

PETR BAKLA

**Příhody starého zálesáka /
Stories of the Old Backwoodsman**

MUSIC ABOUT THREE POEMS IN PROSE BY IVAN WERNISCH

for bassoon, percussion and piano

(2005) (16')

- I. **Prelude** (Před deštěm / Before It Rains) (4')
- II. **Příhody starého zálesáka / Stories of the Old Backwoodsman** (11')
- III. **Postlude** (Na cestě / On the Road) (1')

Parts I. and III. are for percussion solo.

The part II. may be performed separately, but performance of all three parts is preferred.

Structurally speaking, the central part of the piece is a kind of variations on the dominant seventh chord, while the Prelude and the Postlude deal with a simple rhythmic pattern and its distorted, melodized echo. And that's all? Instead of sophisticated harmonic structures, the dominant seventh everywhere? Instead of spectral chords, octaves? The saw and the slide flute attempting (in vain) to get in tune, instead of intricate microtonal systems? The piano only rarely played with more than one finger? Held bassoon notes instead of brand-new multiphonics, and the scraping saw instead of 27th harmonic on the E string? And the triangle...?!?

You may see the piece as a manifesto of musical primitivism, but please note: it is nothing sarcastic or polemic and by no means a parody. I would like to call it a “melancholic musical DIY”.

Před deštěm (Before It Rains), *Příhody starého zálesáka* (Stories of the Old Backwoodsman) and *Na cestě* (On the Road; nothing to do with Kerouac, though) are titles of poems in prose by Ivan Wernisch, which have been object of my admiration since many years. However, the titles say very little about the melancholic-nostalgic-ironic nature of the poems, minimal and masterly elegant... And so simplistic and banal at first sight! In the best case, this piece can be seen as a musical parallel or comment – hence the subtitle “music *about* poems”.

EXPLANATORY NOTES:

General



Triangle-headed notes indicate the highest / lowest obtainable pitch. The rhythmic value must be observed.



The caesuras should be mostly quite distinct, approx. 1-2 sec. = time needed to take breath comfortably. Exception: parts I and III, where a caesura equals to a 16th rest approximately.

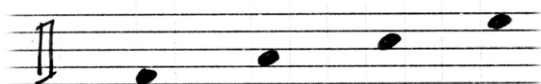


Exact duration of indicated note, contrary to "let sound".

Percussion

Parts I. and III.:

- Four Chinese tom-toms (or similar drums, preferably natural skin), notated from lowest to highest. Play with soft sticks, but not too soft ones – make sure the sound is distinct. The toms should be "tuned" as follows:



perf. 5th perf. 5th minor 2nd

- Four bells of rough timbre and shorter sustain. They should be tuned following the same pattern as in tom-toms (preferably approx. e – h – f# – g) and are notated in the same way, from lowest to highest. Play with very light rubber sticks (pencils with eraser may be a solution). Alternative: a toy piano.

Part II.:

SAW The musical saw. Strictly no vibrato, rough tone, rich in harmonics. Play with a bow. The player should not be a saw virtuoso (if she/he happens to be one, no one should notice it...).

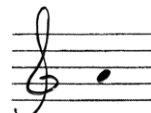


Big triangle, standard triangle stick

tom-tom Low tom-tom (if the parts I. and II. are played, use one of the deep Chinese toms).
Medium-soft sticks and hard wooden sticks.

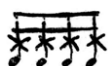
Bassoon

Changes to slide flute ("swanee whistle"). The flute should range from



or lower.

Piano



Depress the key silently with the left hand and hit it firmly with the index finger of the right hand. You may try releasing the key a little bit (the sound produced is more interesting then, but accidents – the note suddenly sounds – are likely; this should not happen, or only very rarely). See also notes on p. 3.



Don't release the right pedal too abruptly (a slight "woooo" is heard).

I. Prelude (Před deštěm / Before It Rains)

- 1) mp = soft, but distinct
- 2) caesuras equal to a 16th rest approx.
(NB: see explanatory notes for their duration in the trio part!)
- 3) exact duration of the note (otherwise let sound)

♩ = 55-60 MM

TOM-TOMS

mp¹⁾ pp

(pp) mp pp mf

p pp ppp

mp *poco*

mp mp

p pp mp

q (al margine)

o (ordinario)

pp ord. mp

(mp)

pp p

V.S.

COW-BELLS

mp p

mp ppp mp

mp

(mp) rustling sound with fingers (stick) (ppp) cca 10-12"

COW-BELL rustling sound with the bow (ppp) COW-BELLS pp

mp X poco mp poco X

(r) (senza fermata se possibile) p with the bow

II. (Příhody starého zálesáka / Stories of the Old Backwoodsman)

$\text{♩} \approx 60 \text{ MM}$ tempo libero, according to the saw

Fg $\frac{6}{4}$ SAW
gliss. getting in tune; bow action ad lib.
pp *al niente*
cca 44
l.v.

Perc.

PF fff mp poco mf
una corda

In tempo ($\text{♩} \approx 60$)

Fg $\frac{6}{4}$ $\frac{6}{4}$
poco f *mf* *f* *molto dim.*
bend ca. 2 semitones
V.S.

Perc. mf (ben sonoro) *ff* dampen triangle if necessary *mf* V.S.

PF pp *f* *ff* poco f *p* *f* *fffz* V.S.

Ped *f* pp *p* *f*

(♩ = 60)

blow into the instrument, no tone

SAW lowest possible tone, mostly friction noise

cca 10"

mf

cca 10"

ppp

air ---> tone

poco più mosso

evenly, no accents unless indicated

una corda

Ped

Tempo 1^a

♩ = 60

(1-2 sec.)

(1-2 sec.)

(1-2 sec.)

(no accents)

fermata according to the saw

tom-tom (soft st.)

poco f

take saw

SAW (get in tune if necessary)

al niente

fermata according to the saw

poco f

mp

pp

V.S.

V.S.

V.S.

(♩ = 60)

poco più mosso

3/4

Fg

Perc

PF

mf > p >

mf

tom-tom soft st.

p > ppp

pp

al niente

G.P. 4"

G.P. 4"

G.P. 4"

evenly, no grouping

> 15" 20"

(no caesura!)

mf

pp

mf

Ped

Ped

6/4

6/4

3/8 + 2/4

Fg

Perc

PF

mf

fff

tom-tom hard st.

f

fff

(evenly, as before)

(tom-tom) hard st.

fff

(wooden st.)

fff

fffz

caesura as short as needed for re-pressing the key silently

TAKE THE FLUTE

TAKE THE SAW

Ped

(% = [musical notation])

Tempo
Libero

"guess" the pitch
getting in tune with the piano
in tune

simile

lu tempo
♩ = 60

FLUTE breathe ad lib.

SAW bow action ad lib.

repeat if necessary

p sempre

p sempre

p sempre

mp

mp

p

f

ff

mf

Ped

7/4

(9)

short caesura

guss.

muta in F#

G.P. 3'

G.P. 3'

G.P. 3'

f

f

ff

p

pp

pp

f

#

#

#

↑ una corda
↑ ord.
↑ una corda

(♩ ≅ 60)

breathe ad lib.

ff sempre

p — ff sub-p — f

depress silently (F maj) > pp

both hands ff Ped

one hand

both hands ff Ped

f

short caesura

tom-tom (soft it.)

p possibile

f > molto dim.

tom tom

short caesura

both hands, poco a poco senza tremolo

pp

p

sfz > p

coordination approximative, players proceed independently of each other

♩ ≅ 60, liberamente

Fl. sempre pp-p

Fl. sempre pp-p

SAW

gliss cca minor 3rd

in higher register ad lib.

3a volta without transposition!!!

f

f > pp mp pp sfz

f > pp p mf

mf

Ped

(♩ ≅ 60, *Litramente*)

short caesura

Fig. $\frac{8}{8}$ $\frac{1}{2}$ $\frac{1}{2}$

Fl. \uparrow

in lower register ad lib.

Fl. \uparrow

in lower register ad lib.

SAW

gliss

in lower register ad lib.

tom-tom (soft fl.)

8

f > p mf

Ped

to be played in 1a and 2a volta only

Fig. \uparrow

SAW

bend l.v.

3x

Udo-panh... 2005

8

mf

Ped

III. Postlude (Na cestě / On the Road)

$\downarrow = 55-60$ MM

TOM-TOMS

mp sempre

COW-BELLS

TOM-TOMS