

The Melancholy Clown

A Frippery in Three Flaps

for woodwind trio or three clarinets

Malcolm Forsyth

Score



ISMN: 979-0-706080-71-0 CP091

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for woodwind trio or three clarinets
flute or Eb clarinet, Bb clarinet and bassoon or Bb bass clarinet

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Several images spring to mind as I listen to these three little episodes of mine. One is of Petrushka, and indeed it was after seeing Stravinsky's ballet for the first time that these were written. Another is that of Picasso's clown, whose ludicrously jolly make-up only half succeeds in masking a deeply tragic countenance; it is sometimes only such a picture that gives any perspective to the charade of living. A third image is that of Marcel Marceau, the supreme mime artist, whose depth of humanity is unfathomable. I think my three pieces were inspired by something akin to that which moves him and they seem to invite choreographic treatment.

Notes by the composer

Total Duration 4' 50"

1. Warm-up 1' 35"
2. Onstage 2'
3. Reflections 1' 15"

Composer Biography:

Canadian composer Malcolm Forsyth (1936-2011) enjoyed a distinguished international career as one of Canada's major composers, having written a wide variety of works including three symphonies, as well as much other orchestral music, chamber music (especially for brass and strings), vocal, instrumental and choral music.

He was named "Canadian Composer of the Year" by the Canadian Music Council in 1989, and received many other awards, including three JUNOs for "Best Classical Composition" -- 1987, 1994 and 1998, and several JUNO nominations. Since his arrival in Canada from his native South Africa in 1968 to take up his post as Professor at the University of Alberta, his career included creating works for many distinguished performers. Those performers included contralto Maureen Forrester, conductor Charles Dutoit, mezzo-soprano Judith Forst who premiered many of his works, as well as orchestras such as the Edmonton Symphony the National Arts Centre, the Montreal Symphony and Calgary Philharmonic. His 1995 work, *Electra Rising*, a cello concerto written for his daughter Amanda Forsyth, a gifted and distinguished cellist, was premiered with the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Mario Bernardi. This piece went on to win a JUNO award. A 60th birthday celebratory CD of *Electra Rising*, his saxophone concerto, *Tre Vie*, and *Valley of a Thousand Hills*, for chamber orchestra, released in 1997, was his last JUNO award-winning disc. His *Concerto for Eight* (2003) received rave reviews after its many performances in March 2003. *Double Concerto*, for viola, cello & orchestra was commissioned for violist Rivka Golani and cellist Tanya Prochaska, received its world première in October 2004.

Dr. Forsyth's last major work was *A Ballad of Canada*, for mixed chorus and orchestra, a joint commission by the National Arts Centre Orchestra and the Edmonton Symphony, Orchestra received its premiere June 9, 2011 to much acclaim, a month before his death. His work was influenced by both the country of his birth and the country he adopted. Since his death, his works continue to be appreciated and performed across Canada and around the world. Many of his former students have made distinguished careers for themselves as composers and performers in orchestras in Canada and around the world.

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To The Cape Pro-Arte: Eva, Harold and Toni

THE MELANCHOLY CLOWN

A Frippery in Three Flaps for Woodwind Trio or Three Clarinets

Bagatelle en trois volets pour trio de bois ou trois clarinets

MALCOM FORSYTH

1. Warm-up

Pesante, doloroso e satirico (♩=120)

Flute (or E♭ Clarinet) *p*

Clarinet in B♭ *mp*

Bassoon (or Bass Cl.) *mp*

rit. *a tempo*

A *drammatico*

semplice *rit.* *a tempo*

B

C *rit. pesante accel. Vivo rit.*

rall. poco a poco

attacca subito

2. Onstage

Agitato (♩=104)

The first system of the musical score consists of three staves. The top staff is in treble clef, the middle in treble clef, and the bottom in bass clef. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 2/4. The tempo is marked 'Agitato' with a quarter note equal to 104 beats per minute. The dynamic marking is *mf*. The music features rapid sixteenth-note passages in the upper staves and a steady eighth-note accompaniment in the bass staff. Trills are indicated in the final measures of the system.

Tempo di "schmalz"

The second system of the musical score consists of three staves. The key signature remains two flats, and the time signature is 2/4. The dynamic marking is *ff*. The music continues with rapid sixteenth-note passages in the upper staves and a steady eighth-note accompaniment in the bass staff. Trills are indicated in the first measure of the system.

D

The third system of the musical score consists of three staves. The key signature remains two flats, and the time signature is 2/4. The dynamic marking is *f*. The music continues with rapid sixteenth-note passages in the upper staves and a steady eighth-note accompaniment in the bass staff. Trills are indicated in the first measure of the system.

The fourth system of the musical score consists of three staves. The key signature remains two flats, and the time signature is 2/4. The dynamic marking is *f*. The music continues with rapid sixteenth-note passages in the upper staves and a steady eighth-note accompaniment in the bass staff. Trills are indicated in the first measure of the system.

The fifth system of the musical score consists of three staves. The key signature remains two flats, and the time signature is 2/4. The dynamic marking is *sf*. The music continues with rapid sixteenth-note passages in the upper staves and a steady eighth-note accompaniment in the bass staff. Trills are indicated in the first measure of the system.

E Il più presto possibile (♩ = 132 or more)

mp *sf* *mp* *sf* *mp* *sf*

sf *f* *f* *mp* *sf* *f* *f* *mp* *sf*

f *f* *f*

p *p* *f* *p* *f* *p* *f*

F *pp* *mp* *mp* *mf*

First system of musical notation, consisting of three staves (treble, middle, and bass clefs). The music features a complex melodic line in the upper staves and a more rhythmic bass line. There are various accidentals and phrasing slurs throughout the system.

Second system of musical notation, continuing the piece. It shows intricate melodic patterns and rhythmic accompaniment across the three staves.

Third system of musical notation, marked with a **G** in a box above the first measure. The dynamics are marked *ff* (fortissimo) in both the upper and middle staves. The music continues with complex textures and phrasing.

Fourth system of musical notation, featuring a *ff* dynamic marking at the bottom. The system contains dense melodic and harmonic material across all three staves.

Fifth system of musical notation, marked with an **H** in a box above the first measure. It includes a triplet of eighth notes in the middle staff and continues with complex melodic and rhythmic patterns.