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Still Beating

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Christopher Best

Still Beating

Op.52

for Scottish Lever Harp (Clarsach)

2006

(Revised edition 2020)

PERFORMANCE INSTRUCTIONS AND SYMBOLS

SET-UP:

- Initial tuning Ab Major.
- Tune down approximately 35 cents: Db2, G2, Db3, Ab3, Db4.
- Pre-set levers as follows:



KEY:

A3-♯ Lever change information is based on the naming convention that C4 = Middle C. Levers are changed with the left hand except where marked.

[E4-♭ D4-♭] Where two or three lever changes can be made simultaneously due to their proximity and common direction they are bracketed together and shown one above the other.

⊙ This symbol means damp all ringing notes other than the current note (e.g. bar 1), or damp everything if occurring at a rest (e.g. bar 13) or over a bar line (e.g. bar 27).

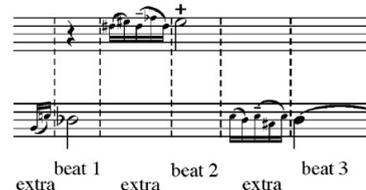
⊕ The cross symbol means damp the note to which it is attached as soon as the *next* note is played (e.g. bar 6) or at the next rest (e.g. bar 13).



The circle with a black cross inside indicates to damp the *specific* marked pitches (left ringing from notes previously played) at the precise moment at which this should happen. If this is in order to effect a silent lever change then a dotted arrow joins the circle with the relevant lever change symbol.



Smaller notes, without a cross-slash and with stems pointing the **correct** way (or correct in the lower stave in the case of cross-stave notation – e.g. bars 14 or 354), occupy a duration taken neither from the previous beat nor from the subsequent one. Rather they are *additional* to the surrounding music and thereby effectively push that music apart slightly (see example below). Single beams (e.g. bar 333) are a little slower than double (e.g. bar 1), which in turn are slower than triple (e.g. bar 57). If marked *accel* or feathered, the player should shape the ornamentation accordingly.



This example (bar 53) shows how this ornamentation adds to the duration of the bar, thus making the two minims longer than they would normally be (the crotchet rest in beat 1 and crotchet in beat 3 are unaffected).



Grace notes, with stems pointing the **wrong** way and with a cross-slash (e.g. bars 70 or 203) follow the common practice of taking their duration from the *preceding* beat.



The arrow between two notes joined by a slur means do not pluck the second note but let the lever change alone effect the pitch change.

Harmonics are written at string pitch, therefore sounding an octave higher than written (e.g. bar 168).

COMPOSER'S NOTE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

'Still Beating' was written for the harpist Ruth Wall, who plays a 33 string lever harp built by Mark Norris. The project was instigated by the S.P.N.M. for a performance on 6th March 2007 at Wapping Power Station in London. I am grateful both to Ruth for her enthusiasm and invaluable guidance and to the S.P.N.M. for giving me this opportunity.

The 2020 revision recognises that the number of lever changes originally required was prohibitively large. The new version has allowed the changes to be reduced in number, re-grouped or given more time to be affected. It has also afforded the work more breathing space, being around a minute longer than the original 2006 version.

Duration: 14' 30"

Still Beating

for lever harp

Christopher Best

Largo Poco Rubato (quasi cadenza)

♩ = c.54

Musical notation for measures 1-6. The piece begins in 3/4 time with a bass clef. Measure 1 has a *p* dynamic. Measures 2-3 are marked *mp* with an *Accel* and *A tempo* marking. Measure 4 has a *p* dynamic. Measures 5-6 are marked *mp* with an *Accel* and *A tempo* marking. There are fermatas over measures 1, 3, and 5.

Poco Più Mosso

♩ = c.66

Musical notation for measures 7-11. Measure 7 has a *p* dynamic. Measures 8-9 are marked *mp* with an *Accel* and *A tempo* marking. Measure 10 has a *p* dynamic. Measure 11 has a *mp* dynamic. There are first endings (l.v.) over measures 10 and 11. There are fermatas over measures 7, 10, and 11.

12

Morendo

Musical notation for measures 12-17. Measure 12 has a *mp* dynamic. Measure 13 has a *p* dynamic. Measure 14 has a *p* dynamic. Measure 15 has a *p* dynamic. Measure 16 has a *p* dynamic. Measure 17 has a *p* dynamic. There are fermatas over measures 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, and 17. Chord markings: A2-b, A2-b, F3-b.

18

A Tempo

Morendo

A Tempo

Musical notation for measures 18-22. Measure 18 has a *pp* dynamic. Measure 19 has a *mp* dynamic. Measure 20 has a *p* dynamic. Measure 21 has a *p* dynamic. Measure 22 has a *p* dynamic. There are fermatas over measures 18, 19, 20, 21, and 22. Chord markings: B2-b, A3-b, A2-b.

23

Musical notation for measures 23-27. Measure 23 has a *mp* dynamic. Measure 24 has a *p* dynamic. Measure 25 has a *pp* dynamic. Measure 26 has a *pp* dynamic. Measure 27 has a *mp* dynamic. There are fermatas over measures 23, 24, 25, 26, and 27. Chord markings: F3-#, A3-b, F3-b, A3-b, F3-#, A3-b.

p

Tempo Primo

♩ = c.54
Accel

29

F3-₄ *p*
G3-₄ B3-₄ *mf* *ppp*
C4-₄ *p* D4-₄ B2-₄ A3-₄ E3-₄

Poco Più Mosso

♩ = c.80

35

p G2-₄ *ppp* E3-₄ C3-₄ A2-₄ A2-₄ B2-₄ *mp*
p *mp* *pp* *p*

39

p *mp* *mp* *p* *p* *p*
G2-₄ A3-₄ E3-₄ A2-₄ G3-₄ D3-₄ D3-₄

46

mp *p* *ppp*
A3-₄ A3-₄ A3-₄ C4-₄ B3-₄ F4-₄ E4-₄

Meno mosso

A tempo

♩ = c.80

52

p *mp* *p* *mp* *mf*
F3-₄ E3-₄ B3-₄ A3-₄ D4-₄ C4-₄ D4-₄ B3-₄ F4-₄ E4-₄ E4-₄

57 *mp* *mp* *p* *pp* *p*

Accel A tempo Accel A tempo rall. $\bullet = c.96$

F4- \natural E4- \flat D4- \flat C4- \natural B3- \flat A3- \flat F4- \sharp E4- \flat C4- \sharp B3- \flat

64 *pp* *p*

Adagio $\leftarrow \bullet = \overset{3}{\curvearrowright} \bullet = c.64$ (sempre *mp*)

B3- \flat F4- \natural E4- \flat B3- \flat B4- \flat RH: E5- \flat

69 *p* *p* *pp*

F3- \natural F3- \sharp B4- \flat

73 *pp*

$\leftarrow \overset{3}{\curvearrowright} \bullet = \bullet = c.96$

E5- \flat

76 *p* *mp* *mf*

accel. *mp* *mf* Più Mosso $\bullet = c.104$

E5- \flat

80

E4-# E5-#

86

F4-# E4-# E5-b B4-b

91

mf E4-#

96

B3-b G3-# *p* *mp*

101

E4-b C4-# F3-# *p* *mp* D4-# +

105 *mp* (*mp*)

B3- \sharp D3- \sharp G2- \sharp

p *mp*

Detailed description: This system contains measures 105 to 110. The music is in 7/8 time. Measure 105 starts with a piano (*mp*) dynamic. The bass line features chords B3- \sharp and D3- \sharp . Measure 106 has a G2- \sharp chord. Measure 107 is marked with a piano (*mp*) dynamic. Measures 108-110 show a dynamic shift from piano (*p*) to mezzo-piano (*mp*).

110

F2- \sharp

Detailed description: This system contains measures 110 to 115. The music continues in 7/8 time. Measure 110 has an F2- \sharp chord. Measures 111-115 show a melodic line in the right hand and a more active bass line.

115 *mf* *f* *mp*

G3- \sharp F3- \sharp D3- \flat D4- \flat

Detailed description: This system contains measures 115 to 120. The music is in 7/8 time. Measure 115 is marked *mf*. Measure 116 is marked *f*. Measures 117-120 are marked *mp*. The bass line features chords G3- \sharp , F3- \sharp , D3- \flat , and D4- \flat . There are time signature changes to 5/8, 3/4, and 3/4.

120

G2- \sharp

Detailed description: This system contains measures 120 to 125. The music is in 7/8 time. Measure 120 has a G2- \sharp chord. Measures 121-125 show a melodic line in the right hand and a more active bass line.

125 *molto rall.*

C4- \sharp B3- \sharp E4- \flat B4- \sharp E3- \flat

Detailed description: This system contains measures 125 to 130. The music is in 7/8 time. Measure 125 is marked *molto rall.*. The bass line features chords C4- \sharp , B3- \sharp , E4- \flat , B4- \sharp , and E3- \flat . There are time signature changes to 5/8, 6/8, and 4/4.

A Tempo
♩ = c.104

129

mp
E3-♯ E3-♭

p
F3-♯
E3-♯

132

F3-♯

136

f
(mf) E5-♯

mf

139

b̄

142

B3-♭

mp

146 *mp* *rall.*

B3-4 B4-b

mf *pp* *mp*

150 *mf* *Andante* ♩ = c.92

E4-4

(mp)

153

E4-b

mp

157 *mf*

p *mp*

E4-4

drag L.H. tempo to gradually become triplets

160

E5-b B4-4

mp

162

164

drag L.H. tempo to gradually become quavers

166

rall. l.v.

A3-♯ D4-♯ E5-♯ F4-♯ E2-♭ B2-♭ G3-♯ E3-♭

169 l.v.

Poco Meno Mosso (Andante) ♩ = c.80

A5-♯ C2-♭ A2-♭ A3-♭ B2-♭ G2-♯ D2-♭

Adagio 176 ♩ = c.56

E3-♭ F3-♭ E3-♭ E3-♭ F2-♯ F4-♯ F2-♭ F2-♯ E3-♭ C3-♭

186 **Andante**
♩ = c.92

Accel A tempo **mp**

A3-♭ G3-♯ F3-♯ A2-♭ C3-♯ A3-♭ F4-♭ E4-♭ D4-♭

192 **Meno Mosso**
♩ = c.80

Accel A tempo **p** **pp**

C4-♭ B3-♭ B3-♭ C4-♯ A3-♭ D4-♭ F4-♯ E4-♭

198 **mp**

Accel A tempo Accel A tempo **p** **pp**

F4-♭ E4-♭ D4-♭ C4-♭ B3-♭ G3-♭ F2-♭ C3-♭

204 **(mp)** **rall.** **p**

D4-♭ D3-♭

210 **pp** **Largo (Tempo 1)**
♩ = c.54 ♩ = c.108

pp **p** poco solo **(pp sempre)**

RH: D5-♭ C5-♯ B2-♭

214

RH: A4-4
B3-4

218

B3-b

221

(pp)

224

E3-4

227

B2-4
mf

231

RH: E4- \sharp

mp *p* *mp*

pp

E2- \sharp

237

Andante
♩ = c.74 ♩ = c.148

pp *rit.*

C4- \sharp

l.v.
p

243

C2- \sharp F2- \sharp C3- \sharp G3- \sharp F3- \sharp

247

B3- \sharp F4- \sharp

pp *p* *mp* *p*

251

mp *p* *mp* *p*

255 *mp* *p* *mp* *p* *mp* *p*

258 *mp* *p* *mp*

261 *p* *mp* *p* *mp*

264 *p* *mp* *p* *mp*

267 *p* *mp* *p* *mp* *p* *mp*

269 *p* < *mp* *p* < *mp* *p* < *mp* *p* < *mp*

271 *mp* *p*

E5-b D4-b

274

E3-b D3-b G4-# G5-#

p *mp*

278

p

281 *mp* *p*

285 *p* *mp*

289

293 *p*

297 *mp* *p*

301

305 *p*

E4-b

p

This system contains measures 305 through 308. It features a grand staff with treble and bass clefs. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The time signature is 3/4. Measure 305 starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The bass line has a chord marking 'E4-b' in measure 306. The system concludes with a repeat sign in measure 308.

309

This system contains measures 309 through 311. It continues the grand staff notation with the same key signature and time signature. The bass line features a melodic line with slurs and ties. The system ends with a repeat sign in measure 311.

312

E4-b

This system contains measures 312 through 315. The time signature changes to 2/4. The key signature remains one sharp. The bass line has a chord marking 'E4-b' in measure 312. The system concludes with a repeat sign in measure 315.

316 *mp*

p

3

This system contains measures 316 through 319. The treble clef part begins with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic. The bass line starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic. A triplet of eighth notes is marked with a '3' in measure 319. The system ends with a repeat sign in measure 319.

320

3

p

This system contains measures 320 through 323. It features a grand staff with treble and bass clefs. The key signature has one sharp. The time signature is 5/4. A triplet of eighth notes is marked with a '3' in measure 321. The bass line has a piano (*p*) dynamic marking in measure 322. The system concludes with a repeat sign in measure 323.

324 *mp*

p

328

p

332

p

D2-b

336

3

340 *mp*

p

p *mp*

p *mp*

p *mp*

3

7

7

rall.

344

Musical score for measures 344-346. The piece is in 5/8 time. Measure 344 starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The right hand features a melodic line with slurs and ties, while the left hand provides a rhythmic accompaniment. The tempo marking *rall.* is indicated above the staff.

347

Musical score for measures 347-350. The time signature changes from 5/8 to 2/4, then 3/4, and finally 4/8. The dynamic marking changes to mezzo-piano (*mp*) in measure 350. The melodic line continues with slurs and ties, and the left hand accompaniment adapts to the new time signatures.

Largo

♩ = c.54 ♪ = c.108

351

Musical score for measures 351-354. The time signature changes to 4/8. Measure 351 starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The right hand has a melodic line with slurs and ties. Measure 354 features a fortissimo (*pp*) dynamic. Chord diagrams for E3-♯ and D3-♯ are provided for the left hand in measure 354.

355

Musical score for measures 355-357. The time signature changes to 8/8. Measure 355 starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The right hand has a melodic line with slurs and ties. Measure 357 features a fortissimo (*pp*) dynamic. Chord diagrams for D3-♭ and A2-♭ are provided for the left hand in measure 355, and A2-♯ in measure 357.

358

Musical score for measures 358-361. The time signature changes to 7/8, 11/8, 13/8, and 7/8. Measure 358 starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic. Measure 359 features a pianissimo (*pp*) dynamic. Measure 360 features a pianississimo (*ppp*) dynamic. The right hand has a melodic line with slurs and ties. Measure 361 features a fortissimo (*pp*) dynamic. The text *l.v.* (l'vivace) is written above the staff in measures 358, 360, and 361.

...unique sonorities and an engaging sound world... a major opus in terms both of its evocative musical content and its duration, ...representing an important contribution to the body of music for low flutes...

Will Sleath (flautist) **'Fragilities'**

... 'How Great, How Fall'n' created a lot of interest from both audience and performers alike. [It] was exactly the type of new music that JAM prides itself on supporting...

Edward Armitage, Chairman John Armitage Memorial Concert Series

...An idiosyncratic blend of stylistic types- Gamelan/folk...the music comes across vividly...

SPNM Reading panel **'Dolya Nash Krai'**

... 'Playfall' is a mature and powerful work, able to portray the dark shadows of loss that can unexpectedly creep into even the most joyful moments in life...

Dance Europe

... 'Night Walking' impressed me because it combined lightness and warmth. Here was proof that contemporary music can succeed on all fronts; it required concentration but was also exhilarating....

Artistic Director SPNM

... 'Another Kind of Air' is courageous in its simplicity and deserves to be heard...The sharp focus of the thematic material combines with the transparent medium to make for a piece that proclaims an unambiguous space...

SPNM Reading panel

...This is lovely music for dance and it develops in a delightful way... I particularly liked the pizzicato section...

(composer Howard Skempton) **'Life Before Birth'**

...The piano command is impressive... the pieces make a satisfying arch in terms of mood...

SPNM Reading panel, **'Then Again...'**

... 'Triaphony' showed competence in the handling of a difficult medium... the climax to the third movement was highly effective...

Cambridge Evening Telegraph

...Best has previously written, with verve, for traditional forces... ['Cue-Play-Review'] seemed so clearly bound up with human responses... but the finale to this concert was his electronic tape 'From Steel to Stone'. In the darkened studio, its shifting layers made a shapely and animating effect.

Nottingham Evening Post

Christopher Best is a freelance composer based in the South West of England. Major works have been commissioned by 'Emilyn Claid and Co', 'Scottish Dance Theatre', 'Bimba Dance Theatre', 'Jamaican National Dance' and the 'SPNM'. Works have been especially written for ensembles including 'Aquarius', 'Jane's Minstrels', 'Kokoro', the choir of Selwyn College Cambridge and 'Onyx Brass', plus a host of distinguished soloists. His compositions have received considerable critical acclaim and been performed all over the world.

Recent output includes; 'Scending' for flutes and accordion and 'Fragilities' for flutes and cello (both commissioned by William Sleath, generously funded by the Britten Pears Foundation), 'Terra al Sol' for voices, string trio and accordion (commissioned by the Fisarchi Ensemble of Florence), 'How Great, How Fall'n' (orchestral version premiered by the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra in 2011 at the Teatru Manoel, Valletta, original version for brass, voices and organ given by JAM in 2004), 'Echoes of a Lost Music' for electric guitar (UK tour 2011-12, New Zealand tour 2009), 'Still Beating' for Clarsach harp (premiered by Ruth Wall in 2007 at Wapping Power Station, London) and 'Panaura' for orchestra (premiered by the Kokoro ensemble in 2006 at Dartington Hall).

Since 2010, Chris has held a senior lectureship in music composition at Falmouth University, having formerly been Reader in music composition at Dartington College of Arts in Devon. He has taught extensively abroad, and co-directed residential music and dance exchanges in Devon, London and Madrid.

Further information, scores, parts and recordings of music by Christopher Best can be obtained from the composer.

Christopher Best

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