

The Bones of a Clown



for four performers

David S. Carter

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The Bones of a Clown: Performance Notes

1. The piece requires four performers, each with a different instrument. One of the instruments can be the human voice (a vocalist could incorporate a percussive instrument of some type in addition to his or her voice). The four instruments should preferably be contrasting from one another.
2. The piece consists of a series of 63 gestures in varying order, with some repeats. Performers are free to interpret them creatively. In interpreting the gestures, performers are free to use any combination of their instrument (played either traditionally or non-traditionally), their voices, and their bodies. Performers in rehearsing the piece should try out different interpretations of individual gestures to find interpretations that make for the most compelling musical result. When two performers perform the same gesture, they should have contrasting interpretations of it. Whatever interpretation of a given gesture performers arrive at in rehearsing, they should be prepared to perform each gesture confidently when performing.
3. Whatever interpretations of the gestures performers use, they should strictly follow the indicated dynamics.
4. Time indications for the six-minute piece appear above and below each system, with each box on the graph paper indicating one second. Each performer should have a stopwatch (or phone app with a stopwatch) that he or she should start simultaneously. Each performer simultaneously starts his or her stopwatch 11 seconds before the gestures start to allow enough time to get ready to begin. The time indications above and below the systems take into account this 11-second lead-in, so that the first gestures start at the 11 second mark.
5. Performers should follow closely the time indications for each gesture. The colored areas indicate the performers should be performing the indicated gesture for that full time (even if the picture does not extend over the full colored area). Grey areas between gestures indicate rests (the given performer is silent).
6. The physical placement of the performers in the performance space is variable, depending on the particular instruments being used, the acoustics and visual characteristics of the performance space, and the judgment of the performers. They may either be spaced as in a conventional chamber ensemble or may potentially be more spread out.

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11 15 20 25 30 35 40 45 50 55 1'

ff p f p pp mp

2

f p ff pp p pp

3

p ff! p f p pp p

4

p ff mp ff pp p

11 15 20 25 30 35 40 45 50 55 1'

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101 105 110 115 120 125 130 135 140 145 150

pp f pp pp mp

p pp p pp

pp pp mp

pp pp mf pp

101 105 110 115 120 125 130 135 140 145 150