For Clive Barker

— solo piano —

Matthew Lee Knowles

2016 – 2021
No tears, please. It’s a waste of good suffering.
- The Hellbound Heart, Clive Barker

This composition started with the desire to turn every letter of a book into music. I chose Clive Barker’s 1986 novella The Hellbound Heart which in 1987 became one of my favourite films: Hellraiser. I knew I would be spending an exceptionally long time with this material so it was important that it meant a lot to me and would sustain my interest. This piece, in all of its occasional tortuousness, seeks to reflect the themes, ideas and implications of Barker’s writing: hedonism, torture, puzzles, sexuality, extreme pleasure indistinguishable from pain, the horrifically beautiful interdimensional Cenobites, sadomasochism, blood and gore and ripping flesh, mysticism and murder.

When I read text I see perpetual patterns; a vast sea of letters talking to each other in all manner of languages, which are so numerous and so exciting to me. When reading most people do not see these and there is no reason they should, they generally don’t add anything to the subject matter. Every single letter of Barker’s book has its own specific note, chord or motif that evolves throughout the thirty-thousand bars (indeed, so did I, I was not the same composer when I wrote both pages one and one-thousand) varying based on the surrounding text in a multidimensional explosion of systems and connections, attempting to put into music the linguistic features that form the contents of the ocean, with its surface projection we skim across when reading. This piece was an utterly painstaking attempt to put these ideas into music and I take some beastly satisfaction that it took around 6666 hours to actually write. I hope this goes some way to celebrating the genius of Clive Barker’s wicked imagination and unparalleled writing style.
DURATION c. 26 hours

This composition is one continuous movement and should only be performed in full

All metronome markings are approximate

This score should be viewed/printed in colour as there are colour coded references throughout

P1 – no pedal at all
P2 – light, occasional
P3 – general, free
P4 – permanently depressed

una corda to be used where the pianist feels it necessary
fff

f

P2
dynamics same in both hands
clunky + uneven

\( \text{retenu} \)

\( \text{precisely} \)

\( \text{f} \)

\( \text{mf} \)

\( \text{ff} \)

\( \text{mp} \)

\( \text{f} \)

\( \text{pp} \)

\( \text{mf} \)

\( \text{pp} \)

\( \text{d} = 120 \)

\( \text{q} = 120 \)

\( \text{211} \)
all the time winding down

$\text{all the time winding down}$
massively slow down

\[ j = 100 \]  dynamics free until page 329

stemless notes can be played in any rhythm
gradually release pedal
gradually depress pedal
massively slow down

\( j = 40 \)

\( f \)
optional action:
excite pedals
fairly voraciously

rubato, ad lib.

P4
P3
P1
optional action:
excite pedals
fairly voraciously
unpredictable dynamic/velocity of trem.
catch resonance with soft pedal

P1 P4

P1 P4

P2 P4
these dynamics apply to all/only spread chords until page 404
rubato, ad lib.
mf

mp

ppp

fff

mf

a tempo

retenu
No natural text can be extracted from this image.
quasi cadenza, improvised dynamics
sim.
quasi cadenza, improvised dynamics  
sim.

P2

pp  

P4  

P1
quasi cadenza, improvised dynamics sim.
brilliante!
[P3]

[P4]

P1
becoming increasingly agitated
no pedal on chords can be freely pedalled until page 587
Always trill to the upper tone:
hesitantly → energetic → dying away

> severe

\[ \text{\begin{tabular}{c} 
6:5 \text{y} \\
7:6 \text{y} 
\end{tabular}} \]
optional action: you may let out a taut, new-sounding
desperate, gut-wrenching howl of distress from deep
within your unconscious with these chords over the next three pages.
only attempt this if you are utterly positive you can pull it off.

optional action: you may let out a taut, new-sounding
desperate, gut-wrenching howl of distress from deep
within your unconscious with these chords over the next three pages.
only attempt this if you are utterly positive you can pull it off.
massively slow down
vibrato on each note
$\frac{d}{dt} x = 200$
to page 842
\( \textbf{c} = 140 \)
Play quickly at any point in the bar freely vary voicing with each repeat. \( x^2 \)

\( \text{\textbf{P2 free dynamics}} \) until page 970
P2 until page 1000

---

[Diagram of sheet music with musical notation]
\( \text{\textcopyright{} 2023}\)
catch staccattissimo chord resonances
with sostenuto pedal until page 1023
\[ \text{\( \frac{3}{2} e \text{\( \frac{4}{5} \)q} \)} \]
ppp
f

ppp
f

p
f

mp

mp

pppp

ppp

f

pp

f

P4

P4

P2

until the end

mf

mf

ppppp

mp

mp

pppp

mp

pppp

mf

pppp

ppp