

Insecto Xilófago

for

Marimba

João Godinho

Score



© João Godinho (b.1976)

Composed in April 2007

Revised in 2011

Approximate duration: 2'30''

This piece is dedicated to Pedro Carneiro

Comissioned by Prémio Jovens Músicos 2007 / Antena 2 - Rádio e Televisão Portuguesa

Program Notes

This piece speculates about the sonorous world of a xylophagous insect.

The xylophagous insect, whose most celebrated species is the woodworm, feeds on wood, paper or any material that contains cellulose.

It is estimated that a medium size community of xylophagous insects can digest this score in less than three minutes and a five-octave marimba in less than three weeks.

Performance notes

Character of the piece:

This piece lives out of contrasts of Character, Tempo, Dynamics and Timbre. All aspects of the performance should contribute to reinforce these contrasts.

In order to achieve clarity in rhythm and pitch, the performer should use two pairs of hard mallets. (Insects have hard mallets on their extremities, not cotton buds.) *Pianissimos* should be audible.

The quantitative *tempo* indications are merely suggestions. When choosing his or her own comfortable *tempos*, the performer should give priority to expressive/qualitative indications. The whole *moto perpetuo* should sound agitated but always clear, sharp and articulate.

The main texture of this piece is a *moto perpetuo* based on polyrhythmic juxtapositions of two simple melodic cells, each with a different number of notes. As a rule, one of the cells is played with one hand on the “white keys” and the other one with the other hand on the “black keys”, in fast alternation, taking advantage of the fact that both hands/keys are physically in different heights. Most of the sections in this piece are based on this technique. The “formulas” used in the construction of each mini-section are revealed above the beginning of each mini-section (see explanation below), making it easier to decode the score. Although it contains a lot of notes in proportion to its duration, the memorizing of this piece is much easier once the performer is familiarized with the composition process and the way in which repetitive melodic patterns interact. In spite of its apparent harmonic and rhythmic complexity the individual parts in each hand are remarkably simple, something that can be observed easily if hands are played separately.

Symbols:

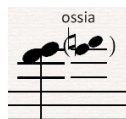
[4 x 3] The numbers that appear in this way above some of the notes in the piece indicate the beginning of each mini-section and are intended to clarify the composition process, by revealing its subjacent formula. This example means that the right hand (upper staff) repeats a melodic cell/pattern made of 4 notes and the left hand repeats a melodic cell/pattern made of 3 notes. This numbering makes it easier to decode the score, especially in first approaches to the piece. Numbering is omitted when the texture presents too many exceptions or when it's completely irregular.

⊕ *Dead stroke*

● Strike bar with mallet handle;

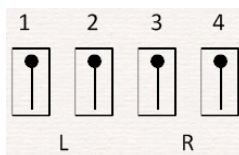
◆ Strike bar on the node;

Node -----▶ **ord.** Move the striking point gradually from the *node* towards the centre of the bar.



Ossia notes are shown in smaller notation next to the original ones.

Stickings:



As a rule, notes in the upper staff are played by the right hand and those in the lower staff are played by the left hand. This notation intends to make the composition process more clear, allowing the repetitive patterns to be easily identifiable. There are, however, passages in which it is necessary to adopt other stickings. Stickings are suggested in some bars. However, the performer is free to find alternative stickings, as long as the choice respects the character and rhythmic feel of that section of the piece.

Accidentals:

Accidentals are valid during the whole bar. However, since the texture of this piece is visually complex, cautionary accidentals are frequently used.

Final:

The performer may choose to improvise on the next to last section (bars 80 to 90), but the harmonic feel, dynamics and the general contour of the notated gestures must be respected.

For any questions concerning the performance of this piece, please contact the composer: mail@joaogodinho.com