

Aaron Houston

Pestilent Dance

-- For small chamber ensemble --

Full Score

Aaron Houston Music, 2019

For Perusal Use Only

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-- For small chamber ensemble --

Transposed Score

Duration: ca. 6 minutes

Aaron Houston Music, 2019
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Instrumentation

Clarinet in B \flat

Cello

Piano

Program Note

In July of 1518, a woman began to dance wildly in the streets of Strasbourg for several days. Within a week, her contagious movement had infected others and as many as 30 people were feverishly fox-trotting non-stop. Eventually, around 400 people in an area of the Holy Roman Empire (that is now modern day France) moved and grooved for a month without stopping for rest. Some of those involved quite literally danced themselves to death from exhaustion. There are many theories about what was behind the “Dancing Plague of 1518,” but nobody is really sure what caused the outbreak or why it lasted for as long as it did.

In an effort to cure this strange disease, authorities and clergy declared there should be even more dancing! They opened guildhalls, built stages for the maniacal mambos, and paid musicians to perform around the clock so people could continue ceaselessly night and day. However, this only led the pestilent dancing to spread even more rapidly and affect a greater number of people.

Pestilent Dance plays out this twisted tango with winding, wild melodies and the jagged, uneven rhythms of bodies moving awkwardly as they attempt to shake off their fevered disease. The music is energetic, lively, and playful, but – like in 1518 – this *Pestilent Dance* ultimately proves to be a dance with death.

Pestilent Dance was written for the 2019 São Paulo Contemporary Composers Festival.

Performance Notes

Technique indications:

“s.t.” = sul tasto

“s.p.” = sul ponticello

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

“→” = slowly transition from one playing technique/bow placement to the next

“▲” = highest note possible on a given string; can be played with harmonic pressure.

“x” noteheads indicate for the piano player to mute the given note with his/her thumb

Accidentals:

= a standard half-step sharp

♯ = a quarter-step sharp; halfway between natural and sharp

♮ = standard natural sign

♭ = a quarter-step flat; halfway between natural and flat

♮ = a standard half-step flat

All accidentals last for the full duration of a measure unless canceled out by a new accidental.

All trills are half-step trills unless indicated otherwise.

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Pestilent Dance

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Dancing and energetic ♩ = 108

Clarinet in B \flat

Cello

Piano

B \flat Cl.

Vc.

Pno.

9 **A**

B \flat Cl. *f* *fp* *p*

Vc. *f* *mp* *sfz* *sfz* *p* s. p.

Pno. *f* *sfz* *p* *sfz*

13

B \flat Cl. *f*

Vc. ord. *f* *mp* *fp* s. t. ord.

Pno. *f* *sfz*

17

B \flat Cl. *fp fp fp mf*

Vc. *fp fp fp mf sfz* *pizz.*

Pno. *mf* *sfz*

Dampen 'x' notehead with thumb



21

B \flat Cl. *fp fp p mf*

Vc. *p mf* *arco ord.* *pizz.*

Pno. *sfz* *mf* *p sub.*

B



25

B \flat Cl. *fp* *fp* *fp*

Vc. arco *f* *fp*

Pno. *f* *pp*

sfz

29

B \flat Cl. *p*

Vc. *sfz* *p* *mf*

Pno. *f* *p* *mf*

loco

sfz

33

B \flat Cl. *< mf*

Vc. pizz. arco *mf* *mf*

Pno.

Detailed description: This system contains measures 33 and 34. The B \flat Clarinet part (top staff) starts in 3/4 time and changes to 4/4 at measure 34. It features a melodic line with accents and a dynamic marking of *mf*. The Violoncello part (middle staff) begins with a pizzicato (pizz.) section in 3/4 time, followed by an arco section in 4/4 time, also marked *mf*. The Piano part (bottom two staves) provides harmonic support with chords and moving lines in both 3/4 and 4/4 time signatures.

35

B \flat Cl. *f* *p*

Vc. *f*

Pno. *f*

8va

Leg.

Detailed description: This system contains measures 35 and 36. The B \flat Clarinet part (top staff) continues in 4/4 time, marked *f* and then *p*. The Violoncello part (middle staff) is marked *f* and features a melodic line with accents. The Piano part (bottom two staves) includes a section marked *8va* (octave up) in the right hand and a *Leg.* (legato) instruction in the left hand. The time signature changes to 7/8 at the end of measure 36.

38

B \flat Cl. *fp* < *mf* *p* *mf*

Vc. *f* *f* *f* *sfz* *mf*

Pno. *sfz* *

41

B \flat Cl. *fp* *fp* *fp* **C**

Vc. *f* *mf* *sfz* s. p. *tr*

Pno. *sfz* *sfz* *sfz* *sfz* *tr*

45 *fingered gliss*

B \flat Cl. *mf* *fp*

Vc. *f* *pp* s. t.

Pno. *p* *mf* *sfz*

49

B \flat Cl. *fp* *fp* *fp* *fp* *fp* *fp* *fp*

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

Pno. *f* *p* *sfz* *sfz*

54 D

B \flat Cl. *mf* *f* *fp* 7

Vc. s. t. ord. ord. s. p. *mf* *f*

Pno. *mp* *f*

57

B \flat Cl. *f* 3

Vc. s. t. ord. *sfz* *p* *f* *f*

Pno.

60

B \flat Cl.

Vc.

Pno.

ord.

leg.

64

B \flat Cl.

Vc.

Pno.

p sub. legato cresc.

m. s. p.

s. t.

ord.

sfz

pp

p legato cresc.

8va

67

B \flat Cl. E

Vc. \rightarrow s. p. m. s. p.

Pno. (8^{va})

fp fp fp fp fp fp

sfz f sfz pp sfz

f sfz

72

B \flat Cl. 1/4 tone trill

Vc. ord.

Pno.

pp f

pp

p mf f p

Rec.

76

B \flat Cl. *p* playfully

Vc. pizz. *p*

Pno. *p*

80

B \flat Cl. **F** *legato espressivo* *mf* *pp*

Vc. arco *mf* *pp*

Pno. *legato espressivo*

84

B \flat Cl. $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{2}{4}$
pp mf *p*

Vc. $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{2}{4}$

Pno. $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{2}{4}$

88

B \flat Cl. $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{2}{4}$
p mf *p* mf *pp*

Vc. $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{2}{4}$
p mf *pp*

Pno. $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{2}{4}$
sim. <> pattern

G

92

B \flat Cl. *fp* *fp* *fp* *pp*

Vc. *fp* *mf*

Pno.

1/4 tone trill

96

B \flat Cl. *mp* *mf* *pp*

Vc. *pp* *mf*

Pno.

100

B \flat Cl.

Vc.

Pno.

p

pp

103

B \flat Cl.

Vc.

Pno.

p cantabile

f

mf

s. t.

cresc. poco a poco

107

B \flat Cl.

Vc.

Pno.

p *mp*

109

B \flat Cl.

Vc.

Pno.

f ord.

f

I

112

B \flat Cl.

ff

3

Vc.

ff

f sfz

Pno.

ff

114

B \flat Cl.

3

p sub.

Vc.

Pno.

3

116

B \flat Cl. *f sub.* 5 *mf* *mf* 3 *p*

Vc. pizz. arco *sfz* *p*

Pno. *f sub.* *p* *sfz* *p*

120

B \flat Cl.

Vc. pizz. arco s. t. ord. *sfz* *p*

Pno.

J

123

B \flat Cl. *f* *fp* *tr* 6

Vc. *f* *fp*

Pno. *sfz*

126

B \flat Cl. *p* *f* *mp*

Vc. *tr* *f* *mp* *f*

Pno. *mp* *f* *mp*

129

B \flat Cl. *f*

Vc. *f* pizz. arco *sfz > p*

Pno. *sfz*

132

B \flat Cl. *p* *legato espressivo* *mf* *fp* *fp* *fp* *fr* *sfz* *pp*

Vc. *sfz* *pp*

Pno. *p* *legato* *mf* *sfz* *leg.*

137

B \flat Cl. *fp fp fp f*

Vc. *f pp*

Pno. *f*

8va

142

B \flat Cl. *p fp*

Vc. *sfz mf p sfz*

Pno. *mf p*

Red.

L

146

B \flat Cl.

Vc.

Pno.

fp *mp* *pp*

sfz *mf* *sfz* *p*

mf *p*

149

B \flat Cl.

Vc.

Pno.

f *p*

pizz. *f* *sfz*

sfz *p*

153

B \flat Cl. *mf* *f*

Vc. arco *sfz*

Pno. *mf* *f* *sfz* *leg.*

157

B \flat Cl. *p* *mf* *legato espressivo*

Vc. *mf*

Pno. *p sub.* *v.* *leg.*

160

B \flat Cl. M

Vc.

Pno.

162

B \flat Cl.

Vc.

Pno.

164

B \flat Cl. *p sub.* *sfz* *f* *fp* *f*

Vc. *sfz* maintain smooth motion with LH while changing bows through the gliss *f*

Pno. *p sub.* *f* *8va* *sfz* *sfz* *sfz* *ped.*

168

B \flat Cl. *mf* *f*

Vc. *sfz* *mf* *f*

Pno. *8va* *mf* *f* *sfz*

Detailed description: This page of a musical score for 'Pestilent Dance' contains measures 164-171 and 168-175. The score is for three instruments: Bb Clarinet (Bb Cl.), Violin (Vc.), and Piano (Pno.). The first system (measures 164-171) features a 7/8, 3/4, 4/4, 4/4, and 2/4 time signature sequence. The Bb Cl. part starts with a *p sub.* dynamic, followed by *sfz*, *f*, *fp*, and *f*. The Vc. part begins with *sfz* and includes a performance instruction: 'maintain smooth motion with LH while changing bows through the gliss', with a dynamic of *f* later. The Pno. part has *p sub.* and *f* dynamics, and includes an *8va* marking. The second system (measures 168-175) features a 2/4, 4/4, 4/4, 4/4, and 7/8 time signature sequence. The Bb Cl. part has *mf* and *f* dynamics. The Vc. part has *sfz*, *mf*, and *f* dynamics. The Pno. part has *mf* and *f* dynamics, and includes an *8va* marking and a *sfz* dynamic at the end.

171

B \flat Cl.

Vc.

Pno.

174

B \flat Cl.

Vc.

Pno.

Musical score for measures 176-180. The score is for B♭ Clarinet (B♭ Cl.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Piano (Pno.).

- B♭ Cl.:** Measures 176-180. Starts with a *ff* dynamic. Features a triplet of eighth notes in measure 178 and a sixteenth-note triplet in measure 179. Ends with a *p sub.* dynamic. A box labeled 'N' is above measure 179.
- Vc.:** Measures 176-180. Starts with a *ff* dynamic. Includes a *mf* dynamic in measure 177. Features a *pizz.* (pizzicato) instruction in measure 178 and *sfz* (sforzando) dynamics in measures 179 and 180.
- Pno.:** Measures 176-180. Starts with a *ff* dynamic. Features a sixteenth-note triplet in measure 179 and a *p sub.* dynamic in measure 180.

Musical score for measures 179-183. The score is for B♭ Clarinet (B♭ Cl.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Piano (Pno.).

- B♭ Cl.:** Measures 179-183. Starts with a *f sub.* dynamic in measure 179, followed by *p sub.* in measure 180 and *mf* in measure 181. Ends with a *mf* dynamic in measure 183.
- Vc.:** Measures 179-183. Starts with *arco* (arco) in measure 180. Includes a *mf* dynamic in measure 181. Ends with a *Sul D* instruction and an asterisk (*) in measure 183.
- Pno.:** Measures 179-183. Starts with a *sfz* dynamic in measure 179. Includes a *mf* dynamic in measure 181.

* Highest note possible on the given string. Use harmonic pressure.

181

B \flat Cl.

Vc.

Pno.

f

ord. → s. p.

fp *f* *sfz* *fp* *sfz* m. s. p.

185

B \flat Cl.

Vc.

Pno.

f

sfz pizz. arco s. t. ord. *sfz* *p* *f*

188

B \flat Cl.

Vc.

Pno.

f

191

B \flat Cl.

Vc.

Pno.

fp *fp*

sfz

194

B \flat Cl. *fp* *fp* *fp* *fp* *f* *p sub.*

Vc. *fp* *fp* *fp* *fp* *f* *p sub.* ord. \rightarrow m. s. p. ord.

Pno. *p*

198

B \flat Cl. *f* *ff* *sfz*

Vc. *f* *ff* *sfz*

Pno. *f* *ff* *sfz*