

Theresa Thordarson

hypoballad

for solo piano
(2022)

PERFORMANCE NOTES

- Mute strings between pins and dampers, still allowing for some string resonance to remain
 - try using the full pinky side of the left hand very close to the pins.
 - Pedal is to be used generously in muted string sections, and generally (except when obvious harmonic shifts are occurring).
- If performing on an upright, or a grand piano with an interior structure which differs greatly from the one used in creating this piece, the interior extended techniques may be modified or performed entirely on the keyboard, with care to emulate the intended sonorities.
- Notes with diamond note-heads in the *murky, wandering* section are emulating a *langspil*, an ancient Icelandic folk instrument. Folk practitioners are uncertain of how this instrument was originally played so, dear player, you are encouraged to experiment! Plucking strings with fingers/nails, hitting with various household objects, or investing in an actual dulcimer hammer could all be options. Plucking may be easiest given the short time to prepare for playing the right hand on the keyboard.

PROGRAM NOTES

Hypoballad explores narrative musical elements from the lives of Icelandic twin sisters Herdis and Olina Andrésdóttir, both poets in the ballade and *rímur* tradition whose work centered on nature and the experiences of peasant women.

It draws musical inspiration from Frédéric Chopin, Icelandic folk traditions, and Björk Guðmundsdóttir.

This music features “twin themes”, one representing each sister, which weave together to portray their childhood, unravel after their father’s tragic death at sea, are explored independently during their lives of separation, and are once more entwined upon their reunion in Reykjavik after 50 years apart.

Together, in 1924 at the age of 66, Herdis and Olina published their first written work *Ljóðmæli* (Poems) to much acclaim.

For the performer: an example of each theme is found in full in bar 24 - 28.

(Herdis is the top voice here and Olina the lower.)

*Are you rising from your twilight slumber,
O goddess of rhymes?*

*Hover over your friends,
awaken them with your bright voice,
let poetry's light and warmth
stream throughout the world*

- Olina Andrésdóttir
translated M.J. Driscoll

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for page turning purposes.

for Brendan Jacklin

hypoballad

for solo piano

Theresa Thordarson
(b. 1990)

Childhood: hazy, lilting, from afar

♩ = c. 116

The first system of the musical score consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and the lower staff is in bass clef. The time signature is 3/8. The music begins with a piano (*pp*) dynamic. The right hand (r.h.) plays a series of eighth notes with a slur, while the left hand (l.h.) plays a series of eighth notes with a slur. There are several plus signs (+) above the notes in both hands, indicating fingerings. The key signature has one sharp (F#).

mute strings (see performance notes)
generous pedal unless otherwise indicated

The second system of the musical score consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and the lower staff is in bass clef. The time signature is 3/8. The music begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The right hand (r.h.) plays a series of eighth notes with a slur, while the left hand (l.h.) plays a series of eighth notes with a slur. There are several plus signs (+) above the notes in both hands, indicating fingerings. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The text "coming into focus" is written above the right hand staff.

The third system of the musical score consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and the lower staff is in bass clef. The time signature is 4/8. The music begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The right hand (r.h.) plays a series of eighth notes with a slur, while the left hand (l.h.) plays a series of eighth notes with a slur. There are several plus signs (+) above the notes in both hands, indicating fingerings. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The text "l.h. on keys" is written below the left hand staff.

l.h. on keys

30 *express.*

p

mp

poco rit.

39 *a tempo, with motion*

mp

r.h.

Red. ^

44 *buoyant and flowing* *growing agitated*

mf

sfz

l.h. r.h.

growing agitated

49

f

r.h.

l.h.

molto dim.

molto rit.

53

p

Red.

Red.

Separation: murky, wandering

56 $\text{♩} = \text{c. } 104$

p

*)

pp

una corda, a piacere

59

pp

mp

pp

*) diamond-head notes on strings, see performance notes

62 *mp* *p* *mf*

65 *mf* *poco rit.*

68 *a tempo, freely* *pp* *mp* *tre corde*

71 *more urgently* *mp* *accel.....*

*) D# optional >

With strict discipline

♩ = ♩

74

fz

rfz

l.v.

80

fz

rfz

gradual accel......

85

mp sub.

cresc......

molto rit.

88

f

ff

Red. _____

Chorale: light, warm, cantabile

90

sub. *p* *mp*

Musical score for measures 90-93. The piece is in 4/4 time and G major. Measures 90-91 feature a piano introduction with a dynamic of *sub. p*. Measures 92-93 feature a mezzo-piano (*mp*) section. The score is written for piano with treble and bass staves. A large slur covers the entire system. A fermata is placed over the final chord of measure 93.

94

p

Musical score for measures 94-96. The piece continues in 4/4 time and G major. Measure 94 begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic. Measures 95-96 continue the piano texture. The score is written for piano with treble and bass staves. A large slur covers the entire system. A fermata is placed over the final chord of measure 96.

97

ppp *molto cresc.*

Musical score for measures 97-100. The piece continues in 4/4 time and G major. Measure 97 begins with a pianissimo (*ppp*) dynamic. Measures 98-100 feature a *molto cresc.* (molto crescendo) section. The score is written for piano with treble and bass staves. A large slur covers the entire system. A fermata is placed over the final chord of measure 100.

Reunion: playful, with buoyant groove

♩ = c. 88

101 *f* *p* *8va*

Ped.

(8) 104 *pp* *ppp* *8vb*

ppp

(8) 106 *p* *pp* *8vb*

pp

(8) 108 *mp*

Ped.

(8)

110

sfz *mp*

Detailed description: This system contains measures 110 and 111. Measure 110 is marked with a dynamic of *sfz* (sforzando) and measure 111 with *mp* (mezzo-piano). The music features a complex rhythmic pattern with many sixteenth notes and rests, and a bass line with chords and moving lines. A dashed line above measure 110 is labeled with the number 8, indicating an eighth-note group.

112 *joyous!*

mf

Red. _____ \wedge etc.

Detailed description: This system contains measures 112 and 113. Measure 112 is marked with a dynamic of *mf* (mezzo-forte) and the instruction *joyous!*. The music features a complex rhythmic pattern with many sixteenth notes and rests, and a bass line with chords and moving lines. A fermata is placed over the end of measure 112. Below the system, the text *Red.* is followed by a horizontal line and a wedge symbol, with the word *etc.* to the right.

114

f *piu f*

Detailed description: This system contains measures 114 and 115. Measure 114 is marked with a dynamic of *f* (forte) and measure 115 with *piu f* (pizzicato forte). The music features a complex rhythmic pattern with many sixteenth notes and rests, and a bass line with chords and moving lines. A fermata is placed over the end of measure 114. The system concludes with a 2/4 time signature.

slightly held back, gradually broadening.....

116

sub. mp *cresc.*

ped.

120

123

molto rit.

free flourish, unmetered

ff

molto rit. *repeat ad. lib.*

flutter fade pedal gradually,

ped.

tempo primo, with movement

126

p

pedal same as beginning

130

poco rit.

*l.h. mutes strings,
same as beginning*