

Five Miniatures on Musical Time

Program Note:

In setting out to compose *Five Miniatures on Time*, I prescribed for myself a large set of parameters from the very earliest stages. As is usually the case, these parameters included general concerns such as instrumentation, approximate length of the entire work, pitch materials, and the like. In addition to these pedestrian concerns, however, I also hoped to establish rigid guidelines in order that I might investigate musical time according to the writings of Jonathan Kramer.¹ Among the most specific details governing the entire work, I included some to merit each miniature a sense of equality. For example, each miniature is exactly ninety seconds long, in absolute time, and each derives from the same pitch set: the phone number at the music department of the University of Pittsburgh (although I took great liberty with the set for the sake of sonority).

The titles of each movement derive from Joyce's "The Dead."² I have read this story many times in my adult life and find it a strange, simultaneous source of both comfort and absolute disquiet. Most importantly, I simply love to read it and cannot help but return to it. The language is stunning and Joyce's effect of achieving multiple meanings reached a new height in this work. Although he deals more directly with issues of time in other examples (most famously, of course, in the snake eating its tail ending/beginning of *Finnegan's Wake*), I found sufficient excerpts here, both as a source of inspiration, as well as to allude to my process.

Performance Note:

Accidentals carry through the bar throughout the work. I have included courtesy accidentals within the bar except where individual pitches are repeated consecutively. If by some chance I have missed some courtesy accidentals the player should do two things: 1) forgive me for poor editing skills and 2) assume that the accidental carries through the bar for repeated pitches within the same register.

-James J. Ogburn
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¹ Specifically, chapter two of Kramer's book *The Time of Music*, "Linearity and Nonlinearity."

² Joyce, James. *Dubliners*. New York: Penguin, 1993.