

PHILLIPS, JANET WATSON, D.M.A. A Performance Guide for Three Compositions for Solo Flute and Indefinite Pitched Percussion by Landis, Engebretson, and Crumb. (2015)  
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The purpose of this study was to provide background information and performance guides for three compositions for flute and indefinite pitched percussion. Included works are *Hemingway was a bombmaker*. (2013) by Steven Landis, *Whac-a-Mole* (2008) by Mark Engebretson, and *An Idyll for the Misbegotten* (1986) by George Crumb.

Background information for the study was collected primarily through the study of scores and from interviews with composers Steven Landis, Mark Engebretson, and George Crumb. Harmonic analysis was not a focus of the study; however, compositional elements including analysis of melodies, motives, phrase structure, rhythmic analysis and form were explored. Performance guides were designed to provide insight into a variety of approaches for preparing and performing the three works. Compositional and performance challenges of these specific works are discussed, including the special effects and extended techniques for the flutist, as well as how individual composers and performers have dealt with challenges.

A PERFORMANCE GUIDE FOR THREE COMPOSITIONS FOR  
SOLO FLUTE AND INDEFINITE PITCHED PERCUSSION BY  
LANDIS, ENGBRETSON, AND CRUMB

by

Janet Watson Phillips

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Approved by

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APPROVAL PAGE

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF PURPOSE AND PROCEDURES

This research project was sparked by the author's keen interest in the combination of solo flute with indefinite pitched percussion instruments. A desire to bring percussive sounds into flute-playing led to a 2012 collaboration with composer Steven Landis which resulted in the composition *Hemingway was a bombmaker*. Following that collaboration, the author searched for more works for the sub-genre of flute and indefinite pitched percussion.

Musical works for flute encompass such a large body of literature that a comprehensive listing is impossible. Virtually every type of performance medium for solo flute has been explored with resulting compositions from the first appearance of the modern transverse flute some 500 years ago. In fact, works for the flute and another performance medium are so numerous that many are relatively unknown and frequently are discovered many years after their composition. An area, however, that does not encompass a large body of literature is that for the solo flute and indefinite pitched percussion. To date, only nine works for solo flute and indefinite pitched percussion instruments have been identified, and all but one have been composed since 1970. These works include: *Duettino Concertante* (1966) by Ingolf Dahl, *Line Drawings* (1972) by Leo Kraft, *Alfa* (1976) by Tauno Marttinen, *An Idyll for the Misbegotten* (1986) by George Crumb, *Ligare* (2002) by Alexandre Lunsqui, *Nimrod/Kimbob for Flute and*

*Percussion* (2006) by George Frock, *NGC 981* (2009) by Adam Vidiksis, *Whac-a-Mole* (2008) by Mark Engebretson, and *Hemingway was a bombmaker* (2013) by Steven Landis. One of the most frequently performed works for solo flute and indefinite pitched percussion, is *Duettino Concertante* by Dahl, composed in 1966, and is also considered to be the first work written for this instrumental combination. The other most frequently performed work for this sub-genre is *An Idyll for the Misbegotten* by George Crumb. Crumb stated that there are 15 or 16 excellent recordings available of that composition.<sup>1</sup>

The compositions examined in this paper represent three different composers at various stages of their careers; one still in the process of completing advanced degrees in music, one a well-established composer and composition professor, and one world-renowned Pulitzer Prize winning composer. Each of the works is written for flute and indefinite pitched percussion, and each varies in terms of style and content. All three are complex, challenging and exciting additions to the flute repertoire.

The purpose of this study was to present performance guides for three selected works for solo flute and indefinite pitched percussion instruments: *Hemingway was a bombmaker*. (2013) by Steven Jon Landis (b. 1977), *Whac-a-Mole* (2008) by Mark Engebretson (b. 1964), and *An Idyll for the Misbegotten* (1986) by George Crumb (b. 1929). Although nine published works are known to exist for this combination of instruments, these three have been selected because each represents a unique style of music composition and method of notation for both the flute and percussion instruments.

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with the author, 11/7/14.

The performance guides include a brief historical background about the composer and the circumstances surrounding the composition. Each performance guide also presents a brief descriptive analysis and concludes with information relevant for the flutist in preparation for performance. A detailed theoretical analysis of each work was beyond the scope of this project. Likewise, neither an in-depth historical background of the composers nor a performer's guide to the percussion parts were included.

The background information for the study was collected primarily through the study of scores and interviews with composers Steven Landis, Mark Engebretson, and George Crumb. Compositional elements including analysis of melodies, motives, phrase structure, rhythmic analysis and form were explored. In addition, performance guides were designed to provide insight into a variety of approaches to preparing and performing the works. Both the compositional and performance challenges of these specific works were explored as well as how individual composers and performers have overcome perceived challenges.

## CHAPTER II

### *HEMINGWAY WAS A BOMBMAKER* BY STEVEN JON LANDIS

#### **Commissioning and Biographical Sketch**

The author, Janet Phillips, had the desire to unite her two favorite instrumental mediums, flute and indefinite pitched percussion, in a new work. In the fall of 2012, she commissioned Steven Landis to create a composition for flute and drum set after assisting a flute student with learning the extended techniques in Landis' work for flute solo, *Transit of Venus*. This author chose *Hemingway was a bombmaker* to be included in this document because it was the original seed spawning interest in the topic. Also as the author is the first flute performer of this work, she is the foremost authority on the flute related aspects of it and can provide first hand guidance and advice on performing it.

Both composer and flutist grew up with strong pop, rock, and heavy metal influences from the 1980s. The timbre choices of a "stripped down," basic drum set of only snare drum, bass drum, and hi-hat cymbal fit the style the collaborators sought and prevented the flute from being overpowered by the percussion instruments. Landis stated that "[the percussion set-up] all comes down to a split roll between the hi hat and snare drum called a blast beat, and [what] goes on with the bass drum."<sup>2</sup> Landis was looking for high (hi-hat), medium (snare drum), and low (bass drum) sounds with nothing to

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<sup>2</sup> Interview with the author, 11/7/14.

encumber those timbres, so after brief consideration he decided against adding floor toms that would clutter the sound.<sup>3</sup>

The composer and author worked through several drafts of the score, continuing to make small changes even after the first performances, until every aspect was satisfactory to both. The process from first discussion to final draft took sixteen months, and was very much a collaborative effort with numerous meetings, reading sessions, and discussions. Topics covered during these meetings included limitations of the instruments, flutist preferences, and general discussion about the direction of the work. More detail on these issues are covered in the ‘Composition Process and Challenges’ section.

Steven Jon Landis (b. 1977) completed a Bachelor of Music degree in Composition in 1999, and a Master of Music degree in Double Bass Performance in 2002 at The University of Florida. He earned a Master of Music degree in Music Composition from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro in 2013, and is currently pursuing a Doctoral degree in composition at the University of Missouri-Kansas City. Landis, also a freelance double bass player, composes in a bold style that has few limitations in terms of traditional elements.<sup>4</sup>

In fact, one example of a work by Landis composed for a non-traditional medium is a composition in which the primary instrument is Peabody Park Bridge, the bridge that connects the area between the UNCG music building and College Avenue. Landis wrote

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<sup>3</sup> Interview with the author, 11/7/14.

<sup>4</sup> [slandismusic.com/bio](http://slandismusic.com/bio) Accessed 11/5/14.

parts with indications for percussionists to play at various locations on the bridge with sticks, mallets, and brushes, while dancers cross the bridge in dance for the duration of the work. Dr. Mark Engebretson says of his former student,

Landis writes for an impressively wide range of settings, from solos and mixed duos (*Hemingway was a bomb maker*, 2012) to orchestral music (*Partir ou Rester? Are you Leaving or Staying?*, 2009) to site-specific works (. . . *and we build our own truths . . .*, 2012) to laptop ensembles (*Apples 2 Apples*, 2012). His idiom has tended toward the visceral, muscular and edgy, with some recent works beginning to explore a more delicate sense of expression (middle movement of *Klangfunk'nmelodie*, 2013).<sup>5</sup>

Landis's music is also composed in collaboration with and for other artistic mediums including dancers, solo instrumental, mixed chamber groups, large ensembles, digital and mixed media, as well as film and theater. Dr. Alejandro Ruty adds,

Steve Landis proposes to merge elements from his rock, classical, and experimental musical backgrounds into his music, and this is something he has in common with many composers of his generation. I think that we need to wait a couple of years to see how he manages the synthesis. I am sure that what comes out of the grinder will be a unique 'Landis mix', but we will only know after we hear his next five or six substantial pieces.<sup>6</sup>

### **Instrumentation**

*Hemingway was a bombmaker* was scored for flute and drum set at the request of the commissioner. Percussion instruments used in the drum set include hi-hat, snare drum, and bass drum. Drum sticks and wire brushes are used to strike the instruments.

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<sup>5</sup> Email correspondence with Mark Engebretson, 11/2/14.

<sup>6</sup> Email correspondence with Alejandro Ruty, 11/11/14.

Specific percussion instrument choices were made by the composer. The unusual title came from a ritual that Landis engages in before beginning new compositions. He reads a story from the Earnest Hemingway book *A Moveable Feast* and finds inspiration in the pages. In the case of this work, Landis came away with a quote from Hemingway that states, “All you have to do is write one true sentence. Write the truest sentence that you know.”<sup>7</sup> The one true musical sentence that Landis knew for this composition was the opening statement of high flute trills and percussion blast beats, drum rolls that alternate between the snare drum and hi hat. He built the rest of the work around that theme. He is a great admirer of Hemingway’s writing, and thus named his new composition after the writer.<sup>8</sup>

### **Composition Process and Challenges**

The seed for this work was planted when the author was assisting one of her flute students with a work for solo flute by Landis, entitled *Transit of Venus*. A discussion with Landis about commissioning new works, how it was done, expense, and process ensued. Landis asked Phillips what her primary interest would be. Phillips replied, “Drums! I love drums. Would you consider writing a work for flute and drum set?” Landis determined that he could take on that challenge and got to work.

Landis worked on the composition on his own for several months. In discussing the compositional process, he described a process of fighting for it and also some of it just coming to him. The opening explosive trill and blast beat introduction was the

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/30849-all-you-have-to-do-is-write-one-true-sentence>

<sup>8</sup> Interview with the author, 11/7/14.

nucleus of the work. It was not until he was more deeply involved in the composition process that he realized that motive would be so significant and would be the introduction. Landis likened the composition process of this work to Lego building blocks, and that it took time to determine the best order for the blocks. He said the composition took much longer to refine and finalize than he had expected, but referred to it as a labor of love and said that the end result is worth all the time that was put into it.<sup>9</sup>

Landis and Phillips, as well as percussionist Justin Bunting, met periodically to discuss the progress and direction of the composition. Landis stated that working with the performers assisted him with the editing process, helping him boil down to the marrow of what he was trying to say in the work. In early drafts, several issues came up that needed to be addressed.<sup>10</sup> Landis had written a series of key clicks that did not work because fingers were being taken off the flute for some of the notes rather than being put down and, therefore, could not be heard. He rewrote the section so that the fingers were able to slap the keys instead of release the keys, so that the integrity of the effect he desired was still intact. The right hand keys tend to elicit a stronger slapping sound than the left hand keys. Also, depressing the G sharp lever opens a key rather than closes one, so no sound effect occurs. See Figure 1 below for examples of both the original version and the edited version.

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<sup>9</sup> Interview with the author, 11/7/14.

<sup>10</sup> Interview with the author, 11/7/14.

The image displays two musical staves side-by-side, comparing an original score (top) with a revised score (bottom). Both staves feature a melodic line with notes and rests, and a bass line. The top staff is in treble clef and shows notes on a higher register, with lyrics 'Ka! Ka!' and dynamic markings 'sfz' below. The bottom staff is in 2/4 time and bass clef, showing the same melodic line but with notes on a lower register, also with lyrics 'Ka! Ka!' and dynamic markings 'sfz' below. The revision aims to make key clicks more audible by lowering the pitch.

Figure 1. Landis *Hemingway was a bombmaker*. Mm. 27. Top example is the original version. Bottom example is revised to allow for key clicks to be more audible. Copyright 2012. Used with permission.

Landis had written a section in which the flutist was to sing and play at the same time for a group of measures. After much practice and effort, the flutist suggested that it was not possible to have sufficient air to sing different pitches while playing sustained high B, B flat and C for the duration intended. The solution here was simply to move the flute notes down an octave in measures 48-51.

The work in progress contained several awkward tremolos that were changed to maintain the compositional integrity. These tremolos occur in measures 84-85 and measures 88-89. In measures 93-98 and measures 128-132, too many extremely high notes were written in succession without an opportunity for the flutist to breathe. Therefore, sixteenth-note rests were placed in strategic locations to allow the flutist time to catch breaths.

The ending of the composition required a bit of reworking after the initial few performances. Feedback received from composition mentors was that the end was too frantic and too demanding of the flutist, causing a loss of the desired effect of high energy and power. The original ending, measures 134 to the end, contained four measures of trills on high B through high C sharp, followed by two full measures of fortissimo high D's, C sharps, and C's in staccato, accented sixteenth notes, with no pauses for breathing. Of this section, Landis said that he likes to write very long phrases, in part because he is a string player and does not have to pause to breathe. Once he realized that some of the long phrases in the high register of the flute did not work, he re-wrote the end to allow the flutist to rest and breathe enough to sustain the high energy through to the end.<sup>11</sup>

In the final edited version, Landis added two measures to the end, giving the flutist three bars of explosive, sung, played, and key-clicked glissando motives after the high register trills beginning in measure 134. The last measure and three beats prior to it are the same as the original version, except for removing one sixteenth note to allow the flutist a breath before the final run. See Figure 2 for comparison of the two endings. The final, and current, version of the work was recorded at UNCG School of Music, Theater, and Dance in May of 2014.

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<sup>11</sup> Interview with the author, 11/7/14.

120

134

*ff* *sfz* *sfz* *sfz* *sfz* *sfz* *sfz* *sfz*

137

*sfz* *sfz* *sfz* sub. *fff* cresc. sempre al fine

140

6

Figure 2a. Landis *Hemingway was a bombmaker*. Mm. 137-143 original version. Note the intense playing in the high register with no space for breathing. Copyright 2012. Used with permission.

134  $\text{♩} = 120$   
 $ff$   $sfz$   $sfz$   $sfz$   $sfz$   $sfz$   $sfz$   $sfz$

137  $tr$   $flz.$   $tr$   $timbre\ trill$   
 $sfz$   $sfz$   $sfz$   $sub.\ fff$   $cresc.\ sempre\ al\ fine$   $Ka!$   $Ka!$   $Ka!$   $Ka!$   
 $sfz$   $sfz$   $sfz$   $sfz$

140  $sfz$   $Ka!$   $Ka!$   $Ka!$   $Ka!$   
 $sfz$   $sfz$   $sfz$   $sfz$

142  $6$

Figure 2b. Landis *Hemingway was a bombmaker*. Mm. 137-143 final version. Edited to provide places for the flutist to breathe and not sound frantic. Copyright 2012. Used with permission.

According to Landis, two significant challenges to composing this work were evident. The first was balance between the flute and percussion instruments. The second challenge was “trying to find balance between creating energy and keeping it sustained, while allowing the performers to survive the performance.”<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Interview with the author, 11/7/14.

## Form and Organization

Landis began the work with the idea of specific sections, but during the composition process the sections began to overlap and blur. Now he considers the work to be through-composed with several returning motives and a coda that recapitulates the opening. He says that the work is always evolving and that it develops all the way through to the end.<sup>13</sup> Table 1 illustrates the sections of the work in an organized manner.

Table 1. Formal Outline of *Hemingway was a bombmaker* by Steven Landis

Section A	mm. 1 - 23	Introduction, excessive energy, trills
Section B	mm. 24 - 29	Jet whistle, key clicks, explosive bursts
Section C	mm. 30 - 35	Oddly accented sixteenth notes
Section D	mm. 36 - 47	Low register, lyrical, accented
Section E	mm. 48 - 65	Singing while playing different pitches
Section F	mm. 66 - 89	Soft, melodic, builds to tremolos
Section G	mm. 90 - 109	Oddly accented sixteenth notes, energetic rhythm
Section H	mm. 110 - 120	Energy decreases, recap of accented 16 <sup>th</sup> notes and explosive bursts
Section I	mm. 121 - 132	Begins soft and low, builds to percussion cadenza
Percussion Cadenza	m. 133	Improvised, indefinite length
Coda	mm. 134 - 143	Similar to beginning, but up a minor 7 <sup>th</sup>

Section A (measures 1-23) introduces the hyper and aggressive first motive of blast beats from the drums and high register, sforzandi attack trills. The energy begins to calm at measure 17, and the flute gradually relaxes in volume and register and decreases to a soft, airy tone and key clicks by measure 23.

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<sup>13</sup> Interview with the author, 11/7/14.

Section B begins at measure 24 with a jet whistle on low B, the lowest note achievable on the flute with a low B foot joint. A jet whistle is a special technique that involves covering the embouchure hole with the lips and blowing forcefully into the flute. The passage then quickly moves into explosive outbursts with flute sound and voice accentuated with the syllable “Ka!” Dynamic contrast in this brief section is extreme and quickly changing.

Section C (measures 30-35) introduces a repetitive, energetic sixteenth note passage with accents in unexpected places such as on the fourth note of a group of four sixteenth notes. In the last two measures of this short section, the “Ka!” motive is revisited.

The first eight measures of Section D (measures 36-47) are lyrical and heavily accented. The next four measures, beginning at measure 44, are a mix of lyrical melody and accented sixteenth notes.

Section E (measures 48-65) is possibly the most difficult passage in the composition. It requires simultaneous singing and playing. That extended technique comes easily to many flutists. In this work, however, the singing occurs on quite different notes than the ones being played on the flute. Interval differences from the voice pitches and the flute notes range from one half step to two octaves.

Section F (measures 66-89) begins softly with percussion and then the flute begins a soft, lyrical passage that gradually becomes louder and more accented and aggressive. It ends with a series of tremolos in the flute part.

Section G (measures 90-109) begins with energetic, oddly accented sixteenth notes similar to the material in Section C. It calms briefly around measures 102-105, and then builds again into a fortissimo, accented melody punctuated with flutter tonguing.

Section H (measures 110-120) starts with a forte melody that quickly builds into another sixteenth note section followed by more explosive “Ka!” syllables. The section winds down with flute alone bending pitches from low D down to low B to prepare for Section I.

The flute plays alone for two measures at Section I (measures 121-132), oscillating between low C and low B. These two notes accelerando into another accented sixteenth note passage that builds until it reaches the drum set cadenza.

The percussion cadenza is measure 133. There is no notation written in the score and it is completely improvisatory. The percussionist may make the cadenza as long or short as is desired, and the material is completely at the discretion of the player. The first performers of the work chose to signal the end of the cadenza with a drum roll that was sustained through the thirty-second note run at the end of measure 133 that leads into the Coda.

The Coda begins at measure 134 with a recapitulation of the original theme from the beginning of the composition, which is now a minor seventh higher than the original pitch. The high energy trills, explosive “Ka!” syllables, and the oddly accented sixteenth note motives all occur in the Coda, and the work ends with a six sixteenth note run into a fortissimo high D six ledger lines above the staff, with percussion matching the flute rhythm.

Landis explained that the slow sections of the work express intervallic relationships. At measure 36, the intervallic relationships are in intervals of seconds. The pitch material is similar at measure 68, but instead the intervals are ninths. The melody, he explains, has the same motion, but the melody implodes or explodes, depending on the width of the intervals.<sup>14</sup>

### **Performance Guide**

The following performance guide is designed for the flutist and will not address performance issues specific to the percussion part. The tempo is quarter note equals 100. The first performers found this tempo to be ideal as a performance tempo, but much practice under tempo is recommended for making sure that the parts fit together correctly. The “grace notes” before the trills in measures 1 through 8 are not true grace notes, rather they indicate the pitch on which to trill from the written note. An excellent resource for trill and tremolo fingerings in this work is *Alternative Fingerings for the Flute: Second Edition* by Nestor Herszbaum<sup>15</sup>. Since all flutes and flutists are inherently different, the same fingerings will not necessarily work for every performer, therefore specific fingering recommendations will not be suggested.

The intended effect of the first sixteen measures is one of crazed hype and excess energy, such as one might find at a heavy metal concert. The triplet rhythms over half notes should be executed with care, as the percussionist strikes simultaneously on bass drum with the flute pitch changes. The groups of six sixteenth notes in measures 9 and 17

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<sup>14</sup> Interview with the author, 11/7/14.

<sup>15</sup> Nestor Herszbaum, *Alternative Fingerings for the Flute: Second Edition* (Carolyn Nussbaum Music Company, 2008)



Measures 25, 27, and 29 are the first in the piece that utilize three extended techniques simultaneously. The techniques include syllabic and accented attacks, key clicks, and singing while playing. While the vocal pitch should begin on a C, the downward glissando need not be pitch specific to match the key click notes, which are for an overall effect.

The sixteenth note sections (measures 30-32, 90-98 113-115, and 123-133) seem as though they might be the most difficult passages in the work, however, they are actually the easiest to learn. The challenges of these sections lie in making the irregular accents strong and in making the dynamic changes evident.

A caution in measures 36 through 39 is to stay open and use air to achieve more sound on the lowest notes of the flute rather than directing the air stream down. These measures can be flat in pitch if the performer is not careful with air use.

Measures 36 through 89 are a through-composed, lengthy section that alternates between smooth, lyrical lines and accented, heavily punctuated musical fireworks and tremolo motives. The most challenging aspects of this portion of the composition are the places where the flutist sings and plays at the same time. Often the sung notes are in contrary motion to the played notes. The pitches to be sung are rarely the same as those being played, and the sung intervals range from half steps to perfect fifths (See Figure 4.).

Figure 4. Landis *Hemingway was a bombmaker*. Mm 48-60. The lower notes are sung and the upper notes are played on the flute. Copyright 2012. Used with permission.

A suggestion for preparation of these sections is to practice the sung pitches (represented by the lower, smaller notes) independently of the flute line until the sung pitches are very familiar to the performer. The flute pitches may then be added in at a slow pace, gradually working the passages up to tempo.

After a recapitulation of some of the melodic ideas and motives recently visited, the music winds down like a music box that has run out of power and needs to be cranked. In measures 119 and 120, the pitches smear into one another and land on a low B with the pitch bending down as far as it will go. The flute plays alone for a bar,

alternating quietly on low B and low C, and winds up rhythmically for one more big push of bombastic, high register, accented, sixteenth notes. The flute abruptly stops on a high B flat, and the percussionist commences a drum set cadenza. The performers should determine how long the cadenza will be, as well as the style, and how the cadenza will end and signal the time for the flutist to resume playing in the end of measure 133.

The flute re-enters and begins the coda with a thirty-second note run to a high B to C trill. The music beginning in measure 134 mimics the initial trill motives from the start of the work, only now the pitches begin a perfect fifth higher than the original, so the flutist will likely need to take in more air and breathe more frequently there, and afterward as a series of pecking, accented high D's occur. The final two measures are wildly accented, ascending runs that end the piece on an accented, powerful high D. Sixteenth note rests are strategically placed to allow the flutist to breathe.

While the composition was written for flute and drum set, there is no indication that the flute should be amplified. The original performers, Janet Phillips, flute, and Justin Bunting, percussion, have performed with and without flute amplification. The work seems equally successful either way. The question of amplification will likely depend on what sizes and types of drums, sticks, and brushes are available, what the flute is made of, the volume potential of the individual flutist, and the size and acoustics of the performance venue.

Landis offers many interesting challenges for both flutist and drummer in this work. Extended techniques for the flute abound and the music is as physically demanding as it is mentally stimulating. The collaboration between composer and performers was

extremely rewarding for those involved. Landis stated that he “made two great friends and a great piece [of music] out of [the process], and [the commissioner] helped expand the flute repertoire in a way that has never been done before.”

## CHAPTER III

### *WHAC-A-MOLE* BY MARK ENGBRETSON

#### **Compositional History and Biographical Sketch**

*Whac-a-Mole* is the first movement of a two movement work by Mark Engbretson entitled *Two Duos for Flute and Percussion*. *Whac-a-Mole* is scored for flute and indefinite pitched percussion instruments and is therefore the only movement examined in this document. The second movement of the work, *Floam*, is scored for flute, marimba, and vibraphone.

*Two Duos* was born from the collaboration between a core group of composers and several performing ensembles, a project that was arranged by Engbretson's colleague John Allemeier. Allemeier currently teaches composition at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. The composers paired with performing ensembles and wrote pieces for them. Then each work was performed by the ensemble at each of the schools represented by the group of composers, and each composition was recorded. Composers achieved performances and recordings of their works, and performers obtained performing exposure in different locations, as well as recordings of their performances.<sup>16</sup>

Mark Engbretson (b. 1964) is currently Associate Professor of Composition and Electronic Music at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. He is the recipient of a North Carolina Artist Fellowship in Composition, a Fulbright Fellowship for study

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<sup>16</sup> Interview with the author 10/27/14.

in France, and has received major commissions from Harvard University's Fromm Music Foundation, the University of Wisconsin-Madison, the Thomas S. Kenan Center for the Arts, and the Barlow Foundation. He studied at the University of Minnesota (graduating *summa cum laude*), the Conservatoire de Bordeaux and then received his Doctor of Music degree from Northwestern University.<sup>17</sup>

Engebretson composes for many media including choral ensemble, instrumental ensemble, orchestra, wind ensemble, duo, solo, and he has composed many electroacoustic works as well. Of his music and compositional style, Engebretson says:

Melody, timbre, virtuosity, clear and balanced formal structure, the integration of new media, multiple levels of associations, and a desire for fresh, engaging expression all drive my creative work. Of course, the concept of melody can be interpreted quite broadly: a melody could be a singing, arcing line, a single tone with constant microtonal or timbre changes, a jumping, jagged, asymmetrical riff, or a lick played on a snare drum. A fascination with both performance and compositional virtuosity joins melody to form the basis of my ongoing interest in writing works that push my boundaries as a composer and that engage superstar performers in technical and musical challenges. Such works teach us something about music, endless possibilities, and ourselves.<sup>18</sup>

### **Instrumentation**

*Whac-a-Mole* is scored for flute and small drum set, including bass drum, snare drum, and hi-hat. Engebretson gave two reasons for choosing this instrumentation for *Whac-a-Mole*. First, he lived in Sweden in the late 1980's and early 1990's, and there he

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<sup>17</sup> Mark Engebretson. (2014). Mark Engebretson website. Retrieved 9:30 p.m., Oct. 27, 2014, from <http://home.earthlink.net/~mark.engebretson/mark.engebretson/Infos.html>

<sup>18</sup> Mark Engebretson. (2014). Mark Engebretson website. Retrieved 9:30 p.m., Dec 12, 2014, from <http://home.earthlink.net/~mark.engebretson/mark.engebretson/Welcome.html>

met a Swedish percussionist named Anders Åstrand. Engebretson and Åstrand formed a percussion and saxophone duo. Engebretson was inspired by the way Åstrand played the drums melodically. Engebretson wanted to write in such a way that the drums in *Whac-a-Mole* would be played melodically. Åstrand sometimes used wire brushes on the drums, but instead of simply using a common technique called “stirring the soup” (rotating the wire brushes in circles across the membrane of the drum), Åstrand actually whacked the drums with the wire brushes aggressively. Engebretson wanted to use brushes on drums in that manner in his composition.

Secondly, Engebretson’s daughter was five years old at the time this work was composed and she had a whac-a-mole toy at home. The ideas of the toy, the drums, and the flute representing a small, fast-moving, evasive mole, came together for Engebretson and became the seed for this movement. Engebretson laughed out loud during our interview as he described his imagery of the mole as a flutist trying to run away as the drummer whacks at it.<sup>19</sup>

The challenge of this instrumentation is, again, balance. Engebretson indicates in the score that amplification of the flute is acceptable if desired. He noted that the work has been performed many times without amplification, and that each method has challenges. When the flute is amplified, balance is easier to achieve. The drummer is more comfortable and does not have to be so concerned about keeping the volume down, and the flutist does not have to work so hard to be heard. The potential down side to

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<sup>19</sup> Interview with the author 10/27/14.

amplification is dealing with the technology involved. Without amplification, the technology aspect is not an issue, but both performers must work diligently to achieve balance. The flutist must push for more sound and the drummer is required to work at playing less loudly to avoid covering the flute.

### **Composition Process and Challenges**

Engebretson used sketches and notes to himself, such as “write some progressions,” to begin shaping the work. (See Figure 8.) Figure 5 is a sketch of the overall form of *Whac-a-Mole* with some rhythmic figures included. Figure 6 is a sketch of rhythmic ideas Engebretson was experimenting with for *Whac-a-Mole*, along with a note to himself to “write some interesting rhythms.” Even though this movement is written for one melody line, Engebretson had some ideas of chord progressions in mind as he wrote. More significant in this particular work were the rhythmic ideas. Engebretson explained that composers must “front load” their works with the most interesting ideas for the purpose of catching the interest of publishers when they listen.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Interview with the author 10/27/14.



performers ever saw it. He says that he learned a lot from the first performers of *Whac-a-Mole*, and that they did some things differently in performance from what he wrote. The flutist changed some articulations to make the notes speak more clearly, and the drummer added some bass drum hits because he thought they sounded good. Engebretson was pleased with those changes and refers to those performances and recordings as “the Due East version.”<sup>21</sup>

Engebretson says of *Whac-a-Mole* that he wanted to write a highly virtuosic piece that would be fun to play. He knew the quality of the players he was writing for, so he knew that he could push hard as far as technical skills. The work has been performed frequently, and he notes that *Whac-a-Mole* is performed more frequently than *Floam* and sometimes both movements are performed together.<sup>22</sup>

### **Form and Organization**

The structure of *Whac-a-Mole* is not strictly classical, but can be seen as an overall rondo form (ABCBA, Coda) with returning musical ideas. (See Figure 7.)

The returning material, however, is not identical to the previous related material. Similarities in returning ideas tend to be rhythmic (triplets) or motivic (jet whistles). Section changes appear to be delineated by fermatas or pauses in the action of flute or flute and percussion.

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<sup>21</sup> Interview with the author 10/27/14.

<sup>22</sup> Interview with the author 10/27/14.



Measures 1-21 are section A. The first eight bars introduce thematic material such as jet whistles and “swell and release” motives that each occur several times. (See Figure 7.) A new idea is introduced in the percussion part at measure 9 with pulsing eighth notes.

The image displays a musical score for two instruments: Flute and Drum Set. The score is written in 4/4 time and covers measures 2 through 4. The Flute part (top staff) begins with a dynamic marking of *ff* and features a 'jet whistle' motif in measure 2, followed by a 'flz. bend' in measure 3, and a 'jet' motif in measure 4. The Drum Set part (bottom staff) starts with a series of pulsing eighth notes in measure 2, which continue through measure 4. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings like *f* and *mf*.

Figure 7. Engebretson *Whac-a-Mole*. Mm. 2-4, jet whistle and “swell and release motives.” Copyright 2008. Used with permission by Effny Music.

Section B is measures 22-41. Both flute and percussion, beginning in measure 27, have groups of five sixteenth notes on each beat, which were introduced near the end of the A section in measures 17-21. (See Figure 8.) Everything comes to a halt for a brief pause in measure 41.

The image shows a musical score for two instruments: Flute and Drum Set. The Flute part is written on a treble clef staff in 4/4 time. It begins at measure 18 with a dynamic marking of *flz.* and a fingering of 6. The notes are grouped in quintuplets, with a bracket labeled 'overblow' above the first two measures. The Drum Set part is written on a bass clef staff in 4/4 time. It features a sequence of five sixteenth notes in a quintuplet, with a '+' sign above the first measure and a '5' below the notes. The score includes various dynamic markings and fingering numbers throughout.

Figure 8. Engebretson *Whac-a-Mole*. Mm. 18-20, matching rhythms of five sixteenth notes in flute and percussion. Copyright 2008 by Effiny Music. Used with permission.

This silence allows for a transition to the introduction of section C (measures 42-53), which brings back the quintuplet sixteenth rhythm in percussion, and a jet whistle from the flute into measure 43. In measure 53 the flute rests for a bar while the percussion has a ritard into measure 54, which is the return of the section B material. The music is not, however, exactly the same as the first presentation of section B. The percussionist has triplets over quarter note values while the flute part has rhythmic similarities to measures 13-16 from the original A section.

Measures 54-59 are labeled B'. Although the rhythms are quite different, melodic material is similar to the B section. Rhythms in this section are characterized by triplets across quarter note values, and groups of sextuplet sixteenth notes.

The last three measures of B' contain a flute and percussion crescendo to a fortissimo downbeat at measure 60 for the percussion, and the flute has a loud jet whistle on beat two. Measures 60-67 are A'. Rhythmic material here quotes the original section A material, but not exactly. Measures 66 and 67 build into the coda which begins at measure 68.

The coda consists of measures 68-84. *Accelerando* should occur from measure 68 until the movement reaches its maximum tempo of quarter note equals 180 at measure 78. That tempo should be maintained through the last bar. The quintuplet across a beat motive is quoted one more time in the final statement with five very loud, accented notes (five quarter notes spread across a common time measure) that tie into the last measure of the movement.

### **Performance Guide**

*Whac-a-Mole* presents numerous technical challenges for the flutist, including extended techniques, extreme dynamics and range of the instrument, frequently changing meters and tempi, as well as fast, difficult technical passages. Engebretson has placed explanations of unusual notations and extended techniques in the front of both the score and the flute part.

The work begins in common time and the percussionist sets the tempo at the beginning in the first measure. The flute part is quite athletic from the start entering on measure 2 with a fortissimo jet whistle, immediately followed by a flutter tongued note with a downward pitch bend. Unless indicated otherwise, a low note such as the low D should be fingered to execute the jet whistles. There is another jet whistle in measure 3 that precedes a passage of sixteenth notes in groups of six and five. In measure 4, some of these notes are overblown to reach higher pitches in the harmonic series. An excellent

practice resource for harmonics can be found in the Trevor Wye *Practice Book for the Flute, Volume 1, Tone*.<sup>23</sup>

The rhythm is challenging in measure 5, magnified by trills and accents, and a flutter tongued group of six sixteenth notes at the end of the measure. In measure 6 there is a symbol in front of the next to last C in the measure. This symbol indicates that the note should be played a quarter tone sharp. This can be accomplished by raising the airstream, and rolling the flute out a bit if necessary. The flutist gets a bit of a rest with mostly eighth and sixteenth notes in measures 6-9. Polyrhythms are present through much of these first eight measures. The flutist and percussionist must each be extremely secure in their own rhythms and have a strong sense of the pulse.

While the flute part appears relatively easy in measures 11-12, the percussionist is playing complex rhythms, and focus will be required to keep the two parts together. The rhythms of the two parts become more parallel in measures 13-22. The flutist and percussionist can count on having triplets or quintuplets together, as well as accents placed in the same beats for both instruments. Note that in measure 11, the last beat should bend upward into the first beat of measure 12, then back into correct pitch. In measure 13 in the first two beats, the flutist is asked to bend the pitch of the repeated B flats up a quarter tone and back down to correct pitch.

Two special effects that occur during these measures should be noted. The first is in measure 18 on beats 3 and 4, when the flutist is asked to simultaneously flutter tongue

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<sup>23</sup> Trevor Wye, *Practice Book for the Flute: Book 1: Tone* (Novello Publishing Limited, 1980)

and overblow groups of sixteenth notes. There is one beat of rest just before this, so the flutist must take a good, full breath, as this feat will require much air. The other notable effect in this section occurs in measure 20, beats 3 and 4. Here, the flutist is asked to begin a trill from A-flat to B slowly, and accelerate the trill speed across the two beats. At the same time, the flutist should sing an unspecified pitch while playing the flute to produce a “growling” effect. (See Figure 8, measure 20)

Between sections A and B, the flutist has two measures (21 and 22) to catch her breath before jumping into another round of fast groups of sixteenth notes. The eighth notes in measures 25 and 26 are not much different in speed than the sixteenth notes that follow in measures 27 through 31. In measure 27, the third and fourth beats in the flute part should be sung on an indefinite pitch as well as played for the growl effect. In measure 28, the flutist can use alternative fingerings to achieve changes in the tone color of the indicated notes. Engebretson indicates a microtonal glissando from beat two into beat three of that measure. Again, an excellent resource for alternative fingerings is *Alternative Fingerings for the Flute: Second Edition* by Nestor Herszbaum.

Note carefully the frequent tempo changes throughout the movement. Engebretson has carefully noted the desired tempi for each section of this movement. For example, at measure 25 the tempo is quarter note equals 180. At measure 27, the quarter note equals 72, but the speed of the notes is close to that of the notes in measures 24 and 25. He indicates at measure 27 that the previous eighth note value is now equal to the value of a group of five sixteenth notes. In measure 29, Engebretson indicates that the

former groups of five sixteenth notes are now equal to the speed of three eighth notes.

Careful practice with the metronome will be invaluable in this work.

The flutist should be prepared for an especially long jet whistle in measure 33 that covers two and three quarters beats, with an accent on beat four of this common time measure. The flutist must take a full breath after the jet whistle in preparation for the next two measures of high register accented notes and then an overblown, crescendo run. In measure 36, the energy begins to wind down in preparation for Section C, which is mostly quieter than the rest of the work. Note the series of downward pitch bends in measures 36-39. These should be significant in pitch change as well as decrescendo (the last two only) for the effect of the winding down energy.

In measure 42, the flutist plays a crescendo jet whistle at the end of a group of percussion beats in which groups of quintuplet sixteenth notes are played. The flutist joins the percussion in the last beat of measure 43, and beginning in measures 44-50, the two instrumentalists engage in a musical conversation. They are taking turns at first, but then begin to engage in polyrhythm figures in measure 47. Measures 47 and 48 offer new effects. In the last beat of measure 47, the flutist begins a two beat tremolo from B down to F. The tremolo should start slow and then become fast in measure 48. There is also a pitch bend over the beginning of measure 48. There is a lot to think about at once here, so this segment, like so many others in this work, should be isolated for intensive practice.

Although the notes are fast and furious, the performers may find measures 54-59 (Section B') to be the easiest section of the work rhythmically. While the two may be playing different rhythms, they are related throughout these measures in that one can find

the pulse easily in what the other is playing. For example, the rhythms are almost identical in measure 55, and the flute accents in measure 56 can be paired with the eighth notes in the percussion.

Some previous musical ideas are revisited in measures 60-67 (Section A'). We do see something new for the flutist in measure 64. On the high E in the first beat, and on the second high F in the third beat, there are symbols in front of the notes that resemble backward, filled in flat signs. These indicate that the pitch of the printed note should be a quarter tone flat. This can be accomplished by directing the airstream downward and possibly even rolling the flute inward a little if the performer finds it necessary.

Measures 68 through 84 comprise the Coda of the movement. The Coda begins in a conversational style between flute and percussion and, by measure 78, they are mostly in unison rhythms until the end. The Coda is very loud throughout and has an *accelerando* from measure 69 until 78, maintaining a fast and furious tempo of quarter note equals 180 until the end. In measure 83, the flutist and percussionist must work to get the five quarter notes across four beats in perfect rhythmic unison. Verbalizing or internalizing a five syllable word such as geophysical or university can be helpful with that.

*Whac-a-Mole* is a demanding composition for both flutist and percussionist. It requires a high level of skill and is suited for college performance majors and professional musicians. The fast tempi, awkward note combinations, polyrhythms, and extended techniques provide unique challenges that daring musicians will enjoy.

## CHAPTER IV

### *AN IDYLL FOR THE MISBEGOTTEN* BY GEORGE CRUMB

#### **Compositional History and Biographical Sketch**

*An Idyll for the Misbegotten* was composed in 1986. George Crumb revealed in a telephone interview with the author that he has always had a preference for the sound of the flute. He has used it in numerous other compositions, including works for voice. Crumb said that he thinks the flute is the instrument most similar to the human voice and that pitch bends and other special techniques to modify the sound are so much easier on the flute than on other instruments. Crumb's brother was an amateur flutist, so he says he had the sound of the flute in his ears from a young age. Crumb went on to say that he loves what has been done with the flute in more recent years, and that it was largely neglected in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. He believes that 20<sup>th</sup> Century composers have written excellent orchestral parts for flute and that there are great things being done with the flute in the present time.<sup>24</sup>

*An Idyll for the Misbegotten* was not a commissioned work. Instead, Crumb had wanted to write for the flute, but thought that writing for flute alone would be immensely difficult. He decided to add percussion so there would be interplay between the two sets of instruments. Crumb has three compositions that he calls his "ecological pieces." The first was *Vox Balaenae*, or *Voice of the Whale* (1971), representing water. *Idyll* (1986)

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<sup>24</sup> Interview with the author 11/8/14.

represents the gradual destruction of world in general by humans. Crumb's program note for this composition explains the chosen title:

I feel that 'misbegotten' well describes the fateful and melancholy predicament of the species *homo sapiens* at the present moment in time. Mankind has become ever more 'illegitimate' in the natural world of the plants and animals. The ancient sense of brotherhood with all life-forms...has gradually and relentlessly eroded, and consequently we find ourselves monarchs of a dying world. We share the fervent hope that humankind will embrace anew nature's 'moral imperative.'

My little *Idyll* was inspired by these thoughts. Flute and drum are, to me (perhaps by association with ancient ethnic musics), those instruments which most powerfully evoke the voice of nature. . .<sup>25</sup>

Crumb is currently working on his third ecological piece, entitled *Xylophenae*, that is music of the forest, or representing wood. It will be for percussion quintet.<sup>26</sup>

Pulitzer Prize winning composer George Crumb was born in 1929 in Charleston, West Virginia. He studied composition and piano at a local college, then achieved a Master's Degree at the University of Illinois in 1952. Crumb obtained his doctorate at the University of Michigan. He then served as Professor of Composition at the University of Pennsylvania from 1965 until his retirement in 1999.<sup>27, 28</sup>

Crumb is known for creating beautiful scores by his own hand that include symbols and even circular music notation,<sup>29</sup> and the creation of unique sound effects via

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<sup>25</sup> Steven Bruns, Ofer Ben-Amots, Michael D. Grace, *George Crumb & the Alchemy of Sound* (Colorado Music Press, 2005), 322.

<sup>26</sup> Interview with the author 11/8/14.

<sup>27</sup> George Crumb. (2014). The Biography.com website. Retrieved 11:53, Dec 11, 2014, from <http://www.biography.com/people/george-crumb-40626>

<sup>28</sup> Steven Bruns, Ofer Ben-Amots, Michael D. Grace, *George Crumb & the Alchemy of Sound* (Colorado Music Press, 2005), 270-71.

<sup>29</sup> Bruns, Ben-Amots, Grace, *George Crumb*, 275.

special techniques uniquely achieved by different instruments. Numerous examples of these sound effects and techniques will be described in the “Form and Organization” and “Performance Guide” sections of this chapter. Some of Crumb’s best known works include *Vox Balaenae*, *Black Angels*, and *Echoes of Time and the River* for which he won a Pulitzer Prize.<sup>30</sup>

Crumb’s primary musical influences are Claude Debussy, Bela Bartok, Gustav Mahler, and Charles Ives. He stated that he finds a sense of spirituality in their music that has strongly influenced him. A notable thought from Crumb is that he believes almost nothing musical is unimportant. He feels that all the music in the world converges, that it is all ancient in some way, and that the travel of musical styles through time is circular citing post-modernism as the example.<sup>31</sup>

### **Instrumentation**

As stated earlier, Crumb wanted to compose for the flute. He hoped for interplay with another instrumental voice, so he composed *An Idyll for the Misbegotten* for amplified flute and three percussionists. The percussion instruments used in the work are as follows: Percussion 1 – bongo drums, African log drum, five tomtoms, small bass drum; Percussion 2 – bongo drums, African log drum, five tomtoms, medium bass drum; Percussion 3 – Large bass drum. While the African log drums do need to be in different pitches, they are not specifically pitched and represent no particular pitch. Crumb indicates in the score that the work is “to be heard from afar, over a lake, on a moonlit

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<sup>30</sup> Bruns, Ben-Amots, Grace, *George Crumb*, 270-71.

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5xo8SHjTxc&feature=share>. Retrieved 21:39, Dec. 17, 2014.

evening in August.” He said in the interview that he knows of only one performance that has actually occurred that way, by a Canadian flutist whose name Crumb could not recall. He did remember that there was a full moon.<sup>32</sup>

### **Composition Process and Challenges**

Crumb refers to himself as a slow worker.<sup>33</sup> Indeed, he tends to average one composition per year or less.<sup>34</sup> In describing his compositional process, Crumb stated that he does a lot of sketching. He said that he has no special abstract procedure for writing music, rather he creates music instinctually. He talked about the many sources for his musical ideas, including old music, new music, and ethnic music. He noted in particular the taking of inspiration from Japanese and Chinese flute.<sup>35</sup>

When asked more about why he chose these specific instruments, Crumb said that he loves the flute and drum combination. He stated that the most ancient instruments in the world are percussion and flute. He said that the ancient instruments were in his mind along with the ecological stamp when he wrote this work. Crumb mentioned that cavemen had these sorts of instruments, and he is convinced that ancient people had music of their own.<sup>36</sup>

Crumb went on to talk about some of the special effects or extended techniques in *An Idyll for the Misbegotten*. He had used some effects, such as flutter tonguing, in other works, and he enjoys utilizing the pitch bending technique. He said that he got the idea of

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<sup>32</sup> Interview with the author 11/8/14.

<sup>33</sup> Interview with the author 11/8/14.

<sup>34</sup> Bruns, Ben-Amots, Grace, *George Crumb*, 275.

<sup>35</sup> Interview with the author 11/8/14.

<sup>36</sup> Interview with the author 11/8/14.

the “turtle-dove effect” from a flutist named Sue Kahn. The “turtle-dove effect” is created by fingering an A and using both trill keys rapidly (as in a trill) while bending the pitch downward toward G. Crumb went on to say that his music tends to exploit the special possibilities in whatever instrument for which he is writing and that different instruments offer different possibilities. He also explained that when he was a teenager the second Viennese school was not quite in existence yet, so his earlier compositions lack the special effects that are found in his later music because he was not yet aware of them. He mentioned that some of his special technique ideas came from the work of Bartok.<sup>37</sup>

### **Form and Organization**

When Crumb discussed the form of *An Idyll for the Misbegotten*, he said that the structure is not well delineated, but that every composition has to make some kind of a form. He explained that a work does not need to be a hard edged thing of sections, but that it can be more of a stream of consciousness. Crumb said that *Idyll* is not sectional in the Classical way, rather is more through composed in the Romantic way.<sup>38</sup>

In the Crumb biography entitled *George Crumb & the Alchemy of Sound*, Tracey Schmidt, the author of Chapter 9 assigns a more formal structure to the work. Schmidt views *Idyll* as having the form ABA’,<sup>39</sup> and her chapter in the book delves deeply into formal analysis of the composition with comparison to Debussy’s *Syrinx*. The following form description adheres to the ABA’ structure suggested by Schmidt.

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<sup>37</sup> Interview with the author 11/8/14.

<sup>38</sup> Interview with the author 11/8/14.

<sup>39</sup> Bruns, Ben-Amots, Grace, *George Crumb*, 181.

Table 3. Formal Outline of *An Idyll for the Misbegotten* by George Crumb

Section A	Beginning – R9	Measured vibrato, pitch bends, turtle-dove effect
Section B	R9 – R21	Speak-flute, quotation from <i>Syrinx</i> , more turmoil and energy
Section A'	R21 – end	Quiet and haunting, pitch bends, soft turtle-dove effect at end

The work begins with a startling bass drum roll that dims to an extremely soft dynamic (*pppp*) in the first five seconds. After ten seconds have passed from the beginning of the drum roll, the flute enters on a low B and works up to A1. It is on this extended note that we see the first of many special techniques in this work. Crumb indicates “measured vibrato” in parentheses above a long group of notes that indicate exactly how the vibrato should be measured and counted. The measured vibrato effect is repeated several times between short melodic bursts and three to five second pauses for a swell and decay of the bass drum roll. The first appearance of the “Turtle-dove” effect occurs just before Rehearsal 2. At Rehearsal 2, feverish yet quiet tomtom activity occurs, setting up the changes in the melodic material at Rehearsal 3. Prior to this point, the flute has been very quiet, but dynamic contrast increases and varies widely beginning at Rehearsal 3.

Section B introduces a unique special flute effect that Crumb refers to as “Speak-flute.” He incorporates some lines of eighth century Chinese poet Ssu-K’ung Shu.<sup>40</sup> The words are spoken into the flute while fingering specific notes and rhythms. As this is one of Crumb’s self-proclaimed “ecological pieces,” the words have significant meaning to

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<sup>40</sup> Bruns, Ben-Amots, Grace, *George Crumb*, 175.

the composition. The poetry lines are, “The moon goes down. There are shivering birds and withering grasses.” In his program note about this work, Crumb said, “I feel that ‘misbegotten’ well describes the fateful and melancholy predicament of the species *homo sapiens* at the present moment in time.”

Between the two “Speak-flute” sentences, the main theme of *Syrinx* by Claude Debussy is quoted very recognizably. The *Syrinx* theme is quoted once more after Rehearsal 13, but is more disguised. The overall mood of Section B is one of turmoil and aggression, with loud (*fff*) and furious bursts of flutter-tongued runs and fast, marcato repeated high notes. After a thirteen second pause for a decrescendo bass drum roll, the general mood becomes quieter in preparation for the A’ section beginning at Rehearsal 21.

Section A’ begins at Rehearsal 21 with the same phrase that is played by the flute at the beginning of the work. However, Section A’ is significantly shorter and the measured vibrato is no longer present. The music is very soft for the duration of the composition, with pitch bends in the flute and small bits of interjected conversation from the percussion instruments, while the large bass drum rolls softly throughout. The final statement of the work is the “Turtle-dove” effect, three times in a row, growing ever softer each time.

### **Performance Guide**

*An Idyll for the Misbegotten* is written for amplified flute and three percussionists. The percussion instruments will have no need of amplification. The flute may be amplified by a microphone attached to the performer’s head, to the flute, or a stand-up

microphone. The stand-up microphone may be the best option for optimal control over how much amplification the flute will receive at any given time. The flutist can move toward or away from the microphone as needed with that type of setup.

Crumb has provided specific instructions throughout the composition to assist the performers in carrying out the work as it was intended. Although a performance as it was intended, “to be heard from afar, over a lake, on a moonlit evening in August,” is seldom feasible, efforts can be made to present that type of mood in any performance through lighting, stage presence, and atmosphere.

A flutist will need strong skills in traditional and extended techniques to perform this work, as well as a low B foot joint. Extreme dynamic contrast and control are necessary. The ability to control and bend the pitch of individual notes, harmonics, and vibrato speed are also important skills in the successful performance of this work.

The first note the flutist plays is the low B at pianissimo. Crumb directs the flutist to sound “like a primitive instrument” at the beginning. Although the volume is very soft to start, the flutist should gather a large breath prior to beginning. The first section of measured vibrato occurs on A1 in the first line of the score. (See Figure 9) The duration is a half note, but it is tied to a quarter note with a fermata that is also tied to the first three notes of the piece (BDA). For each of the measured vibrato sections, as the vibrato speed increases, the volume also increases. As the measured vibrato slows down, there should be corresponding decrescendo.

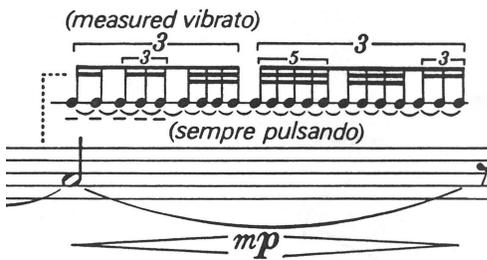


Figure 9. Crumb *An Idyll for the Misbegotten*. Prior to Rehearsal 1, measured vibrato. Copyright 1986 by C.F. Peters Publishing Company. Used with permission.

There are no bar lines in this work. Rehearsals can be organized by the rehearsal numbers provided by the composer. Phrase ends, pauses, and optimal breathing locations are evident by Crumb's artful scoring of the music. He is very specific about rhythmic indications and the performers must listen to one another and count carefully.

The first occurrence of the "Turtle-dove" effect is just prior to Rehearsal 2. (See Figure 10) This effect is accomplished by playing the indicated note (A1) while trilling with both standard trill keys (the C sharp trill key is not involved in this effect), and bending the pitch downward simultaneously. The effect should be one of sad lament.

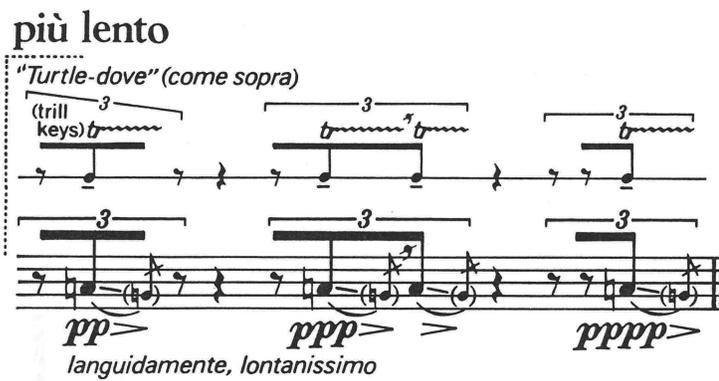


Figure 10. Crumb *An Idyll for the Misbegotten*. "Turtle-dove" effect at the end. Copyright 1986 by C.F. Peters Publishing Company. Used with permission.

At Rehearsal 3, Crumb has written flutter-tongued grace notes followed by an F2 with a fermata and standard flute tone. For the next several rehearsal numbers, the flute repeats similar motives, performs rapid bursts of marcato sixty-fourth notes in groups of four and five, pitch bends, and many grace notes.

The flute begins to play more lyrical and melodious motives and runs at Rehearsal 6. The drum parts that interject periodically are somewhat difficult to keep track of, so extreme familiarity with the score is important for the flutist, as well as strong counting and listening.

Perhaps the most unique special effect in this composition is what Crumb refers to as “Speak-flute” beginning at Rehearsal 9. (See Figure 11.) He gives very specific instructions within the score, indicating that the flutist should, “Whisper the indicated words over the mouthpiece of the instrument so that both the words and the flute pitches project distinctly. The flutist should lean towards the microphone for this passage; also, the whispering can be slightly voiced, if needed.” Specific pitches to be fingered during the “speak-flute” are written in rhythm and the words are printed under the pitches to be played as they are spoken.

\*\*\*\*) "Speak-flute" 7  
*mp ma distinto (misterioso)*  
 3 3 5  
 \*\*\*\*) The moon goes down.  
 (sostenuto, legatiss.)  
 3  
 (\*\*) wire brush  
*ppp ma distinto*

*mp "Speak-flute" (come sopra)*  
 3 3 3  
 There are shiv-er-ing birds  
 (\*\*) wire brush  
*ppp ma distinto*

Figure 11. Crumb *An Idyll for the Misbegotten*. "Speak-flute" effect at Rehearsal 9. Copyright 1986 by C.F. Peters Publishing Company. Used with permission.

The next special flute effect is located just prior to Rehearsal 10. The flutist is asked to create an unbroken glissando from D1 to B flat 1 by sliding the fingers over the open holes of the flute. This technique is challenging to do smoothly without specific changes between notes being heard. The other key to successfully performing this technique, in addition to the removal of fingers from the tone holes, is to be able to release the keys slowly as the pitches rise so that half step pitch changes are not

immediate. This unique glissando rises into the direct quote from Debussy's *Syrinx*, which is actually indicated in Crumb's score with quotation marks.

After the *Syrinx* quote and an interjection from the percussion that begins at Rehearsal 10, the flutist completes the poetry lines that were initiated at Rehearsal 9. The next special effect is a key click with a grace note on a low C (C1) after Rehearsal 11. This technique is actually very similar to something that many flutists do on a regular basis to give a bit of extra air to very low notes. It is casually referred to as "popping" the low G key. Also in Rehearsal 11 and into Rehearsal 12, the flutist has two melodic, flutter-tongued runs.

The flutter-tongued runs continue in Rehearsal 12, but include the addition of multiphonics, also referred to as double harmonics by Crumb. He has indicated the notes to be fingered on the flute by diamond head notes, and the harmonics that should be heard above the diamond head notes. These harmonics are to be played while flutter-tonguing, and Crumb has added the instruction to play with a "breathy" sound. These short bursts require much air and control, and Crumb kindly placed brief rests between them that provide the opportunity for the flutist to breathe and reset the embouchure for the next challenge.

The second, and more disguised, quote of the main theme from *Syrinx* occurs at Rehearsal 13. The melody is expressive and lyrical and should be playing in a very singing style. The melody evolves into a fortissimo, marcato group of high notes that push into the climax of the work. The loudest and most turbulent portion of this composition occurs from Rehearsal 14 through Rehearsal 16. The flute part has flutter-

tongued grace notes and runs, third partial, flutter-tongued harmonics at very loud (*fff*) volumes. These passages are longer and louder than the first time they are encountered at Rehearsal 12. Much air support and control are required.

The mood begins to change prior to Rehearsal 17 with a 13 second decrescendo large bass drum roll. Here begins a conversation of sorts between the flute and the percussionists, who interject rhythmic passages between sforzando bursts and lyrical runs in the flute part.

Perhaps the quietest events in this composition occur just before, and a bit after, Rehearsal 20 with the flute playing passages of whistle tones. The specific pitches to be produced as whistle tones are indicated above the diamond shaped notes that indicate the fingerings to be used. Whistle tones are likely some of the most difficult special effects to control on the flute. They can often happen by accident as a flutist releases a note or plays very softly. They are tiny, thin tones that sound like quiet whistling. The mouth shape to produce whistle tones is not, however, the same as for producing a real whistle, neither is it the embouchure used to play the flute.

Each flutist must find his or her own method of producing the whistle tone. One recommendation for the person new to this effect is to try producing them from the lowest notes on the flute, such as low C and D, to start. Whistle tones are temperamental and will change pitch with the least bit of change in air speed, pressure, or direction. The development of consistency and the ability to hold one pitch will be important to executing this effect accurately.

At Rehearsal 21, the flute motive from the beginning is revisited, although without the measured vibrato. Crumb indicates that the music should be played very softly (*ppp*) and “hauntingly” here. The flute melody includes pitch bends, and the percussion instruments interject quietly between flute phrases. Finally, the flute sets the final atmosphere of the work with three more, ever quieter “Turtle-dove” effects.

*An Idyll for the Misbegotten* is an extremely challenging composition. The rewards of learning and performing it are multitudinous. It provides an excellent opportunity to explore new sounds and special effects for the instrument, and to improve existing skills in those areas. This work presents at times in a very “earthy” manner and provides the opportunity to explore a wide variety of potential colors of the flute sound, evoking anything from birds to the human voice to ancient instruments. It also provides the opportunity for performers and audience to reflect on the world and the roles of humans within it.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

While quite small at present, the genre of flute and indefinite pitched percussion is an exciting area of music, offering much in the way of possibilities for future compositions. The percussion instrument combinations with flute are almost limitless, and virtually no works have been composed for indefinite pitched percussion and other members of the flute family such as piccolo, alto flute, and bass flute.

Each of the three works examined in this paper are quite challenging for the flute performer. Modern special effects and extended techniques are included in each composition, and each composer has different approaches to conveying how the effects should be executed. In fact, extended techniques for the flute have become common in newer music for multiple genres including solo and ensemble flute music as well as band and orchestra literature. Young flutists of today need to know how to execute these extended techniques to be viable in the current world of music. There are resources available that describe how to perform these techniques. It is recommended, however, that flutists find someone who knows these techniques well and can teach them. They are much easier to learn in the presence of someone who can demonstrate and coach flute students in the process of learning them. In the interest of bringing further awareness of this subgenre to a new generation of upcoming young flutists, new compositions that are

less difficult and more accessible for less experienced instrumentalists, both flute and indefinite pitched percussion, should be composed.

This author has established herself as an authority on this rare instrumental pairing, and will continue to seek out already written works that are as yet unknown, as well as seek to cause new works to be written for the genre. The completion of this project leaves open the possibility for future study on the other six works mentioned in this document, but not studied. This research also can be the catalyst from which to branch out and study other unusual instrumental pairings and groupings.

In conclusion, the three works by Landis, Engebretson, and Crumb are exciting, contemporary, difficult, and highly interesting works of musical art. They are too advanced to be performed by young or inexperienced musicians, but they are exciting and fun challenges for advanced college and professional performers. These three compositions provide interesting listening experiences for audiences, with each work conveying a significantly different message. These pieces are also excellent study models for young composers looking to write for flute and indefinite pitched percussion instruments, as they push the boundaries of what can be done on these instruments and demonstrate many special effects and extended techniques.

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APPENDIX A

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From: [Steven Landis](#) >

To: [Janet Phillips](#) >

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November 30, 2014 at 6:15 PM

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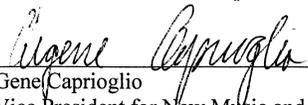
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