

PIERCE GRADONE

AUTOMATON

for bass clarinet

JAMESCREST MUSIC

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PERFORMANCE NOTES



half-breath



key click



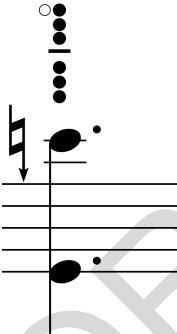
flutter tongue



unit of time in seconds



multiphonic index number from Sparnaay's *The Bass Clarinet Book: A Personal History*



fingering

multiphonic showing highest and lowest pitches



unmeasured sustained pitch

PROGRAM NOTES

In *Bach and the Meaning of Counterpoint*, David Yearsley recounts the incredible tale of Pierre Demoulin's automata. The three automatons - a flutist, a drummer and a duck(!) - were unveiled to astonished Frankfurters in 1746, who were fascinated - and in some cases, deeply troubled - by their realism and functionality (the duck's most acclaimed feature was its apparent digestive system). The flutist, however, captured the imaginations of the German intelligentsia - especially the great flute virtuoso Joachim Quantz - with its astonishing technical ability. Yearsley, quoting Quantz, writes:

"With skill a musical machine could be constructed that would play certain pieces with a quickness and exactitude so remarkable that no human being could equal it....but it would never move you."

Quantz's musical prophecy was fulfilled just over two centuries later with the development of computer music in the 1940s and 1950s. With the possibility of a perfect, impossibly accurate realization of a given work, performers were now cast as an imperfect shadow of now quite visible Platonic form of technical virtuosity. In this new reality, musicians bore a new burden - they were now subject to the autocratic rule of technical perfection, machine-like accuracy.

Automaton is a dramatization of this burden - a kind of passion play for the contemporary musician in which heartless, unrelenting machines roar, then slowly crumble as a distinctly human voice emerges from the ruins. The opening measures of the work are a theatre of impossibility: is the clarinetist breathing? can any other sound be heard above the loud mechanical percussion of the bass clarinet's large and cumbersome keys? And in the end: is that the sound of a human voice, or just a convincing reproduction?

for Katie Schoepflin
AUTOMATON

for solo bass clarinet

PIERCE GRADONE
(2015)

Very steady, rigidly in tempo (♩ = 56)

do not accent downbeats or any divisions of the beat

1
Musical notation for measures 1-3. Time signatures: 2/4, 6/16, 2/4, 6/16.

ppppp as quiet as possible, barely audible

4
Musical notation for measures 4-6. Time signatures: 6/16, 9/16, 2/4, 9/16.

7
Musical notation for measures 7-9. Time signatures: 9/16, 2/4, 9/16.

10
Musical notation for measures 10-12. Includes performance instructions: "gradually remove breath --> key clicks" and "gradually add breath --> normal sound production".

13
Musical notation for measures 13-15. Includes performance instructions: "gradually remove breath" and "gradually add breath". Dynamic markings: *p*, *ppp ethereal*, *p*, *pppp*. Includes fingering 5 and breath marks 2" and 3".

19
Musical notation for measures 19-21. Dynamic markings: *pp*, *pppp*, *pp*, *pppp*.

22
Musical notation for measures 22-23. Includes performance instruction: "gradually remove breath -----> key clicks". Dynamic markings: *p*, *ppp*.

24
Musical notation for measures 24-28. Includes performance instructions: "gradually remove breath" and "gradually add breath". Dynamic markings: *p*, *mf*, *pp*, *p*. Includes fingering 3 and breath marks 2", 41, 44.

29
Musical notation for measures 29-33. Includes performance instruction: "gradually add breath". Dynamic marking: *mf*. Includes fingering 3, 7, 7, 6, 6, 5. Ends with "G.P." and a repeat sign.

33

sfz ppp *pp*

36

pp ppp *pp*

39

pppp *pp* *pppp* *p* *ppp* *mf* *pp* *mp*

42

ppp mp pp *sfz* *mf*

remove breath --> key clicks
gradually add breath - - - - -> normal sound production

45

pp *mp*

52

f *f*

57

p *f* *flz.* *p* *f*

62

p *f* *ppp*

gradually remove breath - - - - -> key clicks

67 *sfz ppp* *sfz ppp* *sfz ppp*

69 *sfz ppp* *sfz ppp* *sfz ppp* *f* *pp* *f* *pp*

73 *mf* *pp* *mf*

75 *ppp* *f* *p* *mf*

78 *mp* *ppp* *mp* *ppp* *mp* *ppp* *mp* *ppp* *mp* *ppp* *mp* *ppp* *f*

81 *f* *pp* *f* *pp* *f* *pp* *f* *pp* *f* *pp* *f* *pp* *f* *pp* *f* *pp* *f*

83 *mp* *ppp* *mp* *ppp* *mp* *ppp* *mp* *ppp* *mp* *ppp* *mp* *ppp* *mp* *ppp* *mp* *ppp*

85 *f* *f* *pp* *f* *pp* *f* *pp* *f* *pp* *f* *pp* *f* *pp* *f* *pp* *f* *pp* *f* *p*

88 *mf* *mp* *p* *pp*

Faster (♩ = 64)

47 48

90 91 92

pp *mf* *f* *pp* *f*

93

95

98

use three different fingerings, alternate fingerings should waver in pitch

101

p *f* *p*

gradually remove breath, continue alternating fingerings with key clicks

104

f *p*

inhale through instrument

108

p *mp* *p*

110

p *mp* *mf* *p* *sfz* *p*

112

ad lib fingerings

ad lib fingerings

ad lib fingerings

sfz

sfz

sfz

114

articulate each note
continue alternating fingerings

f

117

use three different fingerings, alternate
fingerings should waver in pitch

articulate each note
continue alternating fingerings

f *ff* *subito p* *pp*

120

fp *f* *p* *f*

flz.

123

p *f* *p* *fp* *f* *p* *f*

flz.

127

f *sfz* *sfz* *sfz* *sfz*

G.P.

131 *p* with growing urgency *mf* *p* *mf* *p*

134 *mf* *p* *f* *p* *mf* *p* *f* *p* *f*

137 *p* *f* *p* *f* *f* *mp* *f*

141 *sfz pp* *f* *sfz*

144 *sfz* *sfz* *sfz*

146

150 *mf* *p*

40 *Rubato* (♩ = 60)

156 *p* solemn, like a sacred chorale

Musical score for three staves. Staff 162 starts with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). It features various time signatures: 3/4, 2/4, 3/4, 2/4, 4/4, 3/4, 2/4, 3/4, 2/4. Staff 170 starts with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). Time signatures include 3/4, 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 3/4, 4/4, 3/4, 5/4. Staff 178 starts with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). Time signatures include 5/4, 4/4, 3/4, 4/4, 3/4, 2/4. Dynamic markings include *mf*, *pp*, and *pp* with a hairpin. Fingerings and breath marks are indicated above the notes.

Extremely free, senza tempo
numerals in this section refer to the length of the bar in seconds

Musical score for Bass Clarinet and Voice (transposed). The Bass Clarinet part starts at measure 185. Numerical bar lengths are 5, 2, 12, 2, 12. Performance instructions include "single breath", "*pp* simple, childlike", "hum through nasal cavity", and "*pp*". The Voice part consists of whole notes corresponding to the Bass Clarinet part.

*open noteheads (half-note) may vary in length, though solid noteheads should be noticeably shorter.
Whole notes should be considerably longer. Overall, the effect should be that of a free, improvisatory chant.

Musical score for Bass Clarinet and Voice. The Bass Clarinet part starts at measure 185. Numerical bar lengths are 3, 14, 2, 16, 2. Performance instructions include "single breath", "take very deep breath", and "*pp*". The Voice part consists of whole notes corresponding to the Bass Clarinet part.

Musical score for Bass Clarinet and Voice. The Bass Clarinet part starts at measure 185. Numerical bar lengths are 8, 4, 6, 3, 8, 4, 12, 5. Performance instructions include "single breath" and "*ppp*". The Voice part consists of whole notes corresponding to the Bass Clarinet part.