

Brian Questa

**beethoven, as found in a tiny corner
(or, variations on a bagatelle) (2023)**

for ensemble

(full score)

Instrument List

Flute (with Piccolo)

Oboe

Clarinet in Bb

Trumpet

Trombone

Violin

Viola

Cello

Double Bass

About the Piece

“You can sing sweet
and get the song sung
but to get to the third dimension
you have to sing it
rough, hurt the tune a little. Put
enough strength to it
that the notes slip. Then
something else happens. The song
gets large.”

- “What Cathal Said,” poem by Tess Gallagher

Technically speaking, the Bagatelle Op. 119 No. 10 is Beethoven’s shortest composition: it takes about 19 seconds to perform. Ever since my teacher Wolfgang Rihm jokingly said it was Beethoven’s conceptual work, and knowing I was fascinated by appropriation, he told me I *must* do something with it - I have found an unending source of information in these 20 measures of music. I currently have several compositions based on this work: Für Wolfgang Rihm No. 1 (for piano), After Beethoven’s Shortest Bagatelle (for ensemble), Marionette (for orchestra), and Appropriation (for string quartet).

My variations here indeed “sing the song rough,” as the above poem suggestions. I hope my variation work sits on the fence between critically engagement and romanticizing the past. Where is the line? On the other hand, by quoting the original, I hope to see the act of composition with new eyes: to what extent do all composers “copy” Beethoven? To what extent does an original composition, without quotation, fall even faster into convention than one which bravely copies?

In the current composition, *Beethoven as found in a tiny corner*, I added more original composition than appropriation normally allows, hence the subtitle: variations. Drawing clues from the original work and abstracting some of the processes (*high vs low, stepwise-vs-leap, right hand vs left hand, etc.*), I created musical moments which explore these ideas (to which I added: *noise vs pitch*) and freely make reference to the original.

Allegramente.

Nº 10.

The image displays the musical score for Beethoven's Bagatelle Op. 119 No. 10. It is written for piano in G major and 2/4 time. The score is presented in two systems. The first system consists of two staves: the upper staff is the right hand, featuring a series of chords and dyads, and the lower staff is the left hand, featuring a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The second system also consists of two staves, with the right hand staff containing a first ending (marked '1.') and a second ending (marked '2.'). The piece concludes with a final cadence in the right hand.

Techniques

Flute:

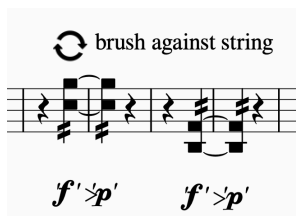


Blow Air through mouthpiece while completely covering it.
Place fingers on indicated pitch.
Shape the mouth in the form of the indicated syllables: "Kae"
and try to mimic the pitch content in the quality of the noisy air
in a type of "filtered noise"



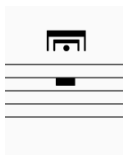
Play notes with the sound containing 3/4 air to pitch ratio.

Strings:



Brush bow horizontally against open strings (back and forth) in order to create a noisy texture.
Dynamics also indicate a relative speed of the movement.

Ensemble:



Variations separated by a grand pause of approx. 2 - 4 seconds. Length up to conductors discretion.


beethoven, as found in a tiny corner

(or, variations on a bagatelle)

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Var. 1

$\text{♩} = 120$

 lips cover
mouthpiece

Flute

"Ki - u" "Kae - u" "Kae - u - i - u" "Ki - u" "Kae - u" "Kae - u - i - u" "Ki - u - ae -"

B♭ Clarinet

"Ki - u - ae -"

Violin

col legno tratto
8

20

Fl.

u - ae - u - i - u" "Ki - u - ae - u - ae - u - ae" "Ki - u" "Kae - u" "Kae - u" "Ki - u"

B♭ Cl.

u - ae - u - i - u" "Ki - u" "Kae - u" "Kae - u" "Ki - u"

Vln.

8

fp' fp' fp' fp' fp' fp' fp' fp' fp' fp' fp' fp' fp' fp' fp' fp' fp' fp'

8

fp' fp' fp' fp' fp' fp' fp' fp' fp' fp' fp' fp' fp' fp' fp' fp' fp' fp'

Var. 2

$\text{♩} = 72$

40 (2 - 4 Sec.)

Vln.

brush against string

Vla.

brush against string

Vc.

brush against string

Cb.

brush against string

8

f' > 'p' f' > 'p' f' > 'p' f' > 'p' f' > 'p' f' > 'p'

f' > 'p' f' > 'p' f' > 'p' f' > 'p'

Var. 3

♩ = 116

59

lips cover mouthpiece

lips cover mouthpiece

Fl. *mf* "Ki - u" Kae - u" Ki - u" "Kae-u" *mf* Kae-u" Ki - u" "Kae-u"

Ob. air only *mf* "Ki - u" Kae - u" Ki - u" "Kae-u" *mf* "Ki-u" Kae-u" Ki - u" "Kae-u"

B♭ Cl. air only *mf* "Ki - u" Kae - u" Kae - u" "Kae-u" *mf* "Ki-u" Kae-u" ord. Kae-u" air only "Kae-u"

B♭ Tpt. air only *mf* "Ki - u" Kae - u" Ki - u" "Kae-u" *mf* "Ki-u" Kae-u" Ki - u" "Kae-u"

Tbn. air only slap air only slap air only slap air only slap air only slap air only slap air only slap *mf* "+" "u _ " *f* *mf* "+" "u _ " *f* *mf* "+" "u _ " *f* *mf* "+" "u _ " *f* *mf* "+" "u _ " *f* *mf* "+" "u _ " *f* *mf* "+" "u _ " *f* *mf* "+" "u _ " *f*

Vln. brush against string *f*' > *p*' *f*' > *p*' *f*' > *p*' *f*' > *p*' *f*' > *p*' *f*' > *p*' *f*' > *p*' *f*' > *p*'

Vla. brush against string *f*' > *p*' *f*' > *p*' *f*' > *p*' *f*' > *p*' *f*' > *p*' *f*' > *p*' *f*' > *p*' *f*' > *p*'

Vc. brush against string *f*' > *p*' *f*' > *p*' *f*' > *p*' *f*' > *p*' *f*' > *p*' *f*' > *p*' *f*' > *p*' *f*' > *p*'

75

Fl. *mf* "Ki - u" Kae - u" Ki - u" "Kae - u" *mf* "Ki - u" Kae - u" Ki - u" *f*
 air only air only

Ob. *mf* "Ki - u" Kae - u" Ki - u" "Kae - u" *mf* "Ki - u" Kae - u" Ki - u" "Ki - u"

B♭ Cl. *mf* "Ki - u" Kae - u" Kae - u" "Kae - u" *mf* "Ki - u" Kae - u" Kae - u" "Ki - u"

B♭ Tpt. *mf* "Ki - u" Kae - u" Ki - u" "Kae - u" *mf* "Ki - u" Kae - u" Ki - u" "Ki - u"

Tbn. *mf* *f* *mf* *f* *mf* *f* *mf* *f* *mf* *f* *mf* *f* *mf* *f* *mf* *f*
 "u__" "u__" "u__" "u__" "u__" "u__" "u__" "u__"

Vln. *f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *p*

Vla. *f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *p*

Vc. *f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *p*

91

Fl.

Ob.

B♭ Cl.

B♭ Tpt.

Tbn.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

lips cover mouthpiece

"Kae - u" "Kae - u" "Ki - u" "Ku"

air only slap air only slap air only slap

mf' *f* *mf'* *f* *mf'* *f*

mf' *p'* *mf'* *p'* *mf'* *p'*

f' *p'* *f'* *p'* *f'* *p'*

f' *p'* *f'* *p'* *f'* *p'*

Var. 4

♩ = 60

101

Vln.

Cb.

col lingo tratto

ppp

brush against string

pp' *ppp'* *pp'* *ppp'*

Var. 5

Var. 6

♩ = 96

♩ = 120

110

B♭ Cl. *col lengo tratto* *col lengo tratto* *air only* *f'* "Ki"

Vla. *mf'* *p'* *col lengo tratto* *mf'* *p'* *col lengo tratto* *mf'* *p'* *col lengo tratto*

Vc. *mf'* *p'* *mf'* *p'* *col lengo tratto* *pizz.*

Cb. *mf'* *p*

118

B♭ Cl. *mp'* *f'* *mp'* *f'* *mp'* *f'* *mp'* *f'* *mp'* *f'* *mp'* *f'*

" " "u" " " "Kae" " " "u" " " "Ki" " " "u" " " "Kae" " "

124

B♭ Cl. *mp'* *f'* *mp'* *f'* *mp'* *f'* *mp'* *f'* *mp'* *f'* *mp'* *f'*

" " "u" " " *ord.* " " "u" " " "Kae" " " "u" " " "Kae" " "

131

Ob. *f'* *mf'* *f'* *mf'*

"Ki" *air only* "u" "Kae" "u"

B♭ Cl. *f'* *mp'* *f'* *mp'* *f'* *mp'* *f'* *mp'* *f'* *mp'* *f'*

"Ki" "u" "Kae" "u"

137

Ob. *f'* *mf'* *f'* *mf'* *f'* *mf'* *f'*

"Kae" "u" "Ki" "u" *ord.*

B♭ Cl. *mp'* *f'* *mp'* *f'* *mp'* *f'* *mp'* *f'* *mp'* *f'* *mp'* *f'*

" " "Ki" " " "u" " " "Kae" " " "u" " "

144

Fl.

Ob.

B♭ Cl.

mf' *f'* *mf'* *f'* *mf'* "Ki" *air only* u -

mp' *f'* *mp'* *f'* *mp'* *f'* *mp'* *f'* "Ki" "u"

151

Fl.

Ob.

B♭ Cl.

B♭ Tpt.

Tbn.

ae - - u - ae u i" "Ki -

"Kae" "u" "Ki" "u" "Kae" "u"

slap
+
mp
slap
+
mp

157

Fl.

Ob.

B♭ Cl.

B♭ Tpt.

Tbn.

p *mf* *p* *mf*

p' *mf'* *p'* *mf'*

u" "Kae - u" "Kae - u - i -

ord
mp *mf*

163

Fl. *p* *mf* *p* *mf* *p*
 "Ki - - u" "Kae - - u"

Ob. *p* *mf* *p* *mf* *p*
 "u" "Ki - - u" "Kae - - u"

B♭ Cl. *f*
 "Ki - - u - - ae - - u"

B♭ Tpt. + + + + +

Tbn. + + + + +



168

Fl. *mf* *p* *mf*
 "Kae - - u - - i - - u" "Ki - -"

Ob. *mf* *p* *mf*
 "Kae - - u - - i - - u" "Ki - -"

B♭ Cl. *f* *f*
 "Ki - - u - - ae - - u" "Ki - -"

B♭ Tpt. + + + + +

Tbn. + + + + + *mp*

173

Fl. *p'* "u" *mf'* "Kae - - u" *p'* "Kae - u - -" *mf'*

Ob. *p'* "u" *mf'* "Kae - - u" *p'* "Kae - u - -" *mf'*

B♭ Cl. u - - ae - - u - - "Ki - - u - -" *f'*

B♭ Tpt. +

Tbn. +



178

Fl. *p'* "i - - u" *mf'* "Ki - - u" *p'* "Kae - -" *mf'*

Ob. *p'* "i - - u" *mf'* "Ki - - u" *p'* "Kae - -" *mf'*

B♭ Cl. - ae - - u - - "Ki - - u - -" - - - ae - - -" *f'*

B♭ Tpt. + *mp*

Tbn. + *mp*



183

Fl. *p* "u" *mf* "Kae - u - i - u" *p*

Ob. *p* "u" *mf* "Kae - u - i - u" *p* *mf* "Kae - u -

B♭ Cl. *f* "u" "Ki - u - ae - u"

B♭ Tpt. +

Tbn. +



190

Fl. *mf* *p* *pp*

Ob. *f* *mf* *p* *pp*
- i - u - i - u - i - u

B♭ Cl. *f* *p*

Var. 7

♩ = 80

198

Fl. *fp ppp* *fp* *mf > pp* *mp > ppp*

Ob. *fp ppp* *pp < f > pp* *mf > p* *mf > pp*

B♭ Cl. *fp ppp* *pp < f > pp* *fp* *mf > p* *mf > pp*

B♭ Tpt. *harmon mute* *fp* *mf > pp*

Tbn. *straight mute* *pp* *mf >* *mf > pp*

Vln. *pp < f > pp* *p* *mp > ppp*

Vla. *mf >* *mf > pp* *mf > pp*

Vc. *fp > ppp* *pp* *p >* *mf > pp*

Cb. *fp > ppp* *pp* *mf > pp* *mf > pp*

Fl. *p* *f* *mf* *p*

Ob. *p* *pp* *p* *f* *fp* *mf* >

B♭ Cl. *p* *f* *fp* *mf* *p*

B♭ Tpt. *p* *pp* *fp* *mf* >

Tbn. *pp* > *ppp* *p*

Vln. *p* *pp* *mf*

Vla. *p* > *pp* *ppp* *fp* > *pp* *p*

Vc. *p* > *pp* *fp* > *ppp* *fp* > *pp* *p*

Cb. *fp* > *ppp* *fp* > *pp* *p* *p* >

Var. 8

♩ = 116

228

Fl. *pp* *f* *mf* *p* *mf* > *ppp* *f*
Ob. *mf* *p* *mf* > *ppp* *f'*
B♭ Cl. *pp* *f* *mf* *p* *mf* > *ppp* *f'*
B♭ Tpt. *f* *p* *pp*
Vln. *f* *mf* *ff* *p* *pp*
Vla. *f* *mf* *ff* *p* *pp*
Vc. *f* *mf* *ff* *p* *pp*
Cb. *f* *mf* *ff* *p* *pp*

Lyrics: "Ki - u" "Kae - u" "Ki - u - ae -"

harmon mute

pizz. Arco

1.

'p' > 'pp' < 'p' > 'pp' < 'p'

■ lips cover
mouthpiece

247

Fl. *p* *fp'* "Ki" *fp'* "Ku" *fp'* "Kae" *fp'* "Ku" *fp'* "Ki" *fp'* "Ku" *fp'* "Kae" *fp'* "Ku"

Ob. *p'* *fp'* "Ki - u" *fp'* "Kae - u" *fp'* "Ki - u - ae - u"

B♭ Cl. *p'* *fp'* "Ki - u" *fp'* "Kae - u" *fp'* "Ki - u - ae - u"

B♭ Tpt. straight mute *pp*

Tbn. *f*

Vln. *pp'* *p'* *pp'* *p'* *pp'*

Vla. *f* *pizz.*

Vc. *f* *pizz.*

Cb. *f*



256

Fl.

Ob. *air*
f
"Ki - u" "Kae - u" "Ki - u - ae - u" *p*

B \flat Cl. *air*
f
"Ki - u" "Kae - u" "Ki - u - ae - u" *p*

B \flat Tpt. *f*

Tbn. *f*

Vln. *f*

Vla. *f* pizz.

Vc. *f* pizz.

Cb. *f* pizz.

1/2 col legno tratto quasi spiccato

■ lips cover mouthpiece

264

Fl. *fp'* "Ki" *fp'* "Ku" *fp'* "Kae" *fp'* "Ku" *fp'* "Ki" *fp'* "Ku" *ff'* "Ki" -

Ob. *fp'* "Ki" - *fp'* "u" *fp'* "Kae" - *fp'* "u" *fp'* "Ki" - *fp'* "u"

B♭ Cl. *fp'* "Ki" - *fp'* "u" *fp'* "Kae" - *fp'* "u" *fp'* "Ki" - *fp'* "u" *ff'* "Ki" - *mp'* "u"

B♭ Tpt. + + + + + + + + *f* *pp*

Tbn. + + + + + + + +

Vln. *f*

Vla. *f* (pizz.)

Vc. *f* (pizz.)

Cb. *mf* (pizz.) *mf*

● 1/2 air

■ lips cover mouthpiece

271

Fl. *mp* *f* *ff* "u" "Ki" "Kae - u" "Ki - u" "Kae - u" "Ki - u" "Kae - u" "Ki - u"

Ob.

B♭ Cl. *ff* *ff* *mp* *ff* *mp* *ff* *mp* "Kae - u" "Ki - u" "Kae - u" "Ki - u" "Kae - u" "Ki - u"

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

277

Fl. *mp* *f* *fp* *ff* *fp* "u" "Kae - u" "Kae - u"

Ob.

B♭ Cl. *ff* *mp* *ff* *mp* *ff* *mp* *ff* *mp* "Kae - u" "Ki - u" "Kae - u" "Ki - u" "Kae - u"

Vln.

Vla.

Vc. *mf*

Cb. *mf*

ord. flz.

■ lips cover mouthpiece

■ lips cover mouthpiece

3/4 air

282

Fl. *f* i - *fp* u - *p* ae" *mp*

Ob. *p*

B♭ Cl. *ff'* *mp'* "Ki - u" *ff'* *mp'* "Kae - u" *ff'* *mp'* "Ki - u" *ff'* *mp'* "Kae - u" *ff'* *mp'* "Ki - u"

B♭ Tpt.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

● ord.



■ lips cover mouthpiece

287

Fl. *ord.* *mf* *fp* "Ku" *fp* "Kae"

Ob. *mp* *f*

B♭ Cl. *ff* *mp* *ff* *mp* *ff* *mp* *ff* *mp* *ff* *mp*
"Kae - u" "Ki - u" "Kae - u" "Ki - u" "Kae - u"

B♭ Tpt.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

5

292

Fl. *fp* "Ki"

B♭ Tpt. *ppp*

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

5

Var. 9

♩ = 132

295

Fl. *f*

B♭ Tpt.

Vla. *mf*

Vc. arco *mp ppp mp ppp mp ppp mp*

Cb. arco *mp ppp mp ppp mp ppp mp*

303

Fl.

Vla. *ppp mp ppp mp ppp mp ppp*

Vc. *ppp mp ppp mp ppp*

Cb. *ppp mp ppp mp ppp mp ppp*

Var. 10

♩ = 116

312

Fl. *mp pp mp pp*

Ob. *mp pp mp pp mp pp*

B♭ Cl. *mp pp mp pp mp pp*

Var. 11

♩ = 92

Piccolo:

317

Fl.

Ob.

B♭ Cl.

B♭ Tpt.

Vln.
sul tasto
non vib.
fp
col lengo tratto

Vla.

Vc.
f
col lengo tratto

330

Fl.

Ob.

B♭ Cl.

B♭ Tpt.

Vla.

Vc.
mf'

mf

mf'

Var. 12

♩ = 92

Flute:

347

Fl. *mf* *p* *mf*

Ob. *mf* *p* *mf*

B♭ Cl. *mf* *p* *f*

B♭ Tpt. *pp* *pp* *ppp* *mf*

Tbn. *pp* *pp* *ppp*

Vln. *ff* *mf* *pp*

Vla. *ff* *brush against string* *ff* *mf* *pp*

Vc. *mp* *ppp*

Cb. *ppp*

364

Fl. *f* *mf*

Ob. *mf*

B♭ Cl. *mf* *f* *mf*

B♭ Tpt.

Vln. *arco*

Vla. *mf* *pp* *mp*

Vc. *arco* *mf* *pp* *mp* *mp*

Cb. *mf* *pp* *mp* *mp*

8

rit.

380

Fl. *p* *mf* *p*

Ob. *mf* *p*

B \flat Cl. *mf* *p*

B \flat Tpt. *mf* *p*

Vln. *mf* *p*

Vla. *mf* *p*

Vc. *mf* *p*

pp