

DOWNTOWN CROSSING

is not only the title of this composition, but the name of a major stop on the Boston underground railway (T) system, where the Red Line and Orange Line intersect. (There are four such lines: Red, Orange, Green, and Blue.)

The *map* of Boston's T system – a pattern of intersecting trajectories, in four colors – has given rise to this particular piece of music-theater. A simplified version of the Boston T map serves as the "score" for *Downtown Crossing*, in that it controls the order and character of musical events. Furthermore, when laid out on the floor of the performance space, the map also marks the pathway(s) of performers as they move across the stage.

INSTRUMENTATION

The piece is designed for *two trombonists* -- one playing tenor trombone, the other bass trombone – and an *improvisation ensemble of at least 18 players*. The latter should consist of 3 percussionists plus a body of woodwind and brass players. 3 members of the non-percussion ensemble must play instruments small enough to be carried around while walking (for example, flute, oboe, clarinet, saxophone, trumpet or horn). Members of this latter group are referred to as Strolling Players (1, 2 & 3).

THE "MAP"-SCORE-STAGE LAYOUT

Please refer to the "map" used for *Downtown Crossing*, as shown on page iii. It must be replicated on the floor of the performance space. Use tape for the lines – colored tape if possible, corresponding to the colors of the train lines!

Note that this is a greatly simplified version of the actual T-map, with many of the stations omitted. The following stations are used for the composition (and therefore are found on the simplified map):

BLUE LINE: Wonderland, Airport, Aquarium, Bowdoin

ORANGE LINE: Oak Grove, North Station, Downtown Crossing, Chinatown, Back Bay, Forest Hills

GREEN LINE: Lechmere, North Station, Park, Copley, (then dividing to) Boston College – or Newton, Riverside – or Heath

RED LINE: Alewife, Harvard, Park, Downtown Crossing, South Station, JFK/U.Mass, (then dividing to) Mattapan – or Quincy, Braintree

(Note, too, that the map has been angled roughly 90 degrees. From a seating position in the main audience area, i.e. as one looks directly at the back wall of the performance space, "north & south" are respectively 'left & right.')

With the exception of starting points (to be noted on the next page), each individual *station* (Lechmere, North Station, etc.) should be *identified* for the audience. This can be accomplished in a number of ways:

A) the use of signs on poster-board. Each sign can be placed on a table located at the appropriate "station." (Sound-producing objects could also be placed on some of these tables – boom-boxes, small percussion instruments, toy instruments and the like. These will be used by the traveling performers as they arrive at the station.)

B) the presence of a performer, given a speaking part, who is seated at the "station." (The person may also be holding a sign.) As musicians approach, the speaker stands up, holds his sign high, and announces the name of the station. Option 1: He/she may also read a prepared statement about the station/location. Option 2: He/she might also activate a sound-producing object, of the sort noted in (A) above.

C) a combination of both (A) and (B) above – some stations designated by signs on tables, others by human announcers, etc.

RULES OF TRAVEL

Three musicians (the two trombonists plus one Strolling Player) choose STARTING LOCATIONS – each person at a different station – from the following menu: BRAINTREE, FOREST HILLS, RIVERSIDE, BOWDOIN, LECHMERE, OAK GROVE.

Midway through the performance (i.e. about the 4 or 5 minute mark), two additional Strolling Players will begin their own "journey" – starting at stations which were *not* chosen by the first group of three musicians. Strolling Players 2 & 3 do not have to begin simultaneously. There may be a time gap between their entrances – as great as one minute.

All of these these starting-stations should be chosen in advance of the performance. Strolling Players 2 & 3, who start their travel later than the others, should wait – either seated or standing -- at their chosen starting locations.

By the end of the piece (timing to be designated in advance), all 5 "travelers" must arrive at one of the following: WONDERLAND, HARVARD, BOSTON COLLEGE. All three of these end-point stations should be used; obviously, some will serve as arrival point(s) for more than one player. *Players may choose their arrival points in advance, or during performance.*

(Note: there are some stations which – although serving as terminus for their respective lines – are neither starting points nor arrival points. Consider these "turnaround" points. If a player reaches one of these, he/she should reverse direction without stopping.)

NORTH STATION, DOWNTOWN CROSSING, PARK STREET and COPLEY are (as in real life) *transfer points*. If and when a performer arrives at one of these points, he or she should feel free to switch lines.

MUTES should be placed on the TABLES located at *transfer points*. When a trombone soloist arrives at a transfer point, a mute should be inserted (or removed), to affect a dramatic change of timbre. Use as great a variety of mutes as you wish -- Straight, Cup, Harmon, hat, plunger! If any of the Strolling Players is a trumpet or horn player, mutes for those instruments could also be placed on the table.

SPOKEN COMMENTARY

Arrival at any of the TRANSFER stations, and final arrival at any of the ENDING-POINT stations, will trigger spoken commentary (about the station and/or the above-ground location). In addition, two "EN ROUTE" itineraries (Huntington Avenue on the Green Line,

and the Longfellow Bridge on the Red Line) will trigger similar commentary. These spoken statements *must* be made! In each case the speaker may be (a) one of the walking musicians, (b) one of the sign-bearing announcers, (c) a musician from the larger ensemble, (d) the conductor. A combination of all (!) would be the most interesting on many levels.

In addition to the obligatory situations above, there are also *optional* statements which may be made when reaching other stations. NOTE: Written statements are supplied with performance materials; they may be read verbatim, or used as springboards for verbal "variation."

THE SOUNDS TO BE PLAYED

There is no single "score." Rather, the various groups within the total ensemble have separate parts. (The resultant musical gestures will be sounding simultaneously.)

THE TWO TROMBONE SOLOISTS

have different parts, one for tenor trombone & the other for bass trombone. Each part consists of a series of musical gestures / events, following a "path" roughly modeled after the Boston T-system map.

The two players may choose varying degrees of synchronization in performing their parts. In any event, they **MUST** perform two synchronized events – in each case, preceded by a cue from the large ensemble. One of these will be fairly brief; the other will be a more extended trombone duet.

There will also be an opportunity for each of the soloists to play a CADENZA. The player wishing to perform a cadenza must say (or shout, or scream!!) the word "STOP." This will cause all sounds to cease, after which point the cadenza begins. See individual parts for further instructions.

THE THREE "STROLLING PLAYERS"

each have a separate part. Ideally, they should *memorize* the part. The instructions and musical materials are relatively uncomplicated, and memorization should be a relatively easy task. It would ensure that the players move around the performing space with ease, unencumbered by sheet music.

THE LARGE ENSEMBLE

Is divided into three sub-groups: percussion (at least 3 players), woodwinds (at least 6 players), & brasses (at least 6 players). All "Large Ensemble" performers will read from identical copies of a single score created specifically for them.

This score will provide instructions for different events and gestures, to be performed in any order. There are twelve (12) such events. Some of them involve the entire *tutti* group; others apply to subgroups. In the latter case, events may overlap.



A CONDUCTOR will direct the Large Ensemble activities -- selecting the order of events, synchronizing attack and cut-off, controlling dynamics, etc. At the conductor's discretion (with two exceptions), individual events / gestures may be repeated. The two exceptions -- which have their own separate instructions (and location) on the score sheet -- are the events which "trigger" the *trombone duets*. Each of these must be performed *once only*.


SHAPE OF THE PERFORMANCE (the "Form")

Is fairly flexible, and ideally will be determined by each conductor and trombone duo. A number of elements are required, however.

- (1) The work's duration is between 12 and 15 minutes.
- (2) It begins and ends loudly *sffz*, dropping down to *pp* shortly after the opening -- and growing louder from *pp* before the ending. Between those points, dynamic variety and contrast are encouraged.
- (3) Strolling Players 2 & 3 do not enter the playing space until (at least) the 4-minute mark.
- (4) The two "duos" and the two "cadenzas" are presented in alternate sequence -- either DCDC or CDCD -- each separated from the other by at least one minute.
- (5) There should be neither cadenzas nor duos until all 5 strolling musicians are traveling within the playing space.
- (6) Arrival at a transfer point will always initiate a significant textural change (particularly with regard to the use of brass mutes), and spoken commentary.

One particular version (use as a model if you wish)


This is the outline of a 14-minute performance. Dynamic indications below apply to all performers, i.e. the trombone soloists and Strolling Players as well as the Large Ensemble.

0:00 minutes until 1:00. Begin loudly, then diminuendo  to *p*.

1:00 until 2:00. Further diminuendo  to *pp*.

2:00 until 3:00. Gradual crescendo , reaching *ff* by the 3-minute mark.

VI

- 3:00 until 4:00. Begin *ff*, then gradually  until you reach *p*.
- 4:00 until 5:00. Strolling Player 2 enters the space at the 4-minute mark. Dynamic level gradually increases to *mp-mf*.
- 5:00 until 6:00. Strolling Player 3 enters the space at the 5-minute mark. Dynamic level gradually increases to *f* by the end of the minute.
- 6:00 until 7:00. Begin cue (including crescendo) for FIRST DUO at the 6-minute mark. The duo begins *sffz*. After duo, gradual diminuendo to *p-pp*.
- 7:00 until 8:00. Gradual crescendo over this minute, reaching *ff* by the end of the minute.
- 8:00 until 9:00. Begin this minute with an unusual gesture – perhaps a faster tempo, or use of an instrumental color previously untapped until now. Dynamics *ff* throughout.
- 9:00-10:00. The TROMBONE CADENZA takes place early during this minute. After cadenza, the Large Ensemble enters *p*, and then diminuendo to *pp*.
- 10:00 until 11:00. Crescendo to *mf-f*, but cut off by the SECOND DUO (dynamic *ff*). Large Ensemble interrupts the duo, *ff*, then dim to *mp*.
- 11:00 until 12:00. Crescendo to *mf-f*, and then fall back again to *mp*.
- 12:00 until 13:00. BASS TROMBONE CADENZA begins at the 12 minute mark. Large Ensemble enters *ff*, and dim rapidly to *pp*. Very quiet for the remainder of the minute.
- 13:00 until 14:00. Begin at *pp* level, and create very gradual crescendo to *ff* by the end of the minute. (All five walking players should be at their end-stations by this time.)
- 14:00. *sffz* ending gesture at the 14-minute mark.

HAVE A PLEASANT JOURNEY!

E.S.
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