

Samuel Messer

stray

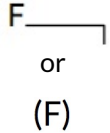
for solo horn in F

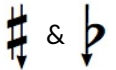
stray (2018)


for solo horn in F

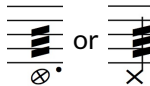
Notes

Techniques

 - the indicated note or passage should be performed on the (sounding) F horn, giving the player access to the written microtonal B \flat (7th harmonic) and F \sharp (11th harmonic) where needed. Do not correct pitches to their equally-tempered counterparts in these sections.

 - indicate microtonal deviations from equal temperament (see note above).

 - quasi-'tongue ram': cover mouthpiece entirely with mouth and blow through the instrument, producing 'slap' effect by inserting tongue rapidly into air stream.

 - flutter-tongue whilst producing unpitched 'breath' sound.

 - all notes in the indicated passage should be stopped.

Passages marked 'echo' indicate a sudden change to a particularly quiet dynamic, as if sounding from a distance. These may be performed with the 'echo horn' technique if desired, at the player's discretion.

This playing score is transposed as appropriate.

Duration: c. 3'30"

Composed over a period of six months, *stray* represents my first attempt for many years at a piece for a member of the brass family. Whilst not wanting to under-play or devalue the great beauty of the instrument's mellow, clear tone - the classic 'horn sound' - I was keen to find a timbral palette which showed a richer, more complex side of the french horn. As such, the frequent cutting between types of material and the gradual move towards distant, sustained & simple tones found here is perhaps akin to the process of composition - a sorting & weighing of different timbral possibilities, before arriving at a clearer (though not uncomplicated) understanding of the work itself.

The title ("to travel along a route that was not originally intended") is a kind of summation of the energy of the material, which forms a restless, constantly digressing line, a kind of stream-of-consciousness 'utterance'. Here, the surface of the piece shifts with such rapidity that meaningful connections are initially difficult to discern, though one gesture (a ringing, bell-like figuration) will become increasingly important as the work continues.

The act of composing a piece based on digression was difficult, and in many ways contrary to my usual way of working. This tension can be heard in the frequent lack of stability or certainty in the piece - ideas rise to the surface & sink as quickly as they came, and are rarely (if ever) heard in direct repetition. Even sections of apparent clarity are short-lived, and abrupt halts in the flow of material often suggest a discontinuous timeline - nowhere more so than at the work's close, a coda which seems only tangentially- (but still, tangentially) related to that which came before.

The piece was written as part of Psappa's 'Composing for French Horn' scheme 2017-18; huge thanks go to Psappa and, in particular, Andrew Budden, under whose guidance it was composed.

stray

for solo horn in F

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♩ = c. 56; jumbled, a little rubato

(♩ = ♩ sempre)

Musical notation for measures 1-3. Measure 1: *sfz*. Measure 2: *pp*. Measure 3: *sffz*, *f* clear, bell-like. A fermata is placed over the first measure of the next system.

Musical notation for measures 4-7. Measure 4: *pp* sub. Measure 5: *sfz*. Measure 6: *f* sub. 5:3. Measure 7: *sffz*, *pp* sub. Above measures 5-7 is the instruction *accel.* and above measure 7 is *a tempo*.

Musical notation for measures 8-11. Measure 8: *sfz*, *pp* < *f* > *pp*. Measure 9: *sffz*. Measure 10: *mp* < *f*. Measure 11: *sfz*, *pp* sub. Above measures 8-9 is the instruction *flz., breath (no pitch)*. Above measure 10 is *flz.*. Above measure 11 is *(F)*.

Musical notation for measures 12-14. Measure 12: *sffz*. Measure 13: *f* sub. Measure 14: *pp* sub., *sffz*. Above measures 13-14 is the instruction *accel.*

A ♩ = c. 100; ever-changing, flexible

Musical notation for measures 15-17. Measure 15: *sfz*, *f* clear, bell-like. Measure 16: *sffz*. Measure 17: *pp* < *f* sim. sub., *mp* sub. A fermata is placed over the first measure of the next system.

Musical notation for measures 18-21. Measure 18: *f* sub. Measure 19: *pp* sub., *sfz*. Measure 20: *sfz*. Measure 21: *f* sub. Above measures 20-21 is the instruction *accel.* and above measure 21 is *a tempo*.

22 $\overset{F}{\text{---}}$ $\overset{F}{\text{---}}$ ($\leftarrow \text{♩} = \text{♩} \rightarrow$)

26 **B** ♩. = c. 100; fluid, energetic

31 (F) $\overset{+}{\text{---}}$

35 $\overset{5:3}{\text{---}}$ ($\leftarrow \text{♩}^5 = \text{♩} \rightarrow$)

39 suddenly wild, aggressive (♩. = c. 168)

44 tongue ram (senza fermata) ($\leftarrow \text{♩} = \text{♩} \rightarrow$)

48 **C** ♩. = c. 168; fluid, brilliant

52 (F) (open)

sffz (*f*) *pp* sub., echo *sfz* *f* sub.

57

sfz *pp* sub., echo *sfz* *sfz* *pp* sub., echo

62

f clear, bell-like *pp* sub., echo *sfz*

66

f sub., sim. *pp* sub., echo *mp* sub. *accel.*

71 *precipitando* = c. 208; increasingly polarised

mf *ff* *pp* sub., echo

73

f clear, bell-like

78

ff *pp* sub., echo (non cresc.)

81

f sim.

85

sfz

89

ff *pp sub., echo* *f sim.*

92

sfz | *pp echo* (non cresc.) *sfz*

95

ppp sub., echo

97 (+)

ff

99

p *f clear, bell-like*

103 flz., breath

p *f* *ppp* sub., echo

105 (+)

(non cresc.) *f* clear, bell-like *pp* sub., echo

108

sfz *ppp* sub., echo

111

fff sub., violent *pp* sub. *fff* short long

senza misura

116 ♩ = c. 192-208; warm, subdued

p legatissimo, con rubato *p sim.*

mf poco *p*

tongue ram molto accel.

mf leggiero *mp* *p legatissimo, con rubato*

rit. a tempo

f poco, brillante *mp languid* *p poco* *pp*

flz., breath

poco *pp* *p tenuto*

tongue ram

mf leggiero