

Epochal Natter

Performance Note

In this piece for vocalising clarinetist, the instrumentalist is essentially free to either make compositional choices in advance, effectively predetermining the details of the piece, or to adopt a more spontaneous and improvisatory approach.

For a first performance of the piece I would suggest having at least a basic plan though. Spoken parts of the piece will also need to have a short piece of text which, again, can either be improvised or from a written source.

The piece has two staves of three lines each. The top staff is for sounds derived from the instrument and contains black notation. The lower staff is for sounds derived from the vocal cavity and has red notation.

The middle line of each staff represents free choice on the performer's part. All the indicated events on this line can be chosen pitches or sounds. Events indicated on the top line must be higher in pitch than the preceding chosen sound. As a basic example, if a middle C is chosen as a middle line event, a higher pitched sound must follow if this is indicated on the top line and this can be any sound above middle C. In a like manner, sounds following freely chosen events that are indicated on the bottom line must sound lower in pitch. If consecutive events are indicated on top/bottom or bottom/top lines the same rule of relative pitching applies but a middle-line event is always a free choice. Instrumentalists must be careful not to view middle line events in terms of relative pitch value. This is solely the role of the outer lines. Each middle line event should be seen therefore as a new start.

The piece is in free time throughout and contains only longer and shorter sounds indicated respectively by open or closed stemless noteheads. It is up to the instrumentalist to determine time values which can be as flexible as desired. They may also wish to add beams at certain points to assist in the counting of sound events. I have resisted doing this, though, to avoid ambiguity.

The piece has a freely improvised section in between the scored material in which the instrumentalist is free to create links between the notated parts of the score.

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