

A Performer's Guide to the Newest Additions in the Oboe D'amore Canon

by

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ABSTRACT

During my career as an oboist, I have only played the oboe d'amore one time before this project. I have always wondered why such a beautiful instrument is scarcely played today, and decided it was time to commission new works that aim to bring back the instrument's popularity. Tim Carlos composed *Fernweh: Sonata for Oboe d'amore and Piano* and *Two Sketches for Oboe d'amore, Guitar, and Percussion*. This document covers the collaborative method Carlos and I experienced, the history of the oboe d'amore, edits made to the compositions, and most importantly a performer's guide to these two new works (discussing both technical and musical challenges.) The recordings are also included. To purchase either work in its entirety, contact timcarloscomposer@gmail.com.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Statement of Purpose

This project broadens the repertoire for the oboe d'amore. Whenever I look up music for the oboe d'amore, most of it is "for oboe consort" or music that is originally written for the English horn and simply transposed. Additionally, most of the music for oboe d'amore is from the Baroque period: by Bach, Telemann, etc. This project will not only add repertoire to the catalog, but also add different genres and timbres to the usual d'amore orchestration. I commissioned composer Tim Carlos to write two new pieces for the oboe d'amore, which I also professionally recorded. This paper serves as a performer's guide to future oboists who wish to perform either piece. These works will sit at the collegiate and professional levels.

Collaboration with Carlos-Our History

Tim Carlos and I met during our freshman year of high school in 2009. We became close friends very quickly and shared a passion for music throughout our four years together. I remember performing a piece he composed at the end of our AP Music Theory class our Senior year and knew full well that he would excel in the field of composition. We were also the two students who performed with the band for the final concert; Tim played Rimsky-Korsakov's Trombone Concerto and I performed the "Haydn" Oboe Concerto.¹ We both went on to receive our bachelor's and master's

¹ Haydn's name is in quotations because it is highly unlikely that Haydn wrote this work. It is probable that one of his students wrote it, or a different composer who sold the piece under Haydn's name to make more money.

degrees, in composition and performance respectively. His bio on his website is as follows: “Tim Carlos is an American video game and film composer who has scored works from around the globe. In 2020, he won the Asian Game Audio Summit scoring contest and his piece was recorded by the Budapest Scoring orchestra. His music is set to appear in multiple upcoming indie games including Esperia: Uprising of the Scarlet Witch and Everafter Falls for the Nintendo Switch. He has also written music accompanying films on television, streaming, and at festivals including Atlanta Film Festival, New Orleans Film Festival, RiverRun International Film Festival, and Indie Grits Film Festival. He received his Bachelor of Music degree in Music Composition at Butler University and his Master of Music degree in Film Music Composition at UNC School of the Arts.”²

Every Friday on social media Tim posts a small snippet of something that he is currently composing, and I have yet to hear something I dislike. Everything he writes just makes sense to me. Furthermore, I have always respected that Carlos has stayed true to himself whilst composing. Many times when I hear commissions for lesser-known instruments today, the music seems to be different just for the sake of being different or for the sake of being noticed. I knew Tim would have reasoning behind everything he wrote for this project.

Knowing that I wanted to work with one composer and have multiple pieces written for the oboe d’amore, Tim immediately came to mind due to our history and his

² Tim Carlos, “Tim Carlos: About,” Tim Carlos, Composer. Accessed October 10, 2021. <https://www.timcarlos.com/about>.

wonderful compositional voice. I was a bit nervous to ask him since there are so many musicians that do not know what an oboe d'amore is, let alone that it exists. When I brought up the project idea, he seemed a little apprehensive since he did not know what an oboe d'amore was—my point was proven! After sending him some videos of myself playing the instrument, he was convinced, and we made a plan.

The initial Zoom calls we held April 2021 set Tim up to brainstorm over the summer. I knew that I wanted music totaling twenty-five minutes: a sonata for oboe d'amore and piano and a piece with oboe d'amore/guitar/Latin percussion.

Once Fall 2021 hit we began meeting over Zoom weekly-throwing ideas back and forth, making edits as the drafts rolled through, etc. The deadline I proposed to have these works completed was December 31, 2021, but we ended up pushing that deadline back to mid-January due to some unforeseen circumstances.

Fernweh: Sonata for Oboe d'amore and Piano (henceforth referred to as *Fernweh*) came first. This piece had the most editing both compositionally and in the recording studio, but I will speak more of that later. This sonata also took the longest to write because it was always meant to be the main component of this project. The reason for this is that most musicians have easier access to a pianist as opposed to the guitarist and percussionist required for the other work I proposed.

Two Sketches for Oboe d'amore, Guitar, and Percussion (henceforth referred to as *Sketches*) was the second work that Carlos composed. Since he had more experience composing for d'amore at this point, the collaboration was fairly smooth, only requiring minor revisions. There were, however, a few edits for ease of ensemble that I will mention later.

What has already been done?

There have been pieces written for oboe d'amore since the Romantic period, but most are performed today on English horn or oboe. As mentioned above, many are for oboe consort, an ensemble comprised of oboe, oboe d'amore, English horn, and bass oboe. Most of the time the oboe is substituted for the oboe d'amore, and the bassoon for the bass oboe. A great resource for finding music for the d'amore is Amoris International.³ Some of the music on Amoris International has been transposed from oboe works, such as Marin Marais's *Les Folies d'Espagne* (with editing done by Jennifer Paull.) A lot of the music, however, gives the performer a choice regarding which instrument to play; for my project, I wanted the only option to be the oboe d'amore. After combing through the ProQuest database, I discovered that I am the first student to commission works for the oboe d'amore, record them, and submit them along with a performer's guide.

In Julian Singer's article "Anregungen zur Erweiterung des Repertoires für Englischhorn und Oboe d'amore" he talks about how music of the Baroque period was constantly taken and re-written for other instruments.⁴ To promote the oboe d'amore today, he lists many pieces for the viola da gamba, violin, cello, etc. that would be idiomatic on the oboe d'amore. Some of these pieces include D'Andrieu's *Sonate en solo majeur pour violon et piano*, Leopold Mozart's *Zwölf kleine Stücke aus dem "Notenbuch für Wolfgang Amadeus" für Violine und Klavier*, and Gaillard's *Sonata D-Dur für*

³ Jennifer Paull, "Composers," Amoris International. Accessed January 8th, 2021. <http://icking-music-archive.org/Amoris/>

⁴ Julien Singer, "Anregungen Zur Erweiterung Des Repertoires Für Englischhorn Und Oboe d'amore," *Oboe, Klarinette, Fagott* 5, no. 4 (1990): 183.

Violoncello und Piano. He goes on to explain that this was common in the 19th century salon scene, where works were performed by whichever instrumentalist was available at the time.⁵ While it is helpful to know which pieces would fall nicely under the fingers of an oboist, the point of this project is to create new music that is only intended for the oboe d'amore.

⁵ Singer, "Anregungen Zur Erweiterung," 184.

CHAPTER 2

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE OBOE D'AMORE

Historians believe the oboe d'amore was invented in Germany, where the Walther Lexikon of 1732 names the date of invention as 1720.⁶ There is some ambiguity to this, however, because some works for d'amore are dated around 1717 which opens the possibility of the instrument being built before 1720.⁷

Between 1720 and the death of J.S. Bach (1685-1750,) the oboe d'amore was quite popular across Europe and was utilized by leading composers of the time— most orchestral pieces listed at least one oboe d'amore. The d'amore was used mostly in the vocal works of Bach (such as cantatas and masses.) Given that seventy five percent of oboe d'amores were built in Germany, and the majority of those were built in Leipzig, it is no surprise that Bach used it extensively in his cantatas there. The Breitkopf catalogues (the first printed thematic catalogues of music) contain Partite, Sonatas, Trios, and Concerti for the oboe d'amore in various combinations.⁸ The instrument was used because it was able to play in more keys than other instruments that were pitched in C. Because of the key system at the time, treble oboes were only able to play in key signatures up to three sharps or flats.

Unfortunately, the d'amore fell widely out of use after Bach and Telemann passed away. The most probable reason the d'amore fell into disuse, per the Koch-Drummer Lexicon of 1865, was the difficulty of playing it in tune; given the popularity of the

⁶ *Musikalisches Lexikon*. Walther, Johann Gottfried. (Leipzig, 1732).

⁷ Cevendra Marc Blake, "The Baroque Oboe d'amore," PhD diss., (University of California, 1981), 11.

⁸ Blake, "The Baroque Oboe d'amore," 12.

instrument during the Baroque era, more likely is that more keys were added to the treble oboe which allowed it to play in different key signatures, essentially eliminating the fundamental need for the d'amore.⁹ Composers in the 18th century wanted to shift towards a more standardized instrumentation as well, making the treble oboe the head of the oboe family.¹⁰ There were few compositions that included the oboe d'amore in the Romantic era and onwards: Ravel's *Bolero* and Holst's *A Somerset Rhapsody* come to mind.

The word "d'amore" means "of love." It is important to note that the "d'amore" instruments (clarinet d'amore, flute d'amore, and oboe d'amore) are all pitched a minor third lower than their upper counterpart (clarinet d'amore is pitched in G, while flute and oboe d'amore are both pitched in A.)¹¹ This brings up the following question: did whoever named this instrument do so because the instrument was pitched a minor third lower than the oboe, or did the name come first? Musicologists have also found that there are major and minor thirds present within music whenever tenderness is expressed in a soulful way such as "a name intimately spoken, when a mother calls her child, whenever love is within the expression."¹² There are many instances in the Baroque period literature where two oboe d'amores play together, and the notes are a third apart; this can

⁹ Heinrich Christoph Koch, *Musikalisches Lexikon*, (Offenbach am Main: Johann Andre, 1865.)

¹⁰ Blake, "The Baroque Oboe d'amore," 14.

¹¹ Werner Schulze, "Die Oboe D'amore Und Die Zahl 5," *Oboe-Fagott: Das Magazin für Doppelrohrblattbläser*, no. 3, 1985, 22.

¹² Rudolf Haase, *Die Grundlagen der harmonikalen Symbolik* (München, 1966), 73. Translation from the original German by the author: "...wo ein geliebter Name innig ausgesprochen wird, wo eine Mutter ihr Kind ruft, also immer dort, wo die Liebe den Ausdruck formt."

be seen in Bach's Mass in B Minor BWV 232 movement "Et in spiritum." Musicologist Cevdra Blake believe this was done intentionally, "...and seems clearly to have been molded after the vocal music of the love duet. This is not surprising considering that the oboe d'amore was born out of the vocal tradition and owes its initial growth to its relationship with texts concerning love and the pastoral."¹³

Because of the oboe d'amore's history rooted primarily in the Baroque period, Tim Carlos and I wanted to move away from traditional Baroque conventions. Although the commissioned music would be mostly tonal, it would also be inspired by neo-classicism and elements from the Romantic period.

¹³ Blake, "The Baroque Oboe d'amore," 193.

CHAPTER 3

EDITS TO THE COMPOSITIONS

I told Tim Carlos to write whatever he pleased if it was within the instrument's range, and I would send edits back to him. The main edits that I could offer as an oboist were ones regarding range, comfortability concerning breathing, and rhythmic notation as it appears to the performer.

The first music Carlos sent me was the first movement exposition of *Fernweh*, and I immediately noticed the five sharps. The notes did not bother me, but I did hear that this key signature did not allow the d'amore to be particularly resonant. I told Carlos that if he wanted a rounder sound that he should raise the section up by half a step, but he said he wanted the instrument to sound a bit subdued there since he intended to change the key signature later in the movement. (The final version has the exposition in A-flat Dorian for the oboe d'amore and F Dorian for the piano.)

There were a few sections that I had to send back due to the range the notes were written in (the oboe d'amore fits somewhere between the oboe and the English horn but is still at its thickest and purest sound when placed in the middle to lower register.) I was open to playing in the upper register (E-flat, E, etc.) but there were some sections that made the d'amore sound thin and shrill. The following was one of the first sections I requested down an octave.



Figure 1-1: *Fernweh*, movement 1 draft, measure 72.

After playing through this measure a few times, it made sense to take only the first eight notes down. The final version now looks like this:



Figure 1-2: *Fernweh*, movement 1, measure 72.

The next excerpt I requested down an octave as well after the three-measure rest:



Figure 1-3: *Fernweh*, movement 1 draft, measures 79-94.

The beginning of this section is in a good range, but I wanted to keep the climactic energy going that playing up the octave brings at measure 91. The final product is now in the lower to middle range, as opposed to middle to upper.) The final version now looks like this:

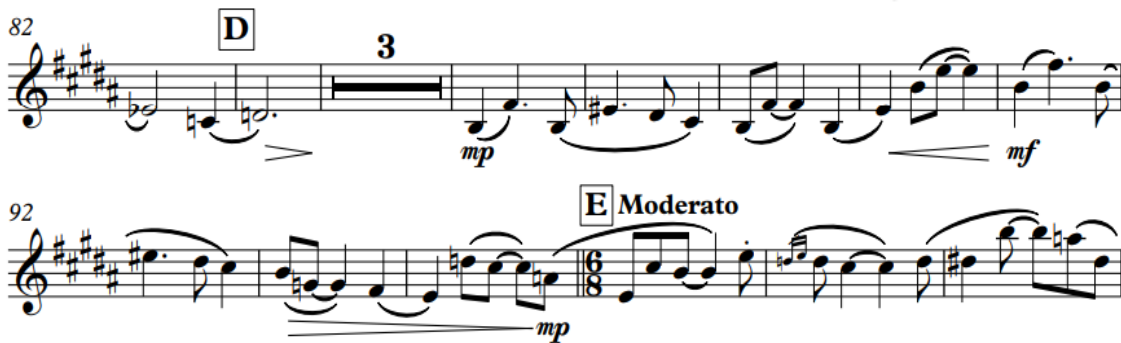


Figure 1-4: *Fernweh*, movement 1, measures 82-97.

Upon practicing the first movement, I noticed that some triple meter measures would make more sense if they were written as compound duple meter. For example:



Figure 1-5: *Fernweh*, movement 1, measures 123-124.

This would undoubtedly be easier to read in 6/8. When I spoke to Carlos about it, he said he prefers to write in one meter for a long time, and since many surrounding measures are clearly in 3/4, he decided to keep the meter consistent. The piano also has this pattern in different spots, so it makes sense for the piano and the d'amore to have matching time signatures. We decided to keep these sections as is, so that both the oboist and pianist would have the same time signatures to avoid confusion.

I only requested one edit in the second movement of *Fernweh*. Measure 49 originally appeared as follows:



Figure 1-6: *Fernweh*, movement 2 draft, measures 49-51.

My first thought: There's a lot going on here. Aesthetically I do not see this as a problem, but I always feel like if something can be made easier, it should be. There is only one rhythm here that can be simplified: the quintuplets. To achieve this, I requested that Carlos place a turn between the E on beat two and the F-sharp on the end of two in measure 49. It now looks like this:



Figure 1-7: *Fernweh*, movement 2, measure 49.

Just like movement 2, in movement 3 I only requested one edit (although major.)

The following section is near the end of the sonata:

Figure 1-8: *Fernweh*, movement 3 draft, measures 138-167.

Before this excerpt occurs, the last place the oboist can breathe for more than one beat is measure 113. This means that from measure 113 to measure 175 the oboist does not stop

playing. Realistically, the performer will be tired by this time—playing these sixteenth notes cleanly and with proper dynamics is difficult enough without struggling to breathe. After thinking through the possibilities, I asked Carlos if he could take the pickup of measure 150 until beat 2 of measure 155 and give it to the piano so that the oboist has five measures to relax before the end of the sonata. Carlos agreed and now the d’amore part looks like this:



Figure 1-9: *Fernweh*, movement 3, measures 146-159.

As for *Two Sketches for Oboe d’amore, Guitar, and Percussion*, I requested different beaming in the first movement for the oboe d’amore part. Here is an example:



Figure 2-1: *Two Sketches for Oboe d’amore, Guitar, and Percussion*, movement 1 draft, measure 18.

Although there is technically nothing wrong with this notation, due to the slur, the E on beat two could appear as if it falls within beat one. Since every other run in *Sketches* is grouped consistently, I asked Carlos to change the notation to this:



Figure 2-2: *Two Sketches for Oboe d'amore, Guitar, and Percussion*, movement 1, measure 18.

One of the edits we made regarding the ensemble was adding a fermata to measure 35 in movement 1. This was due to the quick switch the marimba player must make from soft to hard mallets; three beats did not suffice. Now after the fermata, the marimba player cues the beginning of measure 36. The last edit requested for *Sketches* was placing a slur over the penultimate measure in the d'amore part; this is just to facilitate ease during a descending run.

The editing process was a new experience for me, but forced me to think both in terms of what an oboist would want while simultaneously staying true to Tim's vision. There are some sections that are definitely not easy to play, but I decided to leave them that way because changing them would compromise what Carlos was going for musically.

CHAPTER 4

DRESS REHEARSAL AND CARLOS' COMMENTS

The dress rehearsal took place on the night of February 18th, 2022, and the premiere on February 20th, 2022. Carlos was planning on attending both events in person, but due to COVID-19 we had him Zoom in from Indianapolis.

We performed *Two Sketches for Oboe d'amore, Guitar, and Percussion* first. Carlos mentioned that he liked the addition of the fermata in the first movement and complemented the marimba player's (Robert Grahmann's) ability to keep the tempo steady in the second movement. The only criticism he offered was concerning rehearsal **G** and **I** in movement 2. The guitar and oboe d'amore have a sort of call and response relationship at **G** and then play in unison at **I**; in the dress rehearsal the parts only lined up on the downbeats of **I**, not within the measures. Because of the eighth rests in the beginning of each measure, our downfall was hesitating before coming in. For visual reference, one of the d'amore measures looks as follows:

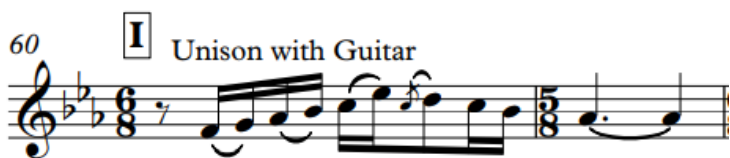


Figure 2-3: *Two Sketches for Oboe d'amore, Guitar, and Percussion*, movement 2, measures 60-61.

After running through *Fernweh* in the dress rehearsal, Carlos had a few comments:

- He said that after seeing and hearing the piano part at the same time, there are definitely a few things he wants to change notation-wise.

- My tempo was what he wanted in the first movement at rehearsal **C**, but when that same theme returned at rehearsal **J** he said it could move along more— listening back, I started dragging at **J**.
- Carlos was pleased with the box-notation sections in the piano part.
- The only comment concerning movement 2 was to make sure that we both reached beat 3 in measure 54 at the same time. The *rallentando* makes this tricky, but I could cue better on my end. The piano and d’amore part looks like this:

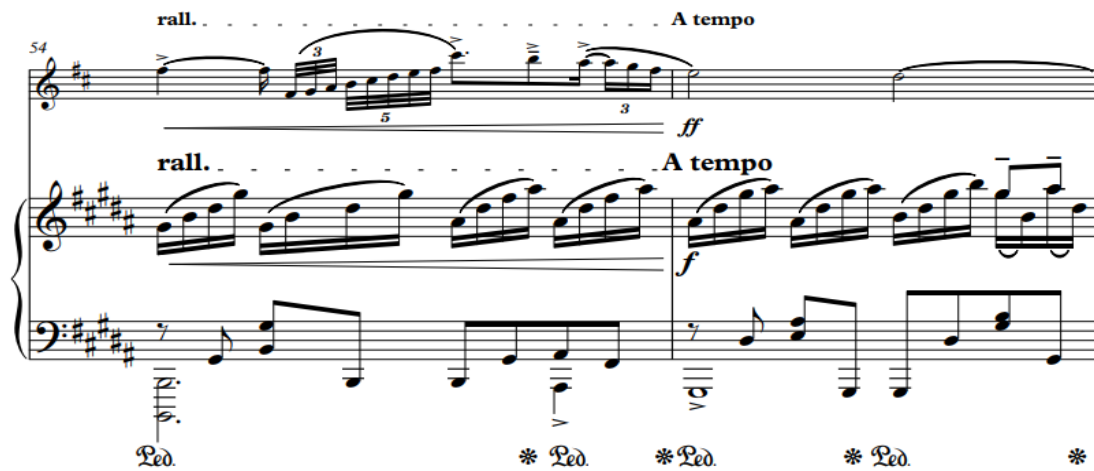


Figure 2-4: *Fernweh*, movement 2, measures 54-55.

- Movement 3 has the most challenging piano part, which Gail Novak played excellently—he made sure to point this out.

The premiere happened two days later, and it went well. The recordings included with this paper are the professionally recorded tracks from Jin Studios and Parker Jones Audio. They were released on April 1st, 2022.

CHAPTER 5

FERNWEH: SONATA FOR OBOE D'AMORE AND PIANO

Introduction

Fernweh: Sonata for Oboe d'amore and Piano is a three-movement work, its movements being I. Andante Moderato, II. Larghetto rubato, and III. Allegretto. The movements were composed in order.

The first movement, Andante Moderato, presents a typical sonata form. The exposition introduces theme one, which is presented beginning at rehearsal **A** in the oboe d'amore:

The image shows a musical score for the first movement of *Fernweh*. It consists of three staves of music. The first staff starts with the tempo marking "Freely" and a 3/4 time signature. After four measures, there is a double bar line, followed by the tempo marking "molto rit." and a 6/8 time signature. A rehearsal mark "A" is placed above the first measure of the 6/8 section. The tempo then changes to "Andante Moderato". The music begins with a dynamic marking of *mf*. The second staff starts at measure 10 and continues the melodic line. The third staff starts at measure 16 and continues the melodic line, ending with a dynamic marking of *mf*. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

Figure 2-5: *Fernweh*, movement 1, measures 1-22.

This leads directly into theme two, beginning at rehearsal **C**. Theme two sounds faster to the ear, but is actually slower because of the subdivision that comes from changing time signatures from 6/8 to 3/4:



Figure 2-6: *Fernweh*, movement 1, measures 54-66.

The development begins at rehearsal **E**. The true recapitulation occurs at rehearsal **I**, with a false recap a little way before at rehearsal **H**.

The second movement, *Larghetto rubato*, is in ABA form and the most straightforward of the three movements. The sweet melody that opens the movement returns in an extremely embellished state at rehearsal **D**.

The third movement, *Allegretto*, is inspired by the neo-classical style and therefore has a different feel entirely when compared to the first two movements. The first theme is presented at the beginning, with the second theme presented in the dominant key at **B**. Here they are respectively:



Figure 2-7: *Fernweh*, movement 3, measures 1-18.



Figure 2-8: *Fernweh*, movement 3, measures 33-44.

Theme one returns at **D**, this time with a rhythmic alteration on beat one. The piano presents the third theme at **F** which swiftly transitions into theme one in the tonic at rehearsal **H**. This time the theme is heard only in the piano part, with further rhythmic alteration on beat one. Theme two returns at **J** in the tonic, leading up to the final declaration of the first theme at **L**.

Carlos gave me the liberty of naming the sonata. I did not want to name the work before it was written, so once I received movement 3, I thought of what all three movements have in common (although they are all so different from one another.) One word kept coming back to me: longing. There seems to be this want for more in every phrase, with touches of beauty and sadness sprinkled throughout; this reminded me of how I feel when I think of my home in Germany. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, I have not been able to go home for many years now. In the German language, we have many words that have an extremely specific meaning that do not translate to one word in English, and one of these words I knew had to be the name for this sonata: *Fernweh*. *Fernweh* roughly translates to “a longing for far-off places.” *Fern* translates to “far” and *weh* translates to “pain” or “misery.”

Technical Challenges

Fernweh is a challenging sonata not just because of its daunting runs but also because of the fingerings needed to successfully play both in tune and in time. The first movement was the most challenging for me but the last two have their moments too. This next section will have bullet points for ease of finding certain sections in each movement. They will be in the order they occur.

Andante Moderato

- The exposition of Andante Moderato appears rather straight-forward at first but playing it through once proves otherwise. Not only is a lot of pinky work involved, but there are also many times when you must switch fingerings during a note that can last as short as an eighth note. For example, measure 23 presents no option but to play the E-flat with the left fingering at first (since you come from a D-flat), but then you must switch during the note to a regular E-flat in order to play A-flat cleanly. I suppose one can argue that you can play right A-flat, but the awkwardness of right A-flat keeps me away from this idea; also, playing right A-flat would create a slight problem moving to D-flat immediately after.



Figure 2-9: *Fernweh*, movement 1, measures 23-25.

Another uncomfortable fingering that returns a few times in this movement is the low C-flat to A-flat transition in measure 10. It is extremely difficult to make this sound smooth, so I recommend cutting off the low C-flat and then really pushing

into the A-flat as if it were a pickup into the next measure. This can be heard in the recording.

- The trills in measures 39-45 are rather involved, and you must be sure you are playing the most efficient trill fingerings. Most of the time, if a trill fingering feels awkward or clunky there is an easier way to execute it. For a comprehensive chart of trill fingerings, I recommend Martin Schuring's trill chart.¹⁴ The very first trill starts on a B-flat and trills to a C-flat. Here is the most efficient way to do that, since only one finger must be moved instead of two:



Figure 3-1: A-sharp to B natural trill fingering.

Onto measure 41: on the oboe *d'amore* the most efficient way to trill from C-flat to D-flat is to lift my left first finger so that no keys are being pushed down. The measure after is a trill from C natural to D-flat, which can obviously be played pressing the second trill key with the left hand. The D-flat to E-flat trill after that will be played keeping the left E-flat key down and trilling the right D-flat key. The final trill in the section, E-flat to E natural, will sound best simply playing the left E-flat (again, since you are coming from D-flat) and lifting the right ring

¹⁴ Martin Schuring, *Oboe Art and Method* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2009), 216.

finger to trill. Since E natural does not use a half hole, you must use more air so that the trill sounds even and not airy every time the E natural sounds. This same concept should be applied to measure 71 where you can leave the left E-flat key down during the first five notes.

- Measures 72-75 are difficult because of the sextuplets and the F major arpeggios (shown below.) Practice these slowly with a metronome on the eighth note.

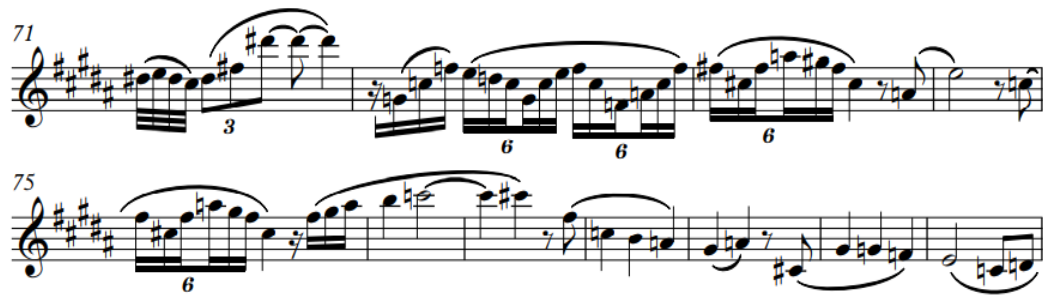


Figure 3-2: *Fernweh*, movement 1, measures 71-81.

- Measure 102 has both high C-sharp and D, which typically can be out of tune on the oboe d'amore and English horn. Therefore, there are alternate fingerings for both to create stability in sound and pitch. Here is the C-sharp fingering I found to be most in tune and dependable on my instrument:¹⁵



Figure 3-3: High C-sharp fingering for oboe d'amore or English horn.

¹⁵ Schuring, 213.

And here is the D fingering:¹⁶



Figure 3-4: High D fingering for oboe d'amore or English horn.

- Measures 142-146 are rhythmically the same as measures 47-51, just with different notes. This next exercise works with both excerpts (and really any run that comes your way that you find challenging.) I will use measures 142-145 for this example. Not only are the fingerings hard, but some of the notation is not what we are used to seeing (B-sharps, for example.)



Figure 3-5: *Fernweh*, movement 1, measures 139-145.

To get this into your muscle memory, I practice an exercise called “rhythmic alteration.” For the first run through, change the notes to a dotted eighth/ sixteenth note rhythm. Here is what you would play to practice measure 142:

¹⁶ Schuring, 213.



Figure 3-6: *Fernweh*, rhythmic alteration #1.

Then, reverse it:



Figure 3-7: *Fernweh*, rhythmic alteration #2.

Only increase the metronome by one click after you can play the section without any finger blips (“blip” refers to an unwanted note sounding between two correct notes.) After practicing each of these a few times, try playing the excerpt as written again. The fingers should be smoother. If not, start again.

- Throughout this first movement, there are many sections that require left E-flats, forked Fs, and other uncomfortable fingerings. Take care to practice these slowly and with a metronome. There are so many of these it would also be smart to mark each fingering, so your brain does not have to remember each one—playing oboe is hard enough as it is!

Larghetto rubato

- This movement is not as technically challenging as it is interpretively challenging; there will be more to discuss in the next section. The difficult measures to put together with the pianist are 49-55 (this can be partially seen in Figure 1-6.). Make sure to subdivide, and know where the big beats are; the piano has straight sixteenth notes underneath and can only follow a rubato so much. Therefore, only

pull within the beat. It makes the most sense to breathe in measure 50 in the middle of beat 3 after the F-sharp. The *rallentando* may begin at the end of measure 53—be sure to coordinate this with your pianist.

Allegretto

- Before beginning this movement be sure to internalize sixteenth notes. It is so easy to begin this quickly because of the “easy” eighth and quarter notes, but you will find yourself in a pickle later if you do this.
- In measure 44, make sure to take in more reed quickly with the higher notes so that pitch does not sag. The alternative C-sharp and D fingerings can be used as well.
- Rehearsal **G** has the tendency to drag, as do most dotted eighth-sixteenth patterns. For me, the best breathing plan for this section was to exhale at the end of measure 133, to do a small inhale at the end of measure 137, and to do a large inhale at the end of measure 139. This gives me enough air to make it to measure 150. I did not want to inhale directly before **H** because I want my entrance there to be strong and in time.

Figure 3-8: *Fernweh*, movement 3, measures 130-141.

- The material at rehearsal **H** can be practiced using the rhythmic alteration method mentioned above. This method can also be used beginning at measure 168, but more than anything simple slow practice helped me here. This four-measure run does not lay well in the fingers due to the large leaps and pinky work involved. Once this passage is in your fingers, practice changing your embouchure and air support fast enough between notes to have all the registers respond quickly.

Figure 3-9: *Fernweh*, movement 3, measures 155-173.

- Remember to put down the third octave key for high E natural on the oboe d'amore and English horn (looking at measure 237.)
- No slowing down in the last four measures. Keep the energy up until the end!

Musicality

Everyone interprets music differently, but the following is what I recommend either from my own taste and artistry or from speaking with the composer.

Andante Moderato

- Each time Theme 1 returns, make sure to play the pickup eighth note to the second full measure with a lifted intensity—in blunter terms, play it with attitude.
- The last two notes in measure 12 should pull back just a tiny bit.
- Although it is marked, make sure to crescendo in measure 34 because the melody passes to the piano there.
- The trills in the next section are marked *piano* with a crescendo to *mezzo forte* each time. Because there are so many trills, doing this each time creates a seasick quality; play the dynamics here on a smaller scale.
- Rehearsal C reminds me of a placid lake before more movement takes place (measure 67.) Therefore, I do not use any vibrato until the *a tempo*. Continue to use a faster vibrato until D.
- Measure 102 is a high point melodically, but it also changes to a duple feel. Be sure to create intensity the measure before so this feels like an arrival:



Figure 4-1: *Fernweh*, movement 1, measures 98-102.

- I like to take a little bit of time on the last two notes in measure 141 and then cue 142. Measure 144 I think of as *piano* instead of *mezzo forte* so that the buildup into measure 146 is bigger. Focusing on the dynamics as opposed to the difficult fingering pattern actually makes this section easier; I find that a lot in other music as well.



Figure 4-2: *Fernweh*, movement 1, measures 139-145.

- Make **H** the climax of theme 1, with **I** being a smaller reinstatement of that.
- Stay *forte* from measure 200 all the way until rehearsal **K**.

Larghetto rubato

- Experiment with speed of vibrato in this movement. I create a wider vibrato right at the beginning and then speed it up in measures 8 and 9. The low notes in measure 12-14 should have a wider vibrato, and the higher notes right before rehearsal **C** a more compact vibrato.
- Rehearsal **C** does not have to be a true *pianissimo* but do notice that the first *mezzo forte* appears at **D**. Create a buildup through air and rubato in this section. I especially enjoy elongating the F natural in measure 46.



Figure 4-3: *Fernweh*, movement 2, measures 45-48.

- Rehearsal **D** does not need to be strictly in time. Obviously, plan it with your pianist like mentioned before, but those written out ornamentations are just that—playing them in time would sound robotic.

Allegretto

- This movement is rather straightforward in terms of dynamics and phrasing, but the difficulty comes in fingerings (explained above) and knowing when to inhale and exhale.
- In the beginning of this movement (and every time this theme returns) be sure to have enough support to have that low B speak at the *piano* level. Also, after the C-sharp in measure 12 is a good place to take a quick breath.
- Inhale after the B in measure 62 so as not to disturb the long crescendo beginning in that measure. Breathe after the E in measure 83, because breathing after the following tied note is not a good idea musically since it would break the *forte piano* to *fortissimo* crescendo.
- Rehearsal **F** until **H** is a gradual crescendo. Beginning at 114, play each long note with an accent and each eighth note/ triplet with a lift until **G**. This would be easier playing at a comfortable *mezzo forte* but make sure to observe the *piano*.
- Halfway through measure 165 would be a good place to inhale. Breathing two measures later before the sixteenth note entrance runs the risk of entering late. Again, focus on dynamics in this next section and the run will appear easier.
- My breathing and dynamic plan from rehearsal **L** to the end is as follows: an inhale after the A in measure 223, an exhale after the E in 227, a large inhale after the E in 232, a large crescendo in measure 236-237 that is not written in, an inhale during the rest in measure 238, and perhaps a small inhale after the D-sharp in measure 243. Observe and feel like you are overdoing all written dynamics in this

section. Measure 243 until the end should be dramatic-I even wrote “AIR!
DRAMA!” there. The last note should still have length, despite the marcato above
it. L to the end is as follows:

The image displays a musical score for measures 213 through 251 of the piece 'Fernweh', movement 3. The score is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It consists of seven staves of music. Measure 213 begins with a triplet of eighth notes marked *ff*, followed by a sequence of eighth notes with dynamic markings *mp*, *ff*, and *mp*. A box labeled 'L' is placed above the first measure. Measure 222 features a triplet of eighth notes marked *mf* and a triplet of eighth notes marked *fp*. Measure 229 is marked *ff*. Measure 234 is marked 'M'. Measure 236 contains two triplet markings. Measure 244 has a marcato marking above the final note. Measure 248 features a sextuplet (6) and a dynamic marking *sfz*. The score concludes with a double bar line.

Figure 4-4: *Fernweh*, movement 3, measures 213-251.

CHAPTER 6

TWO SKETCHES FOR OBOE D'AMORE, GUITAR, AND PERCUSSION

Introduction

Two Sketches for Oboe d'amore, Guitar, and Percussion consists of two movements that were composed in order. Unlike *Fernweh*, the title itself is not thought-provoking, and there are no specific movement titles—only “I” and “II.” This was done intentionally to create variety between the two commissioned works.

When I asked Carlos to write a piece for oboe d'amore, guitar, and percussion, I left the exact instrumentation up to his discretion. What I did know is that I wanted a piece with some Latin American influence. In the first movement, this influence can be heard at rehearsal **D** when the guitar plays rapidly strummed chords for the first time and the congas pick up a quicker tempo. Before rehearsal **D**, the music sounds pensive and the d'amore part almost random. The second movement is in ternary form, with the “B” section being a conversation between the oboe and guitar. The Latin-American influence in this movement can be heard throughout in the meter switching between 6/8 and 5/8 continuously.

Technical Challenges

Some of the runs in movement 1 are challenging for the oboist, such as measures 18, 30, 32, 52-53, and 61. These can be practiced with the rhythmic alteration method explained earlier in *Fernweh*'s “Technical Challenges” section (page 21.) Warming up with octave leap exercises will help as well since there are many large leaps the oboist must execute cleanly. Here is an example:



Figure 4-5: *Two Sketches for Oboe d'amore, Guitar, and Percussion*, movement 1, measures 32-35.

The section beginning right after the fermata proved most challenging for me. The guitar and marimba play the two bars before I come in, the guitar part being this:



Figure 4-6: *Two Sketches for Oboe d'amore, Guitar, and Percussion*, movement 1, measures 36-37; guitar.

While these are triplets, my brain brackets the sound like this:



Figure 4-7: *Two Sketches for Oboe d'amore, Guitar, and Percussion*, movement 1, measures 36-37; phrasing.

Therefore, it was quite difficult for me to count OR feel my entrance and keep the tempo moving. What ended up helping was relying entirely on the marimba, who has a quarter note at the beginning of each bar (until measure 42, when they have a quarter on each beat.) To me, it would have made more sense to put this section in 6/8 and create duples; this would also make sense looking at the articulation. The final tricky part of this movement (ensemble-wise) is lining up the last two measures with the guitar player, but after a few repetitions it should be fine.

The second movement, in my opinion, does not present any difficult runs or fingering problems. Keeping the ensemble cohesive was not the easiest, however. The ostinato in the marimba part does not line up with the continuous guitar rhythm:

Figure 4-8: *Two Sketches for Oboe d'amore, Guitar, and Percussion*, movement 2, measures 4-6; guitar and marimba.

The tendency is also for all instruments to rush, so pulling back and listening to the oboe d'amore is crucial. The biggest challenge in terms of ensemble precision is at rehearsal **G** where the d'amore and guitar converse until rehearsal **I**, when they play in unison. It is important for both the d'amore and guitar player not to over-estimate the length of the eighth rest at the beginning of each measure (see Figure 2-3.)

Musicality

In the previous section, I mention the d'amore part seeming random before **D** in the first movement. The only way to make that seem intentional is to phrase and play with commitment. For example, whenever I have a run, I like to find a note I'm aiming towards. In measure 18, I aim towards the A on beat 4 and the F following that. Two after **A** I hear the melody as almost sassy, so I put emphasis on beat one. Measure 28 presents large downward slurs, so playing this line as legato as possible going into 29 is

imperative. Before **D**, I also add a slower vibrato to longer notes to give this part of the movement a serene feeling; the tremolos in the marimba create a placid atmosphere. The d'amore has the opportunity to really explore dynamic range beginning at measure 38: there are only triplets and eighth notes supporting the melody, so the range of dynamic interpretation is up to the performer. I see measures 48-49 as the beginning of the buildup into rehearsal **D**, with measure 53 needing the greatest crescendo and a cue from the oboist. As for a breathing plan in this movement, there are enough rests where the performer does not really have to plan anything until the end. The beginning of measure 61 is not the time for a breath (you will be late on the sixteenth note entrance) –take a large one at measure 63 that will last until the end. Measure 69 is a good place for a crescendo, with 70-end staying a strong *forte*.

Movement 2 begins with solo marimba and then adds each instrument one by one. Marimba, congas, and guitar all play at about a *mezzo forte* in the beginning, with rehearsal **B** at a *fortissimo*– I requested this from the performers because the goal is to make **B-C** sound like a jam session. All three instruments must back off at **C** due to the d'amore entering, otherwise the instrument does not stand a chance dynamically. Measure 17 presents tension due to the d'amore's D-flat, so accenting them as Carlos notated makes sense and automatically creates a sense of forward motion. All instruments crescendo as written the measure before **E**, then cue the downbeat of **E** to ensure everyone arrives at the same time. Since all instruments are in unison here, it would be obvious if someone was not in the right place. Planning the *fps* with the group in this section helps to get everyone on the same page as well. Tell the percussionist playing congas here that it is their time to shine! Austin Vigesaa did an awesome job playing with

a strong sound and was easy to follow too. The grace notes in the melody that switch between the d'amore and guitar should be short and snappy with the note after having the most importance. Make sure to cue through breathing at **I** as this will help you and the guitar player enter together perfectly every time. Beat two of measure 70 will have the biggest crescendo in this whole movement since it brings the listener back to the A section. As before, **J-K** should be fortissimo with a jam session feel and then those three instruments will back off to allow the d'amore to play a comfortable *forte*. If the oboist feels like they need to play louder and louder to be heard, the sound will spread and the intonation will run sharp. Rehearsal **M** brings all instruments together in unison again, this time without a conga solo. Make sure to create a difference articulation-wise on the last note of each measure; then, the last note of the piece must punch the most.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

This experience has been nothing short of incredible. Watching these two pieces come to fruition has been exciting and inspirational for me. I hope hearing the recordings also inspires other oboists to use their school's (or orchestra's) oboe d'amore and create a different take on this music than I have.

Next time I commission a work, there is not much I would do differently. The only limitations I felt I had regarding this project all revolved around timing; because of the COVID-19 pandemic, I was unable to meet in person with Tim Carlos like we had planned. Perhaps I will wait until travelling is safe again before I undertake such a project a second time! I have further plans regarding this project, though: I plan to have both *Fernweh: Sonata for Oboe d'amore and Piano* and *Two Sketches for Oboe d'amore, Guitar, and Percussion* published. Recordings will be available both on ProQuest and my website, www.majadinger.com. My website is also a good place to read future research or updates regarding this project.

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW WITH TIM CARLOS

After the performance and the recording session were done, I decided it would be interesting to interview Tim Carlos about his general experience with both composing and working on this project with me. The interview was conducted through email on March 19th, 2022.¹⁷ Carlos discusses his compositional style, his method during the composition process, whether he finds these works programmatic, and much more.

How would you describe your compositional style?

That's a hard answer to pin down concisely, but ever since beginning to compose my biggest inspirations came from my favorite films, television shows, and video games. While I think that's somewhat common these days given how much media we're exposed to early on, I was able to kind of retrofit that style to work within concert music as I learned formal classical and contemporary methods as a composer in undergrad. My teachers were about as avant-garde and esoteric as you can get as composers, but I was always firmly rooted in a sense of functional harmony combined with modal and cinematic harmony. So maybe that's the long and short of it, "a blending of functional, modal, and cinematic harmony."

What were your initial thoughts when I asked you to collaborate on an oboe d'amore project?

Having just graduated with a master's in film music, I was actually quite eager to write for the concert hall again. Though from an outside perspective the methods might not

¹⁷ Tim Carlos, Interview by Maja Dinger, Online, March 19, 2022.

seem too different, composing concert music and composing film music are vastly disparate. I often find film composers write dull concert music and vice-versa; having studied concert music I wanted to take another crack at it with the experience I gained as a film composer. Hopefully I would be able to stay unique to myself and compose something compelling to listen to with an instrument I had honestly never heard of before. I was ready for a challenge.

When commissioning Sketches I know I asked you to include the guitar and two percussion instruments. What made you choose the marimba and the congas?

For the marimba I wanted to have another way to fill out the harmonies I was going for. The guitar has plenty of polyphonic potential, but I didn't want it to be solely relegated to playing chords or accompaniment figures. The marimba is such a beautifully resonant instrument too, I thought it would add a nice energy to the ensemble. Congas on the other hand were meant to accent the rhythmic drive of the piece and sometimes to provide a metronomic glue for the group as the rhythms can get quite dense at times. I think the colors of the four instruments really blended in a natural way for being so fundamentally different from each other.

You had said that Fernweh is your largest continuous work you've written to date. Was it difficult to make that switch from video game snippets to a sonata?

Yes it is my longest piece, but not by far. I've written chamber pieces of a similar length and some film cues I write have exceeded 15 minutes on their own, but this is certainly the most thought I've put into the structure and execution of a concert work. It is

certainly vastly different than video game music, considering those pieces hardly top 2 minutes in length, and it requires a wholly different mindset. Concert music requires much broader gestures, creating something that unfolds gradually and naturally over a longer period of time. Film and game music is much more segmented with short cues or tracks meant to convey a single emotional thread emphasizing what they underscore. I would say it was engaging more than it was difficult, using a different part of my brain musically.

I mentioned that Fernweh made me feel a sense of longing, and that the third movement reminds me of Prokofiev sneaking around a castle. Did you have any imagery in your head when writing any movements of Fernweh? What about Sketches?

Because I was shifting gears from film to concert music, I actually started *Fernweh* with a clear goal of it being completely non-programmatic. My concert music before *Fernweh* was always deeply programmatic and sometimes directly associated with specific imagery, but having written film music I now realize that it was becoming a crutch. *Sketches* was much the same. For my concert works going forward, I'd like to more consistently explore harmony detached from narrative and imagery as I find it freeing. This may change in the future, but for now that's my outlook!

How open were you really to making larger edits to the pieces? Is this very frustrating as a composer?

I was open to edits and I guess "large" is subjective in this case. I was not willing to change the overall formal structure of the pieces as I had planned them out pretty

carefully, but there were plenty of tweaks that could be made within the structure if the need arose. For instance, in the 3rd movement of *Fernweh* I had the d'amore playing rigorously for longer than was actually feasibly playable. In situations like this I'm glad to adhere to the performer's suggestions as they're the ones who actually have to play the dang thing! Of course as a wind player myself I keep these issues in mind, but sometimes it's important to step back and see the bigger picture to realize how exhausting something might be to play.

When you heard the pieces for the first time at the dress rehearsal, was there anything that you didn't expect that took you by surprise?

Honestly the most surprising part to me was that the piano part actually worked! I'm a pianist, but far from a professional performance level, so I was becoming worried that the piano part I had written (which was far more complex than mere accompaniment) just wouldn't be performance ready in time for the recital. I was happily dead wrong as Gail smashed my expectations on that front. Us composers are used to things not going quite according to plan, so it was an unexpected relief.

What is your process for composing when you want to create variation on a theme?

A theme can contain many elements that can bridge into multiple variations. When writing a theme, I try to incorporate gestures that I think will work well in developing beyond an initial statement. This can include rhythmic segments, notable interval leaps, sequenced lines, etc. Changing the harmony under a theme can also create variation as the melody conforms to a new setting. In film school we'd often talk about the "toolbox

theme,” a theme presented at the beginning of a film that contains a myriad of small elements that can be heard throughout the film. Hence, the theme provides the tools needed to craft the rest of the score. That’s something that’s definitely stuck with me and it’s a great way to conceptualize theme and development.

If someone didn’t have access to an oboe d’amore, would you consider transposing the music for the oboe?

This depends. Though it’s entirely possible for *Fernweh*, and might be strategically sound, I do think the piece will lose some character in the process. It spans the playable range of the d’amore pretty extensively and the color provided in the alto register is where the instrument really shines. I’m not totally opposed to it if the need arises, but we’ll see. *Sketches* would need extensive reworking to transpose and would probably be better to just rewrite the d’amore part alone to fit the range of the oboe.

At what point were you having the most fun composing these pieces?

I had a kernel of an idea pop up for the 3rd movement of *Fernweh* while writing the 1st movement. I quickly jotted it down to remember for later. Sometimes this works, other times I return to it later and think something like “no no no this won’t work anymore” and scrap it. This time though I returned to it, and it formed the crux of the 3rd movement. It was so satisfying as a composer to flesh out an idea I had early on in the development of a piece, and I had a ton of fun puzzling it together for the rondo form finale!