

Opportunity by David Schumacher

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Reed 1: alto/soprano
Reed 2: alto/clnt
Reed 3: tenor/clnt*
Reed 4: tenor/clnt
Reed 5: bari/bclnt

Tpt 1: cup
Tpt 2: cup
Tpt 3: harm
Tpt 4: harm

Tbn 1: cup
Tbn 2: cup
Tbn 3: cup
Tbn 4:

Guitar*
Vibes
Piano (synth)
Bass
Drums

“Out of clutter, find simplicity. From discord, find harmony. In the middle of difficulty, lies opportunity.” It was the last of Einstein’s three rules of work that inspired this piece. In a time when I struggled to find sanity amidst a cacophony of nursery rhymes and kiddie songs incessantly serenading my then toddler, I needed a musical exorcism of sorts. I embraced the very melodies that were preventing me from hearing my own, and employed them as a demented thread throughout the piece. It was a way to cleanse my creative mind and purge the relentless tunes from my ears.

Opportunity evolves from a single pitch, weaving timbres through a rhythmic ostinato over which the melody floats. As the harmonic language builds in complexity, the reed 3 solo emerges and falls into a tormented mixed meter ostinato that launches the piece into its final section. The minimalist-inspired rhythmic interplay evolves through a series of metric modulations that culminate in a screaming guitar solo over a thrashing drum & bass groove. Multiple nursery rhymes are layered into the texture, and the cacophony fades away to reveal the underlying beauty and serenity that was present all along; a reminder that these qualities can be found even in the most trying of circumstances.

Conductor notes: The metric modulations can be tricky. Be sure to isolate each one ahead of time so your players can anticipate the transitions. Synth is great if you have it, but piano will work throughout if necessary. The bass instruments have the melody throughout much of the first half of the piece working slowly against the rhythmic texture above. The reed 3 and rhythm section players should open up and have fun with section L. The guitar solo over the drum & bass groove beginning at section N should be as intense as possible. Layer the available rhymes carefully in section 1 so as to maintain intensity, but avoid over-taxing the brass players. Allow them rest as needed to get through section 4 which should be conducted. Section 2 should build as much tempo as the rhythm section can sustain through section 3 before breaking down during section 4. There is no perfect way to navigate the final numbered sections. It should be a spontaneous reaction to the energy built in the guitar solo and the stamina of your ensemble players.

Many other works of various style, instrumentation, and level of difficulty are available from this composer. Commissions for new works, orders for existing works, and information about guest artist residencies should be directed to David Schumacher at www.DavidSchumacher.com

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