

James Williamson

The Fifth Element
(2012)

for solo oboe

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Composers note:

I like the idea of 'less is more'. I like to create simple structural foundations and then build layers of colour and texture on top. This piece was written like an Etudé for oboe and is built on simple foundations – a repetition of a short six bar phrase, which is transposed around a cycle of fifths, keeping the same rhythm each time and ends with a multiphonic at each cadence based on the next fifth of the cycle. I then add grace notes, timbral-flutters and breathy key rattles to add another layer of texture and colour. There is also an optional piano part (subject to availability) to act as a further resonance to the oboe and space, rather than an accompaniment. The piano draws out and resonates the accented grace notes (cycling the fifths) throughout the duration of the piece to create another underlying layer of colour. The piece ends how it started with the opening few bars suggesting an infinite amount of times the cycle can be repeated.

This piece was written for the oboeist David Benfield from *Souza Winds and world premiered as part of the York Late Music concert series 01/09/2012.*

Performance notes

All grace notes to be played on the beat and always *ff* unless otherwise stated.

All trills should be timbral where possible.

Multiphonic fingerings are only a suggestion. Where these fingerings are not compatible with your instrument, please find alternative ways to emulate a similar sonority.

N.B. There is also an optional piano part, whereby the piano is to act as a resonance. Particular pitches and the sustain pedal are to be depressed (not played), therefore another performer is required for this option. In order for piano resonance to be more effective, stand close to the piano & direct the oboe toward the piano soundboard (if possible, perform looking out to the audience).

Duration: approx 5 mins 15 secs

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♩=96 Smooth & Flowing

Musical notation for measures 1-3. The piece begins in 4/4 time with a *pp* dynamic. The melody features a series of eighth and sixteenth notes, some with slurs and accents. A *f* dynamic appears in measure 2, followed by a *pp* dynamic in measure 3. A wavy line above the staff in measure 2 indicates a vibrato effect. Below the staff, a section titled "Piano resonance [optional] - hold down keys without sounding" shows a sustained chord of G, B, and D with a "Ped." line and a dashed arrow pointing right.

Musical notation for measures 4-7. Measure 4 starts with a *pp* dynamic and includes a triplet of eighth notes. A wavy line above the staff indicates vibrato. A dynamic marking of *mf* is shown with a hairpin, followed by a *n* (noisy) marking. Measure 7 ends with a *pp* dynamic. A chord diagram for G major (G, B, D) is shown above the staff in measure 6.

Musical notation for measures 8-10. Measure 8 begins with a *f* dynamic that transitions to *pp*. The melody continues with eighth and sixteenth notes, some with slurs and accents. A wavy line above the staff indicates vibrato. Measure 10 features a triplet of eighth notes.

Musical notation for measures 11-14. Measure 11 starts with a *pp* dynamic. A dynamic marking of *mf* is shown with a hairpin, followed by a *n* marking. Measure 12 begins with a *pp* dynamic. The melody consists of eighth and sixteenth notes with slurs and accents. A wavy line above the staff indicates vibrato. Measure 14 ends with a *pp* dynamic. A chord diagram for G major (G, B, D) is shown above the staff in measure 13.

Musical notation for measures 15-17. Measure 15 starts with a *f* dynamic. The melody features eighth and sixteenth notes with slurs and accents. A wavy line above the staff indicates vibrato. Measure 16 includes a triplet of eighth notes and a *pp* dynamic. Measure 17 ends with a *f* dynamic. A chord diagram for G major (G, B, D) is shown above the staff in measure 16.

Musical notation for measures 18-20. Measure 18 begins with a "key rattle" effect, indicated by a "fast" to "slow" tempo change and the word "air" below the staff. The dynamic is *pp*. The melody consists of eighth and sixteenth notes with slurs and accents. A wavy line above the staff indicates vibrato. Measure 19 includes a triplet of eighth notes and a *sf* dynamic. Measure 20 ends with a *pp* dynamic. A chord diagram for G major (G, B, D) is shown above the staff in measure 19.

21 *f* *pp* *mf*

25 *pp* *ff* *the number of notes is not precise

27 *ppp*

29 *f* key rattle fast \dashrightarrow slow air

33 *pp*

37 *f* *pp* *ff* *pp*

41 *ff* *ppp* *fff*

43 *f*

46 *sppp* *ff* *n* *pp* *f* *pp*

key rattle
fast-----slow

air

50 *ff* *sppp*

53 *pp* *f* *pp*

56 *f* *pp* *ff* *pp*

59 *f* *pp* *f* *pp*

61 *ff* *ff* *sppp*

64

ppp *f* *pp*

66

f *pp* *f* *pp*

68

=ff *sPPP* *fff*

72

ppp *f* *ppp* *f* *pp*

75

ff *sPPP* *air* *ppp* *ff*

key rattle
fast → slow

78

sPPP *pp* *f* *pp*

*Let piano resonance fade or taper out manually according to the acoustics.