

STILL HERE

for B \flat clarinet and piano

(2022)

JONATHAN RUSSELL

STILL HERE

for B \flat clarinet and piano

by Jonathan Russell

PROGRAM NOTE:

It's the evening of February 25th, 2022. In the darkness, a grainy 30-second selfie video of five men on the streets of Kiev: "Good evening to all" says the gravelly voice of the man in front, holding the phone. "The leader of the bloc is here. The head of the President's office is here. Prime Minister Schmyhal is here. Podoliak is here. The President is here. We are all here. The soldiers are here, the citizens are here, and we are here....We defend our independence. Glory to our defenders, glory to Ukraine." No press conference. No soaring rhetoric. No lectern or flag or presidential seal. Just a 30-second video calmly stating the only fact that mattered in that moment: We Are Here. Still Here.

That video and its message became the inspiration for this composition. Like millions around the world, I was deeply moved by Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky's calm resolve and courage, rallying his people – and the world – in the face of unprovoked Russian aggression. As I worked on the piece, I thought about this idea of "Still Here" and everything it represents. It is the rallying cry of any marginalized group that refuses, against all odds, to be destroyed or forgotten. I thought of my own Jewish ancestry and the generations upon generations who endured discrimination, expulsions, pogroms, and genocide, but who nonetheless continued to assert: We Are Still Here. Our people, our religion, our culture: Still Here. I thought of the dehumanizing institution of slavery in my own country and the extraordinary resilience of African-Americans who, through generations of violence and oppression, continued to assert through culture, religion, music: We Are Here. Still Here. I thought of how, even today in the United States, there is an ongoing attempt to effectively legislate LGBTQ people out of existence. It will not and cannot succeed. Because our LGBTQ brothers and sisters are here. They have always been here. They will always be here. Still Here. And on a more personal note, every act of artistic creation is in some sense a statement of "Still Here." It asserts for all time that this person, this being, this soul existed. Even long after I am gone, some small shred of my soul will persist in the music I leave behind. Still Here.

Still Here is scored for B-flat clarinet and piano, and is in four movements. Movement 1 is inspired most directly by the Zelensky video. It begins with solo clarinet on its lowest note (E) slowly spinning out a mournful, stately, insistent melody. Piano enters, quiet and spare at first, and both voices gradually grow in confidence and intensity. It builds to a searing high note in the clarinet, before plummeting once more to the low E and ending quietly, questioning. It is sombre, yet also defiant, like Zelensky in the video. Still Here.

Movement 2 interrupts with a racing scherzo. Towards the middle, a klezmer tune nearly breaks out, and then the movement 1 theme returns, but now bopping along over a funky bass line. At first, I struggled to accept the more dance-y, playful, even humorous music that seemed to want to be part of this piece. But then I read an article about the thriving stand-up comedy scene in Ukraine, and thought about the rich comedic tradition in my own Jewish heritage. I realized that part of the idea of "Still Here" is proclaiming that we will not merely survive, but we will live fully. We will experience joy and love and laughter, despite our sorrows and oppression.

Movement 3 is a respite, a simple love song, tinged with nostalgia.

A brief clarinet cadenza then leads directly into movement 4, a rollicking klezmer tune marked "defiantly joyful." After building to a climax, the movement 2 theme returns, leading into a dramatic return of the movement 1 melody, now played with even greater intensity. The piece ends with the clarinet back on the same low E that began the whole piece, now played five consecutive times at top volume, while the piano bangs out the main theme one last time. With that defiantly fortissimo low E, the clarinet proclaims again what it has been proclaiming from the beginning of the piece, what Zelensky proclaimed in that video, and what generations of marginalized and oppressed peoples have proclaimed throughout history: We Are Still Here.

This work was generously commissioned by a consortium of 52 clarinetists. I am deeply grateful to every single one of them for believing in the vision of this piece and coming along on the journey. The members of the consortium are:

Alan Kay, Annie Phillips, Benjamin Mitchell, Brittany Barry, Bruce Belton, Christin Hablewitz, Christopher Nichols, Christy Banks, Debbie Rawson, Diane Barger, Dickson Grimes, Digital Clarinet Academy, Eva Tartaglia, Gary Gorczyca, Gracie Barrett, Jack Liang, Jackie Glazier, Jason Marquez, Jeremy Ruth, Jeremy Wohletz, Jo-Ann Sternberg, Joel Russell, Jonathan Aubrey, Josh Woods, Joshua Gardner, Julie Stuckenschneider, Katie Kimmel, Katie Ravenwood, Kim Fullerton, Laura Ramsey Russell, Leslie Moreau, Lynne Snyder, Macey Campobello, Marcy Bacon, Margalit Patry-Martin, Margaret Thornhill, Marguerite Levin, Mariam Adam, Nathan Soric, Peter Hansen, Ralph Skiano, Robert Spring, Shengwen Wu, Stefanie Gardner, Stephanie Grubbs, Stephen White, Tara Glaspey, Tim Sutfin, Timothy Bonenfant, Victor Drescher, Vince Dominguez / Claire Annette, and Wolcott Humphrey.

Still Here

Commissioned by a consortium of 52 clarinetists

Jonathan Russell

I. Slow and stately ♩ = 44

Clarinet in B \flat

mp

Piano

6

6

p

12

mf

12

mp

19

cresc.

19

cresc.

A

f

A

f

31

più f

31

più f

37

cresc.

ff espressivo

B A bit more flowing ♩ = 50

37

cresc.

ff

B A bit more flowing ♩ = 50

Ped.

*

42

42

ff

Ped.

*

Ped.

*

Still Here

44

Measures 44-46 of the score. The vocal line (top) features a melodic line with slurs and accents. The piano accompaniment (middle and bottom) consists of chords and moving lines in both hands. Dynamic markings include *ped.* and ** ped.* with asterisks.

47

Measures 47-49 of the score. The vocal line continues with a melodic line. The piano accompaniment features a *cresc.* marking. Dynamic markings include *ped.* and ** ped.* with asterisks.

50

Measures 50-52 of the score. The vocal line includes a *rit.* marking. The piano accompaniment features a *rit.* marking and a change in time signature from 2/4 to 4/4. Dynamic markings include *ped.* and ** ped.* with asterisks.

C a tempo Slower ♩ = 36 rit. attacca mvt. 2

Measures 53-54 of the score. The vocal line features a *rit.* marking and a *ff* dynamic marking. The piano accompaniment features a *p* dynamic marking and a *pp* dynamic marking. The section ends with *attaca mvt. 2*.

C a tempo Slower ♩ = 36 rit. attacca mvt. 2

Measures 55-56 of the score. The vocal line features a *rit.* marking and a *pp* dynamic marking. The piano accompaniment features a *ff* dynamic marking and a *p* dynamic marking. The section ends with *attaca mvt. 2*.

II. Scherzo ♩ = 160

60

II. Scherzo ♩ = 160

60

63

63

66

66

69

69

Musical score for measures 72-75. The system consists of three staves: a single treble staff at the top and a grand staff (treble and bass) below. Measure 72 begins with a treble staff containing a complex melodic line with many sixteenth notes. The grand staff below has mostly rests in measure 72, with some bass notes appearing in measure 73. The time signature is 2/4.

Musical score for measures 76-81. Measure 76 is marked with a box containing 'D' and the text 'A little bit held back' followed by a quarter note and '= 140'. The system has three staves. The top staff has a melodic line with triplets. The grand staff below has rests in measure 76, with a *mf* dynamic marking in the bass staff. The time signature changes from 2/4 to 4/4 at measure 77.

Musical score for measures 82-87. Measure 82 is marked with a box containing 'D' and the text 'A little bit held back' followed by a quarter note and '= 140'. The system has three staves. The top staff has a melodic line with triplets and some notes with wavy lines above them. The grand staff below has rests in measure 82, with a *mf* dynamic marking in the bass staff. The time signature is 4/4.

Musical score for measures 88-93. Measure 88 is marked with a box containing 'D' and the text 'A little bit held back' followed by a quarter note and '= 140'. The system has three staves. The top staff has a melodic line with triplets and notes with wavy lines above them. The grand staff below has rests in measure 88, with a *mf* dynamic marking in the bass staff. The time signature is 4/4.

92 **E accel.** **Tempo I** ♩ = 160

92 *(S^{va})* **E accel.** **Tempo I** ♩ = 160

95

98

101

104

Musical score for measures 104-106. The top staff is a single melodic line with a long slur. The piano accompaniment consists of two staves with chords and moving lines.

107

Musical score for measures 107-110. The top staff has a melodic line with some rests. The piano accompaniment is more active with chords and moving lines.

111

Musical score for measures 111-113. The top staff has a melodic line with a slur. The piano accompaniment continues with chords and moving lines.

114

rit.

Musical score for measures 114-116. The top staff has a melodic line with a slur. The piano accompaniment includes a "8va" marking and ends with a "rit." marking.

F A little bit held back ♩ = 140

ff optional growling ad lib. (but not too much)

F A little bit held back ♩ = 140

f

123

123

128

128

G

p

G

p

139 *accel.*
cresc.

H **Tempo I** ♩ = 160
f

147 *ff* *p* *cresc.*

150

153

mf *mf* *mf*

mf *cresc.*

Ped. *

157

cresc.

161

I A little bit held back ♩ = 140

f

f

Ped. *

165

170

f

175

180

185

190

mp *espressivo*

J

190

mf

J

195

195

199

199

203

203

f

f

Detailed description: This page of a musical score for the piece 'Still Here' begins at measure 190. It features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line starts with a melodic phrase marked 'mp' and 'espressivo', with a 'J' (jazz) articulation symbol. The piano accompaniment consists of chords and moving lines in both hands, with a 'mf' dynamic. The score is divided into systems of two staves each. Measure numbers 190, 195, 199, and 203 are clearly marked at the beginning of their respective systems. The key signature has one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4. The piano part includes various articulations like accents and slurs, and dynamic markings such as 'f' (forte) in later measures.

207

207

211

215

espressivo

218

221 *rit.*

dim.

221 *rit.*

dim.

Red.

226 **K** Presto ♩ = 170

p *f*

226 **K** Presto ♩ = 170

p *f*

*

229

229

233

mp *cresc.*

mp *cresc.*

238

f *cresc.*

f *cresc.*

242

f *cresc.*

f *cresc.*

III. Lyrical and flowing ♩. = 92

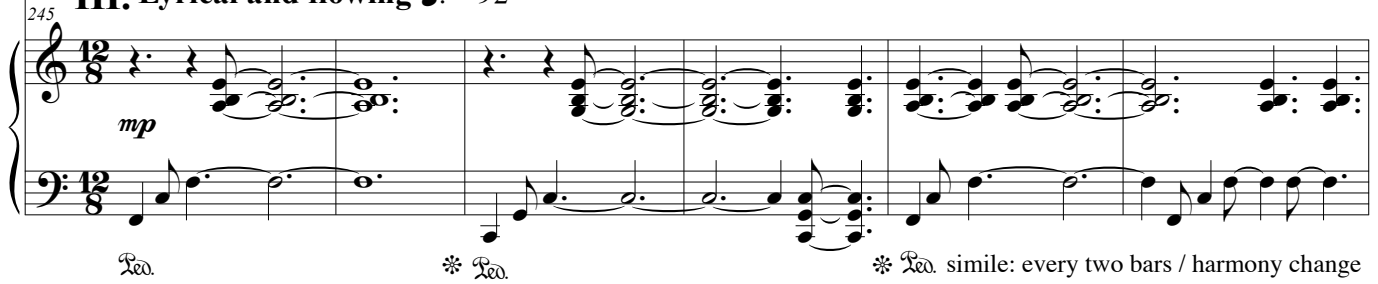
245



III. Lyrical and flowing ♩. = 92

245

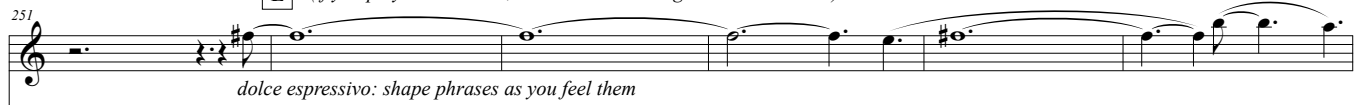
mp



leg. * *leg.* * *leg. simile: every two bars / harmony change*

L (if you play with vibrato, this movement is a great time to use it!)

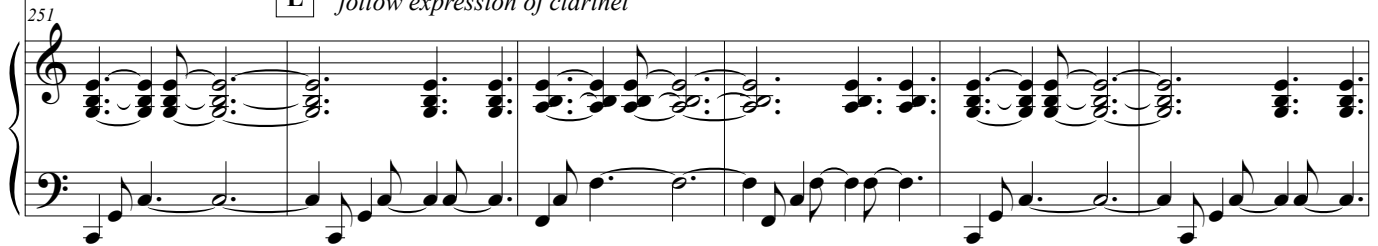
251



dolce espressivo: shape phrases as you feel them

L follow expression of clarinet

251



257



257



261



261



265

Musical score for measures 265-268. The system includes a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line features a melodic line with slurs and accents. The piano accompaniment consists of chords in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand.

269

Musical score for measures 269-272. The system includes a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line continues with a melodic line. The piano accompaniment features chords and a bass line.

273

Musical score for measures 273-276. The system includes a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line continues with a melodic line. The piano accompaniment features chords and a bass line.

277

Musical score for measures 277-280. The system includes a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line continues with a melodic line. The piano accompaniment features chords and a bass line.

M

M

285

285

289

cresc.

cresc.

293

poco rit.

f

poco rit.

f

N a tempo

N a tempo

mf *mp*

301

301

305 *warm, rich sound*

305

309

309

313

317 rit. 0

317 rit. 0

dim. *p* *dim.*

ped.

Cadenza: free and improvisatory

322

6 7 7 11 11

Cadenza: free and improvisatory

322

(keep pedal down)

14 15

accel. *rit.* *attaca mvt. 4*

f

accel. *rit.* *attaca mvt. 4*

IV. Defiantly joyful ♩ = 150

Players with experience in Eastern European clarinet styles (klezmer, Balkan, Greek, Turkish, etc.) may ornament ad lib. throughout this movement, but it is definitely NOT required.

324

324 **IV. Defiantly joyful** ♩ = 150

327

327

331

331

335

335

340

Musical notation for measures 340-343. The top staff is a single melodic line. The bottom two staves are a piano accompaniment with chords and moving lines in both hands.

P

P

Musical notation for measures 344-346. The top staff has a piano dynamic marking 'P'. The bottom two staves also have piano dynamic markings 'P' and include fingering numbers like 'VI' and 'IV'.

347

347

Musical notation for measures 347-349. The top staff has a long melodic line with a slur. The bottom two staves have piano accompaniment with fingering numbers 'VI' and 'IV'.

350

350

Musical notation for measures 350-353. The top staff has a long melodic line with a slur. The bottom two staves have piano accompaniment with fingering numbers 'VI'.

353

Musical score for measures 353-356. The top staff is a single melodic line with a triplet of eighth notes at the end. The piano accompaniment consists of chords in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. A fermata is placed over the piano accompaniment in measure 354.

357

Musical score for measures 357-360. The top staff continues the melodic line. The piano accompaniment features a more active bass line with eighth notes and chords in the right hand.

361

Musical score for measures 361-365. The top staff has a "Q" (quasi) marking above it. The piano accompaniment includes a triplet of eighth notes in the left hand and chords in the right hand. A fermata is placed over the piano accompaniment in measure 364.

366

Musical score for measures 366-369. The top staff continues the melodic line. The piano accompaniment features chords in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. A fermata is placed over the piano accompaniment in measure 368.

370

370

373

mp mysteriously

373

377

381

f

381

385

385

388

388

S

S

395

395

399

399

T

f

T

f

406

406

406

409

409

412

Musical notation for measures 412-415. The top staff is a single melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The bottom two staves are piano accompaniment with chords and moving bass lines.

416

Musical notation for measures 416-419. Similar to the previous system, featuring a melodic line and piano accompaniment.

420

Musical notation for measures 420-422. The top staff has a continuous sixteenth-note pattern. The piano accompaniment consists of chords and eighth notes.

423

Musical notation for measures 423-426. Continuation of the sixteenth-note pattern in the top staff and piano accompaniment.

Musical score for measures 426-428. The system includes a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The piano part features complex chordal textures and rhythmic patterns. The vocal line consists of a melodic line with various intervals and accidentals.

Musical score for measures 429-431. The piano part begins with a *p* dynamic and a *cresc.* marking. The system includes a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The piano part features complex chordal textures and rhythmic patterns. The vocal line consists of a melodic line with various intervals and accidentals.

Musical score for measures 432-435. The system includes a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The piano part features complex chordal textures and rhythmic patterns. The vocal line consists of a melodic line with various intervals and accidentals. A box labeled 'U' is present above the vocal line in measures 432 and 433. The piano part has a *f* dynamic marking in measure 432 and a *ped.* marking in measure 433.

Musical score for measures 436-438. The system includes a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The piano part features complex chordal textures and rhythmic patterns. The vocal line consists of a melodic line with various intervals and accidentals. A box labeled 'U' is present above the vocal line in measure 436. The piano part has a *sva - -* marking in measure 436.

440

8^{va} pva

440

Ped.

444

444

* Ped. * Ped. * Ped. *

448

cresc. poco a poco

448

cresc. poco a poco

Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. *

452

452

Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. *

456

ff

ff

Leo * Leo * Leo * V

460

* Leo * Leo

464

* Leo

Presto ♩ = 170

467

Presto ♩ = 170

470

mp

W Faster still ♩ = 180

474

f

474

f

479

486

cresc.

493 *rit.*

cresc.

493 *rit.*

499

499

503 *molto rit.*

ff sempre

X Strong and defiant ♩ = 50

503 *molto rit.*

ff sempre

X Strong and defiant ♩ = 50

ped. *

507

507

ped. *

ped. *

ped. *

ped. *

510

Rec. simile

514

518

Y

soaring!

Y

525

525

528

cresc.

528

cresc.

530

530

532

rit.

532

rit.

Ped.

*

Z A little slower ♩ = 44
Play these final low E's like your life depends on it. Don't let up.

fff sempre

Z A little slower ♩ = 44

fff

538

Musical score for measures 538-540. The top staff is a single melodic line in treble clef. The bottom two staves are piano accompaniment in bass clef, featuring chords and moving lines.

541 rit.

Musical score for measures 541-543. The top staff is a single melodic line in treble clef. The bottom two staves are piano accompaniment in bass clef. The word "rit." is written above the first measure of the top staff and below the first measure of the piano accompaniment. A "cresc." marking is above the final measure of the piano accompaniment.