

Alvi Joensen

Paradoxes and Oxymorons

Performance Notes

This piece was composed in December 2022-January 2023 for the REAKTION! Ensemble at the Connect Festival in 2023. The theme of the festival that year was 'Paradox' and I have therefore chosen to compose a song cycle with paradoxical poems and treated the text paradoxically in as many ways as imaginable.

The REAKTION! Ensemble Connect Festival year 2023 consisted of the following instruments:

Flute / Alto flute / Bass flute

French horn

Classical guitar (with slide)

Mezzo-soprano (with a "referee whistle")

Cello

1 Percussionist playing: Vibraphone, Crotales (1 oct), 2 x Woodblocks, 2 x Bongos, Sleigh Bells and Tam-tam

The poems for this piece goes as follows:

I. Paradoxes and Oxymorons

*This poem is concerned with language on a very plain level.
Look at it talking to you. You look out a window
Or pretend to fidget. You have it but you don't have it.
You miss it, it misses you. You miss each other.*

*The poem is sad because it wants to be yours, and cannot.
What's a plain level? It is that and other things,
Bringing a system of them into play. Play?
Well, actually yes, but I consider play to be*

*A deeper outside thing, a dreamed role-pattern,
As in the division of grace these long August days
Without proof. Open-ended. And before you know
It gets lost in the steam and chatter of typewriters.*

*It has been played once more. I think you exist only
To tease me into doing it, on you level, and then you aren't there
Or have adopted a different attitude. And the poem
Has set me softly down beside you. The poem is you.*

- John Ashbury


II. Life, A Paradox!

*A beautiful baby is born.
His first cry;
made everyone so happy!
An old man lived his life.
Had his last laugh;
but everyone is crying!
What a paradox;
From start to end of life.*


- Ambrosia Ambrosia


Explanation of symbols:

 1/4-note flat.

 3/4-note flat.

 1/4-note sharp.

 3/4-note sharp.

 High chord with unspecified pitches.

 Notes with unclear or not audible pitch. Which type of sound is specified.


 Placed before a pitch = slide into pitch/sound. Placed after = bend pitch/sound upwards.

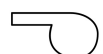
 Placed before a pitch = slide into pitch/sound. Placed after = bend pitch/sound downwards.

E.B.P. Excessive bow pressure = play with too much pressure to make a scratching sound.


 In guitar part = normal flageolet. In flute part = Jet whistle.

flz. Abbreviation of flatterzunge (Ger.), in Eng. Flutter-tongue.

 Wide vibrato. In flute part it also means un-controlled whistle-tones.

 Use police whistle.

 No note-heads means pitches not specified and therefore up to the interpreter to choose.

 Notation used for the Seagull-effect.

adjust the
bongos

Instructions within a box are theatrical instructions and nothing to do with the instrument.

Paradoxes and Oxymorons

I

Alvi Joensen

Calm ♩ = 54

Alto Flute *p* 3 (s)

Horn in F (air) *p* 3 3 (s)

Acoustic Guitar w/slide *pp* *cresc.* *gliss.* *ff*

Woodblocks (2x) 3 5 6 7

Mezzo-soprano

Violoncello *pp* *cresc.* *gliss.* *ff*

4

A. Fl. (air) *sfz* *p*

Hn. (air) *sfz* *p*

A. Gtr. w/slide *mf* knock on saddle *f* w/ edge of slide on 4th-6th string *gliss.*

Bongos *pp* *cresc.* 3 5 6 7

Crot.

Vib. *p*

Sprach-Gesang *mf*

M-S. Thi-s po-e-m is con-cerne - d with lan-gua-ge on a ve-ry pla-in le-vel

Vc. *mf* *gliss.* *gliss.*

7 talk gibberish into mouth piece suddenly stare at the audience suddenly look up at the ceiling check if the flute is straight too big vibrato flz.

A. Fl. *sfz sub.p* *sub.p* *f*

Hn. talk gibberish into mouth piece suddenly stare at the audience suddenly look up at the ceiling empty the valves too big vibrato flz.

A. Gtr. rasg. suddenly stare at the audience suddenly look up at the ceiling adjust the footstool w/ slide too big vibrato

Bongos *sfz*

Crot. suddenly stare at the audience suddenly look up at the ceiling adjust the bongos *f* *sub. niente* *sfz*

Vib. start vibrato-motor *sfz*

M-S. *f* Look at the audience *mf* *mp* fiddle with sheet music Gesang *mf* *f*
 Look at it talk-ing to you you look out a win-dow or pre-tend to fid-get you have it—but you don't have it—

Vc. E.B.P. scratching sound suddenly stare at the audience suddenly look up at the ceiling adjust the tension of the bow nat. too big vibrato tremolo *sfz sub.p* *sub.p* *f*



10 normal rit. Cabaret-like ♩ = 94

A. Fl. *p cresc.* *ff*

Hn. normal *p cresc.* *ff*

A. Gtr. no slide *mf* *ff*

W.Blocks

Bongos

S.Bells *p*

Vib. stop vibrato-motor

M-S. *mp cresc.* *ff* *mf*
 You miss— it it— miss - es you you miss— each o - ther The

Vc. *mp cresc.* *gliss.* *ff* *pizz.* *mf* *gliss.*

rit. Cabaret-like ♩ = 94

14

A. Fl. flz. *sfz* nat. *gliss.*

Hn. flz. *sfz* overblow nat. (air) *mp cresc.*

A. Gtr. rasg. w/ slide ④ sempre *mf*

W.Blocks Bongos *f* *p*

S.Bells *f* *p*

M-S. po - em is sad because it wants to be yours, and can-not (o) What's a pla-in le-vel?

Vc. bart. pizz. *gliss.*



20

accel. . *mp* (air) *p* *f* *gliss.* jet whistle

Hn. (air) *mf* (stopped) *p* *f* flz.

A. Gtr.

W.Blocks Bongos *p*

S.Bells

M-S. Is it that and o-ther thin - gs Brin-ging a sys-tem of them in - to play. Play? *mp*

accel. . *gliss.* *gliss.* *gliss.* *gliss.* *gliss.* *gliss.* *gliss.* *gliss.*

Vc. *gliss.* *gliss.* *gliss.* *gliss.* *gliss.* *gliss.* *gliss.* *gliss.*

♩ = 108

25

A. Fl. flz. nat. *sfz* *f* *mf* *cresc.*

Hn. (stopped) flz. nat. overblow *sfz* *sfz* flz. *sfz*

A. Gtr. strumming *mp* *cresc.* *sfz* *sfz* *sfz* *sfz*

W.Blocks Bongos *mp* *cresc.*

Vc. *mp* *cresc.*

28

A. Fl. flz. nat. flz. nat. *legato*

Hn. nat. *mf* *cresc.*

A. Gtr. *sfz* *sfz* *sfz* *sfz* *sfz* *sfz*

W.Blocks Bongos

Vc.

31

A. Fl. *ff*

Hn. *ff*

A. Gtr. gradually open more strings *ff*

W.Blocks Bongos *ff*

T.-t. (Mezzo-soprano hits the Tam-tam) *sfz*

M-S. Hit the Tam-tam *sfz* Wait for Tam-tam to ring out *mf*
Well, a - ctu-ally, yes,

Vc. *ff*



34

A. Fl. whistle-tones *ff* Calm ♩ = 54

Hn. air *ff*

A. Gtr. Irregular tapping w/ both hands on ④ ⑤ ⑥

W.Blocks Bongos *ff*

Crot. w/bow let ring-----

M-S. Police whistle *sfz* Sprach-Gesang *mp*
but, I con - si - der play to be a

Vc. Calm ♩ = 54

36

A. Fl.

Hn.

A. Gtr.

W.Blocks
Bongos

Crot.

M-S.

Vc.



38

A. Fl.

Hn.

A. Gtr.

W.Blocks
Bongos

Crot.

Vib.

T.-t.

M-S.

Vc.

40

A. Fl. *f*

Hn. *f*

A. Gtr. *p*

W.Blocks Bongos *p*

Gesang

M-S. *mf cresc.* *f decresc.*

and be-fore you know it gets lost in the steam and chat-ter

Vc.



42

A. Fl. *mp legato cresc.* *f*

Hn. *sfz* overblow

A. Gtr. *cresc.*

W.Blocks Bongos *cresc.* *ff*

M-S. *mf*

of type - wri - ter - s

Vc. *cresc.* *gliss.* *ff*

43

A. Fl. *f* *p* *tr* *fl.t.* *nat.* *fl.t.* *3* *nat.*

Hn. *air* *3* *f* *p* *fl.t.* *nat.* *3* *fl.t.*

A. Gtr. *w/ slide* *3* *7* *gliss.* *p.c.* *f* *6* *p* *tr* *3* *3*

Vib. *f* *p cresc.*

M-S. Sprach-Gesang *3* *3* *mf* *3* *3*
 It has been playe-d once more I think you ex - ist on - ly

Vc. *battuto col legno* *normal* *5* *tr* *3* *3* *p*



45

A. Fl. *tr* *3* *fl.t.* *nat.*

Hn. *fl.t.* *3* *nat.* *overblow* *sfz*

A. Gtr. *tr* *3*

Vib. *f*

M-S. *f* *p sotto voce* *3*
 to tease me in - to do-ing it on your le - vel and then you a - ren - 't there

Vc. *tr* *3* *3* *3*

47

whistle-tones

A. Fl. key-clicks

Hn. high air sound low air sound

A. Gtr. Irregular random high notes above sound hole on ① ② ③

Crot. w/ bow let ring

Vib. *p* *decresc.*

M-S. or have a-dop-ted a dif-frent at-ti-tude. And the po-em has set me soft-ly down

Vc. *pp* Sea-Gull effect *gliss.* sul A sul D sul G sul C



49

A. Fl.

Hn.

A. Gtr. *pp*

Bongos *p*

S.Bells *pp*

Vib. *pp*

T.-t. (Mezzo-soprano hits the Tam-tam) *pp*

M-S. Hit the Tam-tam *pp* Wait for Tam-tam to ring out Sprach-Gesang The po-em is you!

Vc. *gliss.*

II

Life, A Padox!

51

A. Fl. *pp*

Hn. con sordin *pp*

Crot. w/bow *pp* l.v.

M-S. con bocca chiusa *pp*

Vc. con sordin *pp*



61

A. Fl. *mp* *pp* *p* *p* vib. vib.

Hn. senza sordin *mp* *pp* *p* *p* vib. vib.

A. Gtr. w/slide rasg. *p* *p* vib. vib.

Crot. w/bow *mp* l.v. *pp* l.v.

Vib. *p* *p*

T-t. *p* l.v.

M-S. *3* *3* *3*
A beau-ti-ful ba-by is born. His first cry; — made e-ve-ry-one so hap-py! An old-man lived his life.

Vc. senza sordin E.B.P. sul D arco Bart.pizz. gliss. *f* *mp* *mp*

67

A. Fl. *f* *p* 3

Hn. *f* *p* 3 Gliss.

A. Gtr. *f* *p* 3

W.Blocks Bongos *f* *pp* *p* 3

M-S. *f* *mf* 3 3
 had his last laugh; but e - ve - ry - one is cry - ing!_

Vc. *f* *p* pizz. arco 3



70

A. Fl. *p*

Hn. *p*

A. Gtr. *p* gliss. gliss. gliss.

Crot. *p* *pp* *mf* l.v.

M-S. 3
 What a pa - ra - do - - x; From start to end of life.

Vc. *p* gliss.