

The Busking Bassoonist

for bassoon and piano
(with optional theatrical elements)

by Sunny Knable

ca. 16 min.

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Notes:

The Busking Bassoonist came about for 10 reasons: Prairie Dawg Press approached me in 2013 about the idea of doing a group commission for a bassoon sonata and shortly thereafter, 10 amazing bassoonists signed up to hire me, lead by the unstoppable force, Scott Pool, and his frequent collaborator, pianist Natsuki Fukasawa. The proposition was for a piece based on New York City, the noisy, irrepressible and talent-laden surrounding in which I now call my home. The result is a three movement work exploring the busking musician in different settings: the first movement, *Underground Blues*, emulates the sound of the noisy subway station, juxtaposed with brief respites of intermittent melody; the second movement, *Park Bench Ballad*, finds the musician relaxing in a park on a breezy afternoon – onlookers reading their papers and books while a distant musician is heard not too far away; and the third movement, *Street Changes*, finds the musician on the hard dirty pavement, intermingled with the fast busy sounds of an unrelenting city.

The Busking Bassoonist was premiered in New York City by Scott Pool and Natsuki Fukasawa in October 2013. The bassoonists listed below are co-commissioners, without whom, this piece would not have come into existence. A big thank you to all of them.

Theatrical Elements and Instrument Preparation:

Bassoon

- All theatrical elements are optional but preferred. They will be designated in the score with an asterick (*).
- Bassoonist has two playing positions: sitting and standing. A chair and two sets of music stands are required.
- If pianist uses The New York Times preparation, the bassoonist will be expected to read an article from the paper in Interlude I, as specified in the score.

Piano:

- All piano preparations and theatrical elements are optional but preferred. They will be designated in the score with an asterick (*).
- Place one copy of the A section of the most current New York Times width-wise inside the piano, resting on the very bottom strings. This would ideally cover notes A1 to F3. The desired result is a rattling effect, emulating a noisy subway station. If this preparation is used, the bassoonist will be expected to read an article from the paper, as specified in the score.
- Place one paper-back copy of “The Catcher in the Rye” length-wise inside the piano, resting on the very top strings. This would ideally cover the top octave, from C6 to C7. Different results are to be expected depending on the piano and the size of the publication. If this preparation is used, pianist will be expected to read a section from Chapter 2 during Interlude II, as specified in the score.
- The use of Melodica in movement two is optional but preferred. A two-octave instrument is required if used (from C4 to C6)

for Scott Pool and Natsuki Fukasawa

The Busking Bassoonist

I. Underground Blues

Sunny Knable

**Piano has been prepared prior to entrance.
Bassoonist and pianist enter wearing street clothes.
Bassoonist puts out case or hat and drops change into it.
Bassoonist plays in a standing position for first movement.*

Allegro (♩.=60-66) like the distant sound of an approaching train
approx. multiphonics

Bassoon

Piano

pp *cresc. poco a poco*

Ped. *8^{vb}*

6

mp *mf* *f*

Ped. *8*

14

5

marcato

ff
marcato

f

8

(8)
poco Ped

26

22

4

8

(8)

30

4

8

sfz p

ff

(8)

38

legato

Bass clef: *f*, 2, 2
 Treble clef: *p*, 4, 4, 4, 4, 4, *mf*, 4, 4
 Bass clef: *stacc. sempre*, (p)

50

Bass clef: 2, 4, 2
 Treble clef: *mf*, 4, 4, 4, 4, 4, 4
 Bass clef: (p)

54

Bass clef: *fp*, *tr*
 Treble clef: *f*, *mf*, *p*, *f*
 Bass clef: (p), 4, 4, Ped.

62

7

Musical score for measures 62-70. The system includes a piano (p) staff and a bass (b) staff. The piano part begins with a dynamic marking of *f* and later changes to *mf*. The bass part includes an *8vb* marking and a fingering of 2 at the end of the system.

70

74

Musical score for measures 70-78. The system includes a piano (p) staff and a bass (b) staff. The piano part features a dynamic marking of *v*. The bass part includes a fingering of 2 at the end of the system.

78

Musical score for measures 78-85. The system includes a piano (p) staff and a bass (b) staff. The piano part features a dynamic marking of *v* and an *8va* marking. The bass part includes an *8vb* marking.

86

brashly

f cacaphonous
p mf f
mf f mf
sim. f
 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93

98

mf p f
f mf f mf
 94 95 96 97

102

mf cresc. f p mf p
f mf p
growl
 102 103 104 105

Musical score for measures 106-117. The system includes a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The piano part features dynamic markings *ff* and various articulations such as accents and slurs. Measure numbers 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, and 117 are indicated.

Musical score for measures 118-125. The system includes a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The piano part features dynamic markings *ff* and various articulations such as accents and slurs. Measure numbers 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, and 125 are indicated.

Musical score for measures 126-133. The system includes a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The piano part features dynamic markings *ff* and various articulations such as accents and slurs. Measure numbers 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, and 133 are indicated.

Ped.

134

Musical score for measures 134-145. The system includes a bass line and a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The bass line starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a fermata, then continues with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic. The grand staff is marked *sempre legato* and *mp*. The bass clef of the grand staff has a *molto Ped.* marking. The music features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes with various articulations and slurs.

146

Musical score for measures 146-149. The system includes a bass line and a grand staff. The bass line continues with eighth and sixteenth notes. The grand staff features a *8va* marking above the treble clef. The music concludes with a *flutter Ped.* marking. The key signature has two flats.

158

Musical score for measures 150-157. The system includes a bass line and a grand staff. The bass line features eighth and sixteenth notes with slurs. The grand staff includes a *8va* marking and a triplet of eighth notes. The music concludes with a four-measure rest. The key signature has two flats.

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160 *dolce*

molto Ped

160-165

166 **170**

molto Ped

166-173

174

molto Ped

174-179

Musical score for measures 208-215. The system includes a piano part (top staff) and a grand staff (middle and bottom staves). The piano part features a melodic line with dynamic markings *f*, *sfz p*, and *f*, and a 5:3 ratio. The grand staff contains complex harmonic textures with various accidentals and articulations. A *8va* marking is present above the grand staff.

218

Musical score for measures 216-222. The system includes a piano part (top staff) and a grand staff (middle and bottom staves). The piano part features a melodic line with dynamic markings *f*, *sfz p*, and *f*, and a 5:3 ratio. The grand staff contains complex harmonic textures with various accidentals and articulations. A *8va* marking is present above the grand staff.

Musical score for measures 223-230. The system includes a piano part (top staff) and a grand staff (middle and bottom staves). The piano part features a melodic line with a *(straight-time)* marking and a tempo change to $(\text{♩} = \text{♩})$. The grand staff contains complex harmonic textures with various accidentals and articulations. A *8va* marking is present above the grand staff. Measure 230 includes a 4/4 time signature change.

230

230

f *8va* *legato* *p* *f*

sub. p

8vb

Red.

15

244

240

p *f* *p cresc.*

8va *8vb*

Red.

3

254

249

cresc. *ff*

8va *8vb*

Red.

molto Red.

6/16

6

3

257

Musical score for measures 257-265. The system consists of three staves: a single bass staff at the top, and a grand staff (treble and bass) below. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The time signature is 7/8. The bass staff contains a melodic line with various rhythmic values and slurs. The grand staff contains a complex accompaniment with chords and arpeggiated figures.

266

Musical score for measures 266-273. The system consists of three staves: a single bass staff at the top, and a grand staff (treble and bass) below. The key signature has two flats. The time signature is 7/8. The bass staff features a melodic line with slurs and a fermata over the final measure. The grand staff accompaniment includes chords and arpeggiated patterns, with some measures marked with a '4' indicating a four-measure rest or a specific rhythmic pattern.

278

Musical score for measures 274-281. The system consists of three staves: a single bass staff at the top, and a grand staff (treble and bass) below. The key signature has two flats. The time signature is 7/8. The bass staff begins with a fermata and then continues with a melodic line. The grand staff accompaniment features chords and arpeggiated patterns, with some measures marked with a '4' and others with '2' and '8'. Dynamic markings include *f*, *sfz*, *p*, and *mf*. A trill is indicated in the final measure of the bass staff.

282

Musical score for measures 282-288. The system consists of three staves: a single bass staff at the top and a grand staff (treble and bass) below. The bass staff contains a melodic line with a trill (trm) and a forte accent (sfz). The grand staff features a complex accompaniment with chords and eighth-note patterns. Measure numbers 4, 2, 8, 4, 8, 2, 8, and 4 are placed below the grand staff. The system concludes with a measure number 17.

290

289

Musical score for measures 289-295. The system consists of three staves: a single bass staff at the top and a grand staff (treble and bass) below. The bass staff contains a melodic line with a trill (trm) and a forte accent (sfz). The grand staff features a complex accompaniment with chords and eighth-note patterns. Measure numbers 2, 4, 8, 2, 8, 4, 8, and 4 are placed below the grand staff.

296

Musical score for measures 296-302. The system consists of three staves: a single bass staff at the top and a grand staff (treble and bass) below. The bass staff contains a melodic line with a trill (trm), a forte accent (sfz), and a piano dynamic (p). The grand staff features a complex accompaniment with chords and eighth-note patterns. Measure numbers 4, 8, 4, 8, 8, and 8 are placed below the grand staff. The system concludes with an 8^{vb} marking and a dashed line.

302

cresc. poco a poco al fine

sfz p cresc. poco a poco al fine

8

308

timbral tr

timbral tr (with growl and/or flutter)

p *f —molto—*

8

Ped

*Bassoonist quietly removes the most current copy of the New York Times from lower portion of piano, goes to a seated position, and softly reads aloud the most somber article of the day underneath the interlude. Pianist keeps pedal ringing, picks up the melodica and starts to play after bassoonist starts the reading.

Grave con molto rubato (♩=50)

Interlude I

1 *lunga* *melodica:
 (optional: play on piano con 8va with Ped l.v.)

p < *mp* < *mf* < *f* > *mf*

*Ped. lift

*Bassoonist finishes reading section, sets paper down quietly on floor, and plays in seated position for second movement.

9 2 *(melodica:)

mp > *p* > *p* < *f* >

*(piano:)

Ped. lift

II. Park Bench Ballad

6 **Allegro moderato** (♩=100) *freely, like a breezy day in Central Park*
circular breathing (ad lib pitch bend up and down) opt. (•)

pp < *p* < *f*

lift

13

(9) *rit.*
mp *f* *f* *f*
 3 3

17

meno mosso

(9) *molto rall.*

mp *dim. poco a poco* *al niente*
 *to melodica

21

L'istesso tempo (♩=120) in strict time

*melodica: *mp* *p* *sub. f* *sub. mf*
 (opt. on piano con 8va with Ped l.v.)
 *Ped. lift

28

Musical score for measures 28-34. The bass staff starts with a dynamic of *mf* and features a crescendo to *f*, followed by a further increase to *ff*, and then a decrescendo back to *f* and finally *dim.*. The treble staff starts with a dynamic of *mp* and features a crescendo to *mf*, followed by an increase to *f*, and then a decrescendo back to *mp* and finally *dim.*

35

37

Musical score for measures 35-39. The bass staff has dynamics of *poco*, *a*, and *poco*. The treble staff has dynamics of *poco*, *a*, and *poco*.

40

42

Musical score for measures 40-44. The bass staff has dynamics of *mp* and *mf*. The treble staff has dynamics of *p*, *mp*, *mf*, and *f*.

45

Musical score for measures 45-49. The bass staff has dynamics of *mp*, *p*, and *mp*. The treble staff has dynamics of *mp*, *mf*, and *mf*.

51

50

Musical score for measures 50-55. The bass staff features a melodic line with slurs and ties, while the treble staff provides harmonic accompaniment. A *cresc.* marking is present in the treble staff.

56

Musical score for measures 56-62. The bass staff includes dynamic markings *cresc.*, *f*, and *mp*, with a **to piano* instruction. The treble staff includes *mf*, *cresc.*, *f*, and *mp* markings. A circled measure number (62) is at the end of the system.

63

Tempo I (♩=100) freely

circular breathing (ad lib pitch bend up and down)

Musical score for measures 63-70. The bass staff features a melodic line with *p* and *mp* dynamics. The piano (pn.) part includes **piano:*, *p*, and *molto Ped.* markings, along with a triplet of eighth notes. A circled measure number (70) is at the end of the system.

mf *f* *mf*

8va

3 3 5

74

78 Moderato (♩=80) in strict time

ff *dim. poco a poco al niente*

8

3 3

l.v. 3

una corda pp

79

N *mf* N *mf*

p

mp p mf

82

84

Musical score for measures 82-84. The score is written for bass, treble, and grand piano staves. The bass staff features a melodic line with dynamic markings *p*, *f*, and *mf*. The grand piano part includes a right-hand staff with chords and a left-hand staff with a continuous eighth-note pattern. Pedal markings include *flutter Ped.* and *molto Ped.* with wedge-shaped symbols.

85

Musical score for measures 85-87. The bass staff continues the melodic line with dynamics *mf < f*, *mp*, and *mf*. The grand piano part maintains the eighth-note pattern in the left hand and chordal accompaniment in the right hand. Pedal markings are present at the end of measures 86 and 87.

88

90

Musical score for measures 88-90. The bass staff features a melodic line with a dynamic marking of *f*. The grand piano part includes a right-hand staff with a 15th fingering (*15^{ma}*) and an 8va marking, and a left-hand staff with a continuous eighth-note pattern. The dynamic marking *pp secco* is indicated at the end of the section.

dim. poco a poco

(15) *sim.*

(8) *sim.*

al niente

(15)

(8)

pp

(15)

(8)

15^{ma} *ppp*

26 *Pianist stands, removes "Catcher in the Rye" from the upper portion of the piano and softly reads aloud a section from Chapter 2 starting with: ["What would you have done in my place?" he said. "Tell the truth, boy. " ...] and ending with: ["How do you feel about all this, boy? I'd be very interested to know. Very interested."]. Bassoonist has the option to resume standing here or at the start of movement III.

102 **Largo con molto rubato** (♩=60) **Interlude II**

p *mp* *p* *mp* *p* *mf* *f* *mf* *mp* *pp* *attacca*

*Pianist finishes reading and has the option of putting book back inside piano.

Presto (♩=224-240) **unrelenting, like NYC III. Street Changes**
(4+3)

*If not already done so, bassoonist resumes a standing position for final movement.

pp *pp* *8va* *secco* *8* *9* *p* *cresc.* *p* *cresc.* *8*

13

17

27

Musical score for measures 13-17. The score is in 3/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It features a bass line and a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). Dynamics include *mp*, *cresc.*, *mf*, and *f*. A circled '8' is at the bottom left.

18

Musical score for measures 18-21. The score continues with the same instrumentation and key signature. Dynamics include *mf* and *f*.

22

Musical score for measures 22-27. The score concludes with the same instrumentation and key signature. Dynamics include *mf* and *f*.

25

Musical score for measures 25-28. The score is written for three staves: a bass staff at the top, a grand staff (treble and bass) in the middle, and another bass staff at the bottom. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The top bass staff contains a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The grand staff features a piano (*p*) accompaniment with chords and moving lines. The bottom bass staff provides a bass line with eighth notes.

29

Musical score for measures 29-32. The score is written for three staves: a bass staff at the top, a grand staff (treble and bass) in the middle, and another bass staff at the bottom. The key signature has two flats. The top bass staff contains a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The grand staff features a mezzo-forte (*mf*) accompaniment with chords and moving lines. The bottom bass staff provides a bass line with eighth notes. A dynamic marking *v.* is present at the end of the system.

33

Musical score for measures 33-36. The score is written for three staves: a bass staff at the top, a grand staff (treble and bass) in the middle, and another bass staff at the bottom. The key signature has two flats. The top bass staff contains a melodic line with eighth notes. The grand staff features a mezzo-piano (*mp*) accompaniment with chords and moving lines. The bottom bass staff provides a bass line with eighth notes. A dynamic marking *p* is present at the start of the system. A circled number 8 is located at the bottom left of the page.

37

Musical score for measures 37-40. The system includes a bass line, a grand staff (treble and bass clefs), and a separate staff for the 8va (8th octave) part. The 8va part is marked *mf*. The grand staff features a melody in the bass clef with triplets and slurs, and chords in the treble clef. The bass line has a similar melodic pattern. Measure numbers 37, 38, 39, and 40 are indicated at the bottom of the system.

41

Musical score for measures 41-44. The system includes a bass line, a grand staff, and an 8va part. The 8va part is marked *f*. The grand staff features a melody in the bass clef with slurs and dynamics *f* and *sub. p*, and chords in the treble clef. The bass line has a similar melodic pattern. Measure numbers 41, 42, 43, and 44 are indicated at the bottom of the system.

45

Musical score for measures 45-48. The system includes a bass line, a grand staff, and an 8va part. The 8va part is marked *mf*. The grand staff features a melody in the bass clef with slurs and dynamics *f* and *sub. p*, and chords in the treble clef. The bass line has a similar melodic pattern. Measure numbers 45, 46, 47, and 48 are indicated at the bottom of the system.

49

Musical score for measures 49-51. The piece is in a key with one flat (B-flat major or D minor) and a 3/4 time signature. Measure 49 starts with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The bass line features a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes with slurs. The piano part consists of chords and arpeggiated figures in both hands.

52

Musical score for measures 52-54. The bass line continues with slurred eighth and sixteenth notes. The piano part features more complex arpeggiated patterns and chordal textures.

55

57

Musical score for measures 55-57. Measure 55 includes a *8va* (octave up) marking above the piano part. Measure 57 begins with a fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic. The bass line maintains its rhythmic intensity, while the piano part features dense arpeggiated textures.

58

61

8^{vb}

64

65

(8)

Ped.

66 *approx. multiphonics*

f 4

mf

8:6

69

3 4

f *mf* *f* *tr*

8:6

72

73

ff *f* *f* *tr*

8:6

75 33

tr

4

8

8:6

78

5

4

tr

timbre tr with growl

p

cresc.

8va

8:6

81

f

tr

8

85

Musical score for measures 85-88. The system consists of three staves: a single bass staff at the top and a grand staff (treble and bass) below. The music is in 3/8 time and features a complex rhythmic pattern with many sixteenth notes and slurs. The key signature has one flat.

89

Musical score for measures 89-92. The system consists of three staves: a single bass staff at the top and a grand staff (treble and bass) below. Measure 89 is marked with a box. The music continues with complex rhythmic patterns, including triplets and slurs. A fermata is present over a chord in measure 91. The key signature has one flat.

Red.

93

Musical score for measures 93-96. The system consists of three staves: a single bass staff at the top and a grand staff (treble and bass) below. The music continues with complex rhythmic patterns, including triplets and slurs. An 8va marking is present in measure 94. The key signature has one flat.

8^{vb}

ff mp cresc. poco a poco al fine

ff mp cresc. poco a poco al fine

8^{va}

101

ff mp cresc. poco a poco al fine

ff mp cresc. poco a poco al fine

8^{va}

105

(mf)

(mf)

8^{va}

108

Musical score for measures 108-112. The system consists of three staves: a bass staff at the top, a grand staff in the middle (treble and bass clefs), and a bass staff at the bottom. Measure 113 is highlighted with a box. The music features complex rhythmic patterns and chromatic movement.

112

Musical score for measures 112-116. The system consists of three staves: a bass staff at the top, a grand staff in the middle (treble and bass clefs), and a bass staff at the bottom. Measure 113 is highlighted with a box. A trill is indicated above a note in measure 114. The music continues with complex rhythmic patterns and chromatic movement.

116

Musical score for measures 116-120. The system consists of three staves: a grand staff at the top (treble and bass clefs), a grand staff in the middle (treble and bass clefs), and a bass staff at the bottom. The music continues with complex rhythmic patterns and chromatic movement.

119

121

marcato

37

Musical score for measures 119-122. The top staff is a single bass line with eighth-note patterns. The middle and bottom staves are a grand staff with chords and bass notes. Dynamics include (ff) and 15ma.

123

Musical score for measures 123-125. The top staff continues the bass line. The middle and bottom staves show chords and bass notes with dynamic markings (ff).

*Bassoonist holds out hat or case.
 A 'plant' (or multiple plants) in the audience
 give(s) a dollar. Bassoonist offers gratitude.

126

Musical score for measures 126-128. The top staff includes a 'growl' marking. The middle and bottom staves show chords and bass notes with dynamic markings (sfz p, fff).

FINE