

Gabriel Ehrlich

Waltz of the Admissions Officers

*to everyone who has experienced the dissonance
of packaging themselves up in a (virtual) envelope
and disseminating themselves among subsets of society whose opinions they care about
for adjudication*

Composer's Notes

The beginning and ending portions of the waltz are intended to caricature the ritual behind the veil of pompous formality often ascribed by college admissions officers to the admissions process (and legitimized by the exhortations of middle-class American society) as a Bacchic drawing of straws. **The middle portion is intended to reflect on the genuine** joy and suffering, often elicited by the years-long process itself, that applicants pour into their personal essays.

In this piece I have used several uncommon conventions and techniques, which I explain here. **Text in parentheses** indicates a reminder of a previous notation that is still in effect. **The only markings that are not consistent** between the score and the parts are text in parentheses, clef changes, al ottavas, and the text on multi-part staves that indicates which part has the indicated music or marking.

In the strings, each “sul C” marking (or whichever string it is) is placed above a line similar to that used for an al ottava marking, to indicate more precisely where I intended the marking to end (i.e. where I no longer care whether every player is using that string). Regarding the glissandos, the note leading into each one should be played nearly full length, and the glissando should merely exaggerate the shift to the second note.

In the winds, next to any dynamic and other markings you will see a number. This indicates which player has the marking at that location, simply to help the conductor avoid making potentially ambiguous statements like “Play from the last *f*.” Most wind players have (e.g. in m. 38) the word “flutter” marked above a note with three tremolo beams. That indicates a fluttertongue, which in this piece means an alveolar trill (“rolled R”), not a uvular trill (“growl”). The purpose in most cases is to give the note a harsh, egregious timbre. **A note for inobservant woodwind players:** every trill is diatonic (apply the key signature to the upper note) unless otherwise marked.

During mm. 33–59, **the timpanist** is asked to play with two sticks in each hand (like the mallet instrument technique), one hard stick and one soft stick. This is because there are quick transitions between notes that I wanted sharply attacked and notes that I wanted to be gentler. At m. 81 I stop indicating whether to use hard or soft sticks for the rest of the piece; the timpanist must use their discretion. The timpanist often has instructions such as “change 32” to G”; the number indicates which timpano to change (see below for instrumentation), and based on the range of the timpano and the given letter, the timpanist can always determine which note (in this case G2). Finally, in mm. 223–225, the timpanist is instructed to roll simultaneously on two drums (one stick each) that have been tuned to the same note, and the subsequent (mm. 225–226) marking “26” 29” 26” 29”” above four single notes stemmed alternating directions indicates that the timpanist should alternate between striking those two drums, starting with the smaller one.

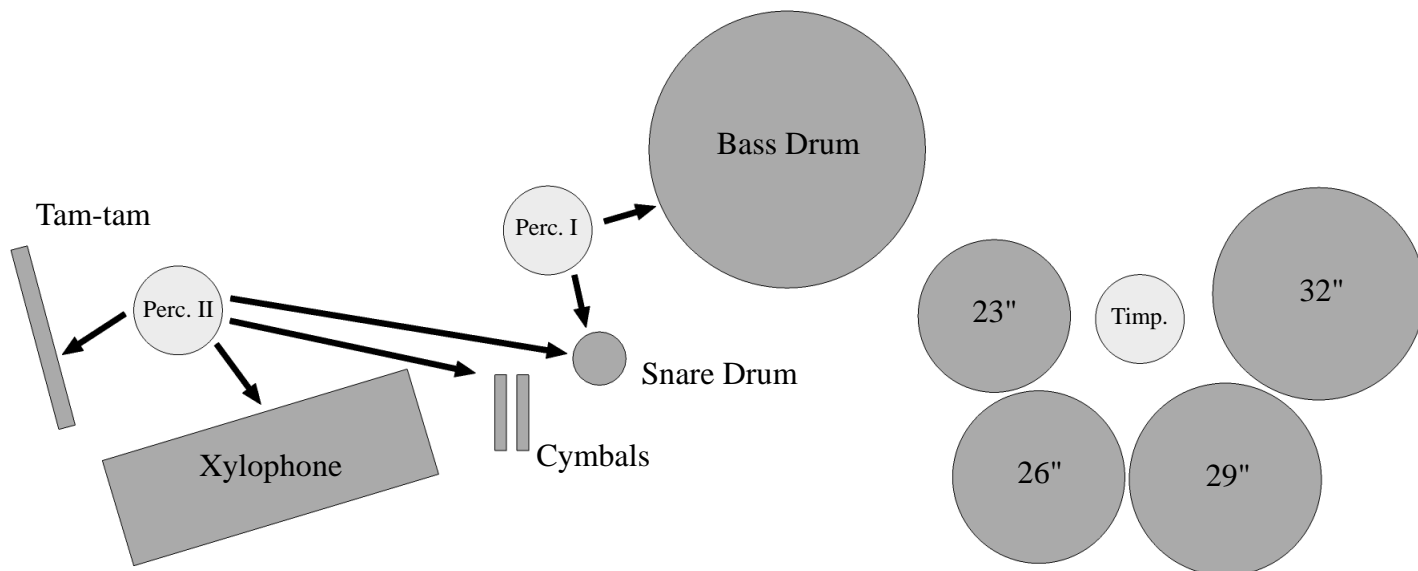
In mm. 5, 207, and 229 **the bass drummer and timpanist** are instructed to create a dead sound by hitting the center of the drum. In m. 229, **the cymbals player** is instructed to create a similar dead effect by bringing the cymbals straight together (and keeping them there), with none of the usual shearing motion.

The bass drummer should use soft timpani sticks most of the time because rolls are frequent.

In mm. 193–202, **the time signature** goes into 5/4 (switching erratically between 2+3 and 3+2) and **the tempo** slows down and speeds up every other measure between Tempo I (a rotary waltz tempo) and what I call Tempo II, a cross-step waltz tempo. This combination is intended to match a 5-count waltz I invented in which, over the course of two rotations, one does the following: two or three steps of rotary waltz, followed three or two of cross-step to finish the first rotation; then two or three steps of cross-step, followed by three or two of rotary to finish the second rotation. (In rotary the lead starts on the left foot, and in cross-step on the right.)

In order to avoid gender-related microaggressions, I have used the singular neuter “they.” Verbs conjugate as if it were plural.

Instrumentation: woodwinds 2/2/2/2, brass 4/3/3/1, strings 12/10/8/8/6, percussion below



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Fast Waltz $\text{♩} = 60$

a 2, 1. 8^{va}

Flutes I II *fff*

Oboes I II *fff*

Clarinets in B♭ I II *fff*

Bassoons I II *fff*

Horns in F I II *fff*

III IV *fff*

Trumpets in B♭ I II *fff*

III *fff*

Trombones I II *fff*

Bass Tb. Tuba *fff*

Fast Waltz $\text{♩} = 60$

Timpani *fff*

dead: strike the center

Bass Drum *fff*

Snare Drum *mf*

Percussion *fff*

Cymbals *fff*

Snare Drum (and Xyl.) *fff*

Xylophone (played by Perc. II)

Violins I II *fff*

Violas *fff*

Violoncellos *fff*

Contrabasses *fff*

div. in 4

p

p

p

6 **A**

Ob. *1. solo*
1. mf
2. solo
2. mf

Cl. *(p)*

Bsn. *(p)*

Vla. *(p)*

Vc. *(p)*

Db. *(p)*

15

Fl. *1. p*
(2. solo)
2. pp

Ob. *(tutti mf)*
1. pp
2. p
mp
mp
f
1. mf
2. mp

Cl. *(p)*
mp

Bsn. *(p)*
mp

Hn. *p*
pp
mp
1. espress.

Vln. *pp*
mp
mp
pp
div.
mp
pp

Vla. *(p)*
unis.
mp
3
3
div.
mp
pp

Vc. *(p)*
mp
pp

Db. *(p)*
mp
pp
mp

(8) *tutti* *1^o*

33

Fl. *3* *(1. ff)* *2. p* *2. ff* *ff* *flutter*

Ob. *f* *ff* *ff* *flutter* *p*

Cl. *3* *(1. ff)* *2. p* *2. f* *2. ff* *ff* *flutter*

Bsn. *f* *ff* *flutter* *p*

Hn. *p* *2. cuivré* *1. ff* *2. f* *2.* *ff* *flutter*

Tpt. *f* *ff* *fff* *cuivré* *f* *flutter* *ff*

Tbn. *mf* *f* *flutter* *ff* *flutter* *ff*

Timp. *hold a hard and a soft stick in each hand* *use hard sticks* *f* *ff* *fff* *mf* *attack with hard sticks, roll with soft sticks* *f* *ff* *p* *use soft sticks*

Xyl. *ff*

Vln. *(f)* *(top line sul A)* *mp* *ff* *sub. p*

Vla. *f* *mp* *ff* *sub. p*

Vc. *f* *mp* *ff* *sub. p*

Db. *ff* *f* *ff*

41 C

Bsn. 2. *mf*

Hn. *cuivré fmp p*

Tbn. *mf* Tuba *Tb. mf 3. mf*

Timp. *use hard sticks solo ff use soft sticks mp change 23" to F change 26" to D* C

Vln. *fmp p pizz. p div. f*

Vla. *fmp p pizz. p div. f*

Vc. *fmp p pizz. p div. f*

Db. *f mp p pizz. f mf*

(top line sul A)

49

Fl. *mf*

Ob. *mf*

Cl. *mf*

Bsn. *1. mf*

Hn. *mp* *fp*

Tpt. *mf* *f*

Tbn. *Tuba* *Tb. f*

Perc. I *Snare drum* *mf* *f* *n*

Xyl. *f* *p*

Vln. *div. arco 3* *mp* *only top line trills* *arco* *f* *non div.* *ff* *p*

Vla. *div. arco* *mf* *unis.* *f* *non div.* *ff* *p*

Vc. *div. arco* *mf* *unis.* *f* *non div.* *ff* *p*

Db. *(pizz.)* *(mf)* *arco* *f* *non div.* *ff* *p*

57

Hn. *(p)*

Xyl. *mf* 3 *f* *mf* 3

Vln. *p* 3 *ricochet* *div.* *f* *solo*

Vla. *p* 3 *ricochet* *div.*

Vc. *f* *pizz.* *p* *arco, col legno battuto* *mf*

Db. *f* *p*

66 **D**

Fl. *2. ff*

Ob. *2. ff*

Cl. *p* *ppp* *2. ff* *1. ff*

Bsn. *2. ff* *1. ff*

Hn. *pp* *distantly legatissimo* *2. f*

Timp. *back to one stick per hand use soft sticks* *change 26" to E* *pp* *return to your station*

Xyl. *f* *tutti pizz.* *div. arco* *ppp nat.* *ff* *sul C*

Vln. *p* *col legno battuto* *mf* *col legno battuto* *ppp nat.* *ff*

Vla. *mf* *ppp nat.* *ff*

Vc. *(mf)* *(pizz.)* *ppp arco* *ff*

Db. *(p)* *ppp* *ff*

75 (2.) 1. 1.8^{mo} g²

Fl. (2.) ff 1. ff fff a 2

Ob. (2.) ff 1. ff fff

Cl. ff fff

Bsn. ff fff

Hn. (2.) 1. ff fff

3. 3. f 4. ff fff

Tpt. ff fff

Tbn. p a 2 ff fff

from now on, the player chooses the sticks

Timp. fffp f p

Bass Drum pp fff mf fff

Perc. Snare Drum fffp fff p fff p fff

move to xyl. rim shot

Xyl. mf return to station

unis. non div. ff fff pizz. f p

Vln. (sul C) ff fff fff p

Vla. ff sul A fff p

Vc. ff fff pizz. f p

Db. ff fff pizz. f p

F

[illegible]

116

G 1.8

Fl. *ff* *a 2* *fff* *p*

Ob. *ff* *fff* *p*

Cl. *ff* *fff* *p*

Bsn. *ff* *fff* *p*

Hn. *ff* *fff* *p*

Tpt. *ff* *fff* *p*

Tbn. *ff* *fff* *p*

Timp. *ff* *fff* *change 32" to F*

Perc. *ff* *fff* *Tam-tam* *slowly damp* *mf*

Vln. *ff* *div.* *unis.* *ff* *f*

Vla. *ff* *div.* *unis.* *ff* *f*

Vc. *ff* *div. in 4* *ff* *div. in 2* *f*

Db. *ff* *fff* *ff* *f*

127 (Tam-tam) cut off

Perc. II

mf *p* *pp* *ppp*

outside players con sord.

inside players play

inside players con sord.

tutti (con sord.)

Vln.

mf *mp* *p* *pp* *ppp*

con sord.

Vla.

6 violas div. (skip first stand)

2 solo violas div. con sord.

f *p*

Vc.

6 cellos div. (skip first stand) sul D

2 solo cellos div. con sord. sul A

f *p*

con sord. solo

Db.

mf *mp* *p* *pp* *ppp* *p*

137 H

Fl.

1. *p*

Ob.

1. *p*

Cl.

2. *p*

Bsn.

cantabile

p *p*

Vln.

(ppp)

Vla.

(ppp)

Vc.

ppp

Db.

ppp

tutti con sord. cantabile sul D

p

174 (1. solo) *(1. mp)* flutter *tr* *change 23" to D*
change 26" to C
change 29" to A \sharp
change 32" to G
 stop rolling slowly damp *n*

Fl. *(1. mp)*

Timp. *(Bass Drum) ppp*

Perc. I *8 12 16 20*

Vln. *(ppp) 8 12 16 18* *n*

188 (1. solo) *(mp)* *n* *f* *p* *1. mp espress.*

Fl. *1. n* *p* *2. p* *a 2* *tr*

Ob. *f* *p*

Cl. *1. n* *p* *2. p*

Bsn. *p* *a 2* *tr*

Hn. *fp* *fp* *1. mp espress.*

(Bass Drum) *(ppp)* *24 26* *p*

Perc. *Cymbals*

Vln. *senza sord. div. p* *senza sord. sul pont. > fp* *senza sord. sul pont. > fp* *senza sord. f* *p* *nat. div. nat. mp espress.*

Vla. *senza sord. sul pont. > fp* *nat. div. nat. mp espress.*

Vc. *senza sord. f* *p* *tr*

Db. *senza sord. f* *p* *tr*

Tempo II, accel. Tempo I, rit. Tempo II, accel. Tempo I, rit. Tempo II, accel.

196 2. (1.)

Fl. (1. *mp* *espress.*) 2. *f* *p* 1. 2. *f* *p* *f* *sub. p*

Ob. *p* *f* *p* *p* *f* *sub. p*

Cl. 1. *f* *p* 1. *f* 2. *p* *f* *sub. p*

Bsn. (a 2) *p* *f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *sub. pp*

Hn. (1.) (1. *mp* *espress.*) 1. *p* *f* *sub. p*

Tpt. *p* *f* *p* *p* *f* *p*

Vln. (p) *f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *sub. pp*

Vla. (mp *espress.*) *p* *f* *p* *mp* *espress.* *p* *f* *sub. pp*

Vc. (p) *f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *sub. pp*

Db. (p) *f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *sub. pp*

Tempo II, accel. Tempo I, rit. Tempo II, accel. Tempo I, rit. Tempo II, accel.

div. unis. div. unis.

[illegible]

220 1. (8) (a 2)

Fl. *fff* *p* *fff*

Ob. *fff* *p* *fff*

Cl. *fff* *mf* *fff*

Bsn. *fff* *fff* *fff*

Hn. *fff* *fp* *mf* *fff*

Tpt. *fff* *mf* *fff*

Tbn. *fff* *fff* *fff*

Timp. *fff* *fff* *fff*

Perc. *fff* *p* *fff*

Vln. *fff* *p* *fff*

Vla. *fff* *fff* *mf* *fff*

Vc. *fff* *fff* *fff*

Db. *fff* *fff* *fff*

roll on both 26" and 29", one stick each 26" 29" 26" 29" dead

dead: bring cymbals straight together and keep them there