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Title

Wenckebach

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James Welland

WENCKEBACH

for clarinet, violin, viola, violoncello and double bass

(2018)

This work was commissioned by the London Symphony Orchestra Soundhub Scheme. It was written for the Pierre Boulez: 90th Birthday Festival and performed at the Aftershock event at the Barbican in London, UK by players from the London Symphony Orchestra on 23rd April 2015. This is the revised 2018 version, which was performed by the Aldwych Sinfonia in London, UK in February 2018.

INTRODUCTION

Wenckebach is a disease of the electrical conduction system of the heart in which the PR interval (the electrical firing of the atria and conduction of said impulse through to the ventricles) undergoes progressive prolongation until the atrial impulse is completely blocked. In short, the rhythm of the heart becomes more and more displaced.

This general idea of displacement of rhythm and of creating the illusion of progressive prolonging of rhythmic regularity was the basic inspiration for this piece, which follows a rhythmic ostinato grouping of 5,4,6,5,4,5,3 semiquavers in 4/4 time, which pervades the music.

The piece was also written for Boulez's 90th Birthday Festival, and contains harmonically reimagined melodic quotes from the third movement of *Le marteau sans maître*. Frank Zappa and Boulez were collaborators and friends, and the music very loosely imagines their personalities playing off each other, with distinctly jazz-influenced harmonies and structures used alongside aforementioned references to Boulez, which come to a head in the clarinet cadenza.

NOTATION AND PERFORMANCE NOTES

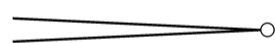
All accidentals as written. Appropriate beaming and stemlets have been used to make rhythmic cues easier to visualise for performers.

Vibrato for string players at their own expressive discretion.

Double bass should let the pizzicatos ring as long as possible throughout the work.

Tutti tacets should be conducted out rhythmically.

Notable unison sections have been marked in parts for ease.



diminuendo al niente – diminuendo into silence.



feathered beaming – get gradually faster whilst playing a single note. Ad lib. indicates the number of notes played is up to the discretion of the player.



flutter-tongue



short fermata



long fermata

All other notation as standard.

INSTRUMENTATION

- clarinet in Bb
- violin
- viola
- violoncello
- double bass

WENCKEBACH

Score in C

James Welland

Calm, precise ♩ = c. 92

Clarinet in Bb

Violin

Viola

Violoncello

Double Bass

pizz., let ring throughout

mf

5

Cl.

Vc.

Cb.

mp

pizz.

mf

9

Cl.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

pizz.

mf

13 tutti tacet **A**

Cl. *mp* pizz. *mf* arco

Vln. *mf* *mp* arco

Vla. *mp* arco

Vc. *mp* arco

Cb. *mf* arco

17

Cl. *mf* arco

Vln. *mp* arco

Vla. *mp* arco

Vc. *mp* arco

Cb. *mf* arco

20

Cl. *mf* arco

Vln. *mp* arco

Vla. *mp* arco

Vc. *mp* arco

Cb. *mf* arco

23 **B**

Cl. *mf dolce* 3 *pp*

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

26

Cl. *mf* 5 *mp*

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

29

Cl. *mf dolce* *p*

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

C
32 unison with violin
Cl. *mf dolce* *p* *mf* *spp*
Vln. unison with clarinet *mf dolce* *p* *mf* *spp*
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.

36
Cl. *mf* *p* *mf* *f*
Vln. *mf* *p* *mf* *f*
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.

39 tutti tacet **D** non unison
Cl. *>mp* *ppp* *mf*
Vln. tutti tacet arco, non unison *pp*
Vla. tutti tacet arco *ppp* *pp*
Vc. tutti tacet arco *ppp* *pp*
Cb. tutti tacet *ppp* *pp*

43

Cl.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

pp *pp*

46

Cl.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

E

cresc. poco a poco

50

Cl.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

F

tutti tacet

ff *mf dolce* *pp*

tutti tacet arco *mp*

tutti tacet arco *mp*

tutti tacet arco *mp*

tutti tacet *mf*

54 **G** unison with violin
mf dolce *pp* *f dolce*

5 unison with clarinet
f dolce

mf

mf

f

58 **H** ambient, laid back
non unison
fff *pp* *mp*

non unison
fff *pp* *mp*

fff *pp*

fff *pp*

fff *mf*

65
pp *f* *pp*

pp *f* *pp*

f *pp*

f *pp*

f *pp*

77 **I**

Cl. *mf* *mp* *pp*

Vln. *mp* *pp*

Vla. *mp* *pp*

Vc. *mp* *pp*

Cb. *mp* *pp*

85

Cl. *mp* *mf*

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

91 **J** **Tempo rubato**
solo — quasi improvvisando

Cl. *ff* (clarinet solo)

Vln. (clarinet solo)

Vla. (clarinet solo)

Vc. (clarinet solo)

Cb. (clarinet solo)

96 flz. nat., ad lib. **slower, more deliberate** flz. nat. flz.

Cl. *fff pp* *sfp sfp* *sfp sfp sim.*

K

101 nat. *sfp sfp* flz. *fff* **A tempo, frustrated** ♩ = c. 92

Cl. *sfp sfp* *fff*

Vln. *mf* *pp* *mf* *pp*

Vla. *mf* *pp* *mf* *pp*

Vc. *mf* *pp* *mf* *pp*

Cb. *mf* *pp* *mf* *pp*

L

107 tutti tacet **calm, precise**

Cl. tutti tacet

Vln. *mf* *pp* *mf* tutti tacet

Vla. *mf* *pp* *mf* tutti tacet

Vc. *mf* *pp* *mf* tutti tacet

Cb. *pp* *mf* *mf* tutti tacet

112 ord. *mp*

Cl. *mp*

Cb. *mp*

117 pizz. *mf*

Cl. *mp*

Vc. *mf*

Cb. *mf*

121

Cl.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

pizz.

mf

125

Cl.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

tutti tacet

M

mf

arco

p

arco

p

arco

p

128

Cl.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

131

Cl.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

134 **N**

Cl. *mf*

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

138

Cl. *f dolce* unison with violin

Vln. *f dolce* unison with clarinet

Vla. *mf*

Vc. *mf*

Cb. *mf*

141 *non unison*

Cl. *pp cresc.* *f*

Vln. *pp cresc.* *f*

Vla. *pp cresc.* *f*

Vc. *pp cresc.* *f*

Cb. *pp cresc.* *f* *p*

O

144 **Sombre, chorale-like** ♩ = c. 60

Cl. *pp*

Vln. *pp*

Vla. *pp*

Vc. *pp*

Cb. *pp*

149 *rit.*

Cl.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb. *arco*