Letters To A Friend

For
Oboe
Clarinet
Alto Saxophone
Bass Clarinet
Bassoon

Theresa Wong
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Letters To A Friend

Commissioned and composed for Splinter Reeds
with support from the San Francisco Friends of Chamber Music.
Deepest gratitude to the splendid members of Splinter Reeds:
Dana Jessen, Kyle Bruckmann, Bill Kalinkos, David Wegehaupt and Jeff Anderle.
Special thanks to Augusto de Campos for his blessing on this piece.

Dedicated to Alessia Pugliatti (1975-2016)

Letters To A Friend was composed as a message to a departed friend, Alessia Pugliatti, who passed away on December 31, 2016 of a rare cancer known as Epithelioid Hemangioendothelioma. A self-proclaimed ‘shy exhibitionist’ hailing from Messina Sicily, Alessia was, among many things, a singer, an ardent fan of Brazilian culture, an organizer for the Portuguese Pavilion at the Venice Biennale and a tireless advocate for African immigrants living in Venice Italy.

The piece stems from the poem O Pulsar (1975) by Augusto de Campos (a founding father of the Brazilian concrete poetry movement), which was rendered in an exquisitely austere and ritualistic song by Caetano Veloso. In Letters To A Friend, the Portuguese text is translated into Morse Code, generating a rhythmic structure from the letter patterns. The reed quintet is in essence sounding out the poem letter by letter, transmitting this message to my friend:

O pulsar
Onde quer que você esteja
Em Marte ou Eldorado
Abra a janela e veja
O pulsar quase mudo
Abraço de anos-luz
Que nenhum sol aquece
E o oco escuro esquece.

Wherever you are
On Mars or Eldorado
Open the window and see
The pulsar almost mute
Light-year embrace
That no sun warms
And the dark hollow forgets.
Notes On Performance:

Sticks
The sticks originally used are salvaged scraps of various hardwoods with the approximate dimension of 1"x.75"x.75". They should be hit together like a film slate; along the length of the stick, rather than on a single point as regular percussion rhythm sticks are hit. Performers may make or find their own sticks or use commercially made percussion sticks such as claves.

Spatialization and Headlamps
The piece can be played in a regular ensemble formation with players on a stage, seated or standing in a semi-circle in the following order from left to right (as seen by the audience): Oboe, Alto Saxophone, Bassoon, Bass Clarinet, Bb Clarinet. Alternatively, the players can be spatialized along the perimeter of the entire performance hall encircling the audience. In either case, the performers can play in a room that is lit with overhead or theater lights, or preferably, in the dark wearing only headlamps for illumination.

Click track
A click track is very helpful and can be made to aid the performance of this piece.

Quarter Notes vs. Eighth Notes
In the full score, quarter notes correlate to the ‘dash’ of any particular Morse code letter while eighth notes correlate to the ‘dot’ of the letter. (Letters and their Morse codes are indicated above each measure). However, in the instrumental parts, eighth notes are sometimes notated with a staccato quarter note for ease of reading at a fast tempo. They should simply be played as eighth notes. (*In measure 49, the alto saxophone note deviates from this rule for clarity of the conglomerate rhythm.)

Multiphonics

Oboe
Multiphonics are to be fingered in the following way:

mm. 136 & 142:

m. 148:

mm. 153, 157 & 161:
Alto Saxophone
The multiphonic from m. 197-end is to be fingered in the following way and played softly:

Additional notation and an audio sample can be found on #4 of this reference page:

Bassoon
Multiphonics are to be created by finger ing the indicated pitch and overblowing to create overtone multiphonics. The fundamental pitch should be included in the sounding tone as much as possible.

Bass Clarinet
Multiphonics are to be played as spectral multiphonics, with pitch material weighted either towards the fundamental or towards higher overtones, as indicated in the score.
LETTERS TO A FRIEND
for Alessia Pugliatti

Theresa Wong

Play with wooden sticks

$A \text{ } \frac{d}{\text{=110}}$

Ob.

Cl.

Alto Sax.

B. Cl.

Bsn.

$B \text{ } \frac{d}{\text{=130}}$

Ob.

Cl.

Alto Sax.

B. Cl.

Bsn.

$C \text{ } \frac{d}{\text{=110}}$

Ob.

Cl.

Alto Sax.

B. Cl.

Bsn.

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take reed off

slap tongue (non-pitched to pitched)

slap tongue (non-pitched to pitched)

pitched

non-pitched

pitched

non-pitched

pitched

non-pitched

take reed off

slap tongue (non-pitched to pitched)

pitched

non-pitched

pitched

non-pitched

pitched

non-pitched

tongue ram (finger these pitches)

slap tongue (non-pitched to pitched)

pitched

non-pitched

pitched

non-pitched

pitched

non-pitched

pitched

non-pitched

tongue ram (finger these pitches)
Alto Sax.

B. Cl.

Bsn.

Ob.

Cl.

Alto Sax.

B. Cl.

Bsn.

Ob.

Cl.

Alto Sax.

B. Cl.

Bsn.

Ob.

Cl.

Alto Sax.

B. Cl.

Bsn.

Ob.

Cl.

Alto Sax.

B. Cl.

Bsn.
Section H to last approx. 16 seconds

mf

B. Cl.

singing and playing, creating beats
(one breath only)

(take one breath, as needed)

107

mf

ob.

put reed back on

Voice

cl.

Enter 4-5 sec. after B. Cl

Alto sax.

Voice

B. Cl.

Bsn.

put reed back on

Voice

Voice

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