

# **Chromatic aberrations**

**for piano four-hands**

**samuel pellman**

# *chromatic aberrations*

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by Samuel Pellman

In physics, the term “chromatic aberration” refers to the spectral arcs that appear around bright lights when viewed through the edges of inexpensive lenses. In music, the term “chromaticism” refers to the “color” that is added to music by the use of pitches that are beyond the scale. In this piece, arcs of chromatic pitches are presented as flashes of lights against the black background of silence. In many respects this piece is reminiscent of the “night music” of Bela Bartok. The arcs of chromaticism occasionally are scampering, sometimes are skittish, and at other times seem quite serene. Often they are interrupted by clusters of pitches that trail off in a series of echoes, like the tape echo effects so often heard in the 1960s and 1970s in the sound tracks of nightmare films. Ever so briefly, this piece brushes against the edge of the zone of twilight, the boundary between light and dark, between evening and night, between what is real and what is imagined.

**Samuel Pellman** was born in 1953 in Sidney, Ohio. He received a Bachelor of Music degree from Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, where he studied composition with David Cope, and an M.F.A. and D.M.A. from Cornell University, where he studied with Karel Husa and Robert Palmer. Many of his works may be heard on recordings by the Musical Heritage Society, Move Records, and innova recordings, and much of his music is published by the Continental Music Press and Wesleyan Music Press. Recently his music has been presented at the International Symposium of the World Forum for Acoustic Ecology in Melbourne, Australia and the Electric Rainbow Coalition festival at Dartmouth College. He is also the author of *An Introduction to the Creation of Electroacoustic Music*, a widely-adopted textbook published by Wadsworth, Inc. Presently he is a Professor of Music at Hamilton College, in Clinton, New York, where he teaches theory and composition and is co-director of the Studio for Transmedia Arts and Related Studies. Further information about his music can be found on the web at: <http://www.musicfromspace.com>.

chromatic aberrations  
for piano four-hands

"a night in the life of a neurotic"

samuel pellman

♩ = 60  
"scampering"

Piano-1 *mp* *legato*

Piano-2 *mp* *legato* *pp* *una corda*

Just prior to the beginning of the performance, set the sostenuto pedal to hold all of the keys (black and white) in the octave above the lowest C on the keyboard.

6 ♩ = 69

8<sup>va</sup>

*mf*

dim.

echo echo echo

accel.

*mf*

tre corde

11 ♩ = 60

8<sup>va</sup>

*ppp*

*p*

*pp*

*una corda* *tre corda*

16  $\text{♩} = 69$

no pause *f* *ff* *8va*

echo *sfz* *dim.* *pp*

19

The musical score for measures 19-22 is written for piano (p) and double bass (db). The key signature is D major (two sharps) and the time signature is 3/4. The piano part consists of a single melodic line with slurs and dynamic markings: *sfz* (measures 19-20), *dim.* (measures 21-22), and *pp* (measures 23-24). The double bass part consists of a single bass line with slurs and dynamic markings: *sfz* (measures 19-20), *dim.* (measures 21-22), and *pp* (measures 23-24). The score is divided into two systems, with measures 19-22 in the first system and measures 23-24 in the second system.

21  $\text{♩} = 72$

*sfz* *dim.* *pp* *sfz* *dim.*

$\text{♩} = 72$

*sfz* *dim.* *pp*

23  $\text{♩} = 60$  placid and serene (basically just keep repeating this until measure 31)

*ppp* *legatissimo*

26  $\text{♩} = 60$  slightly malevolent 13:8 15:8 13:8

*mp* *mf*

30  $\text{♩} = 69$  6:4 6:4 6:4

*p* *pp* *p dim. .... pp* *mp* "rip" *f* *p* *dim.* *f*

una corda tre corda

8va

**What are you lookin' at?**

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34  $\text{♩} = 60$

*pp* *legatissimo*

una corda

*p* *mf* *p* *mf*

(just keep repeating this until Piano-1 reaches measure 41)

37

*mp* *cresc.* *mf* *mp* *mf* *mp* *dim.*

40

*pp* *p* *cresc.* *f* *dim.* *pp*

8<sup>va</sup> 15<sup>ma</sup>

(no pause between Piano-2 and Piano-1 here)

43

*ppp* *mp* *p* *ppp*

"skittish" 5 6 5 6 5 5

*p* *mf* *p* *mf* *dim.* *p* *p* *pp* *mf* *f*

48  $\text{♩} = 60$

*sfz* *pp*

$\text{♩} = 60$

*p cresc.* *f* *mp* *f* *dim.* *7* *mf* *dim.* *cresc.*

Repeat this pattern ad. lib until Piano-2 finishes its "bouncing steel ball" imitation at measure 55.

52  $\text{♩} = 108$

*f* *mp* *f* *dim.* *mf* *dim.* *p* *cresc.*

$\text{♩} = 72$



55

Getting bored?

6 6 6 6 6 6

3 3 3 *pp*

9:8 9:8 9:8 9:8

58

"the pause that refreshes"

*cresc.* 6 6 6 6

*cresc.* 9:8 9:8 9:8 9:8

61

*mf* *cresc.* *f* *pp* *ppp*

*mf* *6:5* *8<sup>va</sup>* *8<sup>va</sup> = 56 no rit.* *15<sup>ma</sup>*

Cue *mf* *8<sup>vb</sup>* *8<sup>vb</sup> = 56 no rit.*

release sostenuto pedal \*