

# THE MUSIC ROOM

## FOR BASS TROMBONE AND TAPE

1975

TIM SOUSTER

Dedicated to James Fulkerson

### PROPS

For the trombonist, a black cloth bag, loosely covering the head throughout. A dyed pillowcase would do. Also a loosely fitting dark-blue or black boiler-suit. (Bare feet)

For the assistant, a white medical coat or overall, underneath which the shirt, tie, trousers and shoes have definite military overtones. If possible, a stethoscope round the neck.

A separate tape operator is also required.

### EQUIPMENT

DAT recorder

Two loudspeakers taking at least 50 watts, on either side of the stage  
Level of the tape playback should be controlled by a tape operator in the hall or off-stage.

### GLOSSARY

TR: the trombonist

WN: white noise

DOC: the trombonist's assistant

SBS: 'squawk-box' sound (a combination of extremely high and extremely low frequencies)

MT: 'march tune' (ie the regimental march 'Lillibullero' which is heard on the pre-recorded tape)

BR: bassoon reed (which must be concealed in TR's mouth between cheek and teeth from the beginning of the piece)

SMP: tenor sax mouthpiece (hangs on string round player's neck, concealed beneath the boiler suit at opening of piece)

# ACTION SCORE

I. Darkness. Start tape and gradually fade in WN. There is 4' of WN on the tape, which is more than enough for the first section of the piece, up to the entry of the first trombone tones. This will normally last between 2' and 3', to be arrived at in rehearsal and dependent largely on the size and nature of the performance space. When the WN has become audible, fade up very murky light, possibly greenish. TR enters slowly, guided by DOC who points him at audience and sets him in 'attention' position, using convincing level of authority, even a light kick if necessary. DOC then departs.

II. Tape becomes gradually louder. TR slumps, as if from fatigue, to a relaxed normal stance, instrument less high, limbs less tense. DOC rushes out from side of stage and clinically and brusquely sets TB in position again.

III. Hold the attention position with strain without playing. WN builds slowly all the time. After first two or three pedal tones on tape TR joins in, imitating the tape. Continue imitating the tape over the next three sections.

Play:

- i. long pedal tones, then groups of two and three phrased together
- ii. single/groups of (up to 5) slap-tongued low notes.

IV. Tape steadily increases in volume. Do not dominate the tape yet.

Play:

- i. pedal-tone *glissandi*
- ii. pedal-tone and normal range *tremolos*
- iii. slap-tongued groups in more abrupt alternation (as before but over a wider range).

V. Move up gradually into lower normal register. Begin to dominate tape.

Play: intense, short, irregular tremolos, glisses and slap-tongued groups in more abrupt alternation.

VI. While this process is going on, begin to march, quietly at first, then with noisy footsteps. Relate the irregularities of the playing to the regularity of the footsteps. Work in distorted little references to the MT.

VII. Change to BR as inconspicuously as possible. Break into lumbering run as extension of march. Increase speed of run until it becomes irregular and stumbling as tape continues to increase to its maximum intensity.

VIII. Tape is suddenly cut off at leader tape and amplification should be reduced by tape OP and re-entry of tape set up. In this silence continue to play (while staggering, and at maximum intensity) very irregular, distorted MT references with BR, mixed with easily audible panting into instrument. Finally, take a few trudging steps (on the spot), as if with your