The Seven Chambers of Prince Prospero

Elliot Paul Butler
Illinois State University, elliotbutlercomposer@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: https://ir.library.illinoisstate.edu/etd

Recommended Citation
https://ir.library.illinoisstate.edu/etd/1659

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by ISU ReD: Research and eData. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of ISU ReD: Research and eData. For more information, please contact ISUReD@ilstu.edu.
The Seven Chambers of Prince Prospero is a multi-movement programmatic work inspired by Edgar Allen Poe’s *The Masque of the Red Death*. In Poe’s short story, Prince Prospero throws a lavish masquerade within his castle while the world outside suffers a deadly plague referred to as the “Red Death.” In Prospero’s castle exist seven peculiar chambers, each one a different color, in which partygoers mingle and celebrate life in the face of death. In this piece, each of the seven rooms are depicted with short character pieces, concluding with a musical interpretation of the dramatic narrative described in Poe’s short story.

KEYWORDS: Composition; Edgar Allen Poe; Chamber Orchestra; Character Pieces; Orchestral Suite.
THE SEVEN CHAMBERS OF PRINCE PROSPERO

ELLIOIT BUTLER

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF MUSIC

School of Music

ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY

2023
THE SEVEN CHAMBERS OF PRINCE PROSPERO

ELLiot BUTLER

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Carl Schimmel, Chair
Martha Horst
Glenn Block
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has played any role in my development as a musician, but unfortunately, if I were to list everyone by name, I would probably run out of room. If someone does not appear in my acknowledgements, it is not for lack of gratitude, but rather for lack of space.

I would primarily like to acknowledge Dr. Carl Schimmel who has had to deal with my music for the last few months as I worked on my thesis. Thank you for your thoughtful input and constructive criticism as I crafted this piece.

Thank you so much to my wife, Alyssa, who has been a patient and lung-suffering patroness, essentially making my master’s degree possible. You are my hero, and I love you.

To my grandparents, parents, and siblings, I am extremely grateful that you listened, supported, and encouraged me as I grew as a musician. I love you all.

To all my music teachers and professors, I appreciate all you have done to encourage my personal and musical growth. I would like to specially thank Delle Vercimak, John Armstrong, Michael Pecherek, Richard Hughey, James Romig, Hong-Da Chin, Ghyas Zeidieh, Kenny Lee, Glenn Block, Martha Horst, Roy Magnuson, Carl Schimmel, and Alex Stephenson. All your contributions have made me the person and musician I am today, and I will forever be grateful for the difference you all made in my development.

I would be remiss if I did not mention Zach Noland and Noah Marney, partly because they mentioned me in their own acknowledgements, but also because they were good compositional resources and even better friends. I will miss our lively conversations.

Last, but not least, I would like to thank God for the gift of music - S.D.G.

E.B.
## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRELUDE</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. THE BLUE CHAMBER</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTERLUDE 1</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. THE PURPLE CHAMBER</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTERLUDE 2</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. THE GREEN CHAMBER</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTERLUDE 3</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. THE ORANGE CHAMBER</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTERLUDE 4</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. THE WHITE CHAMBER</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTERLUDE 5</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. THE VIOLET CHAMBER</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII. THE BLACK CHAMBER</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
"without was the Red Death"

Transposed Score

Elliot Butler
Ob. mp mf mp mf
Cl. in Eb
Tpt. in Bb
Timp.
Xyl. f mf f
BD
SD
Vln. I pp mp p
Vln. II div. p mp p
Vla. pp mp pp
Vc. pp mp pp
Cb.
sweetly
unis.
div.
pp
p
pizz.

mp
f

ff

ff

}
Interlude 1

7pm

Elliot Butler

Chimes

Analog Metronome

Tam-Tam

Cme.

Metro.

Tam

4

7

10

initiate metronome at 58bpm

\[ \text{metronome at 58bpm} \]
II. The Purple Chamber

Poets

Elliot Butler

Nostalgic, \( \frac{\text{j}}{\text{j}} = 72 \)

English Horn

Clarinet in B♭

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Violoncello

Contrabass

E. Hn.

Cl. in B♭

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.
E. Hn.

Cl. in B♭

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

44

E. Hn.

Cl. in B♭

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

Darker

Cheerful,

rit. — a tempo
With grief, \( \dot{=} 56 \)

Tempo I

normal with mute
Thoughtful, \( \text{\( \frac{f}{j} \) = 66} \)

E. Hn.

Cl. in B♭

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.
III. The Green Chamber

Ballet Dancers

Elliot Butler

Slow but cheerful, $j = 60$

English Horn

Bass Clarinet

Glockenspiel

Vibraphone

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Violoncello

Contrabass

45
Picking up slightly, $\mathbf{\dot{\jmath}} = 72$

```
with some rubato
```

```
with some rubato
```
molto rit.

Grand, $J = 60$

**E. Hn.**

**B. Cl.**

**Glock.**

**Vib.**

**Vln. I**

**Vln. II**

**Vla.**

**Vc.**

**Cb.**
Tempo I ($\textit{j} = 60$)

\begin{align*}
\text{E. Hn.} & \quad \text{ppp} \\
\text{B. Cl.} & \\
\text{Glock.} & \quad \text{sweetly} \\
\text{Vib.} & \quad \text{mf} \\
\text{Vln. I} & \quad \text{pizz.} \\
\text{Vln. II} & \quad \text{pizz.} \\
\text{Vla.} & \quad \text{pizz.} \\
\text{Vc.} & \quad \text{pizz.} \\
\text{Cb.} & \quad \text{mf} \quad \text{mp} \\
\end{align*}
53

rit.

winding down, \( \dot{J} = 46 \) rit al fine.

E. Hn.

B. Cl.

pp\( \rightarrow \) mp\( \rightarrow \) ppp

Glock.

Vib.

mf\( \rightarrow \) p

ppp\( \rightarrow \) mp

pizz.
tutti
div.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

rit.

rit.

rit.

rit.

rit.
Interlude 3
9pm

Elliot Butler

Chimes

Analog Metronome

Tam-Tam

Solo Violin I pizz.

Solo Violin II pizz.

Solo Viola mp

Solo Violoncello mp

Cme.

Metro.

Tam

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

initiate metronome at 63bpm
IV. The Orange Chamber

Court Musicians

Elliot Butler

Playful, $d = 132$  
(sempre $d = 132$)  
(3 + 2 + 2)

Solo Violin I

Solo Violin II

Solo Viola

Solo Violoncello

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

arco

pizz.

mp

$p$  

$p$  

$p$

$mp$  

$mf$

$f$

$sfz$

$\frac{3}{4}$


\[\text{Tempo I} \quad \text{with rubato}\]

\[\text{Tempo I} \quad \text{with quiet energy}\]

\[\text{Tempo I} \quad \text{with quiet energy}\]

\[\text{Tempo I} \quad \text{with quiet energy}\]
Suddenly slower, $J = 120$

To Interlude 4
V. The White Chamber

*a Meditation*

Elliot Butler

**Oboe**

Sweetly, $\mathbf{d} = 72$

**B♭ Clarinet**

**Flugelhorn**

(with bow)

**Vibraphone**

$\text{mp}\rightarrow$

**Violin I**

**Violin II**

**Viola**

**Violoncello**

**Contrabass**
Faster, \( \text{\textit{d}} = 88 \)

Ob.

B♭ Cl.

Flghn.

Vib.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

\( \text{\textit{solo}} \)

\( \text{pp} \)
Slightly slower, \( \frac{d}{8} = 66 \)  Tempo I, \( \frac{d}{8} = 72 \)

\text{Ob.}

\text{Bb Cl.}

\text{Flghn.}

\text{Vib.}

\text{Vln. I}

\text{Vln. II}

\text{Vla.}

\text{Vc.}

\text{Cb.}
Interlude 5

11pm

Elliot Butler

Chimes

initiate metronome at 72bpm

Analog Metronome

Bass Drum

Snare Drum

Violin I

Cme.

Metro.

BD

SD

Vln. I
VI. The Violet Chamber

Sweetly, \( J = 120 \)

Wine

Elliot Butler
a tempo
A tad slower, \( \text{\( \frac{d}{t} \) = 44} \)
Totally sloshed, $d = 48$
VII. The Black Chamber

Narrative and Postlude

Elliot Butler

Dark, $\frac{7}{12}$ = 72

Oboe

B♭ Clarinet

Flugelhorn

Timpani

Chimes

Analog Metronome

Tam-Tam

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Violoncello

Contrabass

Initiate metronome at 72bpm

non div.

solo
Twice as fast, \( \frac{3}{4} \) = 144

Ob.

B♭ Cl.

Flghn.

Timp.

Xyl.

Metro.

BD

To Bass Drum

Vln. I

unis.

pp

Vln. II

unis.

Vla.

p

Vc.

unis.

pp

Cb.

p

unis.

unis.
accel.

(metronome does not accelerate)
Tempo I, $d = 72$

- Ob.
- B♭ Cl.
- Flighn.
- Timp.
- Cme.
- Metro.
- BD
- Vln. I
- Vln. II
- Vla.
- Vc.
- Cb.
Dying out, $\dot{\nu} = 72$

Ob.

B♭ Cl.

Flghn.

Timp.

Cme.

Metro.

Tam

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.
take the metronome off-stage to achieve decresendo

let ring until silent

choke sound