

concert music

# Epigrams for Solo Trumpet

p e t e r   g i l b e r t

# Epigrams

for Solo Trumpet (in any key)

1. Vigorous
2. Melancholy
3. Quick and Dry
4. Veiled
5. Fast and Snapping
6. Vague and Unsettled
7. Warm
8. Blazing
9. With frightening weight [attacca]
10. Lunging Forward

## **Program Note:**

These Epigrams are little snatches of music, all less than a minute long. The challenge for the composer, and subsequently performer and listener, is to try and pin each one down before they flit away, like so many thoughts and inspirations which evaporate prior to translation.

### Notes to the Performer:

*Epigrams* demands a great deal of the performer both technically and interpretively. To reflect my feeling that tempo considerations should largely be left with the soloist I have not included metronome markings in the score. However, as some suggestions may be helpful, the following notes are given as suggested starting points.

- 1). Very intense, somewhere around ♩ = 112-120.
- 2). The tempo here is very flexible (and can be very rubato as well, although some rubato is already written into the rhythms). I can imagine it anywhere from ♩ = 54 to ♩ = 69.
- 3). The harmonic series glisses at the end should be as fluid and as ghostly and possible... like a strange, eerie wind. Tempo in the area of ♩ = 126.
- 4) In #4 the tempo is almost always in flux, ranging from ♩ = 60 up to ♩ = 80, 84.
- 5) This movement is a schizophrenic dialogue between two voices: stems up and stems down. This needs high degrees of dynamic contrast and a sense of playfulness. Circa ♩ = 126-132.
- 6) I've tried to encourage the performer to view each note or pair of notes as a unique event; there really is just no "tempo" at all. Make sure to observe the breath marks so each event has its own space. However, the epigram should not drag (running a little over 1 minute). One suggestion for the pedal F is to lip down a 23 fingering. However you play it, this note should form the "timbral climax" of the movement.
- 7) The valve trill at the end just creates a murmuring which dies away (prefiguring the rapid repetitions of the next epigram). This one probably starts in the realm of ♩ = 72.
- 8) This should really sound like the world-on-fire. I clock it at around ♩ = 168.
- 9) As the title indicates, the repeated notes should grow inexorably towards the final movement. It probably needs to go rather slowly to accumulate the weight (although going too slowly will lose the weight behind the pulsations).
- 10) The "Lunging Forward" refers to an over-energized motion between notes and/or gestures. By this I mean both sound-energy and rhythmic energy. This is best off at a quick pace, so that the rhythmic lunging can feel really insistent. The only exception would be the six notes marked piano. This movement is a sort of compilation of the whole set and this is a fleeting nod to the "ballad" movements. After that the build of energy should be quick and dramatic. The last system should be really gripping. Those "roof-top" accents should explode and the finish should be positively snarling.

# Epigrams for Solo Trumpet

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(2001)

## 1. Vigorous

*lunga*

*f* *mp* *sfz/p*

*fp* *f/mp* *f/mf* *ff*

*fr.* *ff*

The score for '1. Vigorous' is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It begins with a half note F#4, followed by a series of eighth and sixteenth notes ascending and then descending. A first ending bracket covers the final two measures. The second system starts with a half note F#4, followed by a series of eighth and sixteenth notes. A crescendo leads to a fortissimo (ff) section. The third system continues with a series of eighth and sixteenth notes, ending with a triplet of eighth notes. Dynamics include *f*, *mp*, *sfz/p*, *fp*, *f/mp*, *f/mf*, *ff*, and *fr.* with a fermata.

## 2. Melancholy

*p* *mf* *p* *a tempo* *p*

*mf* *pp* *mp* *poco rall.* *p* *pp*

*(no breath)* *3* *rall.* *a tempo* *3*

The score for '2. Melancholy' is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It begins with a half note F#4, followed by a series of eighth and sixteenth notes. A first ending bracket covers the final two measures. The second system starts with a half note F#4, followed by a series of eighth and sixteenth notes. A crescendo leads to a fortissimo (ff) section. The third system continues with a series of eighth and sixteenth notes, ending with a triplet of eighth notes. Dynamics include *p*, *mf*, *p*, *a tempo*, *mf*, *pp*, *mp*, *poco rall.*, *p*, and *pp*. There are also markings for *(no breath)* and *3* (triplet).

## 3. Quick and Dry

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

*mf* *mp* *p*

*(ghost quickly up and down the harmonic series)*

*1-2* *2-3*

The score for '3. Quick and Dry' is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It begins with a half note F#4, followed by a series of eighth and sixteenth notes. A first ending bracket covers the final two measures. The second system starts with a half note F#4, followed by a series of eighth and sixteenth notes. A crescendo leads to a fortissimo (ff) section. The third system continues with a series of eighth and sixteenth notes, ending with a triplet of eighth notes. Dynamics include *f*, *ff*, *p*, *ff*, *mf*, *mp*, and *p*. There are also markings for *(ghost quickly up and down the harmonic series)* and *1-2*, *2-3* (fingerings).

\* Strike a vibraslap on the leg (while playing the trumpet with one hand). If a vibraslap is unavailable other solutions creating a percussive stroke with multiple articulations could be successful. An electronic medium could also be very effective.

# Epigrams for Solo Trumpet

## 4. Veiled

harmon mute no stem

*p*  
*poco a poco string.*  
*(poco a poco string.)*  
*sempre p*  
*poco a poco rall.*  
*mp*  
*p*  
*pp*

\* The arrows are rubato indications showing a slight *string*. when pointing ahead and a slight *rall.* when aimed back.

## 5. Fast and Snapping

harmon mute with stem

*f*  
*p*  
*f*  
*p*  
*f*  
*mp*  
*f*  
*mf*  
*f*  
*ff*  
*f*  
*mp*  
*f*  
*mf*  
*f*  
*ff*  
*p*  
*f*  
*ff*  
*p*

## 6. Vague and Unsettled

(open)

*mf*  
*f*  
*p*  
*mp*  
*mf*  
*p*  
*f*  
*f*  
*mp*  
*pp*  
*mf*  
*f*  
*mp*  
*pp*  
*p*  
*mf*  
*mf*  
*mp*  
*f*  
*mp*  
*pp*  
*f*  
*mp*  
*pp*  
*f*  
*mp*

(pitch bend) \* ftr.

\* In #6, the breath marks indicate the separate and autonomous nature of each moment. A very quick lift should occur at each one (lengths may vary).

\*\* As soft as can be consistently produced using whatever means are most comfortable.

# Epigrams for Solo Trumpet

## 7. Warm cup mute

*poco a poco string.*

*mp*

*(poco a poco string.)*

*espress.*

*f* *mp* *mp* *p*

*(alternate between figurings)*

1 13 1 13

*pp*

## 8. Blazing (as fast as possible)

*ff*

*fp* *ff*

*mf* *f*

*ff*

*with fury*

## 9. With frightening weight

## 10. Lunging Forward

*p* *ff* *sfz/mf* *sfz/mf* *ff*

*3* *sfz/mf* *ff*

*Slower* *p* *mf* *mf* *sfz/mp*

*ff* *sfz/mf* *sfz/mf* *sfz/mf* *ff*