

Aaron Houston

Delirium Nocturnum

-- for small chamber ensemble --

Full Score

Aaron Houston Music, 2018
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For Perusal Use Only

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Duration: ca. 7:30 minutes

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Instrumentation

Violin
Viola
Cello
Double Bass

Piano

Program Note

On October 10, 2018, Hurricane Michael made landfall in the Florida panhandle as a category 4 hurricane. It would end up being the strongest hurricane to hit that part of the state. Living in Tallahassee, I did not have to endure the worst of the storm; however, even being on the outer edges of the vicious winds was enough to uproot ancient trees and tear through power lines and houses as if they were never there. The storm left neighborhoods and cities in the dark for days and weeks.

Only a few days before this storm, I was informed I had been awarded the opportunity to participate in the RED NOTE New Music Festival and compose a new work to be premiered at the festival. As I began this new work in the aftermath of Hurricane Michael, I was surrounded by the unnatural silence of a neighborhood with no electricity and the ever-dancing shadows created by candlelight (yes, I found and lit every candle I could so I would have enough light to work from). Quickly, I discovered my mind does not like the silence or the darkness. In our current world full of constant distractions and never-ceasing methods of occupying our attention, I was anxious about being caught in the lightlessness, and the quietness that should have offered a sense of calm after the storm only provided me uneasiness.

Delirium Nocturnum was born out of this disquiet restlessness. The dancing shadows always moving in the corner of my eyes along the wall and the whispering howls echoing after the hurricane winds passed through found their way onto the page and began to move. As the darkness lingered, these voices grew and twisted with the flickering candlelight. By the end of the piece, the distant howls and shapeless dancers have been defined and can be seen (and heard) for what they are: the wild and frantic creations of a restless mind at night.

Delirium Nocturnum was premiered by members of Fifth House Ensemble as part of the RED NOTE New Music Festival in February of 2019.

Performance Notes

Technique indications:

“s.t.” = sul tasto

“s.p.” = sul ponticello

“ord.” = ordinario; used to cancel out sul pont. or sul tasto

“→” = transition between bowing locations over time

“↻” = to move the bow in a circular motion across the string

▲ = a gradual increase in the bow pressure toward an excessive amount to “distort” the sound.

Measures 142 to the end of the piece are to be played with this heavy, distorted sound from bow pressure.

“✱” = a sudden stop of the bow on the string. It should be like pulling a needle off a record.

Square noteheads are used to indicate playing with less finger pressure. The result should be a sound that still has some discernable pitch to it, but is perhaps less clear and a little “dirty” sounding.

“x” noteheads for the piano indicate for the note to be dampened in order to get a percussive attack from the hammer hitting the string.

Accidentals:

- ♯₄ = a quarter tone sharp
- # = a standard half-step sharp
- ♭₄ = a quarter tone flat
- ♭ = a standard half-step flat

All trills are half-step trills.

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With Intensity ♩ = 76-80

The score is written for Violin, Viola, Cello, Double Bass, and Piano. It begins with a tempo marking of ♩ = 76-80 and the instruction "With Intensity". The music is in 4/4 time and features a variety of dynamics and articulations. The Violin part starts with a *p* dynamic and includes a trill (*tr*) and a tremolo (*tr*) section. The Viola part also features a trill and tremolo section. The Cello part has a *p* dynamic and a *f* dynamic section. The Double Bass part starts with a *sfz* dynamic and includes a *f* dynamic section. The Piano part features a *sfz* dynamic and a *p* dynamic section. The score includes various performance instructions such as *ord.* (order), *sul pont.* (sul ponticello), *s.p.* (sordando), and *mf* (mezzo-forte). There are also markings for "Dampen note" and "Lea." (leaving the note).

Delirium Nocturnum

10 *s.p.* **A** *s.t.* *ord.*

Vln. *sfz* *p* *mp cresc. poco a poco*

Vla. *ord.* *s.p.* *ord.* *ord.* *s.p.*

Vc. *s.p.* *sfz* *ord.* *mp cresc. poco a poco*

D.B. *s.p.* *sfz* *ord.* *mp cresc. poco a poco*

Pno. *sfz* *mp cresc. poco a poco*

13 *s.p.* *ord.* *s.p.*

Vln. *fp* *f*

Vla. *ord.* *ord.* *s.p.* *f* *pp*

Vc. *s.p.* *ord.* *s.p.* *f* *pp*

D.B. *s.p.* *f* *pizz.*

Pno. *f*

16

Vln. *ord.* *sfz*

Vla. *ord.* *f* *sfz*

Vc. *ord.* *f* *sfz*

D.B. *arco* *sfz* *sfz*

Pno. *sfz* *sfz*

18

Vln. *V* *V* *V* *V* *mf*

Vla. *mp*

Vc. *mf* *fp*

D.B. *mf*

Pno. *mf*

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20

Vln. *mf*

Vla. *f mf cresc.*

Vc. *cresc. poco a poco*

D.B. *cresc. poco a poco*

Pno. *cresc. poco a poco*

22

B Slightly Relaxed ♩ = 70-74

Vln. *ff* *sul pont.* *p*

Vla. *ff* *sul pont.* *p*

Vc. *ff* *sul pont.* *p*

D.B. *ff*

Pno. *ff* *sfz* *sc.*

C

Vln. *pp* *secco*

Vla. *p*

Vc. *sfz*

D.B. *sfz*

Pno. *p*

27

29

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

D.B.

Pno.

sfz *

31

Vln. *f*

Vla. *f*

Vc. pizz. *p*

D.B. pizz. *p*

Pno. *f*

35

Vln. *fp* s.p. *mf* *f* ord.

Vla. *sfz* *p* *f* *p*

Vc.

D.B.

35

Pno. *p* *f* *sfz*

37 → s.p. ord. p

Vln. ord. b

Vla. sfz arco p

Vc. arco pp arco

D.B. pp

37 p 8va

Pno. p

40 f mf

Vln. II I

Vla. f

Vc. s.p. p f

D.B. p f

40 (8va)

Pno. (8va)

42 *tr* D

Vln. *pp* *p*

Vla. *mf* *p*

Vc. *mp* *p* *pp* *f* *p* *pizz.*

D.B. *p* *f* *p*

42

Pno. *f* *p*

46

Vln. *p* *mf*

Vla. *p* *fp* *p*

Vc. *pizz.*

D.B. *pp* *mf*

46

Pno. *pp* *mf* *sfz*

50

Vln. *p* *tr* *fp* *s.p.* *tr*

Vla. *p* *f* *pp*

Vc. *p* *f* *pp* *pizz.* *mp*

D.B. *f* *pp*

Pno. *f* *p*

54

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

Vla. *mf* *p* *fp*

Vc. *p*

D.B. *p* *pp* *mf*

Pno. *p* *pp* *mf* *sfz*

59

Vln.

Vla. *pizz.* *sfz* *p* *arco* *pp*

Vc.

D.B.

Detailed description: This system contains the first two staves of the string section. The Violin I staff (Vln.) has a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. It begins with a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, and C5. The Violoncello/Double Bass staff (Vc./D.B.) has a bass clef and a 4/4 time signature. It begins with a half note G2, followed by quarter notes F2, E2, and D2. The Viola staff (Vla.) has a bass clef and a 4/4 time signature. It begins with a half rest, followed by a quarter note G2 marked *sfz*, then a quarter note A2 marked *p*. The second measure of this system shows the Viola staff playing a series of quarter notes: G2, A2, B2, C3, D3, E3, F3, G3, marked *arco* and *pp*.

59

Pno.

p *sfz* *8va* *15ma*

Detailed description: This system contains the piano part. The right hand (RH) has a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. It begins with a half note G4 marked *p*, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, and C5. The left hand (LH) has a bass clef and a 4/4 time signature. It begins with a half note G2 marked *p*, followed by quarter notes F2, E2, and D2. The second measure of this system shows the RH playing a series of quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, marked *sfz*. The LH plays a series of quarter notes: G2, F2, E2, D2, marked *sfz*. There are markings for *8va* and *15ma* in the RH staff.

61

Vln. *pp* *mf* *p* *s.p.*

Vla. *mf* *pp*

Vc. *ord.* *p* *mf* *p* *s.p.*

D.B. *p* *mf*

Detailed description: This system contains the next three staves of the string section. The Violin I staff (Vln.) has a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. It begins with a half note G4 marked *pp*, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, and C5. The Violoncello/Double Bass staff (Vc./D.B.) has a bass clef and a 4/4 time signature. It begins with a half note G2 marked *p*, followed by quarter notes F2, E2, and D2. The Viola staff (Vla.) has a bass clef and a 4/4 time signature. It begins with a half note G2 marked *mf*, followed by quarter notes A2, B2, and C3. The second measure of this system shows the Vln. staff playing a series of quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, marked *mf*. The Vc. staff has a marking for *ord.* (ordine) above the first measure. The D.B. staff has a marking for *mf* above the first measure. The third measure of this system shows the Vln. staff playing a series of quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, marked *p*. The Vc. staff has a marking for *p* above the first measure. The D.B. staff has a marking for *mf* above the first measure. The fourth measure of this system shows the Vln. staff playing a series of quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, marked *s.p.* (sordido). The Vc. staff has a marking for *s.p.* above the first measure. The D.B. staff has a marking for *mf* above the first measure.

61

Pno. *mf* *pp*

8va *15ma*

Detailed description: This system contains the piano part. The right hand (RH) has a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. It begins with a half note G4 marked *mf*, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, and C5. The left hand (LH) has a bass clef and a 4/4 time signature. It begins with a half note G2 marked *mf*, followed by quarter notes F2, E2, and D2. The second measure of this system shows the RH playing a series of quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, marked *mf*. The LH plays a series of quarter notes: G2, F2, E2, D2, marked *mf*. There are markings for *8va* and *15ma* in the RH staff. The third measure of this system shows the RH playing a series of quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, marked *pp*. The LH plays a series of quarter notes: G2, F2, E2, D2, marked *pp*.

64

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

D.B.

p

s.p.

f

p

f

p

Pno.

3

loco

f

sc.

69

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

D.B.

ord.

p

pp

f

ord.

p

pp

f

ord.

p

pp

f

ord.

p

pp

f

F

69

Pno.

8va

p

sfz

sc.

74 (3+2+2) s.p.

Vln. *f*

Vla. pizz. *p* arco ord. s.p. *f*

Vc. pizz. *p* *sfz*

D.B. pizz. *p* *sfz*

8^{va}

Pno. *mp* *f*

Reo.

78 ord. play with less finger pressure to create a gritty, dirty sound.

Vln. *p* *p* *f* *pp*

Vla. *p* *f* *pp* arco

Vc. *p* *f* *pp*

D.B. ord. *pp* s.p. *f* ord. *pp*

78

Pno. *p* *pp* *f* *p*

Reo. *sfz*

82

Vln.

Vla. *sul tasto*

Vc.

D.B.

pp move bow in a circular motion across string

82

Pno.

pp

15^{ma}

p

mf

p

* *Lea*

86

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

D.B.

p cresc.

mp

mf

p

mf

mp

86

Pno.

fp

* *Lea*

G

Vln. *f* *p*

Vla. *f* *p*

Vc. *f*

D.B. *f*

Pno. *f* *p* *p*

H Tempo I ♩ = 76-80
ord.

Vln. *sfz* *mp* *cresc. poco a poco*

Vla. *mp* *cresc. poco a poco*

Vc. *mp* *cresc. poco a poco*

D.B. *sfz* *mp* *cresc. poco a poco*

Pno. *pp* *sfz* *mp* *cresc. poco a poco*

3 3

*

96

Vln. *s.p.* *ord.* *fp* *f* *s.p.*

Vla. *ord.* *f* *pp*

Vc. *s.p.* *ord.* *f* *pp*

D.B. *s.p.* *f* *pizz.*

Pno. *f*

99

Vln. *ord.* *sfz* *p*

Vla. *ord.* *f* *ord.* *sfz* *p*

Vc. *f* *ord.* *sfz* *p*

D.B. *f* *arco* *sfz* *p*

Pno. *sfz* *p*

99

Pno. *sfz* *p*

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16

101

Vln. *mf*

Vla. *mf* s.p. ord.

Vc. *mf* *fp*

D.B. *mf*

Pno. *mf*

103

Vln. *cresc. poco a poco*

Vla. *sfz* *mf* *cresc.*

Vc. *cresc. poco a poco*

D.B. *cresc. poco a poco*

103

Pno. *cresc. poco a poco*

I Slightly Relaxed ♩ = 70-74

105

Vln. *ff* *p*

Vla. *ff* *p*

Vc. *ff* *p*

D.B. *ff* *p* s.p.

Pno. *ff* *sfz* *sc*

110

Vln. *f* *p* ord. → s.p.

Vla. *f* *p* s.p. *tr*

Vc. *f* *p* ord. → s.p. *pizz.*

D.B. *f* ord. → s.p.

Pno. *f* *p* 3 *

114

Vln. *f* *sfz* *mf* *p* s.p.

Vla. *f* *mp* *sfz* *p* play with less finger pressure to create a gritty, dirty sound.

Vc. *f* arco *mp* *sfz* pizz. *sfz*

D.B. *f* *mp* *sfz*

Pno. *f* *sfz*

117

Vln. *p*

Vla. *p*

Vc. *mf* *p*

D.B. pizz. *mf* *p*

117

Pno. *fp*

v
88

120

Vln. *sfz* *f* *p* *s.p.*

Vla. *sfz* *f* *p* *s.p.*

Vc. *sfz* *p*

D.B. *arco* *sfz* *fp* *fp*

Pno. *sfz* *mf*

123

Vln. *pp* *mp* *pizz.*

Vla. *pp* *mp* *p*

Vc. *pp* *sneakily - as quiet as possible*

D.B. *pp*

Pno. *p* *pp*

J Tempo I ♩ = 76-80

if some notes don't speak clearly, it's okay

129

Vln. arco ord. pizz. *p*

Vla. *p*

Vc. IV

D.B.

Pno. *p cresc. poco a poco*

132

Vln. arco II IV *p* *cresc.*

Vla. *p* *cresc.*

Vc. *p* *cresc.*

D.B. *p* *cresc.*

Pno. *(8va)* *p* *cresc.*

134

Vln. *f*

Vla. *f*

Vc. *f*

D.B. *f*

Pno. *f*

K

136

Vln. *sfz* *f* *p*

Vla. *sfz* *p*

Vc. *sfz* *p*

D.B. *sfz*

Pno. *sfz* *mf*

sfz

138

Vln. *f*

Vla. *f*

Vc. *f*

D.B. *f*

Pno. *f*

140

Vln. *mf*

Vla. III *mf*

Vc. *mf*

D.B. *fp*

Perc. *p*

Pno. *8va*

Detailed description: This page of a musical score for 'Delirium Nocturnum' contains measures 138 and 140. The score is arranged for a string quartet (Violin, Viola, Violoncello, Double Bass), piano, and percussion. Measures 138-139 are marked with a forte (*f*) dynamic. Measure 140 features a variety of dynamics: *mf* for the Violin, Viola, and Violoncello; *fp* (fortissimo piano) for the Double Bass and Percussion; and *p* (piano) for the Percussion. The piano part includes an *8va* (octave) marking. The percussion part includes a 'III' marking, likely for a triangle. The score is written in 4/4 time and includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

All strings, play with a heavy, distorted sound from here to the end.

Vln. *ff*

Vla. *ff*

Vc. *ff*

D.B. *ff*

Pno. *ff*

cluster on the lowest notes available
hit them as hard and short as you dare to

Vln. *ff*

Vla. *ff*

Vc. *ff*

D.B. *ff*

Pno. *ff*

145

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

D.B.

This block contains the string parts for measures 145 and 146. The Violin I part features a melodic line with accents and slurs. The Violin II part has a similar melodic line. The Viola part provides harmonic support with chords and moving lines. The Violoncello and Double Bass parts play a steady, rhythmic accompaniment with chords.

145

Pno.

This block contains the piano accompaniment for measures 145 and 146. The right hand plays a melodic line with slurs and accents, while the left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and moving lines.

147

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

D.B.

fff

This block contains the string parts for measures 147, 148, and 149. The Violin I part has a melodic line with accents and slurs. The Violin II part has a similar melodic line. The Viola part provides harmonic support with chords and moving lines. The Violoncello and Double Bass parts play a steady, rhythmic accompaniment with chords. A fortissimo (*fff*) dynamic marking is present in measure 148.

147

Pno.

fff

This block contains the piano accompaniment for measures 147, 148, and 149. The right hand plays a melodic line with slurs and accents, while the left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and moving lines. A fortissimo (*fff*) dynamic marking is present in measure 148.