

SONG OF THE ANCIENT NIGHT

for wind band

JONATHAN RUSSELL

SONG OF THE ANCIENT NIGHT

for wind band

by Jonathan Russell

Generously commissioned by a consortium of the following ensembles, conductors, and individuals:

Arizona State University Wind Ensemble Jason Caslor, Conductor (Consortium Lead);
Old Dominion University Wind Ensemble, Tyler Austin, Conductor;
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Wind Ensemble, Dr. Evan Feldman, Conductor;
Gettysburg College Sunderman Conservatory Wind Symphony, Russell McCutcheon, Conductor;
St. Olaf Band, Henry L. Dorn, Conductor;
Millersville University Wind Ensemble, Dr. Joe Cernuto, Conductor;
University of Arizona Wind Ensemble, Chad Nicholson, Conductor;
Providence College Symphonic Winds, Eric Melley, Conductor;
Marshall University Wind Symphony, Phil Vallejo, Conductor;
University of Illinois Chicago Wind Ensemble, Dr. Serena Weren, Conductor;
Julie Stuckenschneider;
Becky and Aaron Vogel

PROGRAM NOTE:

The inspiration for this piece comes from a trip I took to a remote region of Costa Rica, where I was staying on a high hill on the edge of the rainforest, overlooking the ocean, surrounded by nature and wildlife. There were, of course, countless differences I noticed upon returning to my home in a medium-sized city in the northeastern US. But the most surprising was how eerily *quiet* the night now was. In the rainforest, the night teemed with the sounds of insects, frogs, owls, and other unknown creatures; the lapping of waves and the wind in the trees; and just before dawn, the chattering of birds and the haunting wails of the howler monkeys. Here at home, aside from the occasional sounds of cars going by, it was...silent. What had once seemed so appealing about our neighborhood – how quiet it was – now seemed uncanny, even sinister. “We’ve killed the night!” I found myself thinking.

“Song of the Ancient Night” is an attempt to re-imagine those ancient nights on earth, before the spread of modern human civilization and its destruction of habitats, wilderness, and the sounds of the night. It is not intended to literally depict any particular sounds, but rather to evoke the sensations of mystery and wonder that I felt during those nights in Costa Rica.

To achieve this effect, the piece uses open-ended notation, providing pitch content and text instructions, but leaving the details open to the players and conductor. No two performances will be exactly alike, as each ensemble follows their own ears and instincts to sculpt their own unique version of the ancient night.

INSTRUMENTATION

NOTE: There may be any number of players per part

Flute (optional Piccolo in final bar only)

Oboe

Bassoon

B \flat Clarinet

Bass Clarinet (2 parts)

Contrabass Clarinet

Alto Saxophone (2 parts)

Tenor Saxophone

Baritone Saxophone

Piano

Electric Keyboard

B \flat Trumpet (3 parts)

Horn in F (4 parts)

Trombone (2 parts)

Euphonium

Tuba

Percussion (any number of players)

PERFORMANCE INSTRUCTIONS:

-- The section at rehearsal #22 is conducted in a regular meter and tempo. However, the rest of the piece is unmetred and without tempo: each bar lasts an indefinite amount of time, with the conductor cueing the start of each bar.

-- The conductor should shape and pace the music however they see fit. The piece should have a meditative and leisurely quality, but also a sense of forward motion. It is up to the conductor to determine how best to strike this balance. The conductor may also decide how much to actively shape the music, versus how much to allow individual players and the ensemble collectively to shape it.

****TRANSPPOSED SCORE****

Song of the Ancient Night

Jonathan Russell

No meter or pulse:
Conductor cues beginning of each bar

All players move independently through these pitches in any order ad. lib.
Some players may play long tones, but most should move more rapidly.
Shape ad. lib.
The goal is to create a gently shimmering composite texture.

①

②

Flute

Oboe

Bassoon

Clarinet in B \flat

Bass Clarinet

Contrabass Clarinet

Alto Sax

Tenor Sax

Baritone Sax

Piano

Electric keyboard

Trumpet in B \flat

Horn in F

Trombone

Euphonium

Tuba

Percussion

Any number of players on any pitched metallic instruments (glockenspiel, vibraphone, crotales, etc.)
Gently roll or bow ad lib., with the goal of creating a smooth and seamless sound
Shape ad. lib.

Shape dynamics ad. lib., within a generally soft dynamic.
Take breaths as needed, always fading out and then back in to make them unobtrusive.

Shape dynamics ad. lib., within a generally soft dynamic.
Take breaths as needed, always fading out and then back in to make them unobtrusive.

Shape dynamics ad. lib., within a generally soft dynamic.
Take breaths as needed, always fading out and then back in to make them unobtrusive.

Move through these pitches in any order ad. lib.
Shape ad. lib.
The goal is to create a gently shimmering composite texture.

Ad. sempre (yes, really, never lift the pedal for the whole piece!)

Choose a sound that blends with the woodwinds and brass.
The keyboard should not be noticeable as a distinct color;
the effect should be of a "sustain pedal" for the shimmering woodwinds and the brass long tones.

Play long tones ad lib. on any of these four pitches.
Fade in and out and rest ad lib.

Play long tones ad lib. on any of these five pitches.
Fade in and out and rest ad lib.

pppp *p*

Song of the Ancient Night

[illegible]

Repeat is optional.
If taken, 2nd time a bit more intense.

9 10 11 12 13 14 15

Fl.

Ob.

Bsn.

B♭ Cl.

B. Cl.

Cb. Cl.

A. Sx.

T. Sx.

B. Sx.

Pno.

Kybd.

B♭ Tpt.

Hn.

Tbn.

Euph.

Tuba

Perc.

16 17 18 19 20 21

Fl.

Ob.

Bsn.

B♭ Cl.

B. Cl.

Cb. Cl.

A. Sx.

T. Sx.

B. Sx.

Pno.

Kybd.

B♭ Tpt.

Hn.

Tbn.

Euph.

Tuba

Perc.

Note pitch change! (F to E)

Note pitch change! (G to F#)

Note pitch change! (F to E)

Note pitch change! (G to F#)

Note pitch change! (C to B)

Conducted, in a steady tempo ♩ = 84
 Conducted, in a steady tempo ♩ = 84

Move quickly between these notes ad lib., out of tempo

Fl.

Ob.

Bsn.

B♭ Cl.

B. Cl.

Cb. Cl.

A. Sx.

T. Sx.

B. Sx.

Pno.

Kybd.

B♭ Tpt.

Hn.

Tbn.

Euph.

Tuba

Perc.

All horns in unison

f

mf

Vibraphone(s) (any number of players)
 Move quickly between these notes ad lib., out of tempo

Fl.

Ob.

Bsn.

B♭ Cl.

B. Cl.

Cb. Cl.

A. Sx.

T. Sx.

B. Sx.

Pno.

Kybd.

B♭ Tpt.

Hn.

Tbn.

Euph.

Tuba

Perc.

Detailed description: This is a page from a musical score for the piece 'Song of the Ancient Night'. It features 18 staves for various instruments. The Flute (Fl.), Piano (Pno.), and Percussion (Perc.) parts have a continuous melodic line of eighth notes with a slur across the entire page. The Oboe (Ob.), Bassoon (Bsn.), Clarinets (B♭ Cl., B. Cl., Cb. Cl.), Saxophones (A. Sx., T. Sx., B. Sx.), and Keyboard (Kybd.) parts are currently silent, indicated by whole rests. The Horns (Hn.), Trombones (Tbn.), Euphonium (Euph.), and Tuba parts have specific melodic lines. The Horns part begins with a half note G4, followed by a half note F#4, and then a half note E4. The Trombones, Euphonium, and Tuba parts have a more complex melodic line, starting with a half note G4, followed by a half note F#4, and then a half note E4. The Tuba part also includes a half note D4. The overall tempo and mood are suggested by the notation and the title.

Fl.

Ob.

Bsn.

B♭ Cl.

B. Cl.

Cb. Cl.

A. Sx.

T. Sx.

B. Sx.

Pno.

Kybd.

B♭ Tpt.

Hn.

Tbn.

Euph.

Tuba

Perc.

The musical score is arranged in a system of staves. The Flute (Fl.) and Percussion (Perc.) parts feature a continuous eighth-note melody with slurs. The Oboe (Ob.), Bassoon (Bsn.), Clarinets (B♭ Cl., B. Cl., Cb. Cl.), Saxophones (A. Sx., T. Sx., B. Sx.), Piano (Pno.), and Keyboard (Kybd.) parts are mostly silent, indicated by whole rests. The Horn (Hn.) part has a melodic line in the first half of the system, followed by a whole rest. The Trombone (Tbn.), Euphonium (Euph.), and Tuba parts have a melodic line in the first half of the system, followed by a whole rest. The Trumpet (B♭ Tpt.) part is silent throughout the system.

Conductor cues beginning of each bar

23 24 25 26 27 28

Fl. Move rapidly through pitches in the C major scale in any order over the indicated pitch span ad lib.

Ob. Gently fade in

Bsn. Move rapidly through pitches in the D major scale in any order over the indicated pitch span ad lib.

B♭ Cl. Gently fade in

B. Cl. Hold for the length of one comfortable breath, then rest for the rest of the measure. Starts of all long notes should be together, with conductor's cue. Endings of long notes need not line up with each other.

Cb. Cl. Hold for the length of one comfortable breath, then rest for the rest of the measure. Starts of all long notes should be together, with conductor's cue. Endings of long notes need not line up with each other.

A. Sx. Move rapidly through pitches in the A major scale in any order over the indicated pitch span ad lib.

T. Sx. Gently fade in

B. Sx. Hold for the length of one comfortable breath, then rest for the rest of the measure. Starts of all long notes should be together, with conductor's cue. Endings of long notes need not line up with each other.

Pno. Move rapidly through pitches in the C major scale in any order over the indicated pitch span ad lib. (both hands)

Kybd. Hold for the length of one comfortable breath, then rest for the rest of the measure. Starts of all long notes should be together, with conductor's cue. Endings of long notes need not line up with each other.

B♭ Tpt. Hold for the length of one comfortable breath, then rest for the rest of the measure. Starts of all long notes should be together, with conductor's cue. Endings of long notes need not line up with each other.

Hn. Hold for the length of one comfortable breath, then rest for the rest of the measure. Starts of all long notes should be together, with conductor's cue. Endings of long notes need not line up with each other.

Tbn. Hold for the length of one comfortable breath, then rest for the rest of the measure. Starts of all long notes should be together, with conductor's cue. Endings of long notes need not line up with each other.

Euph. Hold for the length of one comfortable breath, then rest for the rest of the measure. Starts of all long notes should be together, with conductor's cue. Endings of long notes need not line up with each other.

Tuba. Hold for the length of one comfortable breath, then rest for the rest of the measure. Starts of all long notes should be together, with conductor's cue. Endings of long notes need not line up with each other.

Perc. Any number of players on any pitched metallic instruments (glockenspiel, vibraphone, crotales, etc.) Move rapidly through pitches in the C major scale in any order over the indicated pitch span ad lib.

29 30 31 32 33 34

Fl.

Ob.

Bsn.

B♭ Cl.

B. Cl.

Cb. Cl.

A. Sx.

T. Sx.

B. Sx.

Pno.

Kybd.

B♭ Tpt.

Hn.

Tbn.

Euph.

Tuba

Perc.

The musical score for 'Song of the Ancient Night' spans measures 29 to 34. The instrumentation includes Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Bassoon (Bsn.), B♭ Clarinet (B♭ Cl.), B. Clarinet (B. Cl.), C♭ Clarinet (Cb. Cl.), Alto Saxophone (A. Sx.), Tenor Saxophone (T. Sx.), Bass Saxophone (B. Sx.), Piano (Pno.), Keyboard (Kybd.), B♭ Trumpet (B♭ Tpt.), Horn (Hn.), Trombone (Tbn.), Euphonium (Euph.), Tuba, and Percussion (Perc.). Measures 29-34 are marked with circled numbers. The Piano part features a melodic line with a crescendo in measures 29-34. The Keyboard part features a sustained chord with a tremolo effect. The Percussion part features a steady rhythm.

35 36 37 38 39 40

Fl.

Ob.

Bsn.

B♭ Cl.

B. Cl.

Cb. Cl.

A. Sx.

T. Sx.

B. Sx.

Pno.

Kybd.

B♭ Tpt.

Hn.

Tbn.

Euph.

Tuba

Perc.

[illegible]

[illegible]

Song of the Ancient Night

Bird calls:

Each player should play the material in any box any number of times and play each box in any order.

Start fairly sparse, gradually get very dense, and then gradually get sparser and softer, until the texture fades into nothing.

Up to half of the flutists may play piccolo.

54

Fl.

Ob.

Bsn.

B♭ Cl.

B. Cl.

Cb. Cl.

A. Sx.

T. Sx.

B. Sx.

Pno.

Kybd.

B♭ Tpt.

Hn.

Tbn.

Euph.

Tuba

Perc.

Hold and fade for as long as possible.
Once the note stops sounding, do not re-enter.

Hold and fade for as long as possible.
Once the note stops sounding, do not re-enter.

Hold and fade for as long as possible.
Once the note stops sounding, do not re-enter.

Bird calls:
Play the material in any box any number of times and play each box in any order.
Start fairly sparse, gradually get very dense, and then gradually get sparser and softer, until the texture fades into nothing.

(continue to keep pedal down)

Hold and fade for as long as possible.
Once the note stops sounding, do not re-enter.

Hold and fade for as long as possible.
Once the note stops sounding, do not re-enter.

Hold and fade for as long as possible.
Once the note stops sounding, do not re-enter.