

An Inopportune Time

A monodrama for female voice, piano and audio file playback
2014

Paul Frehner

Instrumentation

Female Voice – Mezzo or Soprano (octave transpositions of notes that are too high or too low are permissible)
Piano
Audio file playback

Performance Notes

Audio file and Click Track

This piece has two components: a live performance by the singer and pianist and a “tape” or audio part. The playback audio file is a stereo track and should be diffused on loudspeakers. As the two components are intricately linked rhythmically it is highly recommended that the pianist play with a click track diffused through headphones to ensure synchronization with the playback part.

The piece is in 7/4 time and has a metronome marking of Quarter = 88.5. Though perhaps a bit odd, this tempo was chosen based on the tempo of the certain rhythmic sounds in the audio file.

For setup it is recommended that the stereo playback file be loaded into an audio software application such as Pro Tools or Logic. A separate click track can then be added and routed to headphones.

Duration: 2'32”

Program Note

Lawrence Cherney of Soundstreams Canada asked me in 2013 if I would be interested in composing a piece based on a melody by R. Murray Schafer. The melody is just seven notes, a musical transcription of his surname: Eb-C-B-A-F-E-D. In a surprisingly straight line this project led from Schafer's name to the idea of a soundscape, and then on to recording the sounds of kids on my backyard skating rink, recording crowd noises and the thudding impacts of a physical Midget hockey game at a local arena, researching quotes by Don Cherry [that didn't make their way into the piece but which were helpful nonetheless], viewing old clips of a Montreal Canadiens and Boston Bruins game that took place on March 10, 1979 and enjoying Danny Gallivan's colorful play-by-play of that game. From these audio sources I made a 7 beat loop that serves as mostly a rhythmic backing track. Recurring in the loop is a child's voice saying “drop ‘em”, a clear challenge to a fight. Interspersed here and there are sound bites of Danny Gallivan's play-by-play.

Dramatically, everything spoken in Danny Gallivan's play-by-play and the child's challenge to “drop ‘em” applies both to what happens on the ice but more importantly to our main character's multitudinous love interests and the headaches that go with leading such a complex life.

An Inopportune Time was commissioned by Larry and Donna Smith and the proceeds were donated to Soundstreams' 2014 fundraising campaign.

Text

Is there such a thing as too many men?
Is there such a thing as too many men?
Should I drop one, drop two, drop three or four or five of them.
I have too many men in my life.
They've been caught, caught, way out of line.
That's right, it was a terribly, a most inopportune time
Inopportune time, Inopportune time,
There's too much...
Inopportune time,
There's too much pressure,
Oh, Larry,
Oh Serge,
Oh Kenneth,
Oh Bob,
Oh Guy,
Oh Guy,
Guy?
Guys?
My Ginger?

Paul Frehner, with inspiration from my son Kevin and from Danny Gallivan

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a minute monodrama for female voice, piano and audiofile play back

Paul Frehner, 2014

for Larry and Donna Smith and for Soundstreams

$\text{♩} = 88.5$ [set click track: meter=7/4; tempo - Q=88.5] *f* dramatic. sultry, loose

Voice

The pianist wears headphones and listens to the click track
Note on measures 1-3. The arpeggio figures in the piano can be performed *ad lib* within the barlines. However, the timing of the beginning of each bar must be exact with the click.

Is there such a thing as

Piano

with flair

Click Track starts. 1 bar count off in 7/4.

Audio Playback

V.

too ma-ny — men

mp

Pno.

Steady Groove. Senza Rubato

Rhythmic loop with a steady quarter note pulse in 7/4 begins on beat 1, Sounds from children skating and talking on an outdoor rink

Atmospheric swell begins on beat 1, crowd in arena,

Audio

pp

5 *triumphantly hungry* *ff* Slide up to an indeterminate note.

V.

Pno. *MEN!* *fff* *f*

Audio *fff* *f* Rhythmic loop with skating sounds continues Atmospheric swell stops.

7 *ff*

V. Is there such a thing as

Pno. *mf*

Audio

9 *fpp*

V. too ma - ny men? Shall I drop one, drop two, drop,

Pno.

Audio

11 *ff* *ff*

V. *ff* *ff*

— three or four or — five of them. I — have too ma - ny men in my

Pno. *ff*

Audio 11

13 *p* *f* *mp*

V. *p* *f* *mp*

life. They've been caught, caught,

Pno. *mp*

Audio 13

15 *fff*

V. *fff*

WAY! Way out — of — line.

Pno. *ff*

Audio 15