A4, marked *mp*, and a quarter note on B4, marked *mp*. Above the A4 note is a plus sign. This is followed by a quarter note on G4, marked *n*. Above the G4 note is a plus sign. The staff concludes with a quarter note on A4, marked *n.v.* and *pp*, and a quarter note on B4, marked *o.v.* and *p poco*. Dynamics include *mp poco*, *mp*, *mp*, *n*, *pp*, and *p poco*.

6 *ft.*
mf sub. *mp* *p sub.* *c. 2.5"* *sf mp* *p* *mp sub.*
s.v. → → → *f.v.* → → → *s.v.* *o.v.*

7 *mp* *n* *mp* *sf p* *s.v.* → → →

8 *f.v. mf* *o.v. mp* *sf mp* *poco* *f.v.* *n.v. p sub.*

9 *c. 2"* *o.v. mp* *mp* *n* *mp* *s.v.* *o.v.* *mp poco*

10 *n.v. pp sub.* *o.v. mp sub.* *n* *mp* *mp poco*

11 *n.v. pp sub.* *o.v. p* *pp mp* *ft. mf sub.* *o.v. mp* *mp* *p* *n.v. pp*

becoming increasingly urgent...

12 *o.v.* *sfp* *s.v.* *mp* *f.v.* *n.v.* *o.v.* *p sub.* *mp* *mf*

13 *f.v.* *o.v.* *mp* *sf* *mf* *sf* *mf* *n.v.* *p sub.*

14 *o.v.* *sf* *mp* *mf* *f.v.* *mp* *mf* *o.v.* *p* *c. 2"* *c. 2"*

Frantic

15 *tr* *mp* *mf* *poco* *mf* *poco* *f.v.* *o.v.* *p sub.* *molto*

16 *tr* *mf* *sf* *sf* *mp sub.* *mf* *f.v.* *o.v.* *sf*

17 *tr* *mf* *poco* *mf* *sf* *mp* *f* *sffz* *molto*

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