

Phantom Sun

Septet for Flute, Clarinet in Bb, Violin, Cello, and Percussion

by

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ABSTRACT

Phantom Sun is a ten-minute piece in three sections, and is composed for flute, clarinet in b-flat, violin, cello, and percussion. The three-part structure for this work is a representation of the atmospheric phenomenon after which the composition is named. A phantom sun, also called a parhelion or sundog, is a weather-related phenomenon caused by the horizontal refraction of sunlight in the upper atmosphere. This refraction creates the illusion of three suns above the horizon, and is often accompanied by a bright halo called the circumzenithal arc. The halo is caused by light bending at 22° as it passes through hexagonal ice crystals. Consequently, the numbers six and 22 are important figures, and have been encoded into this piece in various ways.

The first section, marked “With concentrated intensity,” is characterized by the juxtaposition of tonal ambiguity and tonal affirmation, as well as the use of polymetric counterpoint (often $7/8$ against $4/4$ or $7/8$ against $3/4$). The middle section, marked “Crystalline,” provides contrast in its use of unmeasured sections and independent tempos. The refraction of light is represented in this movement by a 22-note row based on a hexachord (B-flat, F, C, G, A, E) introduced in measure 164 of the first section. The third section, marked “With frenetic energy,” begins without pause on an arresting entrance of the drums playing an additive rhythmic pattern. This pattern ($5+7+9+1$) amounts to 22 eighth-note pulses and informs much of the motivic and structural considerations for the remainder of the piece.

For my parents, who provided the initial inspiration for this piece,
and for my wife, Sara, who provides a constant source of inspiration in my life.

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INSTRUMENTATION

Flute

Clarinet in Bb

Violin

Cello

Percussion (three players):

1. Temple Blocks, Cymbal, Hi-Hat, Bongos,
Sandpaper Blocks, Claves, Guiro, Tom-toms

2. Marimba

3. Vibraphone

Percussion Key:

The diagram illustrates the Percussion Key with two staves. The first staff contains Temple Blocks (Low and High), Ride Cymbal, Hi-Hat (Open and Closed), Bongos (Low and High), and Sandpaper Blocks. The second staff contains Claves, Guiro, and Toms (Low, Low-Mid, High Mid, and High). Each instrument is represented by a note on a five-line staff, with its specific pitch range indicated below.

Note:

The second section, marked "Crystalline" alternates between metered and unmetered music. All changes are clearly marked by rehearsal letters and are facilitated by cues from the conductor.

Score in C

PHANTOM SUN

SEPTET

for Flute, Clarinet in B \flat , Violin, Cello
Percussion, Marimba and Vibraphone

Stephen Mitton
2017

With concentrated intensity $\text{♩} = 180$

Always 2 + 3 A

Flute p

Clarinet in B \flat p

Violin *con sord.* pp *sub. pp* pp p

Cello *con sord.* pp *sub. pp* pp p

Percussion Temple Blocks p Ride Cymbal

Marimba p p

Vibraphone p p *Ped. ad lib.*

Always 2 + 2 + 3 B

10 Flute p mp mf mp mp

Clarinet in B \flat p mp mf mp mp

Violin *senza sord.* mp mf mp p pp

Cello *senza sord.* mp mf mp p pp

Percussion Hi-hat mp Claves mp

Piano mp mf mp

Vibraphone mp mf mp

35

Violin I: *p*, *pp*, *f*, *ff*, *mf espr.*

Violin II: *p*, *pp*, *mf*, *ff*

Bongos: *mf*, *ff*

Piano: *mp*, *p*, *mf*, *ff*

Bass: *p*, *ff*

Annotations: *sul pont.*, *ord.*



45

Violin I: *mp*, *mf*

Violin II: *mp*, *mf*

Piano: *mp*, *mf agitato*

Bass: *mp*, *mf agitato*

Annotations: *pizz.*

51

51

f *p* *mf* *mp* *pp* *mp*

f *p* *mf* *mp* *pp* *mp*

mf *p* *f*

Cym.

p *mp*

mf *mf* *f*

mf

59

E

59

mf *p* *mf* *mp*

mf *p* *mf* *mp*

p

Guiro

mp *mf* *f*

p *mf* *p* *mp*

p

67

f *p* *mp* *p*

pp *p* *pp* *mf*

pp *p* *pp* *mf* *pizz.*

Clav. *mf*

mf

mf

71

mp *mf*

mp *mf*

mp *arco* *mf* *pizz.*

mf *mf*

Cym. *mf*

mp *mf*

mp *mf*

F

Violin I: *f*, *mf*, *mp*

Violin II: *f*, *mf*, *mp*

Viola: *f*, *mf*

Cello/Double Bass: *f*, *mf*

Percussion (Clav.): *f*

Piano: *mf*, *f*, *mp*



91

Violin I: *mf*, *f*

Violin II: *mf*, *f*

Viola: *f*, *ff*

Cello/Double Bass: *f*

Percussion (H.H.): *mf*, *f*

Piano: *mf*, *f*

116 H

Violin I: *mp* → *mf*

Violin II: *mp* → *mf* (bend)

Viola: *mp* → *p* → *pp*

Piano: *mp* → *mf*

Cello/Double Bass: *pp*

122

Violin I: *p* (legato)

Violin II: *p* (legato)

Viola: *p* (legato)

Piano: *p* (legato)

Cello/Double Bass: *p*

126

p *mf* *mp* *f* *mp*
p *f* *mp*
mf *f* *p* *p*
mf *f* *p* *p*

134

mp *p* *p* *f* *mf*
p *p* *f* *mf*
f *mp* *fz* *f* *mp* *fz*
f *mp* *fz*
f *mf*

Toms

141

mp

subito *p*

pp

subito *p* *pp*

mp

p

Ped.



148

mf

mf

fp

pp

fp *pp*

Toms

mf

f

mf

f

169

p *f* *mp* *mf* *f*
p *f* *mp* *mf* *f*
p *f* *mp*
p *f* *mp*
p *f* *mf*
mf

H.H.



177

f *mp*
mp
mp *con sord.*
mp *con sord.*

184

K Crystalline ca. 10"

pppp

hold until cue

ppp

l.v.

ppp

Motor on (slow)

senza misura bowed

p

Ped.

195

L a tempo ♩ = 180 ca. 10" **M** a tempo string cue

pp

hold until cue

pp

hold until cue

ca. 5"

Tempo Blocks

mp senza misura

l.v.

Ped.

N **Independent Tempo**
 ♩ = ca. 108

with flute
 senza misura

mp

tr

mp

hold until cue

hold until cue

repeat until cue

mp

repeat until cue

p

l.v.

p

Ped.

mf

p

Ped.



O **P** **a tempo**
 string cue rit. $\text{♩} = 120$

mf

54

mp

mf

p

l.v.

Motor off

mf

Q

R $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 120$
senza misura

mp *mf* *p* *mf* *p* *mp*

mp *mf* *p* *détaché* *p*

mp *mf* *p*

Sand Paper Blocks

repeat until cue

repeat until cue

mp *sempre*

random order
 with mallets $\circ \circ \circ \circ$ *ad lib.*

continue with free rhythm
 until cue

mp

S a tempo
 string cue

ca. 10"

f *p* *mp* *senza misura*

senza sord. *p*

senza sord. *p*

gradually become more active...

217

ca. 10"

T a tempo
strings, perc. cue

f *mp*

mp *p*

mp

pp

220

U

mp *f* *mp* *p*

mp *mf* *p* *mp*

mf *f* *p* *mf* *p*

f *mp* *mf* *p*

Sandpaper Blocks

mp *p*

p

senza misura

225

vib. cue

7/4

7/4

6

repeat until cue

repeat until cue

repeat until cue

random order

ad lib.

continue until cue



226

In time (♩ = 120)
strings, perc. cue

6

p

p

random order

continue until cue

vib. cue

mp *mf* *mp* *p*

mf *f* *mp* *p*

mf *f* *mp* *p*

mf *f* *mp* *p*

Sandpaper Blocks

mp *mp*

Motor on (slow)

V

mp *senza misura* *p* as fast as possible *mp*

senza misura *p* as fast as possible with cello *mp*

Independent Tempo (not fast) *senza misura* *pp*

Independent Tempo (not fast) *senza misura* *pp* with violin

repeat until cue

repeat until cue

p

random order

bowed

begin actively and gradually become more sparse...

W In time (♩ = 120)
strings, perc. cue

senza misura

ppp low murmuring (textural)

p

sim.

p

mp

p

con sord.

p

ppp

con sord.

p

ppp

Independent Tempo

Bongos

mp

continue until cue

ca. 15"

continue in this style...

ppp

continue in this style...

p low murmuring (textural)

ppp

ppp

continue improvising intermittently in the style until cue

ppp

With frenetic energy
 ♩ = 170
 Always 2 + 2 + 2 + 3

X vib. cue

Y perc. cue

Toms

f *ff*

ppp

Motor off

mf



226

Z

mp

mp

senza sord.
p

senza sord.
p

Toms

f *fff*

mf

232

mf *f* *mp* *p*

mf *f* *mp* *p*

mp *mf* *p*

mp *mf* *p*

mf *f* *mp* *p*

mf *f* *mp* *p*



237

mf *f*

mf *f*

mf *f* *mp* *mf*

f

mf *f*

mf *f* *mp* *mf*

245

mp *p* *fp* *fp* *fp*

249

AA

Bongos

f *f* *f* *sf*

256 BB

ff mp mp ff mp mf mp ff mp ff mp ff p mf p ff mf mp

263

mf fp f mp p mf fp f mp f mp f mp mp mp

269

269

p *mp*

p *mp*



273

273

mf *ff*

mf *ff*

Toms

Motor on (slow)

ff

278

mf *mp* *p*

mp *p*

legato *p* *p*

p

p

p

CC ♩ = 112

pp *mp* *mf*

pp *mp* *mf*

pp *mf*

mp *p* *mp* *p*

mp *p* *mf*

mp *mp* *mf*

333

333

mp *ff* *ff* *fp* *p* *mf* *ff* *mp* *p* *mf* *f* *mp* *f*

GG

341

mp *mp* *p* *p* *f* *mp* *f* *mp* *mf* *mp* *f* *mp* *mp* *f* *mp*

Toms

Musical score for measures 359-363. The score is written for a 7-piece ensemble in 3/8 time. The instruments are: Snare Drum (HH), Hi-Hat (HH), Tom (Toms), and Piano. The piano part is split into two staves (treble and bass). The dynamics are: *f* (forte), *mf* (mezzo-forte), *mp* (mezzo-piano), and *f* (forte). The key signature has one sharp (F#). The score includes various rhythmic patterns, including sixteenth and thirty-second notes, and rests. The HH and Toms parts have specific markings above them.

Musical score for measures 364-368. The score is written for a 7-piece ensemble in 3/8 time. The instruments are: Snare Drum (HH), Hi-Hat (HH), Tom (Toms), and Piano. The piano part is split into two staves (treble and bass). The dynamics are: *ff* (fortissimo). The key signature has one sharp (F#). The score includes various rhythmic patterns, including sixteenth and thirty-second notes, and rests. The HH and Toms parts have specific markings above them.

370

mf mp

H.H.

mf mp

mf mp

376

II

p mf

p mf

p mp p

p p

p mp

Clav.

p mp

mf

383

mp *mf* *mp* *p* *mp* *p*

mp *mf* *mp* *p* *mp* *p*

sim. *p*

mp *p*

p



390

ppp

ppp

ppp

ppp