
Senior Projects Spring 2020

Bard Undergraduate Senior Projects

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Ellipsis

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Bard College

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Ellipsis

For Orchestra



Senior Project submitted to
The division of the Arts
of Bard College

by

Tristan Geary

May 2020

Preface to Ellipsis

I have noticed a repeating theme - that only at the end of experiences do they reveal their meaning, rather than at the beginning. Only at the end of each year at school would I be able to view it with distance and be able to finally listen to the lessons it was trying to tell me. Hearing them, I think to myself, or rather kick myself over the possibility of having gone about them differently. To get hung up about this is a dangerous road to go down. It can encourage bitterness and guilt, the least productive of emotions. However it can also be the most powerful, forward projecting force there is.

This piece serves as an example of that. It has been almost one year since I made the first sketches of what would become the piece and when I started out what I believed I was trying to do was succinctly summarize the last four years in a neat and digestible piece. However, upon viewing the piece in its entirety the strongest feeling it evokes is not memory, nostalgia or something to be neatly shelved away but rather what I want to do next. In this sense, the piece acts as a farewell, or as the end of a chapter, maybe the first chapter? But definitely not a definitive ending such as an exclamation point, and it is not unsure like a question mark either, but teetering like an ellipsis.

Now that I have some musical experiences behind me, the question has evolved from “how to get my fingers to move to the notes I want” - to - “What is it exactly I am trying to say?” I am incredibly grateful for this shift in focus. It feels like a graduation to a much much more daunting and eternal struggle. It has always interested me whether the answer to this question is that it is something external, that one must find and pursue. Or something that one has no agency over, and must be allowed to present it itself, a state of being that is similar to playing like a child. Something that is in fact so easy, but so difficult to get back to.

The greatest help and advice I got on this piece came from two different people. The first being Joan Tower. A good friend of mine, Luke Jennings, said that writing a piece for Joan Tower is like writing a good argument. That is what Joan Tower taught me how to do. To be infinitely humble to the law of timing and to construct the music like writing sentences, paragraphs and chapters. The second person I am incredibly grateful for is Erica Lindsay. She gave me great advice when she told me to take more risks, something that hit home for me because I knew how true it was. For example, I originally had measure 37 as strings, brass and two woodwinds striking the same tonic chord as the previous measure, simply for emphasis, to reinstate the resolution of the phrase for my own peace of mind. Whilst Erica and I were listening to the playback of my piece for amendments we arrived at this measure and Erica simply burst out laughing. I joined as well because it became so comically obvious that there was no reason that that measure should not be taken as an opportunity to do something unexpected, or to take a risk, rather than a static measure to simply sound consonant and harmless.

In my playing and composing I have noticed a conservatism and a leaning on functionality. This is related to the farewell I would like to bid. But not one that is on bad terms. For I greatly appreciate these qualities that I have been attracted to, they are undoubtedly a part of me that should be embraced and not shunned. But now they seem a little old. I want to achieve the musical freedom that Erica Lindsay made me realize I could do when she told me to take more risks. I do not want to spend all my time exploring the prettiness of functional harmony, and at the same time I find it immensely beautiful. I don't want to dwell on the convenience of the V-I cadence but I do revere it as a force of nature. Measure 37 has since been changed. A new, unexpected harmony lives there now. I have gone in the direction of risk but I want to go further. This piece acts as a reality check that adjusts course and only looks forward.

I want to thank Joan Tower for always keeping a fire lit underneath me. And I would also like to thank Erica Lindsay for being a pillar of wisdom and patience throughout my whole time at Bard.

- Tristan Geary

Ellipsis

Tristan Geary

The score is for a piece titled "Ellipsis" by Tristan Geary. It is written for a full orchestra and includes the following parts: Flutes, Oboes, Clarinets in Bb, Bassoons, Horns 1+3, Horns 2+4, Trumpet I in Bb, Trumpet II in Bb, Trombone I, Trombone II, Bass Trombone, Timpani, Vibraphone, Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, and Contrabass. The score is divided into two systems. The first system covers measures 1 through 10, and the second system covers measures 11 through 20. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 92, and the piece concludes with a ritardando (rit.) leading to a final tempo of quarter note = 80. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4. The score includes various musical notations such as dynamics (p, mp, mf), articulation (accents, slurs), and performance instructions (rit.).

poco accel. . . . ♩=92

rit. . . .

Fl. *mf* 3

Ob. *mf* 3

Cl. *mf* 3

Bsn. *a2* *mf* 3

Hn. 1+3

Hn. 2+4

Tpt. *mp* *mf* *mf* 3 *f*

Tpt. *mp* 3 *mf* 3

Tbn. *p* *mp*

Tbn. *p* *mp*

B. Tbn. *mp*

Timp. *p* *mp* *mf*

Vib.

Vln. I *p* *mf* *mp* 3 *mf* *mp* 3 *mf* *p* sul pont.

Vln. II *p* *mf* *mp* 3 *mf* *mp* 3 *mf* *p* sul pont.

Vla. *p* *mf* *mp* *mf* *p* sul pont.

Vc. *mf* 3 *mp* *mf*

Cb. *mf* 3 *mp* *mf*

20 $\text{♩} = 80$

Fl.

Ob.

Cl. *1.* *mp* *espress.* *mf* *mp* *mf*

Bsn. *2.* *mp* *f* *f* *mp subito*

Hn. 1+3

Hn. 2+4 *p*

Tpt. *pp*

Tpt. *pp*

Tbn. *pp*

Tbn. *pp*

B. Tbn. *pp*

Timp. *pp* *p*

Vib. *pedal ad lib.* *mp* *mf* *mp* *mf* *mf* *Red.*

Vln. I $\text{♩} = 80$ *pp* *p*

Vln. II *pp* *p*

Vla. *pp* *p*

Vc. *mp* *f* *f* *mp subito*

Cb. *mp*

29 poco accel. $\text{♩} = 85$

Fl. *mf* $\text{mf} < f$ *mp*

Ob. *mp* *mf* *p*

Cl. *mp*

Bsn. *mp* *mf* *p*

Hn. 1+3 *p* *mp* *mf* *p*

Hn. 2+4 *p* *mp* *mf* *p*

Tpt. *p* *mf* *mf* *f* *mp* *mf* *mp* *p*

Tpt.

Tbn. *mp* *f* *mp* *p*

Tbn.

B. Tbn.

Timp. *mp*

Vib. *mp* *mf* *mp*

Vln. I *mp* *mf* *mp* *mp* *p*

Vln. II *mp* *mf* *mp* *mp* *p*

Vla. *mp* *mf* *mp* *mf* *p*

Vc. *mp* *pizz.* *arco* *mp* *p*

Cb. *mp* *pizz.* *arco* *mp* *p*

38 $\text{♩} = 95$

Fl. *f* *a2* *mp subito* *f* *mp*

Ob.

Cl. *f* *a2* *mp subito* *f* *mp*

Bsn. *ff* *mp*

Hn. 1+3 *f*

Hn. 2+4 *f*

Tpt. *mf* *p* *mf* *mp* *p*

Tpt. *mf* *p* *mf* *mp* *p*

Tbn. *mf* *p* *mf* *mp* *p*

Tbn. *mf* *p* *mf* *mp* *p*

B. Tbn. *mf* *mf* *mp* *p*

Timp. *f* *mf*

Vib. *no pedal* *mp*

Vln. I *ff* *f* *pizz.* *arco* *f* *mp subito* *f* *mp*

Vln. II *ff* *f* *pizz.* *arco* *f* *mp subito* *f* *mp*

Vla. *ff* *f* *pizz.* *arco* *mp* *mf* *mp*

Vc. *ff* *f* *mp* *mf* *mp*

Cb. *ff* *f* *mp* *mf* *mp*

46 *rit.* $\text{♩} = 70$ 7

Fl. *f* *mp* *f*

Ob. *mf* *mf*

Cl. *mf* *mp* *mf*

Bsn. *mf* *mp*

Hn. 1+3 *mp* *mp* *f*

Hn. 2+4 *mp* *mp* *mf*

Tpt.

Tpt.

Tbn. *p*

Tbn. *p*

B. Tbn.

Timp.

Vib. *mf* *mp*

Vln. I *rit.* $\text{♩} = 70$

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc. *arco* *mf*

Cb. *mp*

50

Fl. *mf* *mp*

Ob. *mf* *p* *mp* *mf* *espress.* *p*

Cl.

Bsn. *mp* *f* *mp*

Hn. 1+3 *p* *mp*

Hn. 2+4 *p* *mp*

Tpt.

Tpt.

Tbn.

Tbn.

B. Tbn.

Timp.

Vib. *pedal ad lib.* *mp* *mf*

Vln. I *p* *pp* *mf*

Vln. II *p* *pp*

Vla. *p* *pp*

Vc. *mp* *pp* *mp* *f* *mp*

Cb. *p* *mp*

Detailed description: This page of a musical score, numbered 8 and starting at measure 50, features a full orchestral ensemble. The instruments are arranged in a standard symphonic layout. The woodwinds (Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Bassoon) and strings (Violins I and II, Viola, Violoncello, Contrabass) have active parts, while the brass (Horns, Trumpets, Trombones) and percussion (Timpani, Vibraphone) are mostly silent. The score includes various musical notations such as dynamics (mf, mp, p, pp, f), articulation (accents, slurs), and performance instructions like 'espress.' and 'pedal ad lib.'. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The piece concludes at measure 64.

Fl. *mf* *f*

Ob. *mf* *f* *mp*

Cl. *mp* *p*

Bsn. *p* *f* *p* *mp*

Hn. 1+3 *p* *mf*

Hn. 2+4 *f* *p* *pp* *mp*

Tpt. *mf* *p* *pp* *mp* *mf* *mp*

Tpt. *mf* *p* *pp* *mp* *mf*

Tbn. *mp* *p* *pp* *mp*

Tbn.

B. Tbn.

Timp. *ff*

Vib.

Vln. I *f* *p* *sul pont.*

Vln. II *nat.* *ff* *f* *p* *sul pont.*

Vla. *nat.* *ff* *f* *p* *sul pont.*

Vc. *p* *ff* *pizz.* *mp*

Cb. *p* *ff* *mp*

66 ♩=105

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn.

Hn. 1+3

Hn. 2+4

Tpt.

Tpt.

Tbn.

Tbn.

B. Tbn.

Timp.

Vib.

♩=105

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

77

Fl. *mp* *mf* *mp* *mf*

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn. *mp* *mf*

Hn. 1+3 *mp* *mf*

Hn. 2+4 *mp* *mf*

Tpt. *mp* *mf*

Tpt.

Tbn. *p* *mp* *mf*

Tbn.

B. Tbn.

Timp.

Vib.

Vln. I *mf* *mp* *mf*

Vln. II *mf* *mp* *mf*

Vla. *mf* *mp* *mf*

Vc. *mf* *mp*

Cb. *mp* *mf*

85

Fl. *mp* *f* *ff*

Ob. *ff* *a2.*

Cl. *ff* *a2.*

Bsn. *mp* *f* *ff* *a2.*

Hn. 1+3 *a2.*

Hn. 2+4 *a2.*

Tpt. *mp* *f* *f*

Tpt. *mp* *f* *f*

Tbn. *f* *f*

Tbn. *f* *f*

B. Tbn. *mf* *f* *f*

Timp.

Vib.

Vln. I *mp* *f* *ff*

Vln. II *mp* *f*

Vla. *mp* *f*

Vc. *mp* *f* *nat.*

Cb. *mp* *f*

92

♩=80

Fl. *mf* ^{a2}

Ob. ^{l.} ^{a2} ^{l.} ^{a2}

Cl.

Bsn. ^{a2} *mf*

Hn. 1+3 *pp* *mp*

Hn. 2+4 *pp* *mp*

Tpt.

Tpt.

Tbn.

Tbn.

B. Tbn. *f* *ff* ³ *mf*

Timp. *f* *fff* *fp* *f*

Vib. *f* *mp*

♩=80

Vln. I *fff* *pp* *mf*

Vln. II *ff* *fff* *pp* *mf*

Vla. *ff* *fff* *pp* *mf*

Vc. *ff* *fff* *pp* *mf*

Cb. *ff* *fff* *pp* *mf*

102

Fl. *pp* *mp* *a2* *3* *3*

Ob. *mf* *p*

Cl. *mf* *p*

Bsn. *pp* *mf* *p*

Hn. 1+3 *pp*

Hn. 2+4 *pp*

Tpt. *mp* Straight Mute

Tpt. *mp* Straight Mute

Tbn.

Tbn.

B. Tbn.

Timp. *mp*

Vib. *mp* *mp* *3* *3*

Vln. I *pp* *p* *mf* *tutti* *pp*

Vln. II *ppp* *p* *pp*

Vla. *ppp* *p* *mp* *p* *pp*

Vc. *ppp* *p* *pizz.* *mf* *p*

Cb. *ppp* *p* *pizz.* *mf* *p*

110 $\text{♩} = 95$

Fl. *p* *mp* *mf* *a2.*

Ob. *mp* *mf* *a2.* *mf*

Cl. *p* *mp* *a2.*

Bsn. *p* *mp* *a2.* *3*

Hn. 1+3 *p* *poco*

Hn. 2+4 *p* *poco*

Tpt. *Open*

Tpt. *Open* *3* *mp*

Tbn. *mp* *3*

B. Tbn.

Timp. *p* *mp*

Vib. *f* *To Cym.* *Cymbals* *mf* *Vibraphone*

Vln. I *p* *mp*

Vln. II *p* *mp*

Vla. *p* *mp*

Vc. *p* *arco* *pizz.* *mp*

Cb. *mp* *3* *mp*

118 poco accel. . . . ♩=105

Fl. *cresc.* 3 *f* *mp subito* *f subito*

Ob. *cresc.* 3

Cl. *a2.* *f* *pp subito* *f*

Bsn. *a2.* *f* *pp subito* *ff subito*

Hn. 1+3

Hn. 2+4

Tpt. *mp* *f* *mp* *f*

Tpt. *mp* *mf* *f* *pp subito*

Tbn. *mp* *mf* *pp subito*

Tbn. *mp* *mf* *pp subito* *ff subito*

B. Tbn. *mf* *pp subito* *ff subito*

Timp. *ff*

Vib.

Vln. I poco accel. . . . ♩=105 *mf* *f* *mf* *ff*

Vln. II *mf* *f* *pp subito*

Vla. *mf* *f* *pp subito*

Vc. *arco* *mf* *ff* *f* *pizz.* *mf* *arco* *ff*

Cb. *arco* *mf* *ff* *f* *pizz.* *mf* *arco* *ff*

128

Fl. *ff* (subito) *mf* *p* *a2.*

Ob.

Cl. *a2.* *p*

Bsn.

Hn. 1+3 *p* *poco* *p* *poco* *sim.*

Hn. 2+4 *p* *poco* *p* *poco* *sim.*

Tpt. *ff* (subito) *mp*

Tpt. *f* *mp*

Tbn. *f* *mp* *f* *mp*

Tbn. *mp* *f* *mp*

B. Tbn. *mp* *f* *mp*

Timp.

Vib.

Vln. I *ff* (subito) *f* *p* *mf*

Vln. II *f* *mp* *f* *mp* *mp*

Vla. *f* *mp* *f* *mp* *arco* *mp*

Vc. *mp* *ff* (subito) *f* *pizz.* *mf* *mp*

Cb. *mp* *ff* (subito) *mp* *pizz.* *mf* *mp*

135

Fl. *f* ^{a2} 3 *mf* ^{a2} 3

Ob.

Cl. *mf* ^{a2} 3

Bsn. *f* ^{a2} 3 *mf* ^{a2} 3

Hn. 1+3

Hn. 2+4

Tpt. *p* 3 *mp* 3

Tpt. *p* 3 *mp* 3

Tbn.

Tbn.

B. Tbn. *mf*

Timp.

Vib.

Vln. I *f* 3 3 *mf* 3 3 *f* *mf* 3 3

Vln. II 3 3 *mf* *mp* 3 3 *mf*

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

141

Fl. *f* *tr*

Ob. *f* *tr*

Cl. *f* *tr*

Bsn.

Hn. 1+3 *a2.* *p* *p < ff* *a2.* *p < ff*

Hn. 2+4 *a2.* *p* *p < ff* *a2.* *p < ff*

Tpt.

Tpt.

Tbn. *p < ff* *p < ff*

Tbn. *p < ff* *p < ff*

B. Tbn. *p < ff* *p < ff*

Timp.

Vib. Triangle *mf* Vibraphone

Vln. I *pizz.* *f*

Vln. II *pizz.* *mp* *f*

Vla. *pizz.* *mp* *f*

Vc. *mp* *f*

Cb. *mp* *f*

151

Fl. *f* *f*

Ob. *f* *f*

Cl. *f* *f*

Bsn. *mp* *f*

Hn. 1+3 *p < ff* *p < ff* *p < ff*

Hn. 2+4 *p < ff* *p < ff* *p < ff*

Tpt. *p < ff* *p < ff* *p < ff*

Tbn. *p < ff* *p < ff* *p < ff*

B. Tbn. *p < ff* *mp* *p < ff*

Timp. *mp < ff*

Vib. *f* *mf*

Triangle

Vibraphone

Vln. I *p*

Vln. II *p*

Vla. *p*

Vc. *p*

Cb. *p*

Flute 2 *gliss.* *f*

Fl. *f*

Ob. *mp* *f* *a2* *f* *3*

Cl. *mp* *f* *a2* *f* *3*

Bsn. *f* *a2* *f* *l*

Hn. 1+3

Hn. 2+4

Tpt.

Tpt.

Tbn.

Tbn.

B. Tbn. *mf* *f*

Timp. *f*

Vib.

Vln. I *arco* *ff*

Vln. II *ff*

Vla. *ff*

Vc. *mf* *f* *ff*

Cb. *mf* *f* *ff*

165

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn.

Hn. 1+3

Hn. 2+4

Tpt.

Tpt.

Tbn.

Tbn.

B. Tbn.

Timp.

Vib.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

rit. =90

accel.

mf

a2.

p

mp

f

f

f

f

p

mp

p

f

p

f

p

mp

p

mp

p

mp

p

mp

p

mp

mp

f

ff

f

p subito

f

arco

mf

f

mp cresc.

p subito

f

arco

mf

f

mp cresc.

p subito

f

arco

mp

mf

f

mp cresc.

p subito

f

arco

mp

mf

f

mp cresc.

p subito

173 *a2* $\text{♩} = 105$

Fl. *f*

Ob. *ff* *a2*

Cl.

Bsn.

Hn. 1+3 *ff*

Hn. 2+4 *ff*

Tpt. *ff*

Tpt.

Tbn.

Tbn.

B. Tbn.

Timp. *ff* *p*

Vib. *ff* *p*

$\text{♩} = 105$

Vln. I *ff* *pp (subito)*

Vln. II *f* *ff* *pp (subito)*

Vla. *f* *ff* *pp (subito)*

Vc. *f* *ff* *pp (subito)*

Cb. *f* *ff* *pizz.* *p*

180

Fl. *f* *a2*

Ob. *mp* *1.* *a2*

Cl.

Bsn. *f* *a2*

Hn. 1+3 *mp* *1.*

Hn. 2+4 *mp* *2.*

Tpt. *mp*

Tpt.

Tbn. *mp*

Tbn. *mp*

B. Tbn. *mp* *f* *ff*

Timp. *mp* *f* *pp* *fff*

Vib. *mp* *f* *mp subito*

Vln. I *fff* *pp subito* *fff*

Vln. II *fff* *pp subito* *fff*

Vla. *fff* *pp subito* *fff*

Vc. *fff* *pp subito* *fff*

Cb. *mp* *f* *arco* *pp subito* *fff*

$\text{♩} = 70$

187

Fl.

Ob.

Cl. *1.* *mp* *espress.* *mf*

Bsn.

Hn. 1+3 *p* *mf* *pp*

Hn. 2+4 *p* *mf* *pp*

Tpt.

Tpt.

Tbn.

Tbn.

B. Tbn. *mf* *mp* *p*

Timp. *p* *mf* *p*

Vib. *mp* *mf*

Vln. I *pp* *p* *sul pont.*

Vln. II *pp* *p* *sul pont.*

Vla. *pp* *p* *sul pont.*

Vc. *p* *mf* *p*

Cb. *p* *mf* *p*

197 rit. $\text{♩} = 60$

Fl. *mf* *f* *pp* *dim. al niente*

Ob. *mf* *f* *pp* *dim. al niente*

Cl. *mf* *f* *pp* *dim. al niente*

Bsn. *pp* *p* *dim. al niente*

Hn. 1+3 *pp* *p* *dim. al niente*

Hn. 2+4 *pp* *p* *dim. al niente*

Tpt. *mp* *mf* *dim. al niente* (Straight Mute)

Tpt. *mf* *f*

Tbn. *mf* *f*

Tbn.

B. Tbn.

Timp.

Vib. *rit.* $\text{♩} = 60$

Vln. I *cresc.* *f*

Vln. II *cresc.* *f*

Vla. *cresc.* *f* *nat.* *pp* *p* *dim. al niente*

Vc. *pp* *p* *dim. al niente*

Cb. *pp* *dim. al niente*