

Joseph Klein

Der Blinde

(The Blind Man)

character study after Elias Canetti

for solo toy piano
(with auxiliary toy instruments)

(2026)

- for Eunmi Ko -

duration: c. 5'

Performance Notes


 durational continuum in *senza misura* sections (shortest to longest)


 rest/break continuum (shortest to longest)


 repeat material within the repeat brackets for the duration of the line; do not coordinate alignment between the two hands.


 allow repeated material to disintegrate at the end of the passage.


senza misura


 toy ratchet: 2 rapid rotations (twirls)


 cricket clicker: depress/release metal tongue

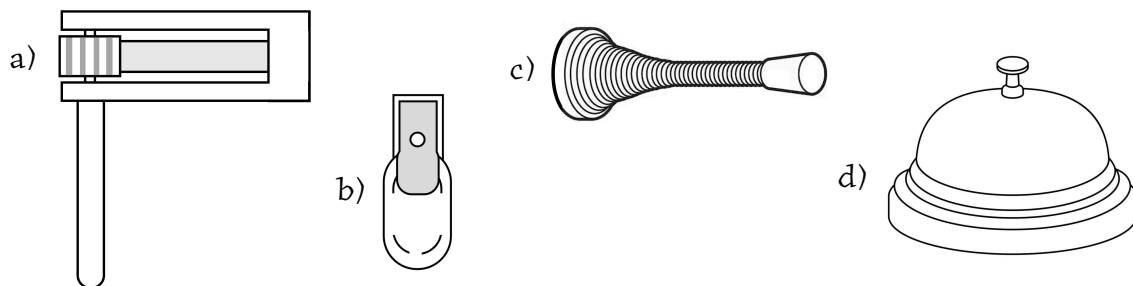

 toy ratchet: a single quick twist with the wrist


laissez vibrer

Ideally, this work should be played on an instrument with a sounding range of F3 to C7; however, it may be played on a smaller instrument if necessary. The written range in the score is from C4 to F5 (notated using *ottava* clefs), with *ossia* indications for passages that should be played an octave higher or lower than written on instruments that can accommodate them.

In addition to the toy piano, the work requires the following auxiliary instruments:

- toy ratchet (wooden or plastic), which can be spun using one hand.
- metal “cricket” clicker toy.
- spring doorstop, mounted upright on a board and “plucked” with the left hand); the resulting vibration should last 2 to 3 seconds when activated.
- desk bell.



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

As an aid to the performer, changing pitches in rapidly repeated cluster chords are indicated with open noteheads.

In the Somnolent sections, the average duration of each measure is approximately 5 seconds, though these should slightly vary in duration to avoid a sense of temporal regularity.

The Ambling section (mm. 44-46) should be played at approximately 12 to 15 seconds per system. The hands should seem to move independently throughout this section and the end of each phrase must be sustained through the start of the next phrase so that each line sounds continuous.

In the mobile passages in mm. 46 and 69, the hands should play independently: the rhythms in m. 69 should be played evenly, though the hands are not to align with one another during the ritardando. The composite ritardando in this passage should be rather extreme, like a music box completely winding down, In m. 46, the rhythms should be irregular, continuing freely in the same manner as the previous section, allowing the two patterns to phase with one another. In this section, the ritardando is more subtle and less extreme than the one in m. 69.

It should be noted that the rhythmic subdivisions in mm. 47-64 (i.e., quintuplets and septuplets at $\text{♩} = 96$) produce the same resultant “tempo” relationships as those in previous sections of the work (i.e., $\text{♩} = 120$ and $\text{♩} = 84$).

Program Note

Der Blinde (*The Blind Man*) is the twenty-sixth 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, begun in 1997, was inspired by the vividly surreal depictions of Canetti's characters, and comprises twenty-four solo works to date—composed for familiar instruments such as violin, guitar, piano, and trombone, as well as less common instruments such as ocarina, cimbalom, glass harmonica, and carillon. 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 blind man "has a camera, he takes it everywhere, and he just loves keeping his eyes closed.... He travels all over the world for the sake of his camera... [and] does not believe anything that was not shot... if he could not point at it he would not know where he had been, the world is confusing, exotic, and rich, who can retain it all?"

Der Blinde was composed in July-August of 2026 for pianist Eunmi Ko, who first performed the work on 18 September 2026 at Suite E Studios in St. Petersburg, Florida.

Der Blinde

(The Blind Man)

The blind man is not blind by birth, but he became blind with little effort. He has a camera, he takes it everywhere, and he just loves keeping his eyes closed. He walks about as though asleep, he has seen absolutely nothing as yet, and already he is shooting it, for when all things lie next to one another, equally small, equally large, always rectangular, orderly, cut off, named, numbered, proven, and demonstrated, then you can see them much better in any event.

The blind man saves himself the trouble of viewing anything beforehand. He gathers the things he would have seen and piles them up and enjoys them as though they were stamps. He travels all over the world for the sake of his camera, nothing is far enough, shiny enough, strange enough—he gets it for the camera. He says I was there, and he points to it, and if he could not point at it, he would not know where he had been, the world is confusing, exotic, and rich, who can retain it all?

The blind man does not believe anything that was not shot. People chatter and boast and talk through their hats, his motto is: Get out the photos! Then you know what a man has really seen, then you can calmly open your eyes instead of senselessly squandering them beforehand. Everything in life has its season, too much is too much, save your eyesight for photos.

The blind man loves to project enlargements of his photos on the wall and treat his friends to the show. Such a festival lasts two or three hours, silence, explanations, indications, interpretations, advice, humor. The jubilation when something has been inserted upside down, the *savoir-faire* when you realize that something is being shown for the second time! There is no saying how good a man feels when the shots are big and the show goes on long enough. At last the reward for the unswerving blindness of a whole trip. Open up, open up, you eyes, now you may see, now it's time, now you've been there, now you have to prove it.

The blind man is sorry that other people can also prove it, but he proves it better.

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

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for solo toy piano
(with auxilliary toy instruments)

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Jubilant (♩ = 84)

Auxiliary
Instruments

Toy Piano

Somnolent (c.5" per measure)

Excitable (♩ = 96)

Clicker

18

8 16 7 16 3 16 7 16 4 16 7 16

23

Desk Bell

mf 3

Somnolent (c.5" per measure)

8^{va}

7 16 8 16 2/4

Ø *p fragile*

28

Mechanical (♩ = 60)

Ratchet

8^{va}

5/4 *ff* 2/4 3/4

(loco)

31

Frenetic (♩ = 120)

Desk Bell

mf 3

8^{va}

3/4 5/16 3/4 7/16 5/16

f

35 *8va* -

5/16 3/4 5/16 Ø

39 Doorstop *fz* *f* **Somnolent** (c.5" per measure)

p fragile *8vb* -

44 **Ambling** (12-15" per system) *mp*

(8vb) -

45

(8vb) -

46 12-15" *poco rit.* **Excitable** (♩ = 96) *(loco)* *f* Clicker ↓ ↑

5/16 *(8vb)* -

Rhythms *ad libitum*; allow patterns to phase with one another.

49

Doorstop

fz

54 **Frenetic** (*l'istesso*)

fz

8^{va} 5 5:4

f

57 **Mechanical** (*l'istesso*)

Ratchet

2

2

2

5:4

5:4

11 16

ff

59 **Excitable** (*l'istesso*)

Clicker

f

3 16

7 16

3 4

63 Doorstop

fz

Obsessive (l'istesso) ← $\frac{7}{8} = \frac{1}{2} \rightarrow (\text{♩} = 84)$

7:8

ff

7:8

8^{vb}

66

dim.

mp

3/4

8^{vb}

c. 20"

69

rit. - - - - - (*molto rit.*) - - - - -

dim. - - - - - *pp*

8^{vb}

(RH and LH ritard independently)

disintegrating...

70 **Somnolent** (c.5" per measure)

p fragile

mp delicate

Desk Bell

(loco)

09/21/26