

The Distance of the Moon

for Chamber Orchestra



Image credit: Josef Mounser

Kitty Xiao

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Dedicated to Orlando Contemporary Chamber Orchestra

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"At one time, according to Sir George H. Darwin, the Moon was very close to the Earth. Then the tides gradually pushed her far away: the tides that the Moon herself causes in the Earth's waters, where the Earth slowly loses energy."

- Italo Calvino (1965), "The Distance of the Moon" from *Cosmicomics*

Against a surreal backdrop, Calvino's short story for me captures humanity, its fanatical longing, distance and displacement with the universe. Having composed most of this piece during isolation, this piece of writing became increasingly expressive in the disconnection I was feeling with the world and the wild dreams I was having trying to reconnect with it.

Instrument List

Piccolo*
Flute
Oboe
Clarinet in Bb 1
Clarinet in Bb 2
Bassoon

Trumpet in C
Alto Trombone
Tenor Trombone (+ woodblock small)**
Bass Trombone

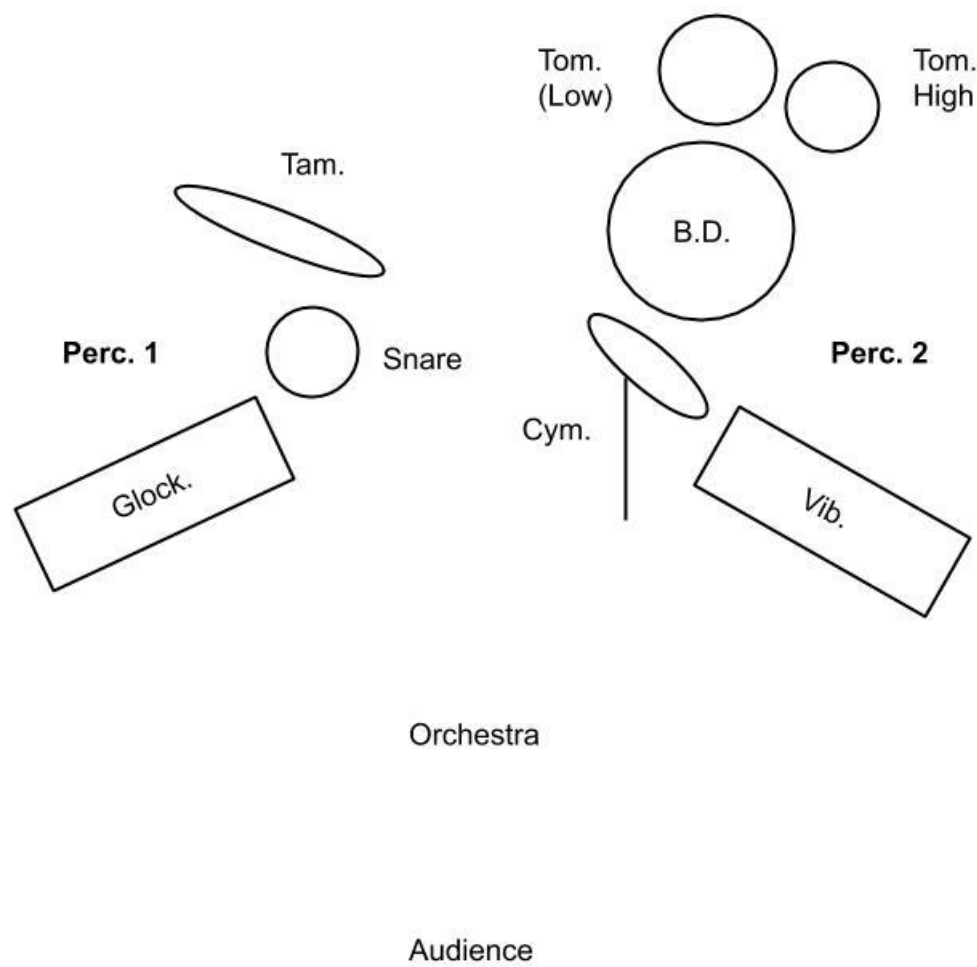
Percussion 1 -
Glockenspiel***
Triangle
Snare drum
Tam-tam (large, 36" or approx.)

Percussion 2 -
Suspended cymbal (16" to 20")
Tom-toms x 2 (low and high, 14" and 16" or approx.)
Bass drum

Violin 1
Violin 2
Viola (+ woodblock medium)**
Violoncello
Contrabass**** (+ woodblock large)**

* Piccolo sounds 1 octave higher than written
** 3 x woodblocks of different sizes (small, medium, large) are to be played by tenor trombone, viola and contrabass
*** Glockenspiel sounds 2 octaves higher than written
**** Contrabass sounds 1 octave lower than written

Stage Layout



Performance Notes

General



crescendo dal niente, begin from nothing
decrescendo dal niente, fade to nothing



microtones (quarter tones) functions for timbral and expressive purposes.



move from one technique of playing to another

meta legato

'beyond' legato, producing a blurring effect, imperceptible attack and articulation of notes



Neighbouring notes of trills are indicated by the smaller notehead in parentheses
Always begin trill on the main larger note

3 x Woodblocks



Tenor Tbn.
(small) Viola
(medium) Contrabass
(low)

Woodwind

Microtones can be created by altering and controlling the air column through adjustments in the oral cavity and the tongue position as well as the throat opening, and by adjustments in the position of the reed or mouthpiece in the mouth and the amount of "bite" put on the reed by the jaws and lips. In the case of the flute, the rolling of the embouchure hole toward or away from the player's mouth will create pitch modifications of almost a semitone between the extreme positions.

Additionally, fingerings can produce microtonal pitches with little embouchure adjustment. This is an option, and the resources are additionally available below.

Flute - <https://issuu.com/epianoqueen/docs/quartertoneflute>

Oboe -

https://www.dropbox.com/s/xkphn5glolmfd1m/Libby%20Van%20Cleve%20-%20Oboe%20Unbound_%20Contemporary%20Techniques-New%20Instrumentation%20%282004%29.pdf?dl=0

Clarinet - https://www.jasonalder.com/fingeringchart/Clarinet_quarter-tone_fingering-chart--Jason_Alder.pdf

Bassoon - <http://www.idrs.org/resources/BSNFING/FINGHOME.htm>

Brass

Microtones for trumpet should be obtained through adjustment of the lips and jaw, trombones should take advantage of their slide!



flutter tongue intensity indicated by number of strokes

Strings


s.p. sul ponticello, to be played with the bow near the bridge

ord. return to normal technique



glissando between pitches at an even rate

Percussion

Percussion 1: (unpitched)			Percussion 2: (unpitched)		
					
Tam-tam	Snare drum	Triangle	Bass drum	Tom-toms (lower and higher)	Suspended cymbal

Mallet list -

Percussion 1:

- 4 x plastic mallets (glockenspiel)
- 1 x triangle beater (triangle)
- 1 x bass drum or gong beater (tam-tam)
- 1 x snare stick (snare)

Percussion 2:

- 4 x rubber mallets (vibraphone)
- 2 x yarn mallets (vibraphone and cymbal)
- 1 x bow (vibraphone)
- 1 x bass drum mallet (bass drum)

Mallets are consistent for each instrument unless indicated otherwise in the score

Let all notes ring unless dampening is indicated by 



If possible for vibraphone, produce vibrato with damper pedal and motor

The Distance of the Moon

for chamber orchestra

composed for Orlando Contemporary Chamber Orchestra

Kitty Xiao (2020)

A she rolled around the sky like a black umbrella blown by the wind

♩ = 72

The musical score is arranged in systems for various instruments. The woodwind section includes Piccolo, Flute, Oboe, Clarinet in B♭ 1, Clarinet in B♭ 2, and Bassoon. The brass section includes Trumpet in C, Alto Trombone, Tenor Trombone, and Bass Trombone. The percussion section includes Percussion 1 (snare off, Tam, Glock, Tr.) and Percussion 2 (Vib. rubber mallets, B.D., Vib.). The string section includes Violin 1 (sul E), Violin 2 (sul A), Viola (sul G), Violoncello (sul G), and Contrabass (sul A). The score features complex rhythmic patterns with frequent changes in time signature (4/4, 3/4, 2/4) and dynamic markings such as *ff*, *mp*, *p*, *pp*, and *ppp*. Performance instructions like *sul E*, *sul A*, *sul G*, and *sul D* are provided for the strings. The piece concludes with a *pp* dynamic marking.

11

Picc. *ff* *p* *ff* *p*

Fl. *ff* *mp* *ff*

Ob. *ff* *ff*

Cl. *ff* *mp* *ff* *p*

Cl. *ff* *pp* *mp* *ff*

Bsn. *mp* *p*

C Tpt. *ff* *ff*

A. Tbn. *ff* *mp*

Tbn. *ff* *ff*

B. Tbn. *ff* *ff* *pp*

Perc. *Glock.* *ff* *Glock.* *ff*

Perc. *Cym.* *mp < ff* *ff* *Vib.* *ff*

Vln. 1 *ff* *pp* *f* *pp* *fff*

Vln. 2 *ff* *pp* *f* *pp* *fff*

Vla. *ff* *pp* *f* *pp* *fff*

Vc. *ff* *pp* *f* *pp* *fff*

Cb. *ff* *pp* *f* *pp* *fff*

B the tides that the Moon herself causes in the Earth's waters
♩ = 66

17

Picc. *mf* *mf*

Fl. *p* *f* *mf*

Ob. *f* *mf*

Cl. *f* *mf*

Cl. *p* *f* *mf*

Bsn. *f* *mf*

C Tpt. *mp* *ff* *mp* *f*

A. Tbn. *mp* *ff*

Tbn. *mp* *ff* *mp*

B. Tbn. *mp* *mp* *ff* *mp*

Perc. *f* *p* *f* *mp* *mf* *pp*

change to yarn mallets for vibraphone

p *f* *p* *f* *pp*

Tr. Glock. B.D. Vib.

Vln. 1 *pp* *f* *p* *f*

Vln. 2 *pp* *f* *pp* *p* *f* *pp*

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

Vc. *> pp* *f* *pp* *p* *f*

Cb. *> pp* *mf* *mp* *f*

20

Picc. *mp*

Fl. *mp < f*

Ob. *mp*

Cl. *mp*

Cl. *mp*

Bsn. *p* *mf* *pp mp*

C Tpt.

A. Tbn. *mf* *ff* *p*

Tbn. *ff* *mp* *p*

B. Tbn. *ff* *p* *fff* *pp*

Perc. *f* *mf* *p* *f*

Perc. *f* *p* *ff*

(tr) *f*

Tr.

Cym.

Vln. 1 *p* *f > pp* *f* *mf* *p* *mf* *p* *mp*

Vln. 2 *p < f > pp* *mf* *p* *pp* *f* *p < mf > p* *mf*

Vla. *p < f > pp* *mf* *pp* *p* *mf*

Vc. *sf* *p* *f* *mp* *f* *mp* *pp*

Cb. *mp* *mf* *p* *mf*

ord.

sp.

23

Picc. *mp* *p* *f* *mp* *p < f*

Fl. *mp* *p* *f* *mp* *pp*

Ob. *mp* *mf* *mp* *mp*

Cl. *mp* *f* *mp* *p < f* *mp*

Cl. *mp* *f* *mp* *p < f* *mp*

Bsn. *pp* *mp*

C Tpt. *mp* *pp* *p* *f*

A. Tbn. *mf* *p* *pp* *p*

Tbn. *mf* *p* *p < mf*

B. Tbn.

Perc. *Glock.* *mf*

Perc. *Vib.* *mf*

Vln. 1 *mf* *p* *mp*

Vln. 2 *mp* *f* *mf* *pp* *p*

Vla. *pp* *mp* *mf* *p*

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

Cb. *mp* *f* *mf* *p* *mf*

C

Picc. *mf* *mp* *mp*

Fl. *p* *mf* *mp* *mp*

Ob. *mf* *p* *mf* *p* *mp* *p*

Cl. *f* *mf* *pp* *mf*

Cl. *mf* *mp*

Bsn. *p* *mf* *f*

C Tpt. *mf* *ff* *mp* *f*

A. Tbn. *ff* *mp* *ff*

Tbn. *mf* *mp* *mf* *ff* *flz.*

B. Tbn. *mf* *fff* *mf*

Perc. *snare on* *3* *Snare* *p* *f* *Tam.* *fff* *f*

Perc. *3* *6* *f* *mp* *f* *p < ff* *sf p < f* *p* *BD. & Tom.* *Vib. arco*

Vln. 1 *mf* *p* *f* *pp* *sffp* *ord.*

Vln. 2 *f* *mp* *p* *f* *pp* *sffp* *ord.* *tremolo accel.*

Vla. *mf* *p* *mf* *p < ff* *pp* *p* *sffp* *ord.*

Vc. *f* *mf* *p* *f* *mp* *sffp*

Cb. *pp* *f* *pp* *sffp*

37 meta legato with more air in tone

Picc. *pp* 6 6 6 7 7 7 7 7 6 6

Fl. *pp* *mp* 5 5 5 5 5

Ob. *mf* *pp*

Cl. *pp* *pp* 6 6 7 7 7 6 6 6 6

Cl. *mf* *pp* *mp* 6 6 6 7 7 5 5 5

Bsn. *pp*

C Tpt. *p* *f* *pp*

A. Tbn. *pp*

Tbn. *p*

B. Tbn. *p < mf* *pp*

Perc. Tam. *pp* *mp*

Perc. *p < f* *p* *mf* Vib. arco

Vln. 1 *f* *pp*

Vln. 2 *f* *mf* *p* *mf*

Vla. *f* *pp* *p* *mf*

Vc. *f* *p* *f* *pp* *p* *mf*

Cb. *p* *f* *pp*