

ARCANUM

for solo alto saxophone (2014)

Alan Theisen

Arcanum (2014) for solo alto saxophone

Alan Theisen
(b. 1981)

Program Note by the Composer

Arcanum (2014) for solo alto saxophone was composed for and dedicated to my good friend, the excellent saxophonist Christopher Condon. "Arcanum," more frequently encountered in the plural "arcana," is a profound and mystical secret known only to initiates (for instance, the alleged knowledge of the ancient alchemists turning lead into gold). Music making, too, is a kind of bizarre magic. I have long been in awe of truly exceptional performers and their ability to conjure notes out of thin air, create sounds and evoke emotions with seemingly little effort, then transmute those ideas into different directions or back into silence in the blink of an eye. In this composition, I sought to capture this capricious and supernatural quality through a seamless thread of variations.

Arcanum was premiered on 24 May 2014 in Hamburg, Germany by the dedicatee.

Note to Performer

Arcanum contains moments of improvisation to be explored by the performer. Here, as is always the ideal, the composer and performer truly become one. The boundary between that which is strictly notated and that which is not should never be apparent to the audience.

The entirety of *Arcanum* should be performed as if it were being completely made up on the spot, in the moment.

For more information about the composer and his music, visit:
www.AlanTheisen.com

Dedicated to Christopher Condon

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Sempre come una improvvisazione;
Molto lento mistico e introverso; irreali ♩ = 44

Transposed
E♭ Alto Sax.

non espressivo
ppp
long
pachissimo espressivo
p

pp
molto tenuto
remain absolutely physically motionless; grand pause ad libitum
p subito espressivo

sospirando
mp
pp
dolce

optional improvisation
(quiet filigree)
on and just under this pitch

espressivo, luminoso
ppp
pp
p
(pizz.)
mp
ppp

piangendo
mp

15 *molto cantabile*

f ma non troppo

18 *rubato, capriccioso*

f

optional improvisation centering on this pitch (approx. 10"-15")

if not desired proceed from end of m. 19 directly to start of m. 21

20 *rapido*

f *pp*

pause may be short or long

improvise multiple long and mysterious phrases on these three pitches for as long as desired. other pitches may be used but only very sparingly. improvisation should match the context of previous and subsequent measures.

22 *suddenly like the beginning*

ppp

without pause or break, *attacca:*

26

pp *p*

31 *very long*

p

very long

Poco piu mosso, cantabile ma avanti (♩ = 48) ♩ = 96

romantically

34 *mp* *p*

37 *mp* *mf* *mp*

41 *pp senza accenti, leggero* *mf* *mf*

43 *mp* *mf* *mf*

♭ (or tremolo to G-flat)

46 *f* *f* *f* *fp* *fp*

quasi-double stop *5*

manipulate this pitch if and as desired

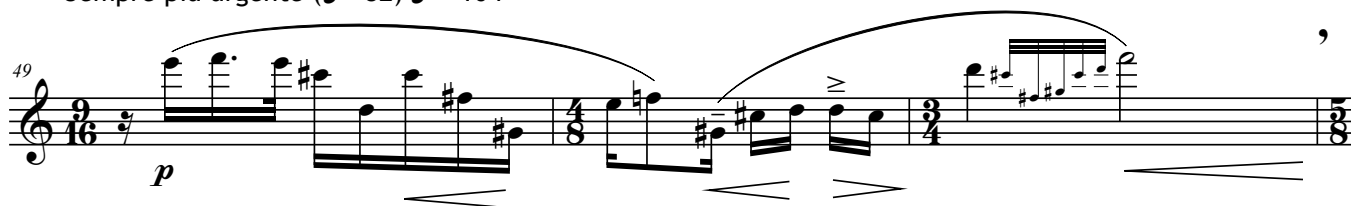
Senza tempo, ad libitum.
 Heavily accent beginning tone of each group.
 Fermatas should be of uneven length, but last fermata should be longest.
 Measure should generally be done in one or two long breaths.

48 *ffp* *ffp* *ffp* *ffp* *ffp* *ffp*

9/16

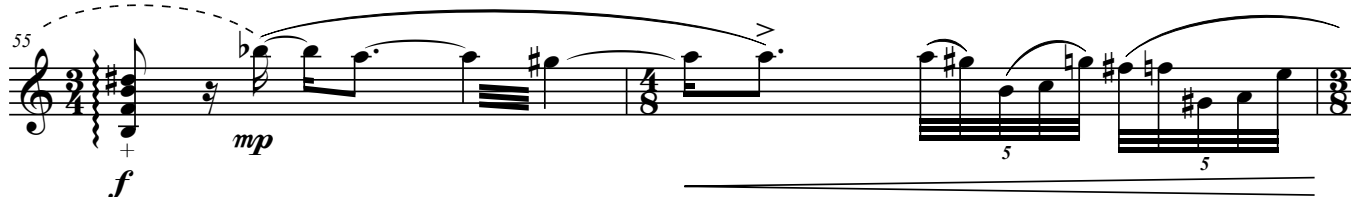
without pause or break, attacca:

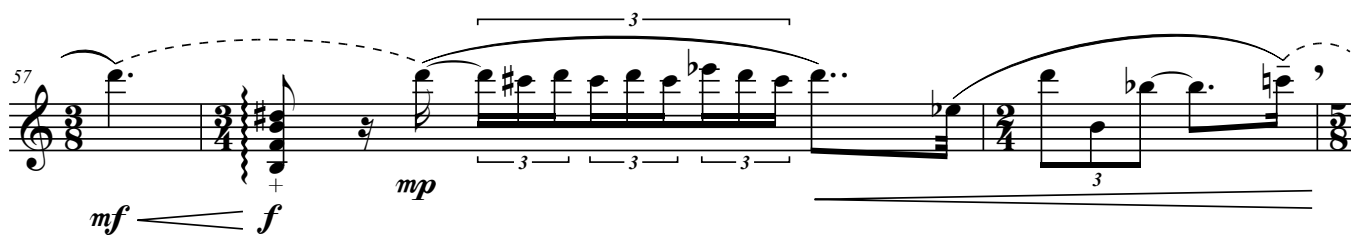
Sempre piu urgente (♩ = 52) ♩ = 104

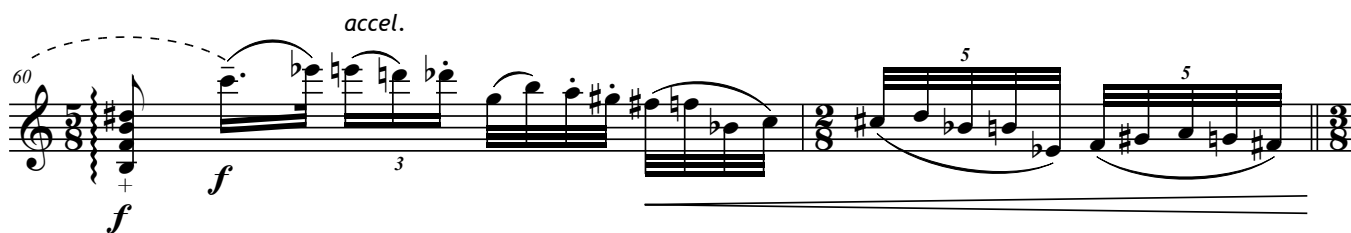
49 
p

52 
mp *pp*

to be played as an upward-arppeggiated
pizzicato quadruple stop (slap tongue)

55 
f *mp*

57 
mf *f* *mp*

60 
f *accel.*

Impetuoso ♩ = 112

62 
f *ff* *f*

65

Musical notation for measures 65-66. Measure 65 contains a series of eighth notes with various accidentals. Measure 66 features a triplet of eighth notes. The system concludes with a fermata over a half note.

67 *accel.* ♩ = 128 *ff*

Musical notation for measures 67-68. Measure 67 begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp. It contains a series of eighth notes with a dynamic marking of *ff*. Measure 68 continues with eighth notes and a fermata.

70

Musical notation for measures 70-71. Measure 70 contains eighth notes with a fermata. Measure 71 continues with eighth notes and a fermata.

(♩ = 104) Tempo ad libitum, rapsodico

72

Musical notation for measures 72-73. Measure 72 contains eighth notes with a fermata. Measure 73 continues with eighth notes and a fermata.

75

Musical notation for measures 75-76. Measure 75 contains eighth notes with a fermata. Measure 76 features a triplet of eighth notes and a fermata.

79 *con umorismo* *ff* *p* *without pause or break, attacca:*

Musical notation for measures 79-80. Measure 79 starts with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp, containing a series of eighth notes with a dynamic marking of *ff*. Measure 80 continues with eighth notes and a dynamic marking of *p*. The system ends with a fermata.

Allegro scherzando ma un poco minaccioso ♩ = 132-138

82 *mf*

86 *mf*

free improvisation - 2 measures, in time (follow rhythm if desired)

90 *p* *pp* *mp*

94 *mf* like a funky walking bass (norm.)

98 *f*

101 *mf* *f*

105 *ff* quasi-glissando