

Teacher Resource Notes: Prepared by Phil Oxley

***Animalia* by Natalie Williams (2017)**

to be performed by Arcadia Winds on Thursday 4 May, 2017 at Armidale Town Hall.

Syllabus topics:	Year 9/10:	Australian Music (compulsory topic)
	Music 1:	Australian Music; An Instrument and Its Repertoire; Music of the 20 th & 21 st Centuries (elective topics)
	Music 2:	Australian Music (Year 11 elective topic) Music of the Last 25 Years (Year 12 core topic)

ANIMALIA

Animalia is a suite for wind quintet, commissioned by the Canberra Symphony Orchestra for their inaugural Australian Series chamber concerts in 2017 and premiered by Arcadia Winds on 2 March, 2017.

This work was composed as a set of reaction pieces to artworks exhibited in the “Popular Pet Show” portraiture exhibition at the National Portrait Gallery, Dec 2016-Mar 2017. A collection of pet portraits exhibited by Australian artists formed the core of the exhibit. The suite is intended as a collection of works that highlights the relationship between pets and their owners, each movement comments on 1-2 pieces within the exhibition.

Movt III – Composer Natalie Williams’s note

The 3rd movement (of *Animalia*) *Five sheepish faces* depicts sheep characters immortalised in portraits by Lucy Culliton (pictured below with her painting ‘Self with friends’). Facing the viewer, each animal appears as an androgenized character, presenting unique facial features and expressions. The movement is based around one chord which remains static under a series of five solo passages, taken by each instrument; one for each sheep. Comical, capricious and awry, the melodic lines unfold, twist and turn in the same manner as the crazy sheep in each portrait. This movement is also a play-on-words for the “five sheepish faces” displayed by the woodwind players as they grapple with the physical limits of their instruments.



Score observation activities – Movt III of Animalia *Five Sheepish Faces*

Note for teachers: Use any of the activities which you feel are appropriate for your students.

Study the score of *Five Sheepish Faces* and answer the questions below.

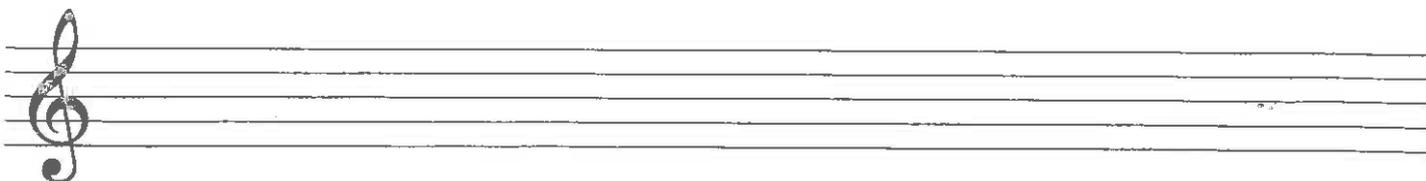
1. Describe the oboe melody which is heard in bars 3 to 10.

2. Compare and contrast the oboe melody (bars 3 -10) with the bassoon melody (b 38-46)

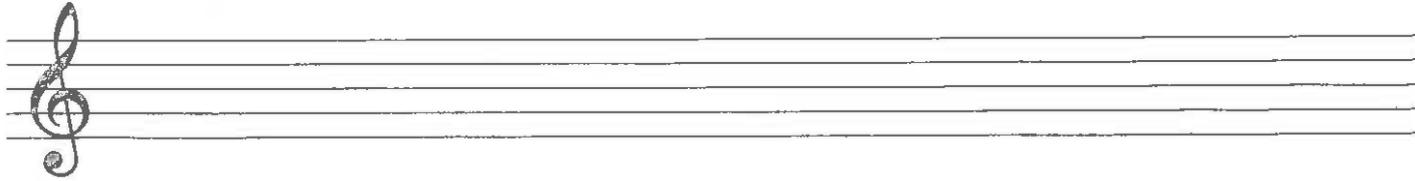
3. The piece opens in bar 1 with a chord, played mainly in crotchets. This idea is used at the end of each solo (bars 11, 18, 27 and 36). How have the notes in the first chord been manipulated at the end of each solo?

4. Transpose to concert pitch:

- a) The clarinet melody in bars 14 - 15



b) The horn melody in bars 24 -25



5. a) Describe the accompaniment pattern used under the solo melody lines.

b) How is the accompaniment part under each solo linked to the opening chord in the piece?

6. How is UNITY and CONTRAST created in this piece?

7. List some ways in which this piece of music might suggest the title of the artwork "*Five Sheepish Faces*".



Self with friends 2016 by Lucy Culliton. Oil on canvas 170 x 170 cm. Courtesy of Lucy Culliton

Answers

1. The oboe melody is very “angular” in shape.

The melody rambles, however there are a number of ideas that are used frequently. These include the intervals of an augmented fourth and a major seventh. Another repeated pattern is a chromatic pattern of rising semitones.

There does not seem to be a particular tonal centre for the melody, despite the repeated notes C and Db in the accompaniment. This means that it is quite atonal in nature.

The range of the melody is large and it uses almost the entire range of notes that can be played on the oboe.

The melodic shape continually rises and falls, however the last two bars begin at the bottom of the oboe register and rise to one of its highest notes, before finishing on a high A.

2. The first bar and a half of the bassoon melody is identical to that of the oboe, except that it is two octaves lower than the oboe melody.

The bassoon melody rambles like the oboe melody and seem to improvise on very similar ideas to those found in the oboe tune.

3. The first chord reads upwards (at concert pitch) C F Bb Eb A. the chords used in the next three places are inversions of the first chord:

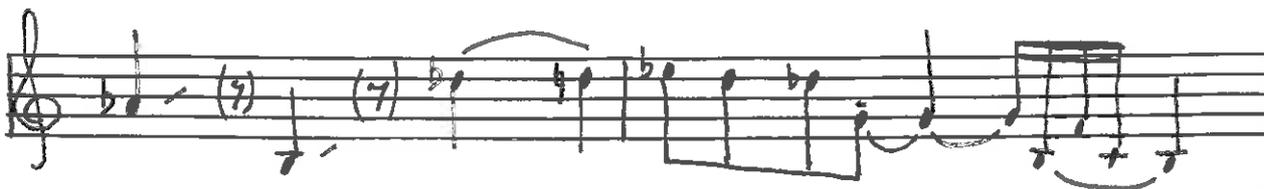
Bar 11: F Bb Eb A C

Bar 18: Bb Eb A C F

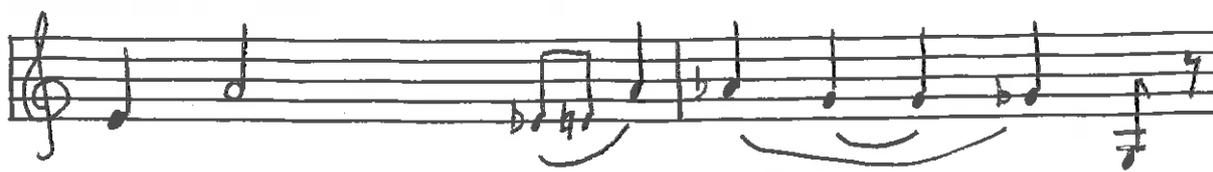
Bar 27: Eb A C F Bb

The chord in bar 36 returns to the original pattern.

4. a) Clarinet



b) Horn



5. a) The accompaniment under the solo lines is always played by two instruments alternately playing the same note. There are only two pitches used in each accompaniment pattern. The two notes are a semitone apart.

b) The accompaniment notes are linked to the opening chord by using the chord notes in a reverse order.

Accompaniment 1 begins on the note C

Accompaniment 2 begins on the note A

Accompaniment 3 begins on the note Eb

Accompaniment 4 begins on the note Bb

Accompaniment 5 begins on the note F

6. UNITY is created in the repeated accompaniment device, the repeated crotchet pattern interlude between the solos and by the similar angular movement and shape of each solo.

CONTRAST is created by the changing tone colour of the solo instruments, the register where the solos are played and by the changing accompaniment drone-type notes under each solo.

7. The music suggests *Five Sheepish Faces* in many ways. These include:

- The music is written in 5/4 time.
- There are five notes used in the opening chord pattern.
- There are five solos in this piece.
- The melodic ideas are suggestive of the random grazing of the sheep.
- The “odd sheep out” in the painting (the white sheep) might be the odd note out in the opening chord: all the notes are a fourth apart, except the top note, which is an augmented fourth away from the note below.

There are probably many more answers to this question!!

Listening/musicology activities

Many composers have used paintings as inspiration for composition.

The young American composer Paul Posthuma has selected a number of paintings by the Swiss-German artist Paul Klee (1879-1940) as inspiration for a series of short pieces for a variety of small instrumental groups.

On YouTube, find the video *"Twittering Machine" from Paul Klee: Painted Songs*. The piece is written for clarinet and piano.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eQvC2rrMkvg>

Listen to this piece and answer the following question:

1. How does this music attempt to describe the painting "The Twittering Machine"?

2. What is the relationship between the piano and the clarinet in this piece?

3. What musical devices has the composer used in writing this piece?

Answers

1. The music starts slowly and then speeds up, sounding like the machine is being wound by someone turning the handle of the machine, slowly at first, then more energetically later on.

The clarinet and piano both play fragments of melody, which sound like bird calls.

Many other answers are possible here.

2. The piano begins with a simple theme, which is repeated. The clarinet takes up the piano idea and also repeats it above the piano line. Both instruments then develop the idea, seemingly independent of each other.
3. The composer uses the idea of repetition, repeating a small fragment in an ostinato like pattern. However, the ostinatos develop and are extended to produce new repeated patterns.
There is a fugue like effect as both instruments develop their ideas.
The composer uses both a crescendo and an accelerando later in the piece.
The composer changes the register, with the pitch getting higher.

Composition activities

1. Select a painting that you like.

In a small group of people in your class, improvise a short piece, using the painting as your “musical score”.

Record the performance and play it for others in the class.

2. Find a painting of an animal.

Write a short melody, which you feel describes the animal in some way.

Record your melody.

Notate the melody, so that others may play it.