

Pale Moon by David Schumacher.

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- 1 Eb Piccolo Clarinet
- 4 Bb Soprano Clarinets
- 1 Eb Alto Clarinet
- 1 Bb Bass Clarinet
- 1 Eb Contrabass Clarinet

Pale Moon was inspired by a phone call I received from my good friend David Rosin in late January of 2006. The piece presents several layers of material that gradually compound and conflict with each other before culminating in the soaring harmonic structures that form the climax of the work. The layers reflect the pain, anger, fear, and hope one feels in times of unexpected loss or betrayal. Melodic material for the piece is derived from the opening phrase of the jazz standard *The Nearness of You*, specifically incorporating the minor 3rd melody line that accompanies the lyrics "pale moon".

Performance Instructions

The opening should feel distant, stark, and bleak with time for reflection between phrases. The *rubato* marking should allow the melody to feel like it is searching for answers that are not there. At measure 10, a theme of hope enters and pervades the balance of the piece alternating with the searching and reflective opening theme. Despite the chaos that ensues, this melody of hope should remain doggedly in character.

The contrabass enters, at first, deceptively supportive, but immediately becoming spiteful and disruptive to the other themes. As this theme develops, the contrabass player should instill anxiety by becoming increasingly aggressive with the written accents and by slightly anticipating each note.

The alto clarinet enters at measure 34 with the anger theme. This part should be deliberate and driving with special attention paid to the written accents. Until measure 43 the quintuplets need not line up exactly with any other part. So long as the spirit of the written rhythm is intact, the part will be successful.

After all four themes have entered, the piece should feel as though it begins to lose control. It should feel rushed and anxious leading up to a great release of tension in the concerted, soaring melody at measure 43. The alto player should continue to drive his/her part forward through to the end of the piece. Again, accents are important in this line, and phrase markings distinguish the start of each of the five unique phrases repeated, in order, throughout the balance of the piece.

As the quintuplets emerge from the texture at measure 51, their drive and intensity should increase leading into the contrabass player's last note. The last two chords in the upper clarinets bring back the bleak, searching feeling from the opening of the piece to leave the listener without resolution or answers.