

Winged Fragments:

a dream of six swans

by Anne Hege

For 2 Soprano Saxophones, Trombone, Electric Guitar, Vibraphone,
Piano, Soundperson, Conductor, and Tape.

Composer's Notes:

First, thank you for working on this piece! It has been a strange piece. I have wanted to write a work based on the Brothers Grimm fairytale “The Six Swans” for years. Honestly, I have been haunted by the vision of the youngest brother with his swan wing and the question, how do we recover?

This version is a dreamscape of the life of the sister; knitting for six years, humming a simple melody to herself, remembering and imagining the sound of her brothers flight and their transformation. I have attempted to capture this by creating a score that is somewhat open. I have also included the role of a conductor. The length of each measure will reflect the transformation of the gesture from traditional beat patterns to more of a dance. The interruption points will be cued by frozen gestures.

The piece begins with a loop of the quiet sound of someone knitting (I have transcribed the basic rhythm of knitting although this is not exact). This loop continues throughout the work with some distortion during Interruptions 1 and 2. The opening should be sparse following the score. The measure of rest with the fermata should be long enough to clear the air of all resonance and become aware of the quiet loneliness of the sister knitting.

One measure before rehearsal B there will be a cue to begin the ebow and set the piano with a traditional beat pattern beginning at letter B. The music should flow and build smoothly into page 2 becoming more dense and unified although retaining a sense of heterophony and flexibility within the exact pacing of each measure. At this point the conducting pattern will be expanding with a lengthening of the duration of each measure.

On the unison A concert pitch, the gesture will stop, arms above the head. This will cue the entrance of “TAPE 1” (approx. 1 minute) and as the arms slowly lower there should be an improvisation with textural sounds, breath, clicking as noted. The vibraphone and guitar create continuity between sections as we enter at C.

At some undetermined point during letter C, the conductor will freeze marking the entrance of Interruption 2 (approx. 2 minutes). Material from Cells 1-3 (last page) can be played and repeated at anytime during Interruption 2. There should be a sense of release and shaking off of “trauma.” This can become big and lively, even playful.

Slowly the conductor’s hands will return to center and prepare for a traditional downbeat, at this point the players return to exactly where the interruption began during letter C and finishes the remaining material of letter C with TAPE 2 overlapping. Cells 1-3 again can be layered over sparsely while TAPE 2 fades out ending with the solo sound of the knitting needles.

I will be placing an example video of the conducting on www.annehege.com/klang.html and possibly other materials. Thank you for your time and I hope you enjoy the piece.

-Anne Hege

The Six Swans

Six brothers were turned into swans by an evil spell cast by their stepmother. The spell could only be broken if their sister would knit for six years six shirts of nettle in silence. The sister sat up in the tree, intent on her work. She was discovered by the King of that land, who was so taken with her beauty that he married her.

The King's mother, jealous, could not find anything good to say about her. A year after, when the couple's first child was born, the mother took it away, and told the King that his wife was a murderess, but the King would not believe it. This happened again with a second and third child.

By this time the whole kingdom was upset, and the King was obliged to let her be tried, and sentenced to be burned at the stake. It happened that on that day, the shirts were almost ready, all except the sixth, which was lacking an arm. In her last free moment, she threw the shirts over the swans and her brothers were restored to human form. All were transformed except for the youngest that retained a swan's wing instead of an arm where the shirt was unfinished. She was at last able to speak in her own defense.

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- Brothers Grimm

[A] 3X

[B] 2X

Follow conducted gesture, let this tempo dictate the length of each bar.

S. Sax. 1

At first use this material as suggested pitch content for sparse long tones dueting between the two saxophones and gradually fill in scored content so that by page 2 measure 3 you are playing as written. audible exhaile

S. Sax. 2

At first use this material as suggested pitch content for sparse long tones dueting between the two saxophones and gradually fill in scored content so that by page 2 measure 3 you are playing as written. audible exhaile

Trombone

continued E resonance from soundman

Vibraphone

Silent first time, second time play every third note loosely, third time play all notes with rubato (like a windchime).

Guitar

play 3rd time only with elbow

Piano

Set these notes in the acstenuato pedal, but do not sound it.

Lift pedal when all resonance has completely died away

Set these notes in the sostenuto pedal, but do not sound it.

Improvise sparsely within this set of pitches for second repeat while retaining sostenuto pedal

Soundman

Filter/EQ trombone so that it is progressively more resonant on the E by the third repeat almost to the point of feedback (as if the room resonated at exactly that pitch)

Filter/EQ trombone on E resonance, delay this resonance so that it continues after trombone begins to play melody on page 2 then slowly fades.

Knitting Needles

1.

* Down-bow and up-bow signs have been used to denote the conductor's downbeat (or outward motion) and upbeat (or inward motion). Conducting gestures mark the length of a measure. Stick figures denote motions outside these parameters.

*She heard a rustling sound and saw six swans
come flying through the window. They landed on
the floor and blew at each other until all their
feathers were blown off. After that their swan
skins slipped off like shirts.*

Score for the first section of the piece, featuring the following instruments and parts:

- S. Sx. 1**: Soprano Saxophone 1
- S. Sx. 2**: Soprano Saxophone 2
- Tbn.**: Trombone
- Vib.**: Vibraphone (labeled "bowed vibraphone")
- Gtr.**: Guitar
- Pao.**: Piano
- Sound**: Sound effects (labeled "slowly fade delay of trombone E resonance")
- K.N.**: Knitting Needle (labeled "TAPE 1 BEGINS")

Annotations for the Knitting Needle part:

- Some reverb on the trombone's A so that it fades unnaturally (5-8 seconds) while tbn. begins to improvise air based textural sounds with tape

INTERRUPTION 1: Timeless quality, end of interruption cued both by lowering arms and end of tape 1

Score for the second section of the piece, featuring the following instruments and parts:

- S. Sx. 1**: Soprano Saxophone 1
- S. Sx. 2**: Soprano Saxophone 2
- Tbn.**: Trombone
- Vib.**: Vibraphone (labeled "bowed vibraphone")
- Gtr.**: Guitar
- Sound**: Sound effects (labeled "TAPE 1 CONTINUES", "Delay on trombone A resonance fades.", "ebow")
- K.N.**: Knitting Needle (labeled "Gradually distort the knitting needle loop so that it is louder and dirtier.", "Fade out distortion.")

Annotations for the Knitting Needle part:

- Gradually distort the knitting needle loop so that it is louder and dirtier.
- Fade out distortion.

swans come flying through the window.

The swans swooped down

INTERRUPTION 2 cued when conductor's gesture freezes (sharp throw of arms and then still) smoothly return to point in previous section where left off when conductor's hands return to center pause and then flow freely in previous beat gesture.

S. Sax. 1,2
Tbn.

Vib.
bowed vibraphone

Sound-
TAPE PART 2

K.N.

fade to air sounds, breath, clicking keys, wing flutter
free rhythm, create a texture with the tape sounds

FREE
IMPROVISATION
BY ALL PLAYERS
EXPANSIVE RELEASE

Gradually distort the knitting needle loop so that it is louder and dirtier.

Fade out distortion.

The swans swooped down and landed close by so that she could throw the shirts over them. As soon as the shirts touched them, the swan skins fell off, and her brothers stood before her in the flesh. Only the youngest was missing his left arm, and he had a swan's wing on his shoulder instead.

Cell 1

Gtr.

Pno.

blew at each other until all their feathers were blown off.

Cell 2

Tbn.

Cell 3

Vib.
bowed vibraphone

Pno.

[C]

S. Sax. 1

S. Sax. 2

Tbn.

Vib.
bowed vibraphone

Gtr.

Sound

K.N.

TAPE 2 CONTINUE after interruption 2

S. Sx. 1

*fade to air sounds, breath, clicking keys, wing flutter
(free rhythm, create a texture with the tape sounds)*

their swan skins

Gtr.

slipped off like shirts.

Tbn.

all their feathers

S. Sx. 2

fade to air sounds, breath, clicking keys, wing flutter

She heard a rustling sound

pno.

he had a swan's wing

fade to air sounds,

breath,

S. Sx. 2

and her brothers stood before her

Tbn.

fade to air sounds, breath, clicking keys, wing flutter

They landed on the floor and blew

S. Sx. 1

D

Vib.

bowed vibraphone

Sound

TAPE 2 CONTINUE

TAPE 2 fade out

K.N.