



# Aqua Ignis

for clarinet, cello and piano opus 107

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ROBERT CASTEELS



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**Duration:**

5'30"

**Performance instructions:**

- use three old mechanical metronomes with pendulum with their slight irregularities, rather than digital metronomes, as swinging pendula visually reinforce the idea of time;
- notation of clusters: see example of a white-key cluster in the right hand of bar 19, example of a black-key cluster in the left hand of bar 19, example of a chromatic cluster in the third chord of the right hand in bar 27;
- the arrow next to a cluster symbol indicates that this symbol is valid for the whole bar (example bar 52: whole bar of white-key clusters in the right hand and black-key clusters in the left hand);
- diamond-shaped notes in the piano part indicate keys that are depressed silently (first example in bar 33);
- all players always play in an identical tempo, double bar lines indicating a change of tempo;
- the players do not need to be exactly synchronized with the metronomes, as the ominous percussive ticking of the metronomes has a symbolic meaning (see below).

**Programme notes:**

Since 2003, I have written a number of music compositions, first in response to the beauty of nature, then in response to ecological disasters caused by humans. In 2009 for instance, I wrote a composition that incorporated genuine bird calls of species threatened with extinction. In 2015, I wrote a follow-up composition, this time incorporating species that have become extinct in particular parts of the world.

*Aqua Ignis* refers to the Latin words meaning water and fire. This composition for clarinet, cello, piano and three metronomes is inspired by the devastating forest fires caused by human overexploitation of our planet's natural resources.

The musical material of *Aqua Ignis* consists of one mode (mi, fa#, sol, la, la#, do, do# and re#), one chord (11 intervals decreasing from low to high successively by one semi tone), one focal pitch (si b), one retrogradable rhythmic cell and clusters.

*Aqua Ignis* consists in a triple metaphor:

- dense clusters for fire,
- emerging harmonics for water and
- the ominous ticking of the metronomes for the urgency of time running out.

The stepwise increase of the speed of the metronomes and the performance tempo represents the cumulative and accelerating negative effects of climate change.

# Aqua Ignis

(piano part/ score in C)

1

All players play in tempo @ 55

Clarinet in B $\flat$

Violoncello

Piano

Metronome 3

The pianist sets a metronome in motion in tempo @ 55 (the audience should be able to see this metronome)

One sostenuto pedal until bar 18

pizz. (pluck the string)

5

Cl.

Vc.

Pno.

Metr. 3

(@55)

*p*

*ppp*

*pp*

*pp*

*pp*

arco

10

Cl.

Vc.

Pno.

Metr. 3

(@55)

*p*

*pp* normal, non vib.

*p* vib.

*mp*

*p*

*mp*

*mf*

*Aqua Ignis (piano part)*

14

Cl. *mf* *f* *ff* *fff*

Vc. trem., ponticello trem., normal *ff* bar 17 and 18: accelerando martellando all down bows

Pno. *f* *ff* *fff*

Metr. 3 (@55)



All players play in tempo @ 75

19

Cl. **A**

Vc. *ff*

Metr. 2 (@75)

Pno. One sost. pedal until bar 38

(= white-key cluster: d, e, f, g, a, b and c)

(= black-key cluster: c#, d#, f#, g# and a#)

Metr. 3 (@55)

Aqua Ignis (piano part)

24

Cl.

Vc.

Metr. 2 (@75)

Pno.

Metr. 3 (@55)

29

Cl.

Vc.

Metr. 2 (@75)

Pno.

Metr. 3 (@55)

(stop with the piano)

(stop with the piano)

sounding like a fierce glissando:  
with a rapid movement of the wrist,  
using first the side of the hand,  
then the side of the small fingers

*f* *ff* *f* *ff*

Aqua Ignis (piano part)

32 All players play in tempo @ 55

Cl. *ppp*

Metr. 1  $\frac{3}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{2}{4}$

Vc. *ppp*

Metr. 2 (@75) diamond-shaped notes are depressed silently

Pno. pizz. (pluck the string)

Metr. 3 (@55)  $\frac{3}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{2}{4}$

3:2 -| 3:2 3:2 3:2 -| \*

The clarinetist sets a metronome in motion in tempo @ 95 (independently of the cellist's and the pianist's metronomes). The fermata simply gives the clarinetist a reasonable amount of time to quickly change the tempo.



All players play in tempo @ 75

**B**

39 Cl.  $\frac{2}{4}$   $\frac{6:4}$   $\frac{6:4}$

Metr. 1 (@95)  $\frac{2}{4}$

Vc. *gliss.*  
(= continuous glissandi)

Metr. 2 (@75)  $\frac{2}{4}$

**B**

Pno.  $\frac{2}{4}$

Metr. 3 (@55)  $\frac{2}{4}$

Aqua Ignis (piano part)

43

Cl. *10:8* *10:8*

Metr. 1 (@95)

Vc. *gliss.*

Metr. 2 (@75)

Pno. *f* *ff*

Metr. 3 (@55)

One sostenuto pedal until bar 63

with whole of left forearm and left hand

46 All players play in tempo @ 55

Cl. *ppp*

Metr. 1 (@95)

Vc. *ppp*

Metr. 2 (@75)

Pno. *pizz. (pluck the string)*

Metr. 3 (@55)



Aqua Ignis (piano part)

52

Metr. 1 (95) tempo @ 75

Metr. 2 (75)

Pno.

Metr. 3 (55)

53

All players play in tempo @ 55

Metr. 1 (95)

Vc.

Metr. 2 (75) ppp

Pno.

Metr. 3 (55) diamond-shaped notes are depressed silently

57

Cl.

Metr. 1 (95) ppp

Vc.

Metr. 2 (75)

Pno.

Metr. 3 (55)

59

All players play in tempo @ 75

Metr. 1 (95)

Metr. 2 (75)

Pno.

Metr. 3 (55)

Aqua Ignis (piano part)

60 All players play in tempo @ 55

Cl. *ppp*

Vc. (ossia in harmonics) *ppp legato*

Pno. \*

Metr. 1 (@95)

Metr. 2 (@75)

Metr. 3 (@55)

64 C All players play in tempo @ 95

Cl. *pp dolce non cresc.*

Vc. *pp* Cello: legato continuous glissando until bar 72 *gliss.*

Pno. *pizz. (pluck the string)* *una corda*

Metr. 1 (@95)

Metr. 2 (@75)

Metr. 3

At C, the pianist changes the metronome tempo to 115 (independently of the other metronomes). The fermata simply gives the pianist a reasonable amount of time to quickly make the change.

One sostenuto pedal until bar 96

Aqua Ignis (piano part)

68

Cl. *(pp)*

Metr. 1 *(@95)*

Vc. *gliss.*

Metr. 2 *(@75)*

Pno. *(@115)* *tre corde*

Metr. 3 *p mp mf f pp*

70

Cl. *(pp)*

Metr. 1 *(@95)* *gliss.* 5:4

Vc. *(h)*

Metr. 2 *(@75)*

Pno. *p mp mf f*

Metr. 3 *(@115)*

71

Cl. *accel.*

Metr. 1 *(@95)* *gliss.*

Vc. *accel.*

Metr. 2 *(@75)*

Pno. *(@115)* *ff fff*

Aqua Ignis (piano part)

**D** All players play in tempo @ 115

73

Cl. *sfz*

Metr. 1  $\frac{4}{4}$  (*@95*)

Vc. *sfz*

Metr. 2  $\frac{4}{4}$

Pno. *fff*

Metr. 3  $\frac{4}{4}$  (*@115*)

All players play in tempo @ 95

*ppp*

*ppp*

The cellist changes the tempo to 135 (the fermata on the 1st beat simply means that the cellist can take a reasonable amount of time to quickly make the change, whilst the rest of the music proceeds without interruption)

**D**

All players play in tempo @ 115

78

Cl. *sfz*

Metr. 1 (*@95*)

Vc. *sfz*

Metr. 2 (*@135*)

Pno. *ff*

Metr. 3 (*@115*)

*bartok pizz.*

Aqua Ignis (piano part)

All players play in tempo @ 95

79

Cl.  $\text{3:2}$   $\text{3:2}$   $\text{3:2}$  *ppp* *sfz*

Metr. 1 (@95)

Vc. arco *ppp* bartok pizz. *sfz*

Metr. 2 (@135)

Pno. *f*

Metr. 3 (@115)

All players play in tempo @ 95

85

Cl.  $\text{3:2}$   $\text{3:2}$   $\text{3:2}$  *ppp*

Metr. 1 (@95)

Vc. arco *ppp*

Metr. 2 (@135)

Pno. *ppp*

Metr. 3 (@115)



Aqua Ignis (piano part)

89 All players play intempo @ 115

Metr. 1  $\frac{3}{4}$  (@95)

Metr. 2  $\frac{3}{4}$  (@135)  
(= chromatic clusters by both hands)

Pno.

*mf*

Metr. 3  $\frac{3}{4}$  (@115)

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90

Metr. 1  $\frac{4}{4}$  (@95)

Metr. 2  $\frac{4}{4}$  (@135)

Pno.

*fff*

Metr. 3  $\frac{4}{4}$  (@115)

---

91

Cl.  $\frac{2}{4}$

Metr. 1  $\frac{2}{4}$  (@95)

Vc.  $\frac{2}{4}$  (@135)

Pno.  $\frac{2}{4}$

Metr. 2  $\frac{2}{4}$  (@135)

Metr. 3  $\frac{2}{4}$  (@115)

\*

Aqua Ignis (piano part)

97 **E** All players play **intempo @ 115**

The clarinetist changes the metronome to tempo @ 155 (the fermata on the 1st beat simply means that the clarinetist takes reasonable time to quickly change the tempo, whilst the rest of the music proceeds without interruption)

Cl. *ppp*

Metr. 1  $\frac{4}{4}$

Vc. *pizz.* *ppp*

Metr. 2  $\frac{4}{4}$  (@135) *ppp*

**E**

Pno. *ppp* *pp* *p*

One sostenuto pedal until the end

Metr. 3  $\frac{4}{4}$  (@115)



101

Cl. *ppp poco cresc.* *pp poco cresc.*

Metr. 1 (@155)

Vc. *arco* *ppp poco cresc.* *pp poco cresc.*

Metr. 2 (@135)

Pno. *mp* *mf* *f*

Metr. 3 (@115)

Aqua Ignis (piano part)

**F**

All players play **intempo @ 135**

105 **Più mosso**

Cl. 1 (Metr. 1) (@155) *pp poco cresc.* 3:2 3:2 3:2

Vc. 2 (Metr. 2) (@135) *pp poco cresc.* 3:2 3:2 3:2 *p cresc.* 3:2 3:2 3:2

Pno. 3 (Metr. 3) (@115) *ff*

**G**

**Più mosso**

108 **Più mosso**

Cl. 1 (Metr. 1) (@155) *p cresc.* 3:2 3:2 3:2 *p cresc.* 3:2 3:2

Vc. 2 (Metr. 2) (@135) *p cresc.* 3:2 3:2 3:2

Pno. 3 (Metr. 3) (@115) *p* **Più mosso**

All players play **intempo @ 155**

**G**

All players play **intempo @ 155**

111

Cl. 1 (Metr. 1) (@155) *mp cresc.* 3:2 3:2 3:2

Vc. 2 (Metr. 2) (@135) *mp cresc.* 3:2 3:2 3:2 3:2 *mf molto cresc.* 3:2 3:2 3:2 3:2

Pno. 3 (Metr. 3) (@115) *f* **Più mosso**

Aqua Ignis (piano part)

114 **Prestissimo**

Cl. *mf molto cresc.* 3:2 3:2 3:2 3:2

Metr. 1 (@155) 2/4 4/4

Vc. (b) 3:2 3:2 3:2 3:2

Metr. 2 (@135) 2/4 4/4

Pno. *fff* 2/4 4/4

Metr. 3 (@115) 2/4 4/4



116 **Prestissimo**

Cl. *f* 3:2 3:2 3:2 *fff* stage lights go off

Metr. 1 (@155) 4/4 repeat this bar ad libitum stop metronome at the same time

Vc. *f* 3:2 3:2 3:2 *fff* repeat this bar ad libitum stop metronome at the same time

Metr. 2 (@135) 4/4 repeat this bar ad libitum stop metronome at the same time

Pno. *f* 3:2 3:2 3:2 3:2 *fff* \* repeat this bar ad libitum stop metronome at the same time

Metr. 3 (@115) 4/4 repeat this bar ad libitum stop metronome at the same time







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