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John Steinmetz
SONATA

(1981)

For
Bassoon & Piano

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Performance Notes

For this new edition of 2004, I have changed a few markings to clarify my intentions. In order to come alive, this music needs performers' musicality, taste, and heart. In the outer movements, you create the pacing. In the middle movement, you shape dynamics and phrasing. Throughout the piece the piano should play as an equal partner with the bassoon: not in the background, and often playing very loudly, pushing the bassoonist to play an extreme dynamic, for intense expressivity.

I. PRELUDE

Notes regarding performance of the glissandi are in the bassoon part.

II. BROWNING

Articulations and dynamics are largely up to the performers, as in early music. Most of the markings are just suggestions.

Begin trills on the upper notes.

Tempo: It works very well to begin this movement Adagio (quarter note = ca. 60). Around measure [65] begin a very gentle accelerando, so that [89] can really move (eighth note = 170+).

III. LAMENT

At [B] the bassoon's first two notes recall the Prelude.

There are two kinds of time here. The piano plods ever onward with steady, unceasing quarter notes; but the bassoon plays in a slower and more flexible tempo, rather like the way a jazz ballad-singer bends time by holding back here and rushing there to stretch a familiar song almost beyond recognition. The overall musical character is spacious and unhurried, yet brimming with emotion.

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I remember wanting to write a piece with strong emotions. I envied other musicians' repertoire: Schubert lieder, Mahler's arching string lines, the intensity of Romantic chamber music, free forms and shifting moods in early music. Other influences I hear in the *Sonata* are Japanese *shakuhachi* music, which had surprised me with the vast expressive space between two neighboring notes, and Messiaen's *Quartet for the End of Time*, with its beautiful slow solos over very spare piano accompaniments. These different musics inspired me and gave me courage to try similar things.

This *Sonata* is not in "sonata form." Like very early sonatas, it is music "to be sounded," music for invoking different emotional states. The first movement portrays the bassoon as a strong-voiced instrument exploring powerful feelings. The second movement is based on an English tune called "Browning" (or "The Leaves Be Green.") Several English Renaissance composers made consort settings of this tune; I was inspired by (and stole ideas from) the *Browning* for three viols by Elway Bevin, in which the 8-bar theme constantly repeats, moving to a different instrument each time. My version has four voices, with three played by the pianist. (After the very first performance of the *Sonata*, a man introduced himself as editor of Renaissance settings of "Browning." We were astonished to encounter an expert on this obscure melody, and he was amazed to hear a new setting.)

I often have trouble ending my compositions with a cheery finale; many of my pieces conclude with a slow movement: a lullaby, chorale, or lament. Who can say how much this has to do with my temperament or stage of life, and how much it has to do with the state of our world?

The Lament that ends this *Sonata* grew from some piano chords that captivated me. I sat at the piano for hours tinkering with them. I began the Prelude and the Lament with similar chords, but only much later did I realize that the "Browning" melody begins with the very same notes – even in other people's versions. Some of the best things in music happen in ways that remain mysterious (during the piece's gestation a songbook caught my attention in a music library and fell open to "Browning"), and that's just a way of saying that I understand only some of what went into this music. For the rest I am grateful.

Sonata

for Bassoon and Piano

I. Prelude

John Steinmetz
(b. 1951)

A

Bassoon

Piano

ff (like ringing chimes)

Ped.

ff powerful

(Quasi tempo, ♩ = ca. 84)

(Quasi tempo) 8^{va}

ff marc.

(hold the pedal down to [F])

(Ped. sempre)

B

ff

8^{va}

(loco)

15^{ma}

ff

15^{ma}

13

C *very slow gliss*

8^{va} **C** *(loco)* *ff* *15^{ma}* *loco*

ff *15^{ma}* *loco*

D ($\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 50$)

8^{va} 15^{ma} *rit. e dim.*

D ($\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 50$) *3*

ff 8^{va}

pp *delicatiss. (rhythms clear, without distortion)*
(Gently ringing, distant bells, wind chimes)

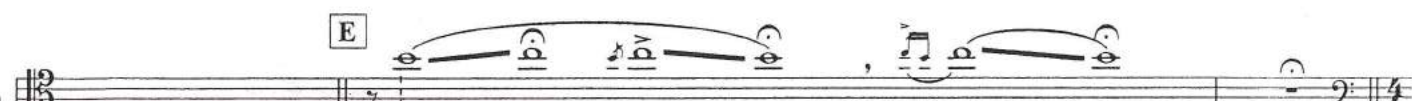
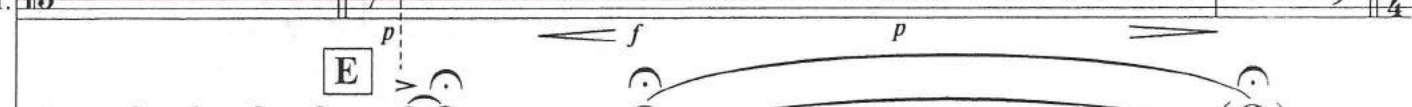
(Ped. sempre)



pno.

3


3


poco rit.

bsn.  **E** 

pno.  **E** 


(poco rit.)

F Roaring ($\text{♩} = 80+$) 

 15^{mb} ----->
ff marc.
(no pedal)

 15^{mb} ----->

 15^{mb} ----->

 15^{mb} ----->

 15^{mb} ----->

(the *p* notes are heard not so much as pitches,
but as a change of color in the *ff* sound)

Slower

15^{mb} ---> *p* *ff* *p* *ff* *p*

Ped.

15^{mb} ---> *ff* *p* *mp* *p*

Ped.

bsn. **G** Thunderous

ff *ff*

Ped.

pno. **G** Thunderous (loco)

ff *ff*

8^{vb} ---> 15^{mb} ---> Ped.

bsn. **H**

ff marc.

pno. **H**

ff marc.

15^{mb} ---> (Ped. sempre)

15^{mb} ----->

ff *ff*

slow

(Ped. sempre)

(Wait until
bassoon B₁ is
absolutely clear.)

Release pedal slowly,
holding the Bs out
and into the beginning
of the Browning.

II. Browning

Andante*

Piano

p dolce, cantabile

etc.

from 1st mvt. (15^{mb})

* Please see the Performance Notes about the tempo of this movement.

9

17

25

First system of music, measures 25-32. The system includes a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The piano part features a treble and bass staff. The vocal line is in a single staff. The tempo/mood is marked *p dolce*.

Second system of music, measures 33-40. The system includes a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The piano part features a treble and bass staff. The vocal line is in a single staff.

33

Third system of music, measures 41-48. The system includes a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The piano part features a treble and bass staff. The vocal line is in a single staff.

41

Fourth system of music, measures 49-56. The system includes a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The piano part features a treble and bass staff. The vocal line is in a single staff.

Fifth system of music, measures 57-64. The system includes a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The piano part features a treble and bass staff. The vocal line is in a single staff.

49

Measures 49-56 of a musical score. The top staff is in 12/8 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It contains a melody with eighth and quarter notes. The piano accompaniment consists of a right hand with chords and a left hand with single notes.

57

Measures 57-64 of a musical score. The top staff continues the melody. The piano accompaniment features more complex rhythmic patterns in both hands, including eighth and sixteenth notes.

65

(♩ = ♪)

Measures 65-72 of a musical score. Measure 65 includes a tempo change instruction: (♩ = ♪). The piano accompaniment has a circled '8' in measure 65, indicating an eighth note. The right hand of the piano part has a circled '6' in measure 65, indicating a sixteenth note.

Measures 73-80 of a musical score. The top staff continues the melody. The piano accompaniment features more complex rhythmic patterns in both hands, including eighth and sixteenth notes.

73

Measures 73-76 of a musical score. The top staff is in 3/8 time with a key signature of one flat. It contains a single melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The piano accompaniment consists of two staves: the right hand plays a steady eighth-note accompaniment, and the left hand plays a bass line with eighth and sixteenth notes.

Measures 77-80 of a musical score. The top staff continues the single melodic line. The piano accompaniment features more complex textures, including chords and sixteenth-note patterns in both the right and left hands.

81

Measures 81-84 of a musical score. The top staff has a single melodic line. The piano accompaniment is marked with the instruction "solo" above the right hand and "dancelike, grazioso" below the left hand. The right hand features a rapid sixteenth-note figure, while the left hand plays a simpler bass line. A fermata is placed over the first measure of the piano part.

First system of a musical score. It features a single melodic line on a treble clef staff with a 12/8 time signature. The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes. Below it is a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) with a complex accompaniment of sixteenth and thirty-second notes, creating a dense texture.

Second system of the musical score. The single melodic line continues with a mix of eighth and quarter notes, including some beamed eighth notes. The grand staff accompaniment remains intricate, with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes.

Third system of the musical score, starting at measure 89. The single melodic line begins with a trill (tr) on a quarter note, followed by eighth notes. The grand staff accompaniment features a steady eighth-note pattern in the bass and a more melodic line in the treble.

Fourth system of the musical score. The single melodic line continues with eighth notes and quarter notes. The grand staff accompaniment maintains its complex texture with sixteenth and thirty-second notes.

97

Measures 97-100 of a musical score. The score is written for three staves: a single treble staff at the top and a grand staff (treble and bass) below. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 3/8. Measure 97 features a melodic line in the treble staff with eighth-note runs and a trill on the final note, and a bass line with eighth-note accompaniment. Measure 98 continues the melodic development with a trill. Measure 99 shows a continuation of the eighth-note patterns. Measure 100 concludes the phrase with a trill in the treble staff.

Measures 101-104 of a musical score. The notation continues on the same three-staff system. Measure 101 features a trill in the treble staff. Measure 102 shows a continuation of the eighth-note accompaniment in the bass. Measure 103 includes a trill in the treble staff. Measure 104 concludes the phrase with a trill in the treble staff.

Measures 105-108 of a musical score. The notation continues on the same three-staff system. Measure 105 features a trill in the treble staff. Measure 106 shows a continuation of the eighth-note accompaniment in the bass. Measure 107 includes a trill in the treble staff. Measure 108 concludes the phrase with a trill in the treble staff.

105

Measures 109-112 of a musical score. The notation continues on the same three-staff system. Measure 109 features a trill in the treble staff. Measure 110 shows a continuation of the eighth-note accompaniment in the bass. Measure 111 includes a trill in the treble staff. Measure 112 concludes the phrase with a trill in the treble staff. The word "dancing" is written in the bass staff between measures 110 and 111.

First system of a musical score. The top staff is a single line with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat), containing whole rests. The bottom staff is a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) with a key signature of one flat. It features a continuous eighth-note melody in the treble and a bass line with a half-note accompaniment.

Second system of a musical score. The top staff is a single line with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat, containing whole rests. The bottom staff is a grand staff with a key signature of one flat. It features a continuous eighth-note melody in the treble and a bass line with a half-note accompaniment. A dynamic marking *f* (forte) is present in the first measure of the bass line.

Third system of a musical score. The top staff is a single line with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat, containing whole rests. The bottom staff is a grand staff with a key signature of one flat. It features a continuous eighth-note melody in the treble and a bass line with a half-note accompaniment.

Fourth system of a musical score. The top staff is a single line with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat, containing whole rests. The bottom staff is a grand staff with a key signature of one flat. It features a continuous eighth-note melody in the treble and a bass line with a half-note accompaniment. A measure number 121 is indicated above the first measure of the top staff.



The first system of musical notation consists of three staves. The top staff is a single treble clef line with a few notes. The middle and bottom staves are grouped by a brace and contain a piano accompaniment with various chords and melodic lines.



The second system of musical notation consists of three staves. The top staff has a measure rest followed by a melodic line starting at measure 129. The middle and bottom staves continue the piano accompaniment. A *dim.* (diminuendo) marking is present in the middle staff.



The third system of musical notation consists of three staves. The top staff continues the melodic line from the previous system. The middle and bottom staves continue the piano accompaniment with various chords and melodic lines.



The fourth system of musical notation consists of three staves. The top staff continues the melodic line. The middle and bottom staves continue the piano accompaniment with various chords and melodic lines.

en dehors

This system contains measures 137 through 144. The top staff is in 13/8 time and features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, some beamed together. The middle staff is in treble clef and contains a few chords. The bottom staff is in bass clef and has a continuous eighth-note accompaniment. The instruction "en dehors" is written above the middle staff.

cresc. poco a poco

cresc. poco a poco

This system contains measures 145 through 152. The top staff continues the melodic line. The middle staff has chords, with the instruction "cresc. poco a poco" written above it. The bottom staff continues the eighth-note accompaniment, also with the instruction "cresc. poco a poco" written above it.

en dehors

This system contains measures 153 through 160. The top staff continues the melodic line. The middle staff has chords. The bottom staff continues the eighth-note accompaniment. The instruction "en dehors" is written above the bottom staff.

145

This system contains measures 161 through 168. The top staff continues the melodic line. The middle staff has chords. The bottom staff continues the eighth-note accompaniment. The measure number "145" is written above the first measure of the top staff.



First system of music. The upper staff contains a melody with eighth and sixteenth notes. The lower staff contains a complex accompaniment with chords and arpeggios. Vertical lines with 'v' marks are present below the lower staff.

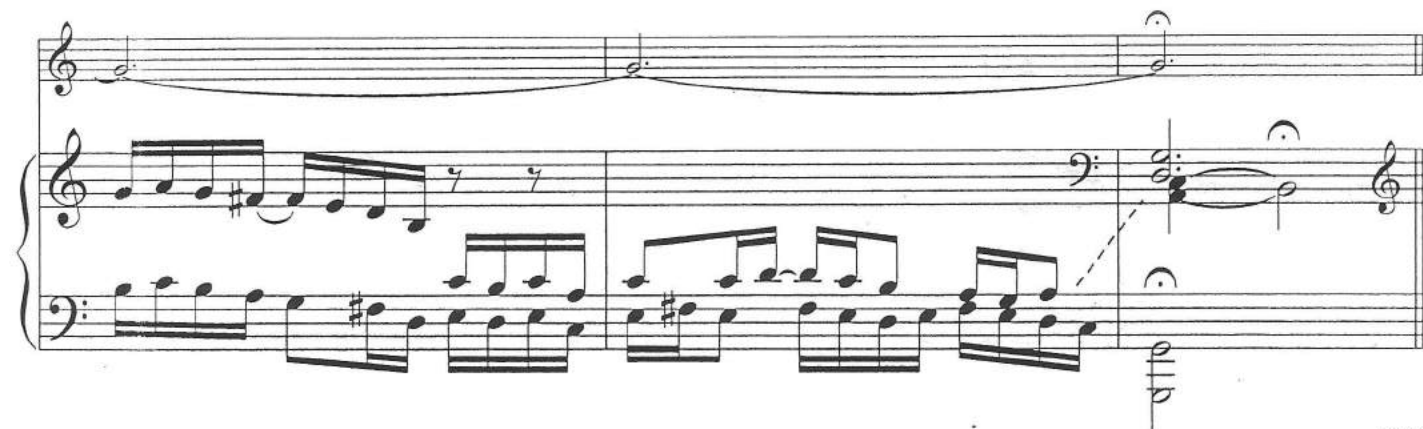
152



Second system of music, starting at measure 152. It features a complex accompaniment with many sixteenth notes. A slur is placed over the first two measures of the lower staff. The text "(Sost. Ped.)" is written below the first measure of the lower staff.



Third system of music. The lower staff has a slur over the first two measures. A vertical line with a 'v' mark and a slur is located below the lower staff.



Fourth system of music. The lower staff has a slur over the first two measures. A vertical line with a 'v' mark and a slur is located below the lower staff.

III. Lament

(chimes)

f

Ped. →

A Slow (♩ = ca. 42-54)

f *p* etc. continue steady pulse, changing chords as indicated.

Ped. →

B Spacious, molto rubato (independent of the piano)

B *p* tenderly

Ped.

Ped.

C

poco a poco cresc.

C

poco cresc. *mp* *poco*

cresc. *mf* *cresc.*

The musical score is divided into several systems. The first system features a chime part on a single staff with a treble clef, marked *f* and *Ped.* with a rightward arrow. The second system begins with a piano introduction marked **A** Slow (♩ = ca. 42-54), showing a steady pulse of chords in the right hand and single notes in the left hand, with dynamics *f* and *p* and a *Ped.* arrow. The third system, marked **B**, is described as 'Spacious, molto rubato (independent of the piano)' and 'p tenderly', showing wide intervals in the right hand and single notes in the left hand, with *Ped.* markings. The fourth system, marked **C**, shows a crescendo in the right hand ('poco a poco cresc.') and a series of chords in the left hand ('poco cresc.', 'mp', 'poco'). The final system continues the crescendo in the right hand and features a *mf* dynamic in the left hand.

The image shows a musical score for 'The Swan' by Camille Saint-Saëns. It is a piano and vocal score in 3/4 time, with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The score is divided into five systems. The piano part is written in the bass clef, and the vocal part is written in the treble clef. The vocal line is marked with 'D', 'E', and 'F' for specific notes. The piano part includes dynamic markings such as *f*, *ff*, *cresc.*, *dim.*, and *mp*. The vocal part includes dynamic markings such as *ff* and *mp*. The score includes articulation markings like accents and slurs.

G

pp *(poco cresc.)*

(dim.) *Ped.*

H

ppp *[bassoon tacet to end]* *(fade out)*

I

R. H.

sf *(suddenly loud)* *rit. and fade out L. H.*

(long)

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1506

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- John Steinmetz, Altadena, CA, February 2004

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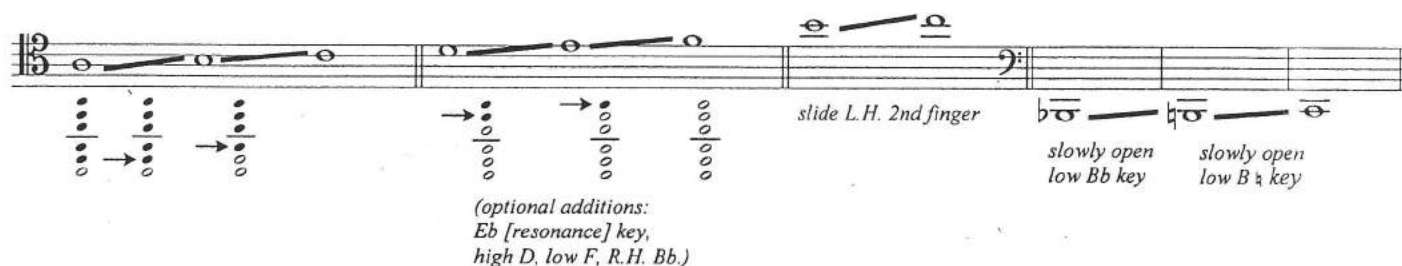
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I. PRELUDE

Glissandi:

Slowly slide the finger on or off the indicated hole. Imitate as closely as possible the unbroken glissando of a voice, hearing all of that musical space between the "real" notes.



II. BROWNING

Articulations and dynamics are largely up to the performers, as in early music. Most of the markings are just suggestions.

Begin trills on the upper notes.

Tempo: It works very well to begin this movement Adagio (quarter note = ca. 60). Around measure [65] begin a very gentle accelerando, so that [89] can really move (eighth note = 170+).

III. LAMENT

At [B] the bassoon's first two notes recall the Prelude.

There are two kinds of time here. The piano plods ever onward with steady, unceasing quarter notes; but the bassoon plays in a slower and more flexible tempo, rather like the way a jazz ballad-singer bends time by holding back here and rushing there to stretch a familiar song almost beyond recognition. The overall musical character is spacious and unhurried, yet brimming with emotion.

Sonata

for Bassoon and Piano

I. Prelude

John Steinmetz
(1981)

A

Bassoon

Piano

ff (like ringing chimes)

ff powerful

(hold the pedal down to [F])

(Quasi tempo)
(♩ = ca. 84)

B

ff marc.

(Ped. sempre)

A

B

ff

ff

13

(loco) >

ff

15^{ma} >

8^{va} >

(Ped. sempre)

C

very slow gliss

C

(loco) >

ff

15^{ma} >

loco

8^{va} >

15^{ma} >

loco

8^{va} >

D (♩ = ca. 50)

rit. e dim.

D (♩ = ca. 50)

pp delicatiss. (rhythms clear, without distortion)
(Gently ringing: distant bells, wind chimes)

(Ped. sempre)

pno.

3

(Ped. sempre)

pno.

3

6

E

pno.

poco rit.

p *f* *p*

fff

4/4

F

Roaring ($\text{♩} = 80+$)

pno.

ff marc.
(no pedal)

15^{mb} ----->

3 3 3 3

15^{mb} ----->

15^{mb} ----->

15^{mb} ----->

15^{mb} ----->

6 5

Slower

(the *p* notes are heard not so much as pitches, but as a change of color in the *ff* sound)

ff 15^{mb} Ped. *p* *ff* 15^{mb} Ped. *p* *ff* 15^{mb} Ped. *p*

G Thunderous

bsn.

ff *ff* 15^{mb} Ped. 15^{mb} Ped.

H

bsn.

ff marc.

pno.

ff marc. 15^{mb} (Ped. sempre)

slow

15^{mb} (Ped. sempre)

ff *ff*

(Wait until bassoon B-natural is absolutely clear.)

Release pedal slowly, holding the Bs out and into the beginning of the Browning.

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for page turn

II. Browning

Andante*

Piano

p dolce, cantabile

etc.

from 1st mvt. (15^{mb})

*see Performance Notes

9

17

Bsn.

3

25

p dolce

33

8



89 *tr*

97 *b*

tr *b* *b*

b *tr* 105 4

Detailed description: This musical score is for a piece in 13/8 time, spanning measures 89 to 105. The notation is written on a single staff with a 13/8 time signature. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The music features a variety of rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together. Trills (tr) are indicated above certain notes in measures 89, 91, 101, and 103. Flats (b) are used to indicate lowered notes in measures 97, 99, 101, 103, and 105. The piece concludes with a final measure (105) containing a whole note and a repeat sign, followed by a 4-measure rest.



cresc. poco a poco

III. Lament

(chimes)

Piano

f

Red. →

A Slow (♩ = ca. 42-54)

continue steady pulse, changing chords as indicated.

f

P

Red. →

etc.

B Spacious, molto rubato (independent of the piano)

Bsn.

p tenderly

Pno.

Red.

Red.

poco cresc.

C

poco a poco cresc.

mp

poco cresc.

cresc.

mf

D

f

cresc.

E

ff

ff

dim.

F

mp

mp

1506

dim.

dim.

G

pp

(poco cresc.)

pp

(poco cresc.)

(dim.)

(dim.)

(dim.)

ppp

H

(fade out)

[bassoon tacet to end]

R. H.

sf (suddenly loud)

rit. and fade out L. H.

(long)