

Ex Nihilo

Kris Peysen

Program Notes

Ex Nihilo is a Latin phrase meaning “out of nothing” or “from nothing.” Its most common use occurs in theology with the phrase *creatio ex nihilo*, which means “creation from nothing.”

In classical philosophy, *ex nihilo* also appears in the phrase *ex nihilo nihil fit*, which means “out of nothing comes nothing.”

In mathematics, a solution to a problem can be called *ex nihilo* if it appears without a working.

In military organization, a unit is *ex nihilo* if it forms without significant members of other units.

In computer programming, a created object is called *ex nihilo* if it does not use another object as its prototype.

My piece explores all these meanings.

Structurally, the piece is in a rough arch form, with the center section acting as a sort of fulcrum upon which the piece undergoes several transformations. Harmonically, the piece is a mixture of octatonic, chromatic, and diatonic elements, all freely juxtaposed with one another. Another notable element of the piece is the use of polymeter, which occurs in multiple episodes throughout, achieving its highest complexity in the climax.

This piece explores the creation and evolution of musical materials and everything that can happen in between. In those spaces lie vast potential.

Performance Notes

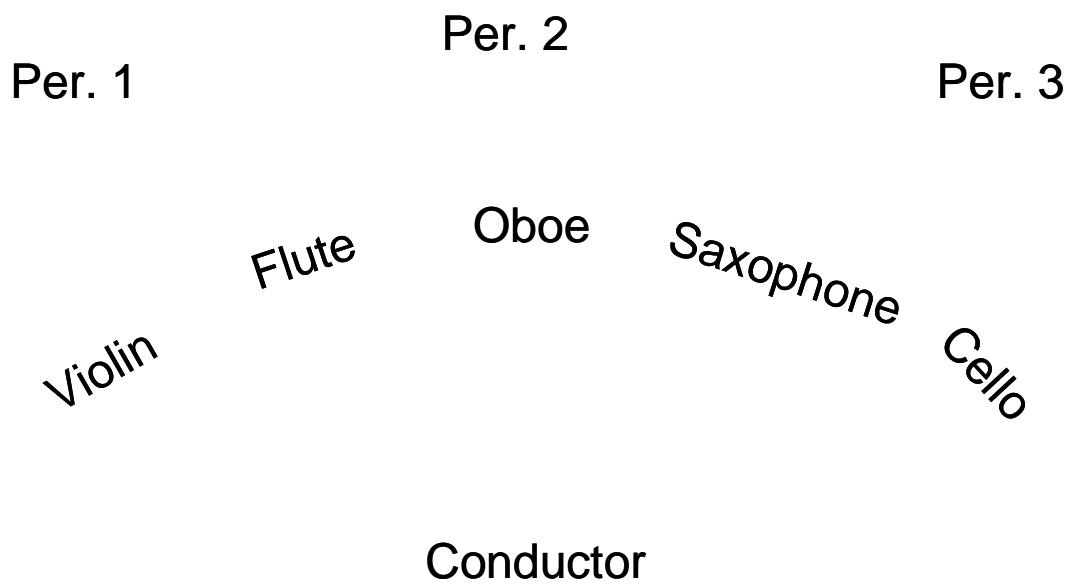
Duration: 15'00"

Instrumentation

Flute/Piccolo
Oboe
Tenor Saxophone in Bb*
Violin
Cello
Percussionist 1
Percussionist 2
Percussionist 3

*The saxophone player is required to perform both classical and jazz style during the piece, as notated in the score. The terms I am using here refer mainly to the type of sound produced by the instrument, and not to any further method of playing or “interpretation” of the music—i.e. rhythms in the jazz section should be played as written and not be “swung” in any fashion. In order to clarify what sounds I want, the classical sound should be darker, mellower, and with less vibrato; while the jazz sound should be brighter, more “growly,” raucous, and use a heavier amount of vibrato. Time has been allotted to change mouthpieces if the player so desires.

Stage Layout



Notational Clarifications

Feathered Beams  mean to repeat the given note or pattern, starting at the initial note value (in this case an eighth note) and accelerate to the speed of an unmeasured tremolo. The beat remains constant.

 always means unmeasured tremolo.

n = niente

String glissandi begin immediately on the note they are attached to.

Accidentals behave traditionally, applying throughout the measure.

Percussion Instrumentation

Player 1

Chimes (Chm)
*Glockenspiel (Glsp)
Xylophone (Xyl)
Triangle (Trgl)
*4 Small Gongs (S.G.)
Medium Tam-tam (M. Tam)
Cymbals (Cymb)
Temple Blocks (T. Bl.)

Player 2

*Glockenspiel (Glsp)
Triangle (Trgl)
Cowbell (Cowb)
*4 Small Gongs (S.G.)
Thunder Sheet (Th. S.)
*Large Tam-tam (L. Tam)
Cymbals (Cymb)
Claves (Clv)
5 Wood Blocks (W. Bl.)
2 Log Drums (L. Dr.)

Player 3

Mark Tree (M. Tr.)
Small Tam-tam (S. Tam)
*Large Tam-tam (L. Tam)
Crash Cymbals (Cr. Cymb)
Snare Drum (S. Dr.)
4 Tom-toms (T-t)
Bass Drum (Bs. Dr.)

*Denotes an instrument that may be shared with another player, if necessary.

Unpitched Percussion Staff Layout

Player 1

A musical staff with five measures. Measure 1: Medium Tam. Measure 2: Temple blocks. Measure 3: Small gongs. Measure 4: Cymbals (Hi-hat*) suspended. Measure 5: Triangle. Measures 2 through 4 have brackets above them. Measure 4 has a bracket below it labeled "Suspended".

Player 2

A musical staff with seven measures. Measure 1: Large Tam. Measure 2: Thunder sheet. Measure 3: Wood blocks. Measure 4: Log drums. Measure 5: Small gongs. Measure 6: Cymbals (Hi-hat*) suspended. Measure 7: Claves, Cowbell, Triangle. Measures 3 through 6 have brackets above them. Measure 6 has a bracket below it labeled "Suspended".

*always in closed position unless otherwise specified

Player 3

A musical staff with seven measures. Measure 1: Large Tam. Measure 2: Bass drum. Measure 3: Crash cymbals. Measure 4: Small Tam. Measure 5: Tom-toms. Measure 6: Snare drum. Measure 7: Mark tree. Measures 5 through 7 have brackets above them.

Pictures of a working percussion setup can be provided upon request.

Ex Nihilo

Kris Peysen

Nascent

Flute

Oboe

Tenor Saxophone

Violin
bow freely

Violoncello

Percussion 1
Cymbals scrape
Triangle
Small Gongs
Glockenspiel
Trgl

Percussion 2
Wood Blocks
Claves

Percussion 3
Large tam
Mark tree stroke randomly with fingers
Tom-toms
Bass Drum stick end
T-t



B

With driving motion

18

Fl. *mf*

Ob. *mp*

Ten. Sax. *mp*

Vln. *pizz.* *mp* *f* *mf*

Vcl. *p* *mp*

Per. 1 *mf*

Per. 2 *pp* *mp* *mp*

Per. 3 *mp* *p* *mp*

Xylophone

Cymb.

M. Tr.

T-t mallets

Bs. Dr.

=

27

Fl. *sim.*

Ob. *sim.* *mp* *mf*

Ten. Sax.

Vln.

Vcl. *mf*

Per. 1

Perc. 2 *W. Bl.* *mp*

Per. 3

Trgl.

=

37

Fl.

Ob.

Ten. Sax. *mf*

Vln. *mp* *mf*

Vcl. *f*

Per. 1

Perc. 2

Per. 3 *Bs. Dr.* *mp* *p*

C

D

43

This section begins with a dynamic of *f*. The Flute and Oboe play eighth-note patterns. The Tenor Saxophone enters with a sustained note at *f*. The Violin and Cello provide harmonic support with sustained notes. Percussion 1 and Percussion 3 enter with rhythmic patterns. The section concludes with a dynamic of *p*.

E

51

This section begins with a dynamic of *mf*. The Flute and Oboe play eighth-note patterns. The Tenor Saxophone and Violin provide harmonic support. The Cello plays eighth-note patterns. Percussion 1 and Percussion 3 enter with rhythmic patterns. The section concludes with a dynamic of *mf*.

F

62

This section begins with a dynamic of *p*. The Flute and Oboe play eighth-note patterns. The Tenor Saxophone and Violin provide harmonic support. The Cello plays eighth-note patterns. Percussion 1 and Percussion 3 enter with rhythmic patterns. The section concludes with a dynamic of *f*.

73

Fl.
Ob.
Ten. Sax.
Vln.
Vcl.
Per. 1
Perc. 2
Per. 3

85

G

Fl.
Ob.
Ten. Sax.
Vln.
Vcl.
Per. 1
Perc. 2
Per. 3

94

Fl.
Ob.
Ten. Sax.
Vln.
Vcl.
Per. 1
Perc. 2
Per. 3

H

103

Fl.
Ob.
Ten. Sax.
Vln.
Vcl.
Per. 1
Perc. 2
Perc. 3

I

III

Fl.
Ob.
Ten. Sax.
Vln.
Vcl.
Per. 1
Perc. 2
Perc. 3

Glockenspiel

J

Reserved
♩=132 ♩=♩(♩.=88)

119

Fl.
Ob.
Ten. Sax.
Vln.
Vcl.
Per. 1
Perc. 2
Perc. 3

l.v.
to W. Bl.
(Bs. Dr.)
T-t
pp

128

Fl. *f*
Ob.
Ten. Sax. *mp*
Vln. *pizz*
Vc. *pizz* *mf* *ppp* *arco*
Per. 1
Perc. 2
Per. 3 *p*

Chimes

140

Fl. *f* *mp* *ff*
Ob. *mf* *mp* *ff*
Ten. Sax. *mf*
Vln. *p* *p* *ff*
Vc. *f* *pp*
Per. 1 *p*
Perc. 2
Per. 3 *mp* *p*

K
arco
Wood Blocks

149

Fl. *f*
Ob.
Ten. Sax. *mp*
Vln. *mp*
Vc. *pizz* *ff*
Per. 1
Perc. 2
Per. 3 *mf*

L
Languorous
♩=62 (♩=93)

(start fast and ritard into the new tempo)

Fl. Ob. Ten. Sax. Vln. Vc.

Per. 1 Perc. 2 Perc. 3

to T. Bl. Temple Blocks

* Large tam Cymbals Small Gongs
play with hands Bs. Dr.

=

165

Fl. Ob. Ten. Sax.

Vln. Vc.

Per. 1 Perc. 2 Perc. 3

Trgl. S. G. Log Drum
take mallets Bs. Dr. Snare Drum
T-t

=

173

Fl. Ob. Ten. Sax.

Vln. Vc.

Per. 1 Perc. 2 Perc. 3

Cymbals to M. Tam
Bs. Dr. S. Dr.

180

Fl.

Ob.

Ten. Sax.

Vln.

Vc.

Per. 1 Medium Tam-tam

Per. 2 Cymb

Per. 3

M

184 accel.

Fl.

Ob.

Ten. Sax.

Vln.

Vc.

Per. 1 Trgl

Per. 2 Clv

Per. 3

Small Gongs l.v.

S. Dr.

189

120

Fl.

Ob.

Ten. Sax.

Vln.

Vc.

Per. 1

Per. 2

Per. 3

snares off

accel. gliss.

(S.G.)

Cymbals

N

Mechanical

194

Fl.

Ob.

Ten. Sax.

Vln.

Vc.

Per. 1

Per. 2

Small Tam-tam

non vib.

con vib.

pizz.

Xylophone

*S. Dr.
beat sticks together*

(snares off)

0

With sudden blossoming

accel. poco a poco.

Musical score for orchestra and percussion. The score includes parts for Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Tenor Saxophone (Ten. Sax.), Violin (Vln.), Cello (Vc.), Percussion 1 (Per. 1), Percussion 2 (Perc. 2), and Percussion 3 (Per. 3). The tempo is indicated as $\text{d} = 76$. The score features various dynamics such as *legato sempre*, *mf*, *f*, *ff*, *arco*, *mf*, and *p*. The instrumentation includes woodwind instruments (Flute, Oboe, Tenor Saxophone), bowed strings (Violin, Cello), and three types of percussion (Percussion 1, Percussion 2, Percussion 3). The score shows a mix of sustained notes, rhythmic patterns, and dynamic changes across the different sections.

P

Frantic

- ♩.=84

Musical score for orchestra and percussion, page 10, measures 210-214. The score includes parts for Flute, Oboe, Tenor Saxophone, Violin, Cello, Percussion 1, Percussion 2, and Percussion 3. The tempo is indicated as $\text{♩} = 84$. Measure 210 starts with a dynamic *mp* for the Flute. Measures 211-212 show the Oboe and Tenor Saxophone playing eighth-note patterns. Measure 213 begins with a dynamic *f* for the Oboe. Measures 214-215 show the Violin and Cello playing eighth-note patterns. Measure 216 begins with a dynamic *f* for the Violin. Measures 217-218 show the Percussion instruments playing eighth-note patterns. Measure 219 begins with a dynamic *ff* for the Percussion instruments. Measure 220 concludes with a dynamic *mf* for the Percussion instruments.

Musical score for orchestra and woodwind quintet, page 219. The score includes parts for Flute, Oboe, Tenor Saxophone, Violin, Cello, Percussion 1, Percussion 2, and Percussion 3. The instrumentation is as follows:

- Flute:** Playing eighth-note patterns.
- Oboe:** Playing eighth-note patterns.
- Tenor Saxophone:** Playing eighth-note patterns.
- Violin:** Playing sixteenth-note patterns. Dynamics: f , fff , f , fmp , fmp , fmp , fmp , f .
- Cello:** Playing eighth-note patterns. Dynamics: 4 , 4 , fmp , fmp , fmp , fmp , f .
- Percussion 1:** Playing sixteenth-note patterns. Dynamics: f .
- Percussion 2:** Playing eighth-note patterns. Dynamics: mp , ff .
- Percussion 3:** Playing sixteenth-note patterns. Dynamics: mp .

Performance instructions include dynamic markings like ff , mf , and $(loco)$. The score is in common time, with various key signatures throughout the page.

Musical score for orchestra and jazz band section, page 226. The score includes parts for Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Tenor Saxophone (Ten. Sax.), Violin (Vln.), Cello (Vc.), Percussion 1 (Per. 1), Percussion 2 (Perc. 2), and Percussion 3 (Per. 3). The Tenor Saxophone part includes a note: "(Optional) take jazz mouthpiece". The score features dynamic markings such as *ff* (fortissimo) and *f* (forte). The instrumentation is divided into two groups: woodwind and brass/percussion.

A musical score page showing measures 233-234 of a piece. The key signature changes from B-flat major to A major at the beginning of measure 234. The score includes parts for Flute, Oboe, Tenor Saxophone, Violin, Cello, Percussion 1, Percussion 2, and Percussion 3. Dynamics and performance instructions include **f**, **mp**, **jazz style**, **pp**, **mf**, **ff**, **(Tom)**, **to L. Tam**, **Large tam-tam**, and **p**. Measure 233 ends with a forte dynamic **f** followed by a fermata. Measure 234 begins with a piano dynamic **pp** and ends with a piano dynamic **p**.

R

241

Fl. *mp*
Ob.
Ten. Sax. *ff*
Vln. *pp*
Vcl. *p*
Per. 1
Perc. 2
Per. 3

to S. G.
Tom-toms

248

Fl.
Ob.
Ten. Sax.
Vln.
Vcl.
Per. 1
Perc. 2
Per. 3

Small Gongs
l.v.
(W. Bl.)
mf

S

Straining

$\text{J}=160$

253

Fl.
Ob.
Ten. Sax.
Vln.
Vcl.
Per. 1
Perc. 2
Per. 3

Glockenspiel
Cowbell triangle beater
S. Tam
f
mf
f
p
pp

T

261

Fl. *mf* *ff*
Ob. *mf* *f*
Ten. Sax. *p* *mf*
Vln. *mp* *fp* pizz
Vc. *f*
Xylophone
Per. 1 *mp* to L. Tam
Perc. 2
Perc. 3 *T-t* *mf*

U

With furious momentum

♩=176 (subito)

(8)

270 *f* *mp* *f*
Fl. *p* *f*
Ob. *mf* *f*
Ten. Sax. *p* *mf* *f*
Vln. *fp* *fp* *mp* *f*
Vc. *arco* *mf* *f*
Per. 1 *f* *mp* *f*
Perc. 2 Large Tam-tam
Perc. 3 *pp* *mp* Thunder sheet
strike in center with mallet *ff*
- *mp* - *mf*

280 *mf* *f* *mp* *ff* *f*
Fl. *mf*
Ob. *mp* *f*
Ten. Sax. *mf* *f*
Vln. *mf*
Vc. *mf*
Per. 1 *mf* *f* *mp* *f* Wood Blocks
Perc. 2 *mf* to Cr. Cymb *f*
Perc. 3

V

With resolved purpose

♩=160

290

rit.

Fl.

Ob.

Ten. Sax.

Vln.

Vc.

Per. 1

Perc. 2

Per. 3

Glockenspiel

Crash cymbals

W

300

To Picc.

Fl.

Ob.

Ten. Sax.

Vln.

Vc.

Per. 1

Perc. 2

Per. 3

Small gongs

Log drum

Wood Blocks

Bass Drum

to Bs. Dr.

311

Piccolo

f

Fl.

Ob.

Ten. Sax.

Vln.

Vc.

Per. 1

Perc. 2

Per. 3

Xylophone (duple feel)

f

318

To Fl.

Fl. Ob. Ten. Sax. Vln. Vc. Per. 1 Perc. 2 Per. 3

X

Flute

326

Fl. Ob. Ten. Sax. Vln. Vc. Per. 1 Perc. 2 Tom-toms Per. 3

Y

accel.

335

Fl. Ob. Ten. Sax. Vln. Vc. Per. 1 Perc. 2 Cymbals Per. 3

=176

343

Fl.

Ob.

Ten. Sax.

Vln.

Vcl.

Per. 1

Perc. 2

Per. 3

ff

fff

ff

f

mp *f* *mp* *f* *mp* *f* *f*

mf

351

Z To Picc.

Piccolo

Fl.

Ob.

Ten. Sax.

Vln.

Vcl.

Per. 1

Perc. 2

Per. 3

ff

mf

lay stick on cymbal and strike it (like a rim shot)

Frenzied

361

Fl.

Ob.

Ten. Sax.

Vln.

Vcl.

Per. 1

Perc. 2

Per. 3

mf

f

ff

accel. gliss

ff

ff

mp

f

mf

370

Fl.
Ob.
Ten. Sax.
Vln.
Vc.
Per. 1
Perc. 2
Per. 3

(Cymb)
f

AA

379

J=48 (Tempo 1)

Fl.
Ob.
Ten. Sax.
Vln.
Vc.
Per. 1
Perc. 2
Per. 3

fff
ff
ff
ff
fff
fff
mp *fff*
p *f*
p *f*

388

To Fl.

Fl.
Ob.
Ten. Sax.
Vln.
Vc.
Per. 1
Perc. 2
Per. 3

fff
f
Small gongs
Bs. Dr.
Cymbals
to Th. S.
mp
f

CC

413 **b**

CC

The musical score consists of eight staves. The top four staves are woodwind instruments: Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Tenor Saxophone (Ten. Sax.), and Violin (Vln.). The bottom four staves are percussive instruments: Percussion 1 (Per. 1), Percussion 2 (Perc. 2), Percussion 3 (Per. 3), and Bassoon (Bsn.). The score is in common time (indicated by '4'). Measure 1 starts with a dynamic of **pp**. The Flute and Oboe play eighth-note patterns. The Tenor Saxophone has a sixteenth-note pattern labeled "classical style". The Violin plays eighth-note chords. Measure 2 starts with a dynamic of **p**. The Flute and Oboe continue their eighth-note patterns. The Tenor Saxophone has a sixteenth-note pattern. The Violin continues its eighth-note chords. Measure 3 starts with a dynamic of **pp**. The Flute and Oboe continue their eighth-note patterns. The Tenor Saxophone has a sixteenth-note pattern. The Violin continues its eighth-note chords. Measure 4 starts with a dynamic of **p**. The Flute and Oboe continue their eighth-note patterns. The Tenor Saxophone has a sixteenth-note pattern. The Violin continues its eighth-note chords. Measure 5 starts with a dynamic of **mf**. The Flute and Oboe continue their eighth-note patterns. The Tenor Saxophone has a sixteenth-note pattern. The Violin continues its eighth-note chords. Measure 6 starts with a dynamic of **mf**. The Flute and Oboe continue their eighth-note patterns. The Tenor Saxophone has a sixteenth-note pattern. The Violin continues its eighth-note chords. Measure 7 starts with a dynamic of **pp**. The Flute and Oboe continue their eighth-note patterns. The Tenor Saxophone has a sixteenth-note pattern. The Violin continues its eighth-note chords. Measure 8 starts with a dynamic of **pp**. The Flute and Oboe continue their eighth-note patterns. The Tenor Saxophone has a sixteenth-note pattern. The Violin continues its eighth-note chords.

422

422

Fl.

Ob.

Ten. Sax.

Vln.

Vc.

Per. 1

Perc. 2

Per. 3

Snare Drum

This musical score page shows a 10-measure section starting at measure 422. The instrumentation includes Flute, Oboe, Tenor Saxophone, Violin, Cello, Percussion 1, Percussion 2, Percussion 3, and Snare Drum. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). Measures 1-3 show mostly rests. Measure 4: Oboe (pp), Tenor Saxophone (pp). Measure 5: Violin (p). Measure 6: Cello (p). Measure 7: Violin (p). Measure 8: Cello (p). Measure 9: Violin (p). Measure 10: Snare Drum (pp) followed by a dynamic change.

DD
Stillness

430 = 48

Fl.
Ob.
Ten. Sax.

Vln.
Vc.

Per. 1
Perc. 2
Per. 3

Chimes
lock pedal and let ring throughout

Claves
Trgl
Cymb

Mark tree
stroke with fingers

T-t

S. Dr.

440

Fl.
Ob.
Ten. Sax.

Vln.
Vc.

Per. 1
Perc. 2
Per. 3

arco

Log drum
Wood Blocks

T-t

S. Dr.

T-t

445

Fl.
Ob.
Ten. Sax.

Vln.
Vc.

Per. 1
Perc. 2
Per. 3

Small Gongs
Large Tam-tam
(no attack)

Bs. Dr.

dampen if needed to achieve an even diminuendo
(hard beater)