J.N. Redelinghuys

AURAS

introduction, theme, and symptoms of temporal lobe epilepsy

for Clarinetist, Cellist, Pianist, and Live Electronics
Auras
Introduction, theme, and symptoms of temporal lobe epilepsy

Programme Note

Temporal Lobe Epilepsy (TLE) has a notably large range of symptoms, from physical sensations, to hallucinations, to loss of consciousness, and others. Many of these symptoms are experienced in the period before a seizure, known as an aura. This work attempts to interpret some of the more common experiences: macropsia and micropsia (also called Alice in Wonderland Syndrome), and indescribable feelings of sudden, vivid clarity, unprovoked feelings of paranoia leading into anxiety, and déjà vu.

Instrumentation

Clarinetist: Clarinet in B-flat
Bass Clarinet in B-flat

Cellist: Violoncello 1, tuned as per usual (i.e. C, G, D, A)
Violoncello 2, scordatura so that the strings are very slack (NB only 1 bow required)

Pianist: Largest Grand available

Electronics: Outputted through 1 speaker, placed towards the back of the stage, ideally not visible to the audience.

(Transposing score)

Other equipment

Four music stands, two of which are required to be easily raised/lowered smoothly, and can be carried easily. Four instrument stands are required, 1 for B-flat Clarinet, 1 for Bass Clarinet, and 2 for Cellos. Two microphones are to be placed next to each stand. Three chairs are to be placed stage right, and two additional chairs, one behind each stand (see Initial Layout).

Staging

There are three possible stagings: firstly, in a traditional concert auditorium, no extra considerations are needed, though the audience may be encouraged to sit close to the stage. Secondly, for a small audience, the audience should be backed against a wall/corner, with the performers very close by, or even intermingled with the audience. The performance space should be set up to evoke some sense of claustrophobia. Thirdly, the piece may be performed in
a round space. In this case the piano should be in the centre of the room, with the audience around the edge. The clarinettist and the cellist (along with all of their associated stands etc.) need not be next to each other, but may be anywhere in the centre of the room.

The performance space should have little-to-no natural light, and all available lights should be on. All the performers should be dressed so as to be indistinguishable from an audience member, or from a stage hand.

Interpreting the graphics

A persistent resource in the piece is an extract from my own EEGs. They are to be read with pitch on the x-axis, and time on the y-axis (in the same way as traditional notation). For each graphic the range and other performance directions are given. The graphic can be read in two ways (the performers may use either of these methods at any point). Either played each maximum point, or play the entire contour, moving between each still point. The pianist may play these as clusters (sliding a flat hand or fist across the keys), and the cellist may interpret these as glissandi.

Prior to performance

The clarinettist should record extract A on the B-flat Clarinet (this will be referred to as Track 2), and the cellist should record extract B on the standardly tuned Cello (this will be referred to as Track 3). Both performers should used the entire compass of their instrumets. The entirety of the extract need not be played, but should not be repeated. The total length of the recording must be as close as possible to 20 seconds (+/- half a second). Track 1 is fixed, also lasting 20 seconds.

Extract A

![Extract A](image1)

Extract B

![Extract B](image2)
Clarinet multiphonics

SW105

SW254

‘SW multiphonics’ – Sarah Watts
Introduction

The piece should ideally be first on a programme, and begin as the audience are moving to their seats, so that it initially appears that the performers are setting up the stage.

Electronics

The direction “play with fragments of” is left largely up to the performer. It should be more improvised than planned, and sound as though the performer is testing out the sound system and tracks, as though occurring prior to a performance.

Rehearsal Marks B, D, E: Tracks 1-3 should be simultaneously played on separate channels, all outputted to a single speaker. The performer operating the electronics should be able to adjust the volume of each track individually, and switch mute/unmute each track instantly and independently. The tracks are muted when not being played, and unmuted when notated.

Stage Layouts:

Initial Layout
(all instruments are next to the chairs stage right)
Diagram 2: Rehearsal Mark A
(Cl. and Vc. 1 only are on their respective stands)

Diagram 3: Rehearsal Mark C
(all instruments are on their respective stands)

Diagram 4: Rehearsal Mark E
(Cl. and Vc. 1 only are on their respective stand)
Theme

The first part of the theme directly references Stockhausen’s *Klaviersstück XI*. Each performer plays/speaks between 8 and 20 fragments. The ensemble should determine approximately how long this part should last before performance.

Symptom 2

The clarinettist and cellist move around the piano in a circle from the fourth beat of bar five. The total length of the circumference should be a minimum of 15m and a maximum of 20m (giving the radius from the middle of the piano at between 2.2m and 2.5m). If the stage does not allow for a circle of such a radius, then the performers may move in an ellipse, provided the circumference remains between 15m and 20m. The clarinettist moves in a counter clockwise direction, and the cellist moves in a clockwise direction. Where the performers paths intersect, the clarinettist moves on the inside of the path (that is, closest to the piano).

The speeds that the performers move at are given by numbers. *Speed 1* indicates a very slow walk, and *Speed 10* indicates the performers fastest walking speed. (Note that the fastest walking speed in the movement is *Speed 5*, which will therefore be at about medium speed). The change in walking speed should be instantaneous, on the beat indicated. The walking should be fluid and calm, no matter the speed.

(I am grateful to Gaia Blandina for the invention of this system.)

Symptom 3

Electronics

From the beginning of this movement until the end of the piece tracks 1-3 are to be played on repeat, muted. The electronics are then controlled as directed in *Introduction*.

Symptom 6

This movement is primarily conceptual, and I cannot truly expect this to be played at every performance (though I would certainly encourage it!). A possible alternative may be to record the piece (audio-video or audio) and replay it after Symptom 5 with all lights turned off.
Introduction
(setting up the stage)

Rather slowly

Clarinet
Enter stage with B♭ Cl. (move to stands) 
place Cl. on Cl. stand 
raise music stand halfway raised

Violoncello
Enter stage with Vc.1 (move to stands) 
place Vc.1 on Vc. 1 stand 
raise music stand 

(Play fragments of [1] at different volumes as if testing out the sound system)

[1]
subito pick up Clar!!!

place Clar.1 on stand 1 still raise stand fully 
Exit stage and sit down on chairs stage right

Cl.

fff

Vc.

fully raised still 
Exit stage and sit down on chairs stage right

Elec.

subito tacet

[1]
Enter stage with sheet music (move to stands) 
short pause place sheets on stands page through sheet music still 

Cl.

Enter stage with sheet music (move to stands) 
short pause place sheets on stands pick up Vc. 1 

Vc.

fff

Elec.

(Play with track as before)

subito tacet

[1]
B

Begin playing all tracks

\[ \text{\textit{ff\textsuperscript{f}, harsh}}} \]

18 seconds

C

Enter stage (move to stands) with B.Cl. (move to stands) place Vc. 2 on Vc. 2 stand

\[ \text{\textit{ff\textsuperscript{f}, harsh}}} \]

Perform any fragments of the tracks, all at \textit{mf}
D Begin playing all tracks 19 seconds
\[ \frac{2}{4} \quad \frac{3}{16} \quad \frac{7}{8} \quad \frac{2}{4} \quad \frac{1}{16} \quad \frac{7}{8} \quad \frac{3}{4} \quad \frac{1}{2} \quad \frac{3}{4} \quad \frac{5}{8} \quad \frac{7}{16} \]

E layout stage diagram 4, then sit down with B.Cl.

Cl. move to seats on stage left with B.Cl., place B.Cl. down next to chair

Vc. move to seats on stage left with Vc. 2, place Vc. 2 down next to chair

Elec. enter imperceptibly

Cl. still

Vc. still

Elec. \( p \)
Cl.
- Page through sheet music
- Tacet
- Sit still

Vc.
- Page through sheet music
- Tacet
- Sit still

Elec.
- Tacet
- Play with [1], [2], [3] quietly
- Dim. a niente
- Tacet

Piano
- (Still sitting)
- Move to piano
- Sit still at piano
Theme: Compos Mentis (Part I)

Play at least 8 A fragments. Each fragment may be played twice, but not successively. A maximum of 2 B fragments may be played, but not successively.
Theme: Compos Mentis  (Part I)

Say at least 8 A fragments. Each fragment may be said twice, but not successively.
A maximum of 2 B fragments may be said, but not successively.

A

suddenly amid the sadness, spiritual darkness and depression
happiness that is impossible in an ordinary state
their brain seemed to catch fire at brief moments
awareness increased tenfold at those moments which flashed by like lightning
agitation, doubts and worries, seemed composed in a twinkling
culminating in a great calm, full of understanding
heaven descended to earth and swallowed me
mind and heart were flooded by a dazzling light
all of you healthy people don't even suspect what happiness is

B

that second was, of course, unbearable
all agitation, doubts and worries
final second – never more than a second – of course unbearable
these glimmerings were still but a premonition of that final second
Compos Mentis
(Part II)

Andante alla ciaccona  \( \frac{4}{4} = 48 \)

* all appoggiaturas occur before the proceeding note
** suddenly interrupt the flow of the music, and turn head to face the audience, with a blank expression
en dehors

“down the rabbit hole”

f

head to side** head forward

U

head forward

head to side

mp

mp

Wild!

fff

mp

a tempo

mp
Interlude

head forward

play until the next movement is set up

repeat as necessary

range: between a 5th and an 8ve

\[ \text{PPP} \]

Seated, the clarinetist and cellist read several of the following text fragments (in any order) in a clear voice:

fall very slowly
tumbling down
never come to an end
fallen by this time
down down down

then move with B.Cl. and Vc. 2 to the stage.
Symptom 1: Marcopsia/Micropsia

 Clarinet in B♭

Violoncello

Piano

Electronics

\( \text{mp sempre} \)

\( \text{Which way?} \) begin playing

\( \text{Which way?} \) begin playing

\( \text{begin recording Cl. and Vc.} \)

\( \text{begin playing} \)
Slowly put down instruments, and move underneath the piano.

Begin playing back recordings, increasingly lower in pitch, louder, and slower.
Lie still underneath the piano.

The movement ends when Elec. playback has finished on a Bösendorfer Imperial model, this pattern may be continued:
Symptom 1: Macropsia/Micropsia

seemed to be in a very unpleasant state of mind so many different sizes in a day

\( \text{\textit{mf}} \)
\( \text{\textit{q}} \)
\( \frac{72}{15} \) accel. poco a poco

\( \text{\textit{A}} \frac{72}{15} \) accel. poco a poco
molto accel.

\[ \frac{12}{\text{Cl.}} \]

00'42''

\[ \frac{17}{\text{Cl.}} \]

\( \text{Cl.} \)

\[ \frac{22}{\text{Cl.}} \]

00'55''

\[ \frac{27}{\text{Cl.}} \]
the piano move underneath instruments, and Slowly put down
Lie still underneath the piano

57
01'24''
rit. al $\cdot = 72$

62 (rit.)

66
02'24''

B 01'36''

C TACET

Slowly put down instruments, and move underneath the piano
Lie still underneath the piano
Symptom 2: Vividly clear, yet disturbed

Bass Clarinet in B♭
\( \frac{4}{4} \) \( \dot{\text{q}} = 72 \)  
gradually stand up

Violoncello
\( \frac{4}{4} \) \( \dot{\text{q}} = 72 \)  
gradually stand up

Piano
\( \frac{4}{4} \) \( \dot{\text{q}} = 72 \)  
\( \text{legato sempre} \)  
\( \text{p sempre without nuance} \)  
\( \text{half pedal sempre} \)

3
B. Cl.   \( \text{move to and pick} \)  
up B.Cl.

Vc.   \( \text{move to and pick} \)  
up Vc. 2

Pno.

5
N.B. from memory pitches second time only

B. Cl.   \( \text{second time only} \)

Vc.   \( \text{second time only} \)

Pno.
B. Cl.  
Vc.  
Pno.  

21

B. Cl.  
Vc.  
Pno.  

25

B. Cl.  
Vc.  
Pno.  

26
Symptom 3: Paranoia

*Hurried* \( \frac{J}{144-168} 

\textit{mp} (spoken)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Piano</strong></th>
<th><strong>Cl.</strong></th>
<th><strong>Vc.</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>( \text{clear-ly}) ten sion faint round and round and round</td>
<td>( \text{stress sleep med me-di-ca tion round and round and round})</td>
<td>( \text{stress sleep med me-di-ca tion round and round and round})</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\( (\text{hit fallboard}) \)

\textit{mp}

<table>
<thead>
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<th><strong>Vc.</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>( \text{clear-ly}) round and round and round</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A L’istesso tempo

Cl. (Clarinet in B♭)

Vc. (Violoncello 1)

Pno. (Microphones on, through speaker with 1 second delay, just on the edge of audibility.)

Elec.
move to pick up Bass Clarinet
Symptom 4: Anxiety

Very stressed $\downarrow = 152$

Microphones still on, through speaker with 1 second delay, at same volume as instruments.

Cl. Cl.

Vc. Vc.

Ped. sempre

(sustain throughout)

ppp cresc sempre

6

10

Cl.

Vc.

Cl.

Vc.

Cl.

Vc.
He was thinking a moment or two before the fit itself; suddenly amid the sadness fire at brief moments being alive, flashed like lightning agitation, doubts and worries but a premonition of that final second of course, unbearable.
Place Cl. on stand.  
Take B.Cl. and sit down on chairs stage right

Place Vc. 1 on stand.  
Take Vc. 2 and sit down on chairs stage right

attaca

 senza Ped.

Microphones off
Symptom 5: Déjà vu

- Bass Clarinet in B♭
- Violoncello
- Piano
- Electronics

- Gradually dim. a niente
- Half Ped. sempre
- \( \cdot \cdot \cdot \)

A \( 0'20'' \)
B \( 0'40'' \)
dim. poco a poco a niente

senza rit.
Symptom 5: Déjà vu

L'istesso tempo \( \frac{\text{mf}}{\text{L'istesso tempo \( \frac{\text{mf}}{\text{mf}}\)}} \) = 152

Bass Clarinet

Violoncello 2

B. Cl.  Vc. 2

mf  ff

5

B. Cl.  Vc. 2

mf  pizz.

10

B. Cl.  Vc. 2

mf  pizz.  arco

15

B. Cl.  Vc. 2

p  sf  p  sf  ff
J

Vc. 2

pp < sffz  mf

pp < sffz mp

pizz. as in Symptom 2

arco

B. Cl.

C

1'00"

D

1'20"

mf ——— p ——— mp

pizz. as in Symptom 2

62

B. Cl.

Vc. 2

pizz.

67

B. Cl.

Vc. 2
subito tacet!
even if the previous section is unfinished

which dreamed it?
Symptom 6: Status Epilepticus
(Optional)

*Ad lib.* repeat the piece as many times as desired from *Interlude.*

*status epilepticus*
a condition in which epileptic fits follow one another without recovery of consciousness between them.