James Whittle

Brainbow mouse

for fl(picc).cl(bcl).pno.vln.vla.vc
Programme Note
"In the 1960s, scientists found that a particular jellyfish makes a protein that glows, known as green fluorescent protein. In the 1990s, using genetic engineering, researchers found that they could take the gene that makes GFP and insert it into the DNA of other cells. This makes different parts of the cell glow – and thus easier to see in a microscope – depending on where the gene is placed.

"To go short, Jean Livet, Jeff Lichtman and their collaborators at Harvard University were able to genetically alter mice so their neurons produce fluorescent proteins, and each cell produces a random combination of the colors yellow, red, and cyan. These colors mix, the way the basic colors of a television screen mix to produce a range of hues. Images can be taken in living mice, and the genetic engineering does not harm them. To celebrate this, the scientists decided to appropriately name the species: Brainbow Mice."

While I neither set out with nor assumed any programmatic intent, the brightly coloured images showing the workings of a mouse's brain - with scattered and distracted, reoccurring thoughts? - seemed to correspond to the musical gestures I was composing and treating with such flexibility, unravelling from the opening gesture into a drama for ensemble.

JWW, 30th March 2012 [Source: http://www.nextnature.net/2007/11/brainbow-mice]

Duration: 7 minutes

Performance Notes
When rehearsing and performing this piece, players should at all times have in mind the drama of the music, and the relationships each has to the other. A visual, theatrical experience is desired, as much as aural. The ensemble is at times divided differently, by timbre, by register, by spatial arrangement and mixed combinations. It is within these changing relationships and the sharing or not of material that the drama can be found, which should be conveyed to an audience.

Bars 12-17, strings, and bar 49, viola: a smaller notehead denotes that the string should be half-pressed to the fingerboard to achieve a muffled sound. Pitches here may be treated as approximate: they show the contour and general register of the phrase, though need not be entirely exact so long as the shape is clear.

Bars 11-12, flute: press the D key without covering the hole then slide your finger to cover the hole, bending the pitch from E flat to D whilst also singing them.

The players should sit in an arc:

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Piano

Viola

Flute Clarinet

Violin Cello
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Brainbow mouse

Urgent, but with a playful sense of distraction $\downarrow = 80$

Flute (doubling Piccolo)

Clarinet in B♭ (doubling Bass clarinet)

Violin

Viola

Violoncello

Piano

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Sing and play simultaneously
breathy, unfocused tongue slaps

The string should be half-pressed to the fingerboard to achieve a muffled sound.
Fl.  fp sf
Cl.  p  f
Vln.  p  f
Vla.  p  f
Vc.  jeté
Pno.  B Mischievous
inhale through flute, finger the notated pitches

(harmonic)
\( j = 88 \) poco rit. \( j = 66 \) timbral trill

\( j = 88 \) poco rit. \( j = 66 \)

p somewhat bloated

sul pont.

mp somewhat bloated

sul pont.

p lethargically

\( j = 88 \)

\( j = 66 \)
Urgent! (then trailing off) $\downarrow = 88$

- For Flute:
  - F#4
  - $\text{fff}$
  - $p$

- For Clarinet:
  - C4
  - $\text{fff}$
  - $p$

- For Violin:
  - G4
  - $f$
  - $\text{sul tasto}$
  - $\text{sul tasto punta d'arco}$
  - $\text{molto sul pont. al talone}$
  - $\text{nat. e molto vib.}$
  - $\text{senza vib.}$

- For Violoncello:
  - C4
  - $f$
  - $\text{sul tasto}$

- For Piano:
  - C3
  - $f$
  - $p$
  - $\text{Urgent! (then trailing off)}$
  - $\downarrow = 88$
D Unhurried - more alert!

pp → p mf → p f → p

(sul pont.)

Il senza vib.

D Unhurried - more alert!
rit. \( \frac{4}{4} \) = 56 Pensive

\[ \begin{array}{c}
\text{Fl.} \\
\text{Cl.} \\
\text{Vln.} \\
\text{Vla.} \\
\text{Vc.} \\
\text{Pno.}
\end{array} \]

\( \text{p} \quad \text{mf} \quad \text{p} \quad \text{f} \quad \text{mf} \quad \text{p poss.} \)

\( \text{p} \quad \text{mf} \quad \text{p} \quad \text{f} \quad \text{mf} \quad \text{p poss.} \)

\( \text{f} \quad \text{p} \quad \text{p} \quad \text{pp} \quad \text{dolce} \)

\( \text{f} \quad \text{p} \quad \text{p} \quad \text{pp} \quad \text{p} \quad \text{sul pont.} \)

\( \text{f} \quad \text{p} \quad \text{p} \quad \text{pp} \quad \text{dolce} \quad \text{sul tasto senza vib.} \)

\( \text{f} \quad \text{p} \quad \text{p} \quad \text{pp} \quad \text{dolce} \quad \text{sul tasto senza vib.} \)
F\( \text{= 72} \) Lurking surreptitiously

Picc.

Cl.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Pno.

nat. punta d'arco

nat. senza vib.

IV molto/sul pont.
make circles with the bow

III molto/sul pont.
make circles with the bow

nat. senza vib.

nat. senza vib.

F\( \text{= 72} \) Lurking surreptitiously

(poco a poco cresc.)
Jumpy, then scrambling in a nervous fit

breathy and unfocused

G Jumpy, then scrambling in a nervous fit
Absolute stillness.

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To Fl.

---

arco con sord. sul pont.

---

To B. Cl.

---

Absolute stillness.
\( \text{} \)

**Fl.**
- \( \text{Fl.} \)
- \( \text{B. Cl.} \)
- \( \text{Vln.} \)
- \( \text{Vla.} \)
- \( \text{Vc.} \)
- \( \text{Pno.} \)

- \( \text{fff} \)
- \( \text{p} \)
- \( \text{pp} \)
- \( \text{q} = 80 \) Frenetic!

- \( \text{otto} \)
- \( \text{still, sorrowful, nearly defeated} \) rit.

- \( \text{arco sul tasto IV} \)
- \( \text{III} \rightarrow \text{nat.} \)

- \( \text{molto vib.} \)
- \( \text{sul tasto} \)
- \( \text{nat.} \)

- \( \text{To Picc.} \)

- \( \text{(Or release the pedal whenever the decay has reached silence.)} \)
Piccolo

B. Cl.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Pno.

Piccolo To Fl.

IV sul pont. make circles with the bow

III sul pont. make circles with the bow

II sul pont. make circles with the bow

accel.

dolce

p

p

pp

ppp

pp

ppp

p

accel.

98
\( \textit{\textdollar} = 60 \) Suddenly threatened

\( \textit{\textdollar} = 72 \) Swagger with renewed vigour and humour
trill as fast as possible (always a tone higher)
Fl.

B. Cl.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Pno.

trill as fast as possible
arco
whining
arco, trill as fast as possible
pizz.