

Composition Portfolio

David Morissette

Submitted for the completion of the degree: Master of Music in Composition

University of Alberta

Department of Music

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Miscellaneous

While I wrote this, I wondered whether the following thoughts were worthy inclusions for the opening section of my portfolio. Though perhaps they don't serve as a perfect introduction to my work, I think they offer some small amount of insight into my process & priorities. As such, I've decided to include them.

An ideology I've adopted in writing music is that you should use every ounce of time you've been allotted to try and make the thing you're working on better. This is something that I strongly feel is embodied by the pieces of music included in this portfolio. All of them were difficult to definitively "finish", which is an experience I'm sure is shared by many composers.

Most pieces of music that I write feel like the best I've ever written while I'm writing them, and later on seem to become mediocre, unique at best. It's not a feeling I particularly enjoy, as it feels like my ever-growing catalog of music is in fact not growing at all, but stagnating somewhat. However, as unsatisfying as this feeling can be, I'm glad I feel this way. I know that I wrote better music at the end of my bachelor's degree than I did at the beginning, and I know that I write even better music today. Knowing that, the feeling of dissatisfaction with my past work is something I'll leverage in order to continue improving well into the future.

In the past year I have discovered that perhaps my largest focus when composing is that the music is pleasing to the ears, my own taking the highest priority. I have a talent for stating the obvious, but I think this realization has been fairly significant for me. Though I enjoy having the knowledge to write in such a way if I choose, I don't have much interest in musical complexity for its own sake. I prefer writing passages that I think will compliment the rest of the piece, and in turn create something that is satisfying to listen to. I write music to serve the music that serves me, whether that be a piece that subscribes to a succinct "less is more" way of thinking, or a multi-year labour of love I believe to be my magnum opus.

My time in this program has greatly boosted my faith in my compositional skills and I'm grateful for all of the instruction and guidance I've received. A massive thank you to all of my teachers for their wisdom and patience.

atmospheric gestures

composed by David Morissette

Atmospheric Gestures

Composed by David Morissette
Version Completed: Feb 19 2025
Duration: approx. 10 min
Instrumentation:
- Flute
- Oboe
- Bb Clarinet
- Bassoon

Performance Notes:

- All instruments:
- A stopwatch should be used.
 - Vertical dashed lines indicate notes played simultaneously between instruments. At bolded timestamps, it is particularly important for the players to be synchronized.
 - Wind tones can be used to begin or conclude a passage that uses niente (○).
 - Breath marks are not written in the score. To accommodate, breaths can be taken at any convenient point between notes (except during slurs), and held notes can be faded early if necessary.

Program Notes:

This piece was inspired by the sky at a particular moment. This edition of the piece was written for a day of mixed clouds, with occasional moments of complete cloud cover (as is shown in the associated video). The piece was written simply by writing the notes that felt right at the sight of the sky at any one point in time.

As ever present as it is, the sky is constantly changing. It’s simply happening too slowly for most to notice. The sky is regularly thought of as being somewhat mundane, and is a beauty often taken for granted. *Atmospheric Gestures* puts it in a well-deserved spotlight.

The world’s most common sight is also its greatest canvas. Don’t forget to look up now and again.

Atmospheric Gestures

David Morissette

Contemplative

10" 20"

Flute

Oboe

Clarinet in B \flat

Bassoon

wait for clarinet before playing

30" 40"

Fl.

Ob.

B \flat Cl.

Bsn.

50" 1'00"

Fl.

Ob.

B \flat Cl.

Bsn.



The first system of the musical score features four staves: Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), B-flat Clarinet (B♭ Cl.), and Bassoon (Bsn.). The Flute part begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 3/4 time signature. It contains a half note G4 (F#4) and a half note A4 (G4), with a dynamic marking of *mp* and a crescendo hairpin. The Oboe part also begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp, containing a half note G4 (F#4) and a half note A4 (G4), with a dynamic marking of *p* and a crescendo hairpin. The B-flat Clarinet part begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp, containing a half note G4 (F#4) and a half note A4 (G4), with a dynamic marking of *p* and a crescendo hairpin. The Bassoon part begins with a bass clef and a key signature of one sharp, containing a half note G3 (F#3) and a half note A3 (G3), with a dynamic marking of *p* and a crescendo hairpin. The system is marked with a rehearsal mark 1 and a time signature of 3/4. The tempo is marked as 1'30" and the time signature is 1'40".



Fl.

Ob.

B \flat Cl.

Bsn.

1'50"

2'00"

p

mp

p

Fl. 2'10" 2'13" 2'20"

Ob.

B♭ Cl.

Bsn.

mf *mp* *mp*

Fl. 2'30" 2'40"

Ob.

B♭ Cl.

Bsn.

mp *mf* *mp* *p* *p* *mp* *p* *p* *mp* *p*

Fl. 2'50" 3'00"

Ob.

B♭ Cl.

Bsn.

pp *p* *p* *p* *p* *p* *p*

10

3'06"3'10"3'20"

Fl.

Ob.

B♭ Cl.

Bsn.



3'30"3'40"

Fl.

Ob.

B♭ Cl.

Bsn.



3'50"4'00"

one after another

Fl.

Ob.

B♭ Cl.

Bsn.

Fl. *p* *mp* *p* *mp* *p* 4'10" 4'20"

Ob. *mp* *p*

B♭ Cl. *mp* *p* *p*

Bsn. *mp* *mp* *p*



Fl. *mp* *mp* *p* one after another 4'30" 4'40"

Ob. *mp* *mp* *p*

B♭ Cl. *mp* *mp*

Bsn. *mp* *mp*



Fl. *mf* *f* *mp* *mp* one after another 4'45" 4'50" 5'00"

Ob. *mf* *f* *p*

B♭ Cl. *mf* *f* *p*

Bsn. *mf* *f* *p*

one after another

Fl. *mp* 5'10" 5'20"

Ob. *p* *mp*

B♭ Cl. *p*

Bsn. *p*



Fl. 5'24" 5'30" 5'35" 5'40"

Ob. *p*

B♭ Cl. *p*

Bsn. *p*



Fl. 5'42" 5'48" 5'50" 5'53" 6'00"

Ob. *p* *pp* *p*

B♭ Cl. *p* *pp* *p*

Bsn. *p* *pp* *p*

The image displays a musical score for the first movement of 'The Marriage of Figaro' by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. The score is arranged in four staves, each representing a different instrument: Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Bassoon (Bsn.), and Bassoon/Clarinet (B♭ Cl.). The time signature is 4/4, and the key signature is one flat (B♭). The score is divided into four measures, each with a duration of 6'03", 6'06", 6'10", and 6'20" respectively. The Flute part begins with a rest, followed by a series of notes with dynamic markings *p* and *mp*. The Oboe part begins with a rest, followed by a series of notes with dynamic markings *p* and *p*. The Bassoon part begins with a rest, followed by a series of notes with dynamic markings *p* and *pp*. The Bassoon/Clarinet part begins with a rest, followed by a series of notes with dynamic markings *p* and *p*. The score includes various musical notations such as rests, notes, and dynamic markings, as well as crescendo and decrescendo hairpins. The overall structure of the score is a single melodic line for each instrument, with the Flute part being the most prominent.



Fl.

Ob.

B \flat Cl.

Bsn.

pp

p

pp

p

pp

p

6'30"

6'40"



Fl. 7'10" 7'20"

Ob.

B♭ Cl.

Bsn.

mp *mp* *p*

Fl. 7'24" 7'30" 7'40"

Ob.

B♭ Cl.

Bsn.

p *mf* *p* *p* *p*

Fl. 7'50" 8'00"

Ob.

B♭ Cl.

Bsn.

mf *mp* *mf* *p* *p* *mf*

Fl. 8'10" 8'18" 8'20"

Ob.

B♭ Cl.

Bsn. *p* *mp* *mf* *mp*



Fl. 8'30" 8'40"

Ob.

B♭ Cl.

Bsn. *mp*



Fl. 8'43" 8'50" 9'00"

Ob.

B♭ Cl.

Bsn. *mp* *p* *mp*

Fl. 9'10" 9'20"

Ob.

B♭ Cl.

Bsn.

Fl. 9'30" 9'40"

Ob.

B♭ Cl.

Bsn.

Fl. 9'50" 10'00"

Ob.

B♭ Cl.

Bsn.

fade as air runs out

14 Hours

Composed by David Morissette

14 Hours

Composed by David Morissette

Version Completed: Feb 19 2025

Duration: approx. 12 min

Instrumentation:

- Flute
- Tenor Saxophone
- Percussion (Hi-hat, Bass Drum, Floor Tom, Snare, Mid Tom, High Tom, Ride Cymbal, Tam-Tam, Triangle, Suspended Cymbal)
- Piano

Performance Notes:

Flute:

- The wind tones indicated at bar 11 are not required to be played with D4 fingering, it is merely a suggestion.
- Accidentals in proportional parts of the score are applied to all notes grouped together in a “section”. Sections are typically separated from each other by three or more seconds of silence, and are found primarily on page two of the score.
- The dashed vertical lines at the end of page five’s first line indicate that the notes connected by the lines are to be played as synchronously as possible.

Percussion & Drum Set:

The image shows two staves of musical notation. The top staff is labeled 'Percussion' and contains three measures: a double bar line, a diamond-shaped note (Tam-Tam), and a triangle-shaped note (Triangle). The bottom staff is labeled 'Drum Set' and contains six measures: a double bar line, a cross symbol (Hi-hat), a solid black note (Bass Drum), a solid black note (Floor Tom), a solid black note with a cross (Snare (cross-stick)), two solid black notes (Tom-toms), and a cross symbol (Ride Cymbal).

Piano:

- Please note that the rhythm to be tapped on the side of the piano on page seven begins with a “da-dun, da-dun” rhythm, rather than a “dun, dun”. If it’s helpful, imagine the sound of train tracks rather than the sound of a heartbeat (though the rhythm does eventually become more heartbeat-like later on).
- Accidentals in proportional parts of the score are applied to all notes grouped together in a “section”. Sections are typically separated from each other by three or more seconds of silence, and are found primarily on page two of the score.
- The dashed vertical lines at the end of page five’s first line indicate that the notes connected by the lines are to be played as synchronously as possible.

Program Notes:

Road tripping is a form of travel that places a strong emphasis on the journey itself, rather than a destination. It offers time to spend with fellow travelers, the chance to see new places and an excellent opportunity to let the mind drift into thought. These moments are somewhat rare today, making them valuable. It is the ability to create these sorts of moments that makes road trips special, by almost forcing travellers to slow down and take some time for themselves in what has become a very fast-paced world.

14 Hours is inspired by these ideas and guides its listeners through common road trip experiences, including pre-departure anxiety, getting lost in thought while gazing out a window, stopping at a gas station and driving through a rainstorm, finally ending with an arrival at a destination.

14 Hours

David Morissette

A With uncertainty

Drum Set

20"

Piano

D. S.

40"

Pno.

D. S.

1'00"

Pno.

D. S.

1'20"

Pno.

Fl.

1'40"

Pno.

With more confidence

quickly, birdlike

6

Fl. *mf* 2'00"

Pno. *p* *mf* *p* *mf* *p* *f*

Reo. *

7

Fl. *mf* *mp* 2'20"

Pno. *mf* *p* *mf* *p*

Reo. *

8

Fl. *mf* *mp* *mf* short improv *mp* 2'40"

Pno. *mf* *p* *f* *mp* *mf* *mp*

Reo. *

9

Fl. *p* *mf* 3'00"

Pno. *p* *mp*

Reo. *

10

Fl. *mf* 3'20"

D. S. *mp* *mf*

Pno. *p*

Reo. *

B Subdued but groovy, freely (♩ = 105)

Fl. *wind tone* *mf*

T. Sx. *mf*

Perc. *Tri. (door chime-like)* *f*

D. S. *mp*

Pno. *mf*

Red. *

[illegible][illegible]

30

Fl.

T. Sx.

D. S.

Pno.

mp

mf

f

mp

2

2

2

Leg.

Leg.

Leg.

Leg.

38

Fl.

T. Sx.

Perc.

D. S.

Pno.

mf

3

mp

f

2

mp

Leg.

Leg.

Leg.

45

Fl.

Perc.

D. S.

Pno.

mf

mp

f

Leg.

6

D Little, Intimate (♩ = 94)

Fl. *p* < *mp*

T. Sx. *p* < *mp*

Perc. *mp*

Pno. *mp*

53

53

Reo.

Fl. *p* < *mp*

T. Sx. *p* < *mp*

Perc. *pp* < *mp*

Pno. *mp*

59

59

* Reo.

*

Fl. *p* < *mp*

T. Sx. *p* < *mp*

Pno. *mp*

65

65

poco rall.

Reo.

*

E Fast, rhythmless key clicks (like rain on a windshield)

Fl. *mf*

T. Sx. *mf*

Perc. *ppp* < *p*

72 Tam-Tam

pp < *mp* < *pp*

p

20"

Fl.

73

mf

T. Sx.

mf

Perc.

73

f

mp

p

mf

p

mp

Pno.

73

Tap on side of piano with open palm

mf

40"

Fl.

74

T. Sx.

mf

f

p

Perc.

74

mf

pp

mp

Pno.

74

mf

1'00"

Fl.

75

T. Sx.

pp

pp

p

pp

Perc.

75

mf

Pno.

75

mf

1'20"

8

F

D. S. *p* 1'40"

Pno. *p* *mp* *pp* *p*

Fl. *mf* 2'00"

D. S. *p* *mp*

Pno. *p* *mf*

Fl. *mp* *mf* 2'20"

Pno. *p* *f* *p* *mp*

Fl. 2'30" **G** With Passion (♩ = 75)

T. Sx. *mf* *mf*

Perc. *p* *mf* *p* *mf* *p* *mf* *p* *mf* *p*

Pno. *mf* *mf*

84

Fl. *f*

T. Sx. *mf* *f*

Perc. *f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *p* *f*

Pno. *f*

Reo. * Reo. * Reo. * Reo. * Reo. *

89

Fl. *f* *mp*

T. Sx. *mp*

Pno. *mp* *mf* *mp* *mf*

Reo. * Reo. *

96

Fl. *mp* *mf* *mp*

T. Sx. *mp* *mf*

Pno. *mp* *mf* *mp* *mf* *mp* *mf*

Reo. * Reo. * Reo. * Reo. *

10

104

Fl.

mp

T. Sax.

mp

104

D. S.

mp

104

Pno.

mp

mf

mp

Ped.

20"

105

D. S.

p

105

Pno.

p

pp

40"

THE DUALITY OF THAT DAY

BY DAVID MORISSETTE

FULL SCORE FOR BRASS QUINTET

2025

The Duality of That Day

Composed by David Morissette

Version Completed: Feb 19 2025

Duration: approx. 10 ½ min

Instrumentation:

- Bb Trumpet x2
- F French Horn
- Trombone
- Tuba

Performance Notes:

All: Much of this piece calls for sustained pitches, which can sometimes leave little room to breathe. Breath markings are included to accommodate. However, if a performer feels that they can comfortably skip a breath marking, they are encouraged to do so to enhance the feeling of a continually sustained sound.

Trumpet 1: Requires access to a straight mute.

Program Notes:

This piece takes inspiration from a variety of sources, including Beethoven's 7th Symphony (2nd Movement), Bizet's *Habanera*, and John Williams' *Schindler's List* theme. It originally intended to blend characteristics from each into a satisfying and natural-feeling mixture. However, throughout the composition process, it began to develop its own voice.

No story was originally intended to be associated with the piece, though I began to imagine one as the piece entered the final stages of writing. The piece begins in the aftermath of a battlefield, as the victors observe the irreparable damage dealt to the landscape and their enemy. The cause surely cannot be worth the cost paid in lives. In the piece's waltz, the remaining combatants turn their gaze toward their distant leaders, celebrating their apparent victory from the safety of the backlines. Their thoughts are elsewhere, dwelling not on the countless deaths their conquest has caused. They look forward to the land they will claim, the riches they will gain, and the glory they imagine. Most of their ilk have never known war, its toll. The few that have managed, in their revelry and self-indulgence, to somehow forget. The soldiers will no longer tolerate such gross ignorance, deciding to confront their superiors. The aristocratic and subservient classes collide in the piece's finale, the result of which is unknown.

David Morissette

Somber Glory ♩ = 60

Trumpet in B♭ 1

Trumpet in B♭ 2

Horn in F

Trombone

Tuba

19

B♭ Tpt. 1

B♭ Tpt. 2

Hn.

Tbn.

Tuba

62

B♭ Tpt. 1

B♭ Tpt. 2

Hn.

Tbn.

Tuba

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

mp *mf* *mp* *f*

f *ff* *dim.* *f* *ff* *f*

mp *f* *ff* *f* *ff* *f*

74

B♭ Tpt. 1

B♭ Tpt. 2

Hn.

Tbn.

Tuba

f *f* *f* *f* *f*

dim. *mp*

Straight Mute

f *mp*

3/4

B

$\text{♩} = 120$ **Tempo Subito**

B♭ Tpt. 1

B♭ Tpt. 2

Hn.

Tbn.

Tuba

mp

mp

cresc.

f

mf cresc.

f

cresc.

f

B♭ Tpt. 1

B♭ Tpt. 2

Hn.

Tbn.

Tuba

f dim.

mp

dim.

p

f dim.

mf

cresc.

f

f dim.

mp

mf cresc.

f

f dim.

mp

dim.

p

f dim.

mf

cresc.

f

115

B♭ Tpt. 1

B♭ Tpt. 2

Hn.

Tbn.

Tuba

f *dim.* *p*

mp *cresc.* *f*

f *dim.* *mp*

f *dim.* *p*

f *dim.* *p* *cresc.* *f* *dim.* *mf*

131

B♭ Tpt. 1

B♭ Tpt. 2

Hn.

Tbn.

Tuba

mf *cresc.* *ff*

mf *cresc.* *ff*

mf

mf *cresc.* *ff*

mf *cresc.* *ff* *mf*

mf *cresc.* *ff* *mf*

mf *cresc.* *ff* *mf*

147

B♭ Tpt. 1

B♭ Tpt. 2

Hn.

Tbn.

Tuba

mf

f

mf

f

mf

mf

f

ord.

accel.

p

p

mp

mp

163

B♭ Tpt. 1

B♭ Tpt. 2

Hn.

Tbn.

Tuba

mf

f

mf

f

mp

mp

mf

f

mp

mf

f

[illegible]

211

B♭ Tpt. 1

B♭ Tpt. 2

Hn.

Tbn.

Tuba

mf

cresc.

f

mp

mf

219

B♭ Tpt. 1

B♭ Tpt. 2

Hn.

Tbn.

Tuba

f

f

f

f

cresc. _ _ _ _ _ *ff*

[illegible]

Appendix

Morissette_AtmosphericGesturesVideo.mp4

Video associated with the piece *Atmospheric Gestures*. This video is meant to be shown during the performance of the piece.

Morissette_AtmosphericGestures_Fall2024.wav

Recording of the piece *Atmospheric Gestures*, performed at its premiere on Dec 18, 2024, in UofA's Convocation Hall. Performed by flutist Shelley Younge, oboist Beth Levia, clarinetist Rob Spady and bassoonist Matthew Howatt.

Morissette_TDOTD_Winter2024.wav

Recording of the piece *The Duality of That Day*, performed at its premiere on April 18, 2024, in UofA's Convocation Hall. Performed by the ensemble Bok Brass, featuring trumpeters Russ Whitehead & Joel Gray, horn player Peter Clark, trombonist Alden Lowry and tubist Hannah Gray.

Morissette_14Hours_Fall2023.wav

Recording of the piece *14 Hours*, performed at its premiere on Dec 14, 2023, in UofA's Convocation Hall. Performed by the ensemble UltraViolet, featuring flutist Chenoa Anderson, saxophonist Allison Balcetis, percussionist Mark Segger & pianist Roger Admiral.