

The Multimedia Construction Kit

BY **KENNETH AMIS**

*Commissioned by Thomas O'Halloran and the Carlisle Middle School
Carlisle, Massachusetts, U.S.A.*

Instrumentation

1st and 2nd Piccolos

1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Flutes

1st and 2nd Oboes

1st and 2nd Bassoons

1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th B^b Clarinets

1st and 2nd B^b Bass Clarinets

1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th E^b Alto Saxophones

1st and 2nd B^b Tenor Saxophones

1st and 2nd E^b Baritone Saxophones

1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th B^b Cornets

1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th B^b Trumpets

1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th French Horns in F

1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Trombones

1st and 2nd Baritones

1st and 2nd Tubas

Timpani

Bass Drum

Suspended Cymbal

Xylophone

Tubular Chimes

Approximate timing : 9 minutes

$$ni = \frac{vO}{vi'}$$

The Multimedia Construction Kit

Performance Notes

Introduction

The Multimedia Construction Kit is a piece that highlights the affects created by an artistic experience. It brings together music and visual art in an interactive communiqué of emotions, dispositions and craft. Just as a scent may evoke a particular taste in one's mouth, sounds organized in verse, or music, may presuppose a visual image giving an artist the inspiration to create an optical transcription of the aural experience. This transcription, however, would represent a visual interpretation that the artist has made, not a literal translation of music. Surely, if music could be wholly and perfectly rendered into a visual medium there would be no need for large expensive orchestras (or large expensive stereos). Can, then, this transcription, viewed by a musician, create an affect similar to the one that initially inspired the artist. And, if the musician makes a musical interpretation of that affect, would the resulting transcription resemble the original music? This is the process that awaits the performers in **The Multimedia Construction Kit**. Visual artists pursue an explicit means of visual communication while musicians undergo a type of multiple choice 'Rorschach test'. The performance of **The Multimedia Construction Kit** is achieved through the interpretation and transcription of three art forms – visual, music and movement.

$$\sin \theta_c = \frac{n_2}{n_1}$$

About the Score

The band is divided into two groups as shown below.

Group 1	Group 2
1 st piccolo	2 nd piccolo
1 st and 2 nd flutes	3 rd and 4 th flutes
1 st oboe	2 nd oboe
1 st bassoon	2 nd bassoon
1 st and 2 nd clarinets	3 rd and 4 th clarinets
1 st bass clarinet	2 nd bass clarinet
1 st and 2 nd alto saxophones	3 rd and 4 th alto saxophones
1 st tenor saxophone	2 nd tenor saxophone
1 st baritone saxophone	2 nd baritone saxophone
1 st and 2 nd cornets	3 rd and 4 th cornets
1 st and 2 nd trumpets	3 rd and 4 th trumpets
1 st and 2 nd french horns	3 rd and 4 th french horns
1 st and 2 nd trombones	3 rd and 4 th trombones
1 st baritone	2 nd baritone
1 st tuba	2 nd tuba

Percussion are part of neither group.

The range of the parts from highest to lowest is 1st, 3rd, 2nd then 4th. An effort should be made to have an equal number of players in each group. The reason for this grouping is explained under the heading, **Performance**.

Conventions

The following notes will use certain words which, though not semantically restrictive, have come to imply certain meanings.

<i>art, artwork, piece of art, visual image</i>	These terms will be used to refer to visual art as opposed to music. This could be a painting, sculpture, lighting, drawing, photography or any other form of visually created work.
<i>artist(s)</i>	The term ' <i>artist</i> ' will be used to refer to the person or persons creating the <i>visual images</i> .
<i>musician(s)</i>	The word ' <i>musician</i> ' refers to an instrumentalist in the band.
<i>solo section(s)</i>	<i>Solo sections</i> are specific sections in the musical score where the <i>artwork</i> shall be employed. It is in these sections that the musicians will interpret and re-transcribe the art into music. $\frac{\sin i}{v_1} = \frac{\sin r}{v_2}$
<i>melody</i>	This is the tune that is played by the <i>musician</i> .
<i>theme</i>	Essentially the same as a <i>melody</i> , however in this document the word ' <i>theme</i> ' will be used to refer to the <i>melody</i> and its accompanying voices, if applicable (i.e., middle voices, bass line). In the score the <i>themes</i> are listed A through F and its voices abbreviated with a small 'v'.
→	→ refers to θ_i

Performance

The Multimedia Construction Kit contains three (3) *solo sections*, of which the first two are repeated. The first two *solo sections* give the *musicians* a choice of six (6) different themes to choose from. Immediately prior to the playing of these *solo sections* the *musicians* are shown a *piece of art*, which they then use to make their decision of which theme to play. This means that a minimum of three (3) *pieces of art* are needed. A maximum of five (5) can be used if it is decided that different *pieces of art* will be shown on the repeat of each section. Since the association of the *art* to a *theme* is based on an individual interpretation, it is possible that each *musician* could end up playing a different *theme* during the *solo section*. Great care has been taken to structure the counterpoint so that if everyone plays a different theme simultaneously the result isn't anarchy. However, the *artist* is to strive to avoid this scenario (at least in the 1st and last *solo sections*) and create a single, clear and explicit impression. The following paragraphs detail how each *solo section* should be approached.

1st Solo Section [measures 31 through 47] : *music (characterized) → art → music*

The preparation of this begins with the *artist* listening to the six different *themes* that constitute this section (either by playing them on a piano or listening to a tape prepared by the conductor/band). Then he/she chooses one of the *themes* to base his/her *artwork* on and creates a *piece of art* with the intent to recreate, in the person viewing the *art*, a similar feeling to that which the *artist* felt when listening to the music. The *themes* provided in this *solo section* are 'characterized'; meaning each *theme* lends itself to being heard as having certain disposition or nature. Even if played unemotionally the nature of the *theme* can be heard through its rhythms, harmonies and voicing. It is important that the *artist* attempt not only to capture some of this in his/her *artwork*, but also to produce an image so provocative that the *musicians* will intuitively associate the *artwork* with the appropriate *theme*. 'Theoretically,' all the *musicians* should be drawn to play the same *theme* that originally inspired the artist. This should be done without any foreknowledge of which *theme* the *artist* actually used (or even the fact that the *artist* was using one of the *themes* for inspiration). The performance of this section measures the strength of such a theory – a theory whose precariousness may prove to be more interesting than its substantiation.

$$n_1 \sin \theta_1 = n_2 \sin \theta_2$$

In the live performance, the two groups within the band will take turns being shown the *artwork*. Group 1 should be shown the artwork moments before the first time this section is played (around measure 24 or 25 – as most of them rest). Each of the *musicians* in group 1 will make a decision on which *theme* to play based on the feeling they experienced from the *art*. Just before the repeat of this section (roughly measure 40 or 41) group 2 should be shown a *visual image*. This could be the same *piece of art* that group 1 saw or it could be something totally different. Again, each *musician* will decide on which *theme* to play based on the feeling they've experienced from the *art*. Group 1 plays this section the first time and group 2 plays it the second.

2nd Solo Section [measures 92 through 108] : *art → music*

This section of the work allows the *artist* to create a *piece of art* ad libitum. The *artist* is not required to use music or any other external source for inspiration simply to create a provocative and skilled work of *art*. This section is also repeated so that one or two *pieces of art* may be used.

$$n = \frac{\sin i}{\sin r}$$

As far as the *musicians* are concerned, they are to follow the exact same procedure in this *solo section* as they did for the first – decide on and play a *theme* based on feeling they experience from viewing the *art* (which can be shown to them at approximately measure 86 for group 1 and measure 102 for group 2). This section will be harder for the *musicians* since they will have to draw an association between a *theme* and a *visual image* which may or may not share a common lineage.

3rd Solo Section [measure 117 to the end] : *music → art (characterized) → music*

In this section the music will again be used to inspire the *artist*, however, it differs from the first in one important way – the *artist* will decide upon the character of the *theme* and *artwork*, and therefore the subsequent musical performance. Unlike the first two *solo sections*, the *musicians* do not have different *melodies* to choose from. They will all be playing a choral-like *theme* which has been intentionally written to allow for multiple interpretations. There are no articulation markings, no dynamics, no tempo markings and its harmonic and rhythmic structure, although clearly shaped, lend themselves to a number of different renderings. This will, perhaps, be the hardest section for the *artist*. His/her task is to listen to this section (either by playing it on a piano or listening to an uncommitted, 'interpretless' tape prepared by the conductor) and impassion the music. The *artist* should ask himself/herself, "How do I feel this section should be played? Joyously, angrily, mournfully, pompously, (etc.)?" The *artist* does here what conductors and musicians normally do before playing a passage – form an idea of the character with which the music should be performed. He/she will attempt to communicate this idea to the band's conductor through a *visual image*. Again, clarity and articulateness are crucial.

$$n = \frac{c}{v}$$

In this last section it is only the conductor who sees the *artwork*. He/she may choose to view the *artwork* at some point prior to the performance or decide to put himself/herself through the same process as the *musicians* and see the *artwork* only moments before the last section (presumably around measure 112). Either option is acceptable. The conductor should then, without any verbal instructions or rehearsal, inspire the musicians to play this section in a way that reflects the affect that was generated in him/her by the *art*. In effect, the conductor becomes the *visual image* inspiring the *musicians* to play a certain way. The only markings in the score and parts are the time signature of $\frac{4}{4}$ and the words "As conducted." This should not be a problem for the *musicians* since interpreting a conductor's movements is something they are supposed to do all the time. However, with younger *musicians* this may be a new experience and the conductor should encourage the effort. Much like in the game 'Charades', the most effective communication is a result of both a realistic pantomime and open-minded and responsive interpreters.

To the conductor

Each *musician* should thoroughly learn how to play his/her voice in each of the *themes*. This way their decision to play one *theme* over another is not biased by technical insecurities. It is also important that each *musician* memorize the character of each of the *themes* in the first and second *solo sections*. This is to facilitate the speedy realization of an association between the music and *art*. For those *musicians* who have inner voices or bass lines in their part, the *melody* of each *theme* is included as cue notes. This is only the case where the character of a particular *theme* cannot be deduced from the given *voice*. It is important that each *musician* not be influenced by the decisions of their colleagues. Once an individual makes a decision to play a certain *theme* and begins to play he/she should not switch to another because of what he/she hears around him. This will be more difficult for group 2 since they play the repeat of the first two *solo sections*. The *musicians* of group 2 must be able to focus on the art while group 1 is finishing the first strain of *solo sections* 1 and 2. They must then enter in time, playing whatever *theme* they have decided on. Conductors should be aware that an extra-large cue may be needed as each group begins the *solo sections* since their eyes will have been away from the music (looking at the *art*). While making their associations the *musicians* may have lost count of where they are and when they're supposed to come in.

If space allows for a slight separation of the two groups on stage, it would make showing the *artwork* to one group without letting the other see it possible. Insights could be gained by observing the reaction of each group as they unwittingly view the same *piece of art*. The mechanics and logistics of how the *artwork* is displayed would be unique to each hall. The band should practice this piece (not with the same *artwork* that will be used for the performance) several times before the performance to get used to the procedure and relieve the *musicians* of any inhibitions. It should be noted that not all the parts have the **Tacet** staff as an option.

If the conductor (or another *musician*) provides a tape recording of the *themes* of the 1st and, if requested, 2nd *solo sections* to the *artist*, the performances should be very inspiring and have a clear personality. A recording of the 3rd *solo section* should, however, be indifferent and uncommitted to any demeanor. It is up to the *artist* to decide on the character of the final *solo section*.

If, in the unfortunate circumstance, there is no *artist* available for the performance of this work, preexisting *artwork* may be used. A conscious decision must be made to choose *artwork* that reflects what an *artist* may have made in fulfillment of the requirements for this piece.

To the artist(s) / art teacher

The *artwork* required for the first and last *solo sections* should not be thought of as limited. The creation of the *artwork* should not feel restricted either. Many *artists* have used only two colors to produce a universe of expression. Others have created scores of varied *artwork* representing a single idea or emotion. Perhaps an effort can be made to interpret two of the *themes* in one *visual image*. Whatever the strategy, the actions of the *musicians* will show its soundness. Young students may choose to think of **IT** as a highly progressive version of the game 'Pictionary'. Always keep in mind the age and experience of the *musicians* who will be interpreting the *art*.

If this piece is used in a classroom setting, the teacher/coordinator can feel free to make as many variations of this process as possible. The logistics of having a classroom of students listen to the *themes* need to be considered. Keep in mind, it is the character and the feeling that one gets upon hearing a *theme* that need to be remembered, not the theme itself, so constant broadcasting of the *themes* should not be necessary. Students may benefit from being in small groups so they may listen to the themes more often if needed. The performance of **The Multimedia Construction Kit** has certain guidelines which have been described above. However, outside of the performance preparations, there is much room for variation, exploration and exploitation. **IT** should provide a learning experience which is both fun and inspiring.

KENNETH AMIS

$$n_1 \sin i = n_2 \sin r$$

C

30

Picc. 1-2
Fls. 3-4
B \flat Cls. 3-4
B \flat Tpts. 3-4

30

Timp.
Xylo.

30

Theme A

v.1
v.2
v.3
v.4

30

Theme B

v.1
v.2
v.3
v.4

30

Theme C

v.1
v.2
v.3
v.4

30

Theme D

v.1
v.2
v.3

30

Theme E

30

Theme F

v.1
v.2
v.3
v.4

30

Tacet

C

34

Theme A

v.1

v.2

v.3

v.4

34

Theme B

v.1

v.2

v.3

v.4

34

Theme C

v.1

v.2

v.3

v.4

34

Theme D

v.1

v.2

v.3

34

Theme E

34

Theme F

v.1

v.2

v.3

v.4

34

Tacet

38

v.1

v.2

v.3

v.4

Theme A

38

v.1

v.2

v.3

v.4

Theme B

38

v.1

v.2

v.3

v.4

Theme C

38

v.1

v.2

v.3

Theme D

38

Theme E

38

v.1

v.2

v.3

v.4

Theme F

38

Tacet

41

v.1

v.2

v.3

v.4

Theme A

41

v.1

v.2

v.3

v.4

Theme B

41

v.1

v.2

v.3

v.4

Theme C

41

v.1

v.2

v.3

Theme D

41

v.1

Theme E

41

v.1

v.2

v.3

v.4

Theme F

41

Tacet

44

Theme A

v.1

v.2

v.3

v.4

44

Theme B

v.1

v.2

v.3

v.4

44

Theme C

v.1

v.2

v.3

v.4

44

Theme D

v.1

v.2

v.3

44

Theme E

44

Theme F

v.1

v.2

v.3

v.4

44

Tacet

48

Picc. 1-2

Fls. 1-2

Fls. 3-4

Obs. 1-2

Bns. 1-2

B^b Cl. 1-2

B^b Cls. 3-4

B^b B. Cl. 1-2

E^b A. Sax. 1-2

E^b A. Sax. 3-4

B^b T. Sax. 1-2

E^b B. Sax. 1-2

B^b Cor. 1-2

B^b Cor. 3-4

B^b Tpts. 1-2

B^b Tpts. 3-4

Hns. in F 1-2

Hns. in F 3-4

Tbns. 1-2

Tbns. 3-4

Bar. 1-2

Tbas. 1-2

Timp.

Bs. Dr.

Susp. Cym.

Xylo.

Chimes

mf

a2

tr

pp