

Stomp Box

for two oboes

Robbie McCarthy

2011

“Stomp Box” - notes

“Stomp Box” was composed in an afternoon, out of necessity for a duet that didn’t suck. Robbie McCarthy was approached by fellow oboist Melissa Sassaman to perform in her friend’s variety show, “The Encyclopedia Show, Arizona”. Since the show involves different artists performing their interpretation of the theme, I thought it would be fun to perform a piece for the show. The theme that month was ‘The Future,’ so we originally decided to play sections from a duet I was working on at the time, and the joke was that we would stop abruptly, and I would announce that I would finish the piece in the future. Not wanting to phone it in, I decided one day to write something fun and entertaining. After pondering about the ‘The Future’ of classical music, I realized that I would be totally fine with a singularity of classical and rock music, (much like the singularity of robots and humans, which turned out to be a heavy part of the Encyclopedia Show that month!)

The sections of this piece are modeled after pedals, or ‘stomp boxes,’ that guitarists use to modify their tone during a performance. The effects used in this piece are:

- I. Delay - delay pedals take the sound that a musician produces, and repeat it identically later in time. This section is essentially one line of music repeated exactly a half note after itself. Neither part is more important, and the tempos are mostly suggestions. It should sound fun but never difficult to play. (As an added touch, if the 1st player makes a mistake, the 2nd player could try for that mistake too, if possible!)
- II. Loop - loop pedals are traditionally used to accompany one’s self in a solo performance. Essentially, the soloist will play a basic phrase, (in this case, 4 bars,) then play another basic phrase over the first which is ‘looped’ back over and over. The soloist continues this pattern until a substantial backing track is built which he or she will then solo over. (For an authentic performance, bars 57-81 should be partially or completely improvised by the 1st player, with the pause in bar 65 left up to the duo’s discretion.)
- III. Fuzzbox - fuzz/distortion pedals are used to add an overdriven fuzz to the soloists sound. Here, the 2nd player should perform a rapid tremolo trill over each pitch when he or she plays the melody starting at bar 108. The pitch of each note should not shift, but the tone should. (Ex: rapidly trill the low B key while fingering forked F in bars 109-110. F, E, and Eb can be trilled with the low B key. Measure 129-130 can be trilled with the low B key as well, (using right Ab.) All other notes can be trilled with the right ring finger (D key) while fingering the notes normally.
- IV. Pedalboard - the culmination of all the pedals, guitarists usually perform with more than one pedal at a time. Here, the previous 3 pedals are used all at once, leading to a rather chaotic finish. As before, tremolo trills are done with the right ring finger, and tempo marking are only suggestions, (although this section works rather well with a hurried/rushed feel to it.)

To further show the effects of the implied pedals, it would be appropriate to discuss the use of the pedals with the audience or describe them in the program. It would also be suitable for the 1st player to stomp audibly on each double bar line to highlight the effects.

for two oboes

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I. Delay

♩ = 148

Oboe 1

Oboe 2

Ob. 1

mf

Ob. 2

mf

5 3/4

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

11

mf

f

mp

mf

f

mp

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

The image shows a musical score for two oboes, Ob. 1 and Ob. 2. The score is written in treble clef and includes measures 15 through 19. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The tempo is marked 'Allegretto' at the top. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like 'mp'. The oboes play a melodic line with some grace notes and slurs. The dynamic 'mp' (mezzo-piano) is indicated in measures 18 and 19.

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

19 *accel.* ($\text{♩} = 156$) *f*

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

23 *f*

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

($\text{♩} = 164$)

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

32 *fp* *fp* *fp* *fp* *rit.* *molto rit.*

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

36 *a tempo* *fp* *p* *cresc.* *p* *cresc.*

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

f *cresc.*

ff

ff

II. Loop

♩ = 164

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

f

f

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

mp

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

mp

f

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

f

p

mf

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

p

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

63

3

3

rubato

a tempo

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

67

p

mf

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

71

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

75

mp

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

79

f

f

III. Fuzzbox

♩ = 148

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

83

f

mp

f

mp

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

89

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

96

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

103

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

109

(♩ = 132)

mf

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

116

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

123

IV. Pedalboard

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

130

♩ = 180+

Stomp Box

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

136

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

141

(♩ = 200+)

sfz

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

146

sim.

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

151

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

156

(♩ = 220+)

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

161