

REBECCA SAUNDERS

shadow (2013)

study for piano

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First performance at the Salzburg Biennale 2013 by Nicolas Hodges.

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“an acoustic shadow is to sound what a mirage is to light”

This solo explores the play of shadow, vertical harmonic clouds of differing density and complexity. Clouds of colour are projected into the acoustic resonance, or shadow, of the preceeding gesture. As a study, it is a detailed exploration of the sostenuto and sustaining pedals.

shadow v. shade; make dark; cloud; represent mysteriously; darken in a painting or drawing; follow in secret; trail.
n. the darkness following sunset; a mirrored image or reflection; umbrage; ghost, phantom; trace.
Old Eng. n./v.: sceadu, sceaduwe.

umbra *n. L.:* the darkest part of a shadow. From within the umbra, the source of light is concealed by the occulting body.
Astromony, the observer within the umbra experiences the shadow as a total eclipse.

acoustic shadow n. similar to the shadow of light, acoustic shadowing forms when sound waves encounter a very dense structure: through the consequential absence of echoes, nearly all of the sound is reflected resulting in an acoustic shadow.

“Everyone carries a shadow, and the less it is embodied in the individual’s conscious life, the blacker and denser it is ... in spite of its function as a reservoir for human darkness – or perhaps because of this – the shadow is the seat of creativity ... the dark side of his being, his sinister shadow ... represents the true spirit of life as against the arid scholar.”
C. G. Jung, 1938

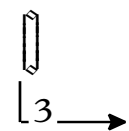
“At this juncture we ought to say something about lights and colours. It is evident that colours vary according to light, as every colour appears different when in shade, and placed under rays of light. Shade makes a colour dimmer, and light makes it brighter and clear. Colour is swallowed by the dark.”
Leon Battista Alberti, 1435.

General Notes

1. A melodic line is stretched through layers of resonances and moments of silence. Each fragment or melodic phrase is numbered from 1 to 11. Like a song – lyrical and expressive.
2. Extreme contrast between the expressive melodic line, as warm and lyrical as possible, and the direct fortissimo attacks and clusters, which are weighted and aggressive gestures.
3. Busoni highly valued the sostenuto pedal for its technical and sonic potential. This composition combines the sostenuto and sustaining pedals, exploring the thus created layers of complex and vibrating resonances, exact depression and release of the pedals are graphically shown in the score.
4. Exact durations of pauses and fermatas are often given (♩-note measurements): these resonances are active and part of extended lyrical line.
Some durations are not exactly stated and approximate lengths are defined as follows:
 short = 2½–4 beats
 medium = 5–7 beats
 long = 7–14 beats
 very long = 15–21 beats
Each piano responds differently to the prepared resonances – listen closely, and time the pauses and fermatas carefully.
Be flexible, giving time for the ear to focus on the complex resonances.
5. The tempo (approx. max. ♩ = 92) can be varied within each numbered phrase, and from section to section.
Tempi, like pauses and fermatas, depend greatly on resonances of individual piano and the acoustic of performance space.
The following criteria are important: stretched melodic line flows, lyrical, breathes freely; allow time to focus in on the particular colours and inner fluctuations of the complex resonances: the music is always in motion, never stagnant.
6. arm clusters assume the approximate span:
2½-octaves from elbow to finger tips; 2 octaves from elbow to fist. Using palm of hand gives from major 7th to a minor 9th.
If a performer has a larger or smaller stretch, e.g. 3-octave forearm span, then adjust the size of the clusters according to the following criteria:
 - i) the **ff** physical gesture is not compromised, keeping power and intention;
 - ii) the drawn out „lyrical“ line threaded throughout the composition remains clear.
The key „melodic“ notes are therefore indicated by an accent or a line above or below the cluster:
please keep the accented/lined note and then expand or reduce the span of the cluster below or above it according to the size of your hands or arms:
It will then be possible to retain not only the key melodic line, but also the intended physical gesture.

It is recommended to play this study with long sleeves!
7. Inside piano at bar 85/86: If there are restrictions regarding touching the strings, use a thin tissue or piece of silk over the left hand fingers to damp the lowest 3 strings.
Remove music stand before performance, and set slightly further back on the frame of the piano for easy access to the foremost point on the strings.

Explanatory notes



Silently depress keys and hold with sostenuto or 3rd pedal



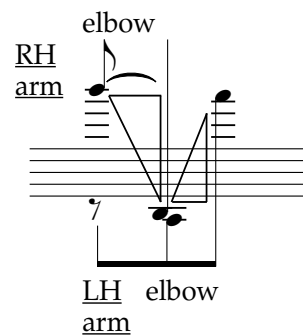
Black key cluster



White key cluster



Chromatic cluster



Cluster like a glissando, holding down all the tones

for AJS
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1 92 max.

ff *long* *ca 7* *ff* *mp* *sf* *short* *mp* *ff*

mp *mf* *ff*

mp *ff* *p* *mp* *ff* *mf* *ff*

21

ff

ff

f

4

2

ff *fff*

ff *sempre*

3

P

P

P

P

P

P

3

27

mp *ff*

RH

LH arm

2½

p *sempre*

4

pp

f *ff*

2½

P

P

P

P

P

P

3

34

p

3

long

non cluster

ff

2½

f

fff

mf *ff*

LH arm

P

P

P

P

P

P

3

40

f *sff* *mp* *fff* *mp* *p* *ppp*

LH arm *RH*

P *fff* P

3 8 3 3

47

4

mp *ff* *ff* *p* *fff*

LH arm *RH arm* *loco*

P P *fff* P

3 3 3 3

long non clusters

53

5

ff *p* *fff* *ff sempre*

LH arm *RH arm* *elbow*

P P *fff* P

3 3 3 3

v. long ca 11 long ca 7 5

60 *fff* *ff* *sempre* *p* *ff* *short* *p*

67 *ff* *mp* *ff* *p* *sempre* *melody!*

74 *pp* *sempre* *long* *a tempo* *ff* *fff* *ff* *loco*

♩ = 60-68 slow, freely gentle and expansive

6

98

med. *pp* *ff* *mf* *ff* *mp* *ff* *sff*

P *3* P *3*

8 *sff* 8 *sff* 3 *3*

[illegible]

112

ff

f

mp

ff *sempre*

f

mp

ff

RH arm > elbow

125

8

sf *f* *pp* *ppp* *poco f* *p* *mf* *sff*

p

loco

P

3

8

3

133

9

ff *fff* *p* *meno* *long* *ff* *long*

P

3

8

3

143

ff *fff* *long* *ca 6* *sff* *ca 5* *pp* *mf* *ff* *ff* *fff* *ff* *sub mp* *ff*

RH arm *RH palm* *LH palm*

P

3

8

3

151

(ff) *pp* *ppp* *ff* *sempre* *sfff*

RH palm
LH arm

3 3 3 3

159

(ff) *v. long* *ff* *long ca 7* *pp* *ff*

non cluster

3 3 3 3

169

espressivo *ppp* *mp* *pppp* *sfff* *ff* *sempre* *sub p* *ff* *sempre*

3 3 3 3

177

sub *p*

sff sempre

p

ff

ca 3 1/2

(loco)

P

P

P

184

p

ff sempre

ff

p

ff sempre

P

P

P

P

P

190

sff

ff

pp long ca 12

poco p > pp sempre

poco p

P

P

P

P

P

11 slow melody
freely, gentle, with care

210

p

poco *p* (*)

pp *poco* *p*

ppp

10. silent hold perfectly still

* A# disappears each time into the resonance of white note of bar 211.

—P—→

—3—→

notengrafik berlin