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# Huapango de los Muertos

for Wind Ensemble

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J. Aaron Stanley



# Huapango de los Muertos

## for Wind Ensemble

by J. Aaron Stanley

Opus 12c (2021)  
Duration: c. 7m

**Instrumentation:**

Piccolo  
2 Flutes  
2 Oboes  
English Horn  
3 Clarinets in B $\flat$   
Bass Clarinet in B $\flat$   
2 Bassoons  
Contrabassoon  
Soprano Saxophone  
Alto Saxophone  
Tenor Saxophone  
Baritone Saxophone

3 Trumpets in B $\flat$   
4 Horns in F  
2 Trombones  
Bass Trombone  
Euphonium  
Tuba

Timpani  
4 Percussionists

Celesta

Harp

Contrabass

Percussion 1:  
Marimba  
Xylophone  
Vibraphone

Percussion 2:  
Vibraphone (shares with Percussion 1)  
Suspended Cymbal  
Tam-tam  
Tambourine  
Claves

Percussion 3:  
Gourd  
Cabasa  
Ratchet  
Tambourine  
Castanets  
Glockenspiel

Percussion 4:  
Kit: High Wood Block, Snare Drum, Bongos (High & Low)  
Suspended Cymbal

**Performance Notes:**

The rhythms in this work, while uncomplicated, are *unfamiliar* to most non-Mexicans, and therefore challenging even for professional musicians not accustomed to them. Musicians can't rely solely on feel, because the feel constantly shifts between 3/4 and 6/8 and is usually *both* at the same time. Therefore, it is important that musicians always internally count the 8ths notes, even after becoming familiar with the work.

One of the characteristics of this piece is the occasional sliding around of pitches. The work was originally conceived for trombone and string quartet, which obviously handle this with ease. But every wind instrument has at least *some* capability, however limited, of sliding pitch. Oboe and Bassoon are rarely called upon to bend pitch, but it is possible through embouchure manipulation and/or sliding fingers on/off keys. Performers not familiar with the technique may require some practice to get the hang of it. Flutes can roll their instrument inward to get a slight “sigh.” Clarinets have been glissing upward since *Rhapsody in Blue*—again through emboucher manipulation and/or gradually sliding the fingers off the keys. For saxophones, "scoops" are an essential staple of jazz effects, and generally performed with ease.

For the brass, Trumpets have an occasional “scoop,” easily performed by half-valving and embouchure manipulation. Horns are asked for smooth glisses of a half step, which is performed by going from a partially stopped to open position (for a gliss upward), or an open to a partially stopped position (for a gliss downward), while using the fingering of the open note. For every instrument, glissandi should be performed gradually, over the entire length of the first note.

Hn.

Use the fingering of the open note, then move from a partially-stopped to open position to gliss up, or from an open to a partially-stopped position to gliss down.

## Program Notes:

The *huapango* is a traditional Mexican dance. The 'h' is silent. The stress is on the second syllable. And the 'a' is a short, open vowel. It is so well-known in Mexico, and considered such a vital part of traditional Mexican culture, that the Mexican composer, Jose Moncayo, composed his famous (in Mexico, at least) *Huapango* for symphony orchestra, which to this day is immediately recognizable to nearly every Mexican, and is a celebration of Mexican culture and nationalism. The music to which the *huapango* is danced, *son huasteco*, is a common style among Mariachis and other traditional and popular music ensembles.

The famous *Día de los Muertos* ("Day of the Dead") is another important element, not only in Mexican culture, but all over Latin America. *Huapango de los Muertos* imagines what it would be like if *los muertos* were to rise from the grave dancing the Mexican *huapango* to the traditional rhythms of *son huasteco*.

I will confess upfront that I'm 100% gringo. But I lived in Mexico for five years, where I met my beautiful Mexican wife, Rose. As a trumpet player, I've played many different Latin styles popular in Mexico, including cumbia, sonora, salsa, mariachi, and banda Sinaloense. I also heard a lot of traditional Mexican music during my time there, as well as some of Mexico's classical concert works, like *Huapango* by Jose Moncayo, mentioned above. *Huapango de los Muertos*, in a way, is my personal response to *Huapango* by Moncayo, and is very much informed not only by my classical music training, but my experience as a jazz musician, and as an expat in Mexico constantly hearing Mexican music.

The piece was originally born out of a commission from Dr. William Haugeberg, assistant professor of low brass at the University of Texas – Rio Grande Valley, for a piece for Bass Trombone and string quartet. Because of the heavy Mexican culture and influence in south Texas, I wanted to compose a piece that celebrated that heritage. This chamber version of the piece premiered at the International Trombone Festival on July 10, 2019.

As I was working on the chamber piece, I couldn't help but feel that it would work extremely well for symphony orchestra. So I was very thrilled to be presented with an opportunity shortly afterward to compose a piece on the theme of “dance” for the Irving Symphony Orchestra (a professional orchestra in the DFW area), which premiered in February 2020. It was the perfect opportunity to realize my vision of what *Huapango de los Muertos* could be.

But a good piece of music can stand on its own in many different kinds of settings, and I felt a Wind Ensemble version could also work extremely well. However, it took time to come to this conclusion, since one of the inspirations of the work was the ability of both the trombone and strings to perform smooth glissandi. I wasn't convinced at first that tossing the strings would produce desirable results. Turns out I was wrong! Shortly after finishing the whirlwind of graduate school in 2021, I set about revising and reimagining the work for winds. I feel it works very well, and stands on its own with no need to know or reference the orchestral version.

Musically, the piece is a combination of the traditional and modern: traditional Mexican rhythms with some bold “jazzy” harmonies... a traditional late romantic quasi-Hollywood sound with some contemporary extended techniques to spice things up. Harmonically and melodically, the music “dances” between major and minor, adding to the macabre tone. All the melodies are original, except for two short quotes of the traditional Mexican song, *La Llorona*, which was featured in the recent Disney movie, *Coco*, about the *Día de los Muertos*. Most Mexicans will immediately recognize the reference.

My goal was to write a fun, festive, and colorful piece that celebrates Mexican culture and pays homage in gratitude for my time spent there and the influence it had on me. My hope is that listeners are transported to the fantastical world of *los muertos* and are thrilled by the journey... and that they embrace the uniquely Mexican and “United Statesian” (as those south of the border prefer to refer to us, since they, too, are "Americans") nature of the piece.

J. Aaron Stanley, 2021

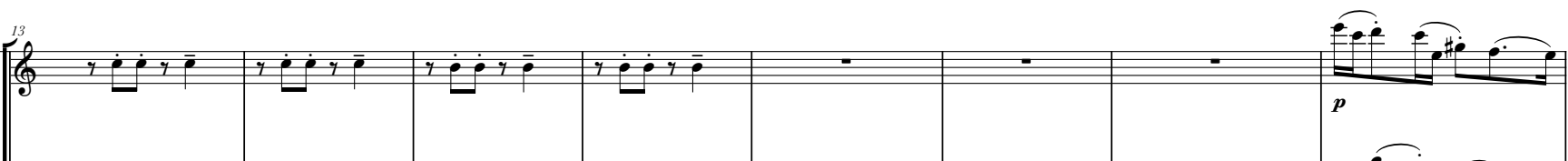
# Huapango de los Muertos

J. Aaron Stanley (b. 1975)

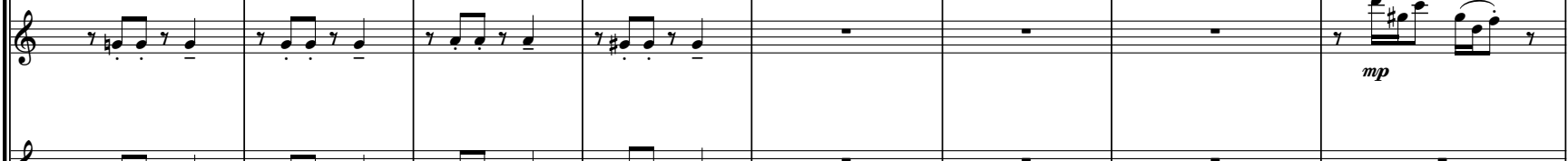
[illegible]

The musical score is for 'The Firebird' by Igor Stravinsky, specifically the section marked 'A'. The score is written for a full orchestra and solo instruments. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats) and the time signature is 3/4. The score is divided into two systems, each with 12 staves. The first system includes Flutes (1, 2), Oboes (1, 2), English Horn, Clarinets (1, 2, 3), Bass Clarinet, Bassoon (2), Contrabassoon, Saxophones (S. Sax., A. Sax.), Trumpets (1, 2), Trombone (1), Timpani, Maracas, Tam-tam, Gong, Wood Block, Snare Drum, Hi-hat, Bass Drum, Harp, and Cello. The second system includes Flutes (1, 2), Oboes (1, 2), English Horn, Clarinets (1, 2, 3), Bass Clarinet, Bassoon (2), Contrabassoon, Saxophones (S. Sax., A. Sax.), Trumpets (1, 2), Trombone (1), Timpani, Maracas, Tam-tam, Gong, Wood Block, Snare Drum, Hi-hat, Bass Drum, Harp, and Cello. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, dynamics (p, mp, mf), articulation (accents, slurs), and performance instructions (e.g., 'solo, cantabile', 'inverted Cym. on 26" head soft yarn on Cym.', 'to Timp. mallets', 'med. hard yarn', 'To Cab.'). The section marked 'A' is a 16-measure phrase that begins with a key signature change to B-flat major and a time signature change to 3/4. The score is a high-quality, professional-grade musical score, likely a typeset or a high-quality digital score.

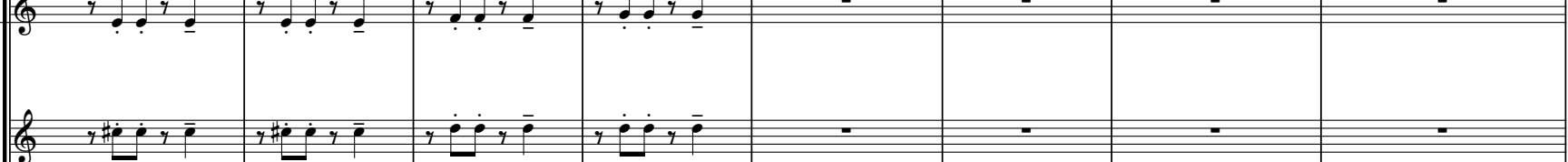
1



Cl. 2



3



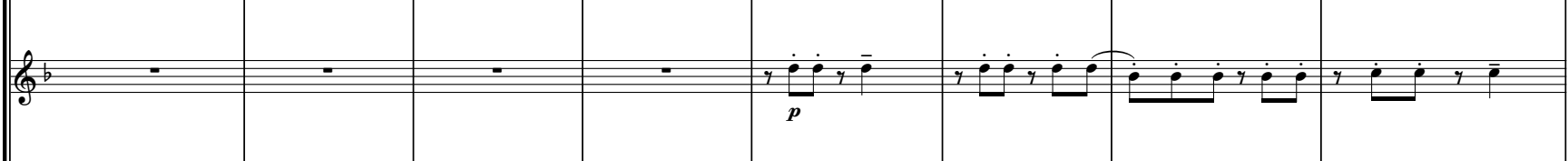
B. Cl.



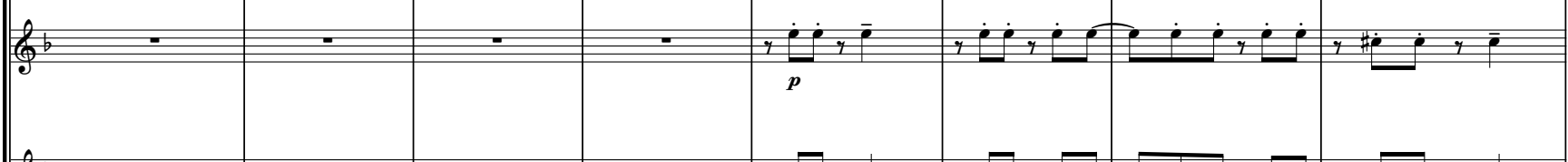
Cbsn.



1

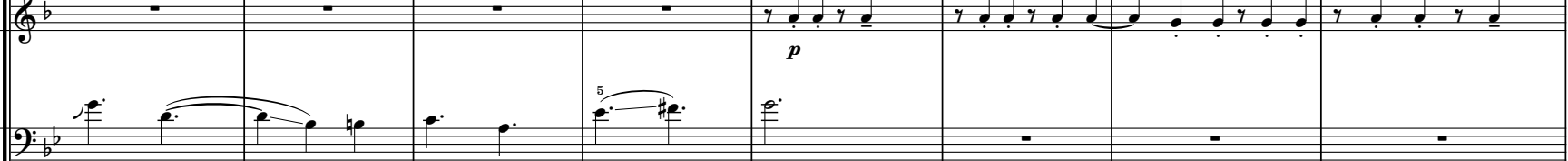


2

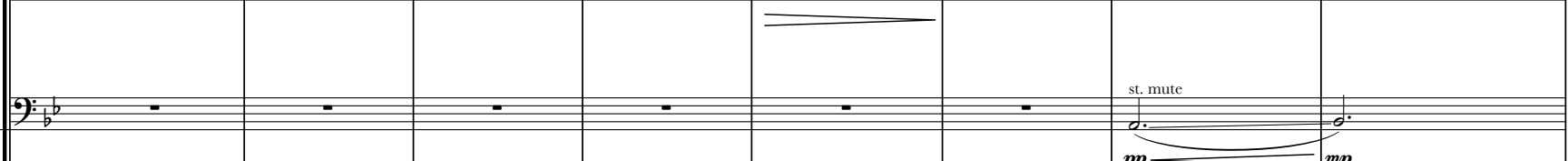


Hn.

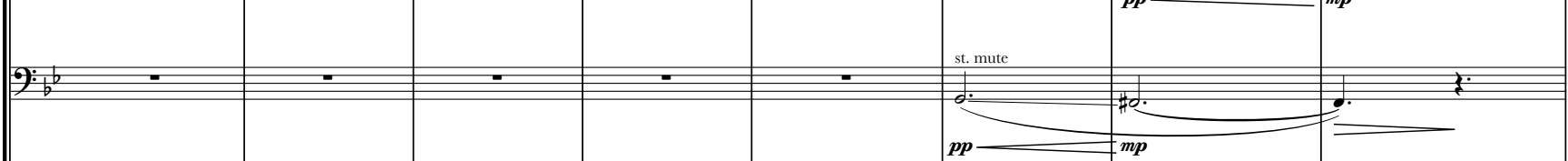
3



4



1

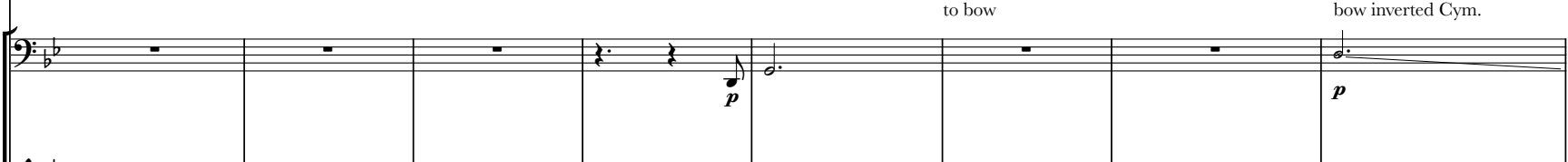


Tbn.

2



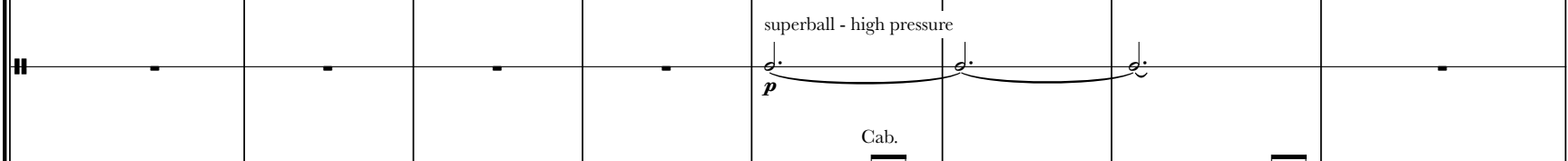
B. Tbn.



Tba.



1

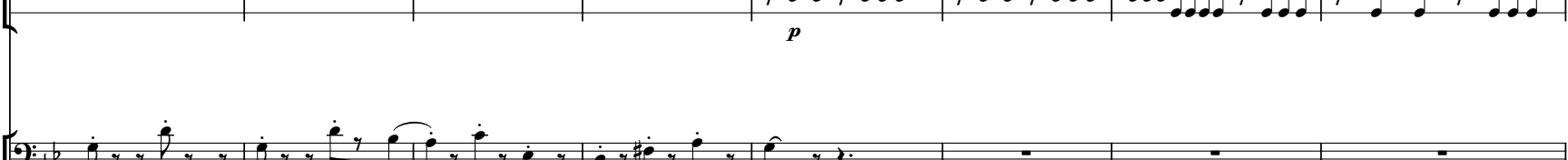


Timp.

Mar.



Tam.



Cab.



W. Bl.  
Sn. Dr.  
H. Bon.  
L. Bon.



Cb.



[illegible]





45

Picc. *mp*

1

Fl. *mp*

2 *mp*

1 *mp*

Ob. *mp*

2 *mp*

E.H. *mp*

1 *mp*

2 *mp*

3 *mp*

B. Cl. *mp*

1 *mp*

Bsn. *mp*

2 *mp*

Cbsn. *mp*

S. Sax. *mf*

Tpt. 1 *p*

1

2

Hn. 3

4

Tbn. 1 *p*

B. Tbn.

Tba.

Timp. *p* *mp*

Xyl. To Vib.

Gou. (8) To Cast.

W. Bl. 2

Sn. Dr. 2

H. Bon. 2

L. Bon. 2

Cel. *mf*

Hp. *mf*

Cb. *pizz.* *mp*

[illegible]



















The image shows a page of a musical score, likely for a symphony. The score is written for a large ensemble of instruments, including Piccolo, Flutes (1 and 2), Oboes (1 and 2), Euphonium (E.H.), Clarinets (1 and 2), Bassoons (1 and 2), Saxophones (S. Sax., A. Sax., T. Sax., Bar. Sax.), Horns (1, 2, 3, 4), Trombones (Tbn. 1), Timpani (Timp.), Cymbals (Cymb.), and a Percussion section (W. Bl., Sn. Dr., H. Bon., L. Bon.). The score is in 3/4 time and includes dynamic markings such as *mf* (mezzo-forte) and *f* (forte). The page is numbered 133 in the top left corner. The score is written in a standard musical notation with staves for each instrument, showing notes, rests, and other musical symbols. The instruments are listed on the left side of the page, and the corresponding staves are arranged in a vertical column. The score is divided into measures by vertical bar lines, and the measures are numbered at the bottom of the page. The overall layout is clean and professional, typical of a printed musical score.











181

Picc.

1

Fl.

2

1

Ob.

2

E.H.

2

Cl.

3

B. Cl.

1

Bsn.

2

1

Tpt. 2

3

1

2

Hn.

3

4

1

2

Tbn.

B. Tbn.

Tba.

Timp.

Tamb.

Rat.

W. Bl.  
Sn. Dr.  
H. Bon.  
L. Bon.

Cb.

4/8

Slower

$\text{♩} = \text{c. } 92$

M

$\frac{3}{4}(6)$

Fl. 1

188

$\text{pp}$

Cbsn.

$\text{mp}$

S. Sax.

$\text{mp}$

A. Sax.

solo, espress.

$\text{mp}$

T. Sax.

$\text{mp}$

Bar. Sax.

$\text{mp}$

Tpt. 1

solo, espress.

$\text{mp}$

Tba.

Mar.

Mar.  
med. hard yarn

$\text{mf}$

Glock.

Glock.

$\text{mp}$

Sus. Cym.

Sus. Cym.

$p < \text{mp}$

Cel.

$\text{mf}$

Cb.

arco

$\text{mp}$







220

Faster  $\text{♩} = c. 138$

ac - - - ce - - - le - - - ran - - - do - - - poco - - - a - - - poco - - -

Picc.

1

Fl.

2

1

Ob.

2

E.H.

1

Cl. 2

3

B. Cl.

1

Bsn.

2

Cbsn.

1

Tpt. 2

3

2

Hn. 3

4

1

Tbn.

2

B. Tbn.

Euph.

Tba.

Timp.

Sus. Cym.

Tamb.

W. Bl.  
Sn. Dr.  
H. Bon.  
L. Bon.

**P** **Faster** ♩ = c. 160

228

Picc.

1

Fl.

2

1

Ob.

2

E.H.

1

Cl. 2

3

B. Cl.

1

Bsn.

2

Cbsn.

A. Sax.

T. Sax.

Bar. Sax.

1

Tpt. 2

3

2

Hn.

4

1

Tbn.

2

B. Tbn.

Euph.

Tba.

Timp.

Tamb.

To Cast.

W. Bl.  
Sn. Dr.  
H. Bon.  
L. Bon.

Cb.

arco  
*f*





255

Picc.

1

Fl.

2

1

Ob.

2

E.H.

1

Cl. 2

3

1

Bsn.

2

Cbsn.

A. Sax.

T. Sax.

1

Tpt. 2

3

1

2

Hn.

3

4

1

Tbn.

2

B. Tbn.

Euph.

Tba.

Cast.

W. Bl.  
Su. Dr.  
H. Bon.  
L. Bon.

Cb.

Musical score for Huapango de los Muertos, page 33. The score is for a large orchestra and includes parts for Piccolo, Flute 1, Flute 2, Oboe 1, Oboe 2, English Horn, Clarinet 1, Clarinet 2, Clarinet 3, Bassoon 1, Bassoon 2, Contrabassoon, Alto Saxophone, Tenor Saxophone, Trumpet 1, Trumpet 2, Trumpet 3, Horn 1, Horn 2, Horn 3, Horn 4, Trombone 1, Trombone 2, Baritone Trombone, Euphonium, Tuba, Castanets, Wood Block/Small Drum/High Bone/Low Bone, and Cymbal. The score is in 2/4 time and features a variety of musical notations including eighth notes, sixteenth notes, and rests. The key signature is one sharp (F#).

**R**

[illegible]



277

espress.

Picc.

1

Fl.

2

espress.

espress.

Ob.

1

2

E.H.

1

Cl.

2

B. Cl.

1

Bsn.

2

Cbsn.

espress.

f

S. Sax.

espress.

f

A. Sax.

Tpt. 1

1

Tbn.

2

B. Tbn.

Timp.

Sus. Cym.

Cb.

[illegible]



[illegible]

309 **T** Tempo Previous ♩ = c. 176

Picc.

1

Fl.

2

1

Ob.

2

E.H.

1

Cl. 2

3

B. Cl.

1

Bsn.

2

Cbsn.

A. Sax.

1

2

Hn.

3

4

1

Tbn.

2

Euph.

Timp.

Xyl.

Sus. Cym.

Cb.

*ff*

*f*

*mp* *f*

poco accel.

318 **Tempo Previous** ♩ = c. 188

Picc. 1 Fl. 2 1 Ob. 2 E.H. 1 Cl. 2 3 B. Cl. 1 Bsn. 2 Cbsn. T. Sax. Bar. Sax. 1 Tpt. 2 3 Hn. 2 3 Tbn. 2 Tba. Timp. W. Bl. Sn. Dr. H. Bon. L. Bon. Cb.

poco accel.....

326

Picc.

1

FL.

2

1

Ob.

2

E.H.

1

Cl. 2

3

B. Cl.

1

Bsn.

2

Chsn.

S. Sax.

A. Sax.

T. Sax.

Bar. Sax.

1

Tpt. 2

3

1

2

Hrn.

3

4

1

2

Thn.

B. Thn.

Euph.

Tha.

Timp.

Nyl.

Sus. Cym.

Cab.

W. Bl.

Sa. Dr.

H. Bon.

L. Bon.

Cel.

ad lib.

Hp.

Ch.

*p*

*mp*

*mf*

*f*

*ff*

*wood*

*8va*

*do*

*4*

*5*