

William Neil

Twenty-One Birds

for string quartet and digital acoustics

(2020)

(Premiere Proof)

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Dedicated to the Artaria String Quartet

Program Notes: Incorporating acoustic calls and songs in the performance of live music has informed my work in composition for sometime. When the Artaria String Quartet approached me with this project, I was delighted to incorporate the twenty-one selected birds found in the upperMississippi Flyway of the Driftless Region that are endangered or at risk from the negative effects of habitat depletion. The piece, is a free sonic interplay between the quartet and the birds. The quartet shifts between its own themes and passages that orchestrate the processed digital sounds of the birds. All of the recorded bird sounds were licensed for use in my composition from the Macaulay Library at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology s

Digital Acoustic: The digital acoustic audio file (.wav) comprised of processed recorded bird calls and songs, begins simultaneously with the downbeat for the string quartet. The audio file can be launched in a media player program such as Windows Media, QuickTime, or Apple Music on a computer interfaced to a stereo playback system. Ideally, the speakers should be placed the the right and left, behind the ensemble. The audio file runs independently of the performance of the music and the approximate rhythmic placement of the bird calls are notated in the "tape"part of the score.

There are three bird cues that require some coordination with the string quartet.
Measure 39: wait for the B7 pitch to sound before proceeding to the next bar.
Measure 44: begin counting beats before re-entering when the Dawn Chorus first sounds.
Measure 82: wait fo the D#7 to sound before proceeding to the next bar.

Duration: 05:47

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Allegretto ♩ = 60
Vivace e Animato

ff *ff* *ff* *ff*

arco *pizz.* *arco* *arco*

ff *ff* *ff* *ff*

arco *pizz.* *arco* *arco*

ff *ff* *ff* *ff*

arco *pizz.* *arco* *arco*

ff *ff* *ff* *ff*

Whooping Crane *Yellow Crowned Night Heron* *Short-Eared Owl*

Yellow Billed Cuckoo

5

5

pizz. arco

ppp *fff*

pizz. arco

ppp *fff*

pizz. arco

ppp *fff*

pizz. arco

ppp *fff*

Lark Sparrow

Detailed description: This block contains the musical notation for measures 5 and 6. It features four staves for strings and one for woodwinds. The string parts (Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello/Double Bass) all begin with a pizzicato (pizz.) instruction and a fortissimo (ppp) dynamic. They then transition to arco (arco) and reach fortissimo (fff) by measure 6. The woodwind part (Lark Sparrow) has a rest in measure 5 and enters in measure 6 with a melodic line. A rehearsal mark '5' is placed at the beginning of the first staff.

7

A

mp *f*

mp *f*

mp *f*

p *f*

Detailed description: This block contains the musical notation for measures 7 and 8, starting with a rehearsal mark 'A' in a box. It features four staves for strings and one for woodwinds. The string parts (Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello/Double Bass) all begin with a mezzo-piano (mp) dynamic and transition to fortissimo (f) by measure 8. The woodwind part (Lark Sparrow) has a rest in measure 7 and enters in measure 8 with a melodic line. A rehearsal mark '7' is placed at the beginning of the first staff.

8

Musical score for measures 8-11. The score consists of four staves. The first two staves are in treble clef, and the last two are in bass clef. The music features long, sweeping melodic lines with dynamic markings of *p* (piano) and *f* (forte). Fingerings of 5 are indicated for several notes. The first staff begins with a fermata over a whole note, followed by a half note, and then a quarter note. The second staff has a similar pattern. The third staff starts with a half note, followed by a quarter note, and then a half note. The fourth staff begins with a quarter note, followed by a half note, and then a quarter note.

9

Musical score for measures 12-15. The score consists of four staves. The first two staves are in treble clef, and the last two are in bass clef. The music features long, sweeping melodic lines with dynamic markings of *f* (forte), *mp* (mezzo-piano), and *p* (piano). Fingerings of 5 are indicated for several notes. The first staff begins with a fermata over a whole note, followed by a half note, and then a quarter note. The second staff has a similar pattern. The third staff starts with a half note, followed by a quarter note, and then a half note. The fourth staff begins with a quarter note, followed by a half note, and then a quarter note.

10

p *f*

p *f*

p

p

Louisiana Waterthrush

12

mp *f*

mp *f*

mp *f*

p *f*

Dickcissel

14 **B**

pp

pp

pp

15

Cerulean Warbler

16

f *fp*

f *fp*

f *fp*

18

f *p* *mp* *f* *mf* *sfp* *f*

Red Shouldered Hawk

20

arco

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

arco

arco

arco

King Rail

22 **C**

pp

pizz.

f

f

pp

f

f

pp

pp

La Conte's Sparrow

23

ff

ppp

ff

ppp

arco

ff

f

ff

f

ff

f

ff

f

Whip-poor-will

25

f *ff* *ff* *pp*

f *ff* *ff* *pp*

ppp *f* *ff* *f* *p*

ppp *f* *ff* *f*

gr. *pizz.* *arco* *8va*

3

Acadian Flycatcher

27

pp *ff* *pp* *ff*

pp *ff* *pp* *ff*

pp *ff* *pp* *ff*

pp *ff* *pp* *ff*

V *3* *V* *3*

V *3* *V* *3*

V *3* *V* *3*

V *3* *V* *3*

Purple Martin

29 *8va*

f *pp*

f *p* *pp*

f *p* *pp*

pp

Least Flycatcher

31 **D**

mp *f*

mp *f*

mp *f*

p *f*

Henslow Sparrow *Lark Sparrow*

32

f

f

f

f

p

p

p

35 **E**

mp

f

mp

f

p

f

p

Rusty Black Bird

37

mp *f*

mp *f*

mp *f*

p *f*

(B5)

f

40

F

ff *f*

ff *f*

ff *ppp*

ff *ppp*

Kirtland Warbler

42

fff

fff

gliss.

Loggerhead Shrike (E7)

f

44 **G** (E6) Greater Prairie Chicken

Dawn Chorus

48 **H**

f

f

f

49

Musical score for measures 49-50. The system consists of four staves. The top staff is in treble clef, the second and fourth staves are in treble clef, and the third staff is in bass clef. The music features various rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. There are several slurs and accents throughout the passage.

50

Musical score for measures 50-51. The system consists of four staves. The top staff is in treble clef, the second and fourth staves are in treble clef, and the third staff is in bass clef. The music continues with complex rhythmic figures and slurs. A fermata is present over a note in the second staff at the end of measure 51.

51

Musical score for measures 51-52. The system consists of four staves. The top staff is in treble clef, the second and fourth staves are in treble clef, and the third staff is in bass clef. A dynamic marking of *f* (forte) is placed above the second staff in measure 51. The music concludes with a trill in the top staff of measure 52, indicated by a wavy line and the word "trill".

16

Musical score for measures 52-53. The system consists of four staves: Treble, Treble, Alto, and Bass. Measure 52 features a *tr* (trill) in the first Treble staff. Measure 53 continues the melodic lines with various articulations and rests.

53

Musical score for measures 54-55. The system consists of four staves: Treble, Treble, Alto, and Bass. Measure 54 features a *tr* (trill) in the first Treble staff. Measure 55 continues the melodic lines with various articulations and rests.

54

Musical score for measures 56-57. The system consists of four staves: Treble, Treble, Alto, and Bass. Measure 56 features a *tr* (trill) in the first Treble staff. Measure 57 continues the melodic lines with various articulations and rests.

55

Musical score for measures 55-57, system 1. It consists of four staves: Treble 1, Treble 2, Bass 1, and Bass 2. Measure 55 features a trill in the Treble 1 staff. Measure 56 features a trill in the Bass 1 staff. Measure 57 features a trill in the Treble 1 staff.

56

Musical score for measures 56-58, system 2. It consists of four staves: Treble 1, Treble 2, Bass 1, and Bass 2. Measure 56 features a trill in the Treble 1 staff. Measure 57 features a trill in the Bass 1 staff. Measure 58 features a trill in the Treble 1 staff.

57

Musical score for measures 57-59, system 3. It consists of four staves: Treble 1, Treble 2, Bass 1, and Bass 2. Measure 57 features a trill in the Treble 1 staff. Measure 58 features a trill in the Bass 1 staff. Measure 59 features a trill in the Treble 1 staff.

18

58

59

61 **I**

pp

pp

pp

pp

Sharp-Tailed Grouse

72

Musical score for measures 72-75. The score is written for four staves: Treble, Violin, Viola, and Bass. Measure 72 features a trill in the Treble staff and a trill in the Bass staff. Measures 73-75 continue with various melodic lines and trills across all staves.

73

Musical score for measures 76-79. The score is written for four staves: Treble, Violin, Viola, and Bass. Measure 76 features a trill in the Treble staff and a trill in the Bass staff. Measures 77-79 continue with various melodic lines and trills across all staves.

74

Musical score for measures 80-83. The score is written for four staves: Treble, Violin, Viola, and Bass. Measure 80 features a trill in the Treble staff and a trill in the Bass staff. Measures 81-83 continue with various melodic lines and trills across all staves.

75

Musical score for measures 75-78. The score is written for four staves: Treble, Treble with trills, Bass, and Bass with trills. Measure 75 features a treble staff with a *ff* dynamic and a bass staff with a *tr* trill. Measure 76 has a treble staff with a *f* dynamic and a bass staff with a *tr* trill. Measure 77 shows a treble staff with a *tr* trill and a bass staff with a *tr* trill. Measure 78 concludes with a treble staff *f* dynamic and a bass staff *ff* dynamic.

76

Musical score for measures 76-79. The score is written for four staves: Treble, Treble with trills, Bass, and Bass with trills. Measure 76 features a treble staff with a *tr* trill and a bass staff with a *f* dynamic. Measure 77 has a treble staff with a *tr* trill and a bass staff with a *tr* trill. Measure 78 shows a treble staff with a *tr* trill and a bass staff with a *tr* trill. Measure 79 concludes with a treble staff *f* dynamic and a bass staff *f* dynamic.

77

Musical score for measures 77-80. The score is written for four staves: Treble, Treble with trills, Bass, and Bass with trills. Measure 77 features a treble staff with a *tr* trill and a bass staff with a *tr* trill. Measure 78 has a treble staff with a *tr* trill and a bass staff with a *tr* trill. Measure 79 shows a treble staff with a *tr* trill and a bass staff with a *tr* trill. Measure 80 concludes with a treble staff *tr* trill and a bass staff *ff* dynamic.

78

Trills are indicated above the first and third measures of each staff.

K
79

ff (fortissimo) dynamic marking is present in all four staves.

81

pp (pianissimo) dynamic marking is present in all four staves.

8va (octave) marking is present above the first two staves.

(D#7) chord marking is present at the end of the piece.

Musical score for measures 83 and 84. The score is written for four staves: Treble 1, Treble 2, Bass 1, and Bass 2. Measure 83 features a *ff* dynamic with *pizz.* markings. Measure 84 features a *f* dynamic with *arco* markings and a *pp* dynamic. The piece is titled "Yellow Crowned Night Heron".

L

Musical score for measures 85 and 86. The score is written for four staves: Treble 1, Treble 2, Bass 1, and Bass 2. Measure 85 features a *ppp* dynamic with *arco* markings and *8va* markings. Measure 86 features a *ppp* dynamic with *arco* markings. The piece is titled "Dickcissel".

24 (8)

86

Musical score for measures 86-89. The score is written for four staves: two treble clefs and two bass clefs. The top two staves are grouped by a dashed line with an '(8)' above it, indicating an 8-measure phrase. The bottom two staves are also grouped by a long slur. The music is in a 4/4 time signature. The upper staves feature a steady eighth-note accompaniment, while the lower staves feature a single bass note.

(8)

87

Musical score for measures 87-90. The score is written for four staves: two treble clefs and two bass clefs. The top two staves are grouped by a dashed line with an '(8)' above it, indicating an 8-measure phrase. The bottom two staves are also grouped by a long slur. The music is in a 4/4 time signature. The upper staves feature a steady eighth-note accompaniment, while the lower staves feature a single bass note.