

Joseph Klein

Die Geruchschmale

(The Narrow-smeller)

character study after Elias Canetti

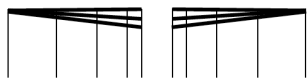
for solo harpsichord

(2022)

- for Elliot Figg -

duration: c. 6'30"

Performance Notes



accelerando/ritardando (number of beams indicates relative speed)



durational continuum in *senza misura* sections: arranged from shortest to longest (precise durations *ad libitum*).



distinct pause/break in sound, arranged from shortest to longest



continue pattern for the extent of the beams or wavy line (duration may or may not be specified)



senza misura



small noteheads indicate sustained pitches from previous passage



sustain indefinitely, until otherwise indicated or next hand position shift



release previously-depressed key(s)

The work is composed for a double-manual harpsichord, with the top manual tuned in A and the lower manual tuned in E \flat , as indicated in the tuning diagram below. In the score, pitches played on the top manual are notated with red noteheads; those on the bottom manual are notated with black noteheads.

Pitch	Top Manual (A)	Bottom Manual (E \flat)
B	466.9 Hz	463.3 Hz
B \flat	442.7 Hz	435.8 Hz
A	415 Hz	406.7 Hz
A \flat	389.1 Hz	387.3 Hz
G	373.5 Hz	363.1 Hz
F \sharp	345.8 Hz	348.6 Hz

Pitch	Top Manual (A)	Bottom Manual (E \flat)
F	332 Hz	326.8 Hz
E	311.3 Hz	309 Hz
E \flat	290.5 Hz	290.5 Hz
D	276.7 Hz	272.3 Hz
C \sharp	259.4 Hz	261.5 Hz
C	249 Hz	242.1 Hz

Accidentals apply only to the notes they immediately precede, with the exception of repeated pitches.

It is important to adhere to the timings indicated in each *senza misura* section to achieve the proper pacing of the music: the Cautious, Hesitant section is 12-17 seconds per system; the Aloof section is 12 to 15 seconds per system; the Anxious sections are approximately 15 seconds per system; and the Elusive section is approximately 12 seconds per system.

All arpeggiated chords are ascending unless otherwise indicated by a downward arrow. Chords not marked with an arpeggiation sign are always to be played as block chords.

As a general rule, arpeggiated figures are sustained whenever possible (typically indicated with open ties, though occasionally left to the discretion of the performer).

Broken ties are used to indicate continuity between microtonally related pitches; while the tied pitches are to be rearticulated (these are not ties in the traditional sense), the connection between pitches should be smooth.

Program Note

Die Geruchschmale (The Narrow-smeller) is the twentieth in a series of short works for solo instrument based upon characters from *Der Ohrenzeuge: Fünfzig Charaktere (Earwitness: Fifty Characters)*, written in 1974 by the Bulgarian-born British-Austrian novelist Elias Canetti (1905-1994). Canetti's distinctive studies incorporate poetic imagery, singular insights, and unabashed wordplay to create fifty ironic paradigms of human behavior. This collection of works, begun in 1997, was inspired by the vividly surreal depictions of Canetti's characters and includes works for contrabass, violin, bass flute, ocarina, contrabassoon, glass harmonica, alto saxophone, trumpet, percussion, bass saxophone, guitar, piccolo, organ, basset horn, and violoncello, among others. In Canetti's depiction of this character, the narrow-smeller "shrinks away from smells and avoids them. [She] is regarded as noble because she avoids any touch. She fears vehement sentences that might pierce through, she addresses people softly.... Unfortunately, she is attractive and gets pursued with roses, she can save herself from them only with quick faints.... while she dreams about distilled water, her admirers put their foul-reeking heads together and try to figure out to which flower scents they could convert her."

Der Gertuchschmale is conceived as a deconstructed chaconne, whose subject is based on a fragment from Maurice Ravel's *Valses nobles et sentimentales* (1911). The work incorporates a 23-tone microtonal scale, which is the result of tuning each manual to a different key in just intonation.

Die Geruchschmale was completed in August 2022 and composed for harpsichordist Elliot Figg.

Die Geruchschmale

(The Narrow-smeller)

The narrow-smeller shrinks away from smells and avoids them. She opens doors cautiously, hesitating before she crosses a threshold. Half-averted, she stands there a while, to smell with one nostril and spare the other. She sticks one finger into the unknown space and brings it to her nose. Then, with that finger, she holds one nostril shut and sniffs with the other. If she does not lose consciousness immediately, she waits a bit. Then she puts one leg sideways across the threshold, but leaves the other foot outside. It would not take much more for her to dare it, but she hits upon a final test in time. She gets up on her tiptoes and sniffs again. If the smell does not change now, she fears no surprises and risks the other leg as well. She is standing inside. The door, through which she could save herself, remains wide open.

The narrow-smeller seems isolated wherever she may be, she has a layer of caution about her; other people watch out for their clothes when they sit down, but she watches out for her isolation layer. She fears vehement sentences that might pierce through, she addresses people softly and awaits answers just as softly. She does not come halfway to anyone; in the aloofness in which she remains, she follows the movements of other people. It is as though, separated from them, she is constantly dancing with them. The distance remains the same, she knows how to ward off any approach and certainly any touch.

So long as it is winter, the narrow-smeller feels best out of doors. She worries about the spring. The blossoms and fragrances will begin and she will suffer unbearable torments. She prudently avoids certain bushes, she goes her own, intricate ways. When she sees an insensitive person sticking his nose in lilacs far away, she becomes ill. Unfortunately, she is attractive and gets pursued with roses, she can save herself from them only with quick faints. People find this exaggerated, and while she dreams about distilled water, her admirers put their foul-reeking heads together and try to figure out to which flower scents they could convert her.

The narrow-smeller is regarded as noble because she avoids any touch. She is at her wits' end with marriage proposals. She has already threatened to hang herself. But she will not do it, she cannot bear the thought of having to smell the savior who cuts her down.

— Elias Canetti, *Der Ohrenzeuge: Fünfzig Charaktere*
(translated by Joachim Neugroschel)

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Cautious, Hesitant (15-17" per system)

The first system of music is written for a harpsichord in treble and bass clefs. It begins with a whole rest in the bass clef and a half note in the treble clef. The melody in the treble clef is characterized by dotted rhythms and slurs. The bass clef accompaniment consists of vertical chords with a wavy, tremolo-like effect. The key signature has one sharp (F#).

The second system, labeled '4b', continues the piece. It features a similar melodic line in the treble clef with dotted rhythms and slurs. The bass clef accompaniment remains vertical with a wavy texture. The key signature is one sharp (F#).

The third system, labeled '6b', shows a change in the bass clef accompaniment. The treble clef continues with its melodic line. The bass clef now features a more active, rhythmic accompaniment with eighth notes and slurs. The key signature is one sharp (F#).

The fourth system, labeled '7b', continues the piece. The treble clef has a melodic line with slurs. The bass clef accompaniment is active with eighth notes and slurs. The key signature is one sharp (F#).

The fifth system, labeled '9b', concludes the piece. It features a melodic line in the treble clef and an active bass clef accompaniment with eighth notes and slurs. The key signature is one sharp (F#).

Lilting (Tempo rubato, ♩ = ±72)

11b

Musical score for measures 11b-16. The piece is in a key with one sharp (F#) and a common time signature. The tempo is 'Lilting (Tempo rubato, ♩ = ±72)'. The score features a variety of time signatures: 3/16, 5/16, and 3/8. It includes triplets and slurs. Red dots are placed above certain notes, likely indicating fingerings or accents.

17

Musical score for measures 17-22. The time signatures continue to change, including 3/16, 7/16, 5/16, 3/16, 5/16, and 3/8. The notation includes triplets and slurs, with red dots above notes.

Anxious (c.15" per system)

23

Musical score for measures 23-24. The tempo is 'Anxious (c.15" per system)'. The score shows a transition from a common time signature to 3/8. It features a large slur and a fermata over a measure.

25

Musical score for measures 25-26. The score includes fingerings (5, 4, 1, 2) and a large slur. Red dots are present above notes.

26

Musical score for measures 26-28. The score includes fingerings (3, 5, 1) and a large slur. Red dots are present above notes.

Elusive (c.12" per system)

becoming increasingly urgent...

29

Musical score for measures 29-34. The tempo is 'Elusive (c.12" per system)'. The score includes a 'c.3"' marking and a large slur. Red dots are present above notes.

31

Musical score for measures 31-33. Measure 31 features a treble clef with a sharp key signature and a bass clef with a flat key signature. Measure 32 has a double bar line and a wavy line in the bass clef. Measure 33 includes a fermata and fingerings 1, 4, 3 in the treble and 1, 2, 3, 5 in the bass.

34

Musical score for measures 34-35. Measure 34 has a bass clef with a flat key signature and a treble clef with a sharp key signature. Measure 35 features a fermata and a treble clef with a sharp key signature.

35b

Musical score for measure 35b. The treble clef has a sharp key signature and a flat key signature. The bass clef has a sharp key signature and a flat key signature. A wavy line is present in the treble clef.

36b

Musical score for measure 36b. The treble clef has a sharp key signature and a flat key signature. The bass clef has a sharp key signature and a flat key signature.

Aloof (12-15" per system)

38

Musical score for measure 38. The treble clef has a sharp key signature and a flat key signature. The bass clef has a sharp key signature and a flat key signature.

40

41b

43b

c.3" c.6"

5 1 4 2 3

3 2 4 1 5

becoming increasingly urgent...

45b

Exaggerated (♩. = 76; ♩ = 114)

49

Intricate ← $\text{♩} = \text{♩} \rightarrow (\text{♩} = 76)$ *rit.* - - *poco* - - *a* - - *poco* - -

Musical score for measures 54-56. The piece is in 4/4 time. Measure 54 starts with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The music features complex rhythmic patterns with many beamed eighth and sixteenth notes. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5. A triplet of eighth notes is marked with a '3' above it. Measure 55 continues the intricate patterns. Measure 56 ends with a double bar line and a fermata over the final chord.

Musical score for measures 57-59. Measure 57 begins with a tempo change to $\text{♩} = \text{c. } 56$. The music continues with complex rhythmic patterns. Measure 58 features a 3/4 time signature change. Measure 59 ends with a double bar line and a fermata over the final chord.

Musical score for measures 60-61. Measure 60 starts with a tempo change to $\text{♩} = \text{c. } 40$. Measure 61 begins with a tempo change to $\text{♩} = 30$. The music features complex rhythmic patterns with many beamed notes. Measure 61 ends with a double bar line and a fermata over the final chord.

Anxious (c.15" per system)

Musical score for measures 62-63. Measure 62 starts with a bass clef and a key signature of one flat (Bb). The music features complex rhythmic patterns with many beamed notes. Measure 63 ends with a double bar line and a fermata over the final chord.

Musical score for measures 64a-64b. Measure 64a continues the complex rhythmic patterns. Measure 64b ends with a double bar line and a fermata over the final chord.

* Fermatas become slightly longer with each iteration.