AL-KITAB AL-KHAMR

الكتاب الخمر

for chamber orchestra

(2015)

TREVOR BAČA

PREFACE

Al-kitab al-khamr is the book of forbidden drink. "Khamr" is the word in the Qūr'an that prohibits the faithful from intoxicants: from wine and from stimulants and from bringers-of-visions. What things must those be that between poison and pleasure tack course in the body? What colors and shapes the forbidden inscribes as its left-behind marks on dreams and insoluble mind.

Instrumentation:

- Bass flute (doubling flute)
- English horn (doubling oboe)
- Bass clarinet (doubling B♭ clarinet)
- Baritone saxophone (doubling sopranino saxophone)
- Guitar
- Piano
- Percussion
- Violin
- Viola
- Cello
- Contrabass

Prioritization of tempo. The piece comprises two series of different tempi. Tempo series one sets the quarter note equal to 126, 63 or 31.5 (written as 32). Tempo series two sets the quarter note equal to 84 or 42. The tempi of the first series stand 3:2 in relation to the tempi of the second series. Even though the choice of tempi are to some extent a matter of the preferences of the ensemble and the acoustics of the hall, the subito changes of tempo in the piece should be felt and conducted as exact metric modulations. In addition, the tempi of the very fast parts of the piece should be played as closely as possible to the tempi written in the score: it is preferable to play the dense figures in very fast parts of the piece as something of a blur rather than slowing the tempi to attack the notes carefully.

Stopping time. Fermatas are not (yet) written in the score. But fermatas should be inserted by the conductor in the places that need them. All the measures written as grand pauses are fair game for fermatas. As are individual beats that help clarify the intensity of transitions from one type of material to the next.

Accidentals. Accidentals govern only one note. This is true even for successive noteheads at the same staff position. *Because of this no natural signs appear in the score* (with the exception of parenthesized noteheads in trills). The sequence of, for example, G♯4 followed by G4 (without accidental) is to be understood as G♯4 followed by G♮4.

The winds are tranposed. The bass flute sounds an octave lower than written. The English horn sounds a perfect fifth lower than written. The B♭ clarinet sounds a major second lower than written and the bass clarinet sounds a major ninth lower than written. The baritone saxophone sounds a major thirteenth lower than written and the sopranino saxophone sounds a minor third higher than written.

Flute. The two bass flute multiphonics in the piece are numbers 17 and 22 in Carin Levine's book *Die Technik der Flötenspiel* and the boxed numbers in the score are reminders of this. Any fingerings approximating the off-octave sound of the multiphonics may be used. Trills without secondary noteheads are color trills.

Saxophone. The multiphonic dyad in the piece is number 77 in Marcus Weiss's book *Die Technik der Saxophons*; the boxed number in the score is a reminder of this.

Guitar. The guitar is tuned as usual. The sound ideal for all plucked notes is as resonant as possible; interpret rests only as rhythmic placeholders (and not as indications to stop the reverberation of the notes). Cross noteheads indicate half harmonics; play the low E (or other open strings) marked this way with a type of RH plucking that best approximates the color of the other half harmonics. Individuated clicks indicated in the score should be executed by running a pick or fingernail laterally up the outer wire weave of the E string creating a continuous but sparse and irregular sound. Use a metal machinists screw of about 8 or 10 centimeters like a type of corrugated guiro in the part of the score that requests screw-bowing; make up-bow and down-bow changes freely.

Piano. The piano should be prepared with a piece of cardboard woven between the strings of twelve notes in the octave from F♯6 to F♯7. The effect is coarsely to mute these pitches; no special indication is given in the score when these pitches are encountered. 'Tamburo' hits characterize the first section of the piece. Execute these with heel of the palm struck against the lowest strings inside the piano with the sustain pedal lifted; the sound augments the color of the tam-tam. Use a credit card run very slowly laterally up the weaving of the low C♯1 string in the part of the score that requests individuated clicks.

Percussion. Six percussion instruments are required: (1.) one woodblock; (2.) mounted castanets; (3.) snare drum; (4.) bass drum; (5.) very large tam-tam (38″ recommended); (6.) marimba. The percussion part is notated primarily on a single-line staff. Where cells of the five-line staff occur they represent a synchoronous attack on A♭5 in the marimba together with a single woodblock; these two instruments are always struck together in the piece and should be placed near each other so that each can be hit with a hard mallet at the same time. The tam-tam should be as large as possible and the tam-tam dynamics written into the score may be freely ignored: the goal is as resonant a sound that fills as much of the hall as possible without spilling over from the fundamental of the instrument into the less desirable upper frequencies. Rolls on the bass drum are all to be as close to attackless as possible: the rate of the roll doesn't matter but the background depth provided by the instrument is important.

Strings. The violin, viola and cello are tuned as usual. String IV of the contrabass is tuned down to G♮0 (a major sixth lower than the usual tuning of E♮1) and will probably be a little loose as a result. (Note that that the seemingly large double stops in the contrabass at the interval of a minor seventh are all played with the fingers at the exact same position on strings III and IV.) The contrabass plays a special role in the piece and should be allowed to sound front-and-center above the other strings in many sections of the piece. Natural harmonic glissandi lentissimi in the violin, viola, cello and contrabass are designed to encourage the production of multiphonics and other unstable harmonics: allow the multiphonics and transient harmonics to sound as much as possible and do not adjust them back to recognizable harmonics unnecessarily.

Al-kitab al-khamr was written between January and April 2015 for Ensemble Dal Niente. The piece is to be premiered on the 16th of May 2015 on the campus of Harvard University by Ensemble Dal Niente.

AL-KITAB AL-KHAMR

for Ensemble Dal Niente

Trevor Bača

♩= 126

2/4 6/4 3/4

L.17

Bass flute — *mp*

English horn — air tone without reed: mix inhales and exhales ad lib. — *p*

Bass clarinet — *pp*

Baritone saxophone — *pp*

Guitar — cross noteheads indicate half-harmonics — *f*

Piano — tamburo: strike lowest strings with palm inside piano and let vibrate (pedal down throughout) — *mf*

Percussion — XL tam-tam — *mp*

Violin — emphasize multiphonics and unstable harmonics prominently throughout — IV — *pp* *ppp* *ppp* — 4:3

Viola — emphasize multiphonics and unstable harmonics prominently throughout — III — *pp* *ppp*

Cello — emphasize multiphonics and unstable harmonics prominently throughout — III — *pp* *ppp* *ppp* — 3:2

Contrabass — emphasize multiphonics and unstable harmonics prominently throughout — III — *f* — 7:6 — 5:4

5

Bass fl.

Eng. hn.

Bass cl.

Bar. sax.

Gt.

5:4

Pf.

Perc.

3:2

Vn.

pp pp ppp ppp

Va.

3:2

7:5

pp pp ppp ppp pp pp

Vc.

7:6

5:4

pp pp ppp ppp

Cb.

5:4

9

4/4 3/4 4/4 5/4

Bass fl.

Eng. hn.

Bass cl.

Bar. sax.

Gt.

5:4

3:2

3:2

Pf.

Perc.

7:4

7:5

Vn.

pp pp < p p

Va.

p p

Vc.

5:4

pp pp

Cb.

3:2

pp < ppp ppp

13

Bass fl.

Eng. hn.

Bass cl.

Bar. sax.

Gt.

3:2

Pf.

marimba + woodblock

Perc.

sfz

5:4

Vn.

pp pp

Va.

4:3 4:3

pp pp p p

Vc.

3:2 7:4

p p pp pp p p

Cb.

7:6

pp pp

17

Bass fl.

Eng. hn.

Bass cl.

Bar. sax.

L.22

Gt.

5:4

5:4

Pf.

Perc.

4:3

3:2

Vn.

p

p

ppp

ppp

Va.

7:4

ppp

ppp

Vc.

Cb.

5:4

ppp

ppp

pp

pp

20

Bass fl.

Eng. hn.

Bass cl.

Bar. sax.

Gt.

Pf.

Perc.

Vn.

Va.

Vc.

Cb.

3:2

7:6

5:4

4:3

pp

ppp

p

24

♩= 63

4/4 2/4 6/4

Bass fl.

Eng. hn.

Bass cl.

Bar. sax.

move towards (and then back away from) the bridge at the center of each accelerando

Gt.

match dynamic levels of guitar

8va

Pf.

mf

Perc.

5:4 5:4

Vn.

ppp ppp pp pp

Va.

pp pp > ppp ppp

4:3

Vc.

pp pp

Cb.

3:2 7:4 7:6

pp pp p p ppp ppp

(accel.)

28

Bass fl.

Eng. hn.

Bass cl.

Bar. sax.

Gt.

8va

Pf.

Perc.

Vn.

ppp

Va.

pp

Vc.

7:4

7:6

Cb.

(accel.)

32

Bass fl.

Eng. hn.

Bass cl.

Bar. sax.

Gt.

8va

Pf.

Perc.

sfz

9:5

7:4

Vn.

pp pp p p pp pp

Va.

7:6 5:4

p p > pp pp

Vc.

p p pp pp

Cb.

8:5 3:2

ppp ppp pp pp

(accel.) ♩= 84

36

Bass fl.

Eng. hn.

Bass cl.

Bar. sax.

Gt.

Pf.

Perc.

Vn.

Va.

Vc.

Cb.

put reed back in

molto flautando ed estr. sul pont.

40

Bass fl.

Eng. hn.

Bass cl.

W.77

Bar. sax.

Gt.

3:2

3:2

3:2

sparse, individual clicks with credit card on C♯1 string
(1-2/sec. in irregular rhythm)

Pf.

Perc.

5:4

Vn.

Va.

Vc.

Cb.

A

♩= 42

44

Bass fl.

Eng. hn.

Bass cl.

Bar. sax.

Gt.

Pf.

Perc.

Vn.

Va.

Vc.

Cb.

mp

pp

mf

III + IV

(accel.) ♩= 84

48

Bass fl.

Eng. hn.

Bass cl.

Bar. sax.

Gt.

Pf.

Perc.

Vn.

Va.

Vc.

Cb.

3/4 4/4 6/8 4/4

pp pp mp

to flute

sparse, individual clicks with nail or pick laterally up string
(1-2/sec. in irregular rhythm)

mf

5:4

(rit.) ♩= 42

52

Fl.

Eng. hn.

Bass cl.

Bar. sax.

Gt.

Pf.

Perc.

sfz

Vn.

5:4

Va.

5:4

Vc.

sparse, individual clicks with extremely slow bow
(1-2/sec. in irregular rhythm)

mf

Cb.

3:2

56

Fl.

Eng. hn.

Bass cl.

Bar. sax.

Gt.

Pf.

Perc.

Vn.

Va.

Vc.

Cb.

fluttertongue

draw metal screw back and forth slowly across string;
continuous loud sound

arco ordinario

60

2/4 5/4 6/8 4/4

Fl.

Eng. hn.

Bass cl.

Bar. sax.

Gt.

Pf.

8vb

Perc.

Vn.

Va.

Vc.

Cb.

fff sfz

♩= 126

64

Fl.

Eng. hn.

Bass cl.

Bar. sax.

Gt.

Pf.

Perc.

Vn.

Va.

Vc.

Cb.

68

Fl.

Eng. hn.

Bass cl.

Bar. sax.

Gt.

Pf.

8va

3:2

5:4

sfz

Perc.

Vn.

Va.

Vc.

Cb.

72

4/4 3/4 6/8 2/4 B

Fl.

Eng. hn.

Bass cl.

Bar. sax.

Gt.

8va

Pf.

3:2 3:2 fff 3:2

Perc.

sfz sfz sfz

Vn.

Va.

Vc.

Cb.

77

♩= 63

Fl.

Ob. — to oboe

Cl. — to clarinet in B-flat

Sopr. sax. — to sopranino saxophone

Gt.

Pf. — 8va — 5:4 5:4 5:4 — 3:2 — ffff 3:2 3:2 5:4 5:4 5:4 5:4

Perc. — bass drum — pp

Vn. — estr. sul pont. — p — 5:4 — pp

Va. — estr. sul pont. — 5:3 — p — pp

Vc. — estr. sul pont. — p — pp

Cb. — p — p

(accel.) ♩= 126

81

Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Sopr. sax.
Gt.
Pf.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Cb.

8va

castanets

estr. sul pont.

85

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

Sopr. sax.

Gt.

Pf.

Perc.

Vn.

Va.

Vc.

Cb.

89

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

Sopr. sax.

Gt.

Pf.

Perc.

Vn.

Va.

Vc.

Cb.

92

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

Sopr. sax.

Gt.

Pf.

Perc.

Vn.

Va.

Vc.

Cb.

96

♩= 63

3/4 4/4 2/4

Fl.

8:7 8:7 8:7 8:7 8:7 8:7 8:7 8:7 8:7

Ob.

6:5 6:5 6:5 6:5 6:5 6:5 6:5 6:5 6:5 6:5

Cl.

9:8 9:8 9:8 9:8 9:8 9:8 9:8

Sopr. sax.

7:6 7:6 7:6 7:6 7:6 7:6 7:6 7:6 7:6

Gt.

Pf.

11:9 11:9 11:9 11:9 11:9 11:9 11:9

Perc.

7:4 5:3 3:2

Vn.

Va.

5:4 3:2

Vc.

7:6 7:4 5:4

Cb.

arco ordinario

101

♩= 42

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

to bass clarinet

Sopr. sax.

Gt.

Pf.

Perc.

bass drum

Vn.

Va.

Vc.

Cb.

105

Fl.

Ob.

Bass cl.

Sopr. sax.

Gt.

Pf.

Perc.

Vn.

Va.

Vc.

Cb.

4/4 5/4 3/4 4/4

air tone with lips covering mouthplate
(sounds major 7th lower)

pp

ppp

air tone

pp

Shape trill dynamics beautifully. (Thank you, Stefano.)

tr

mp

109

5/4 6/8 2/4 C

Fl.

Ob.

air tone without reed: mix inhales and exhales ad lib.

pp

Bass cl.

Sopr. sax.

Gt.

Pf.

Perc.

pp

Vn.

bow on wooden mute

p

Va.

bow on wooden mute

p

Vc.

bow on tailpiece

p

Cb.

bow on tailpiece

p

114

Fl.

Ob.

Bass cl.

Sopr. sax.

Gt.

Pf.

Perc.

ppp

Vn.

Va.

Vc.

Cb.

accel.

118

Fl.

Ob.

Bass cl.

Sopr. sax.

Gt.

Pf.

Perc.

snare drum

Vn.

Va.

Vc.

Cb.

(accel.)

122

Fl.

Ob.

Bass cl.

Sopr. sax.

Gt.

Pf.

Perc.

Vn.

Va.

Vc.

Cb.

(accel.) ♩= 84

126

Fl.

Ob.

Bass cl.

Sopr. sax.

Gt.

Pf.

Perc.

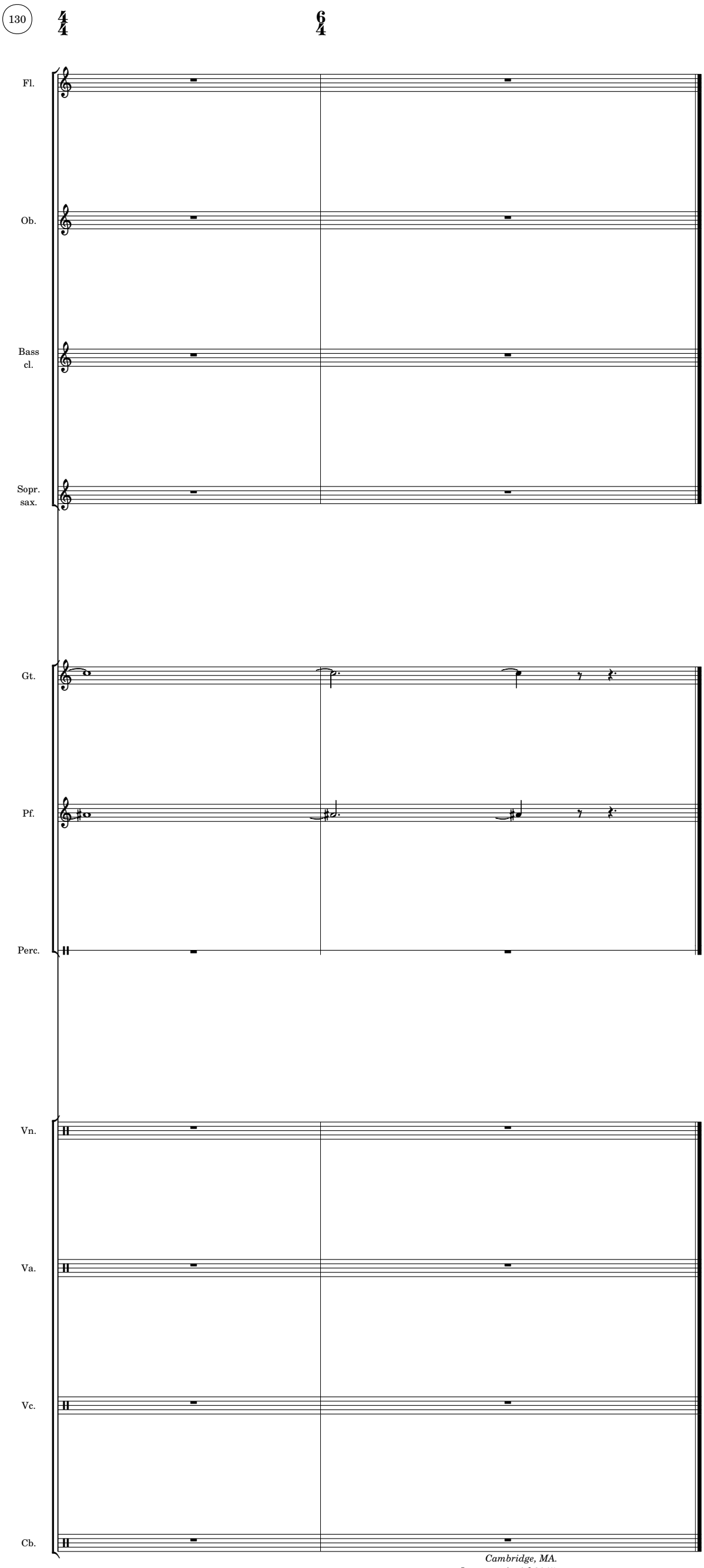
Vn.

Va.

Vc.

Cb.

130



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