THE FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF MUSIC

THE SHIELD OF ACHILLES

By

MICHAEL BRODER

A Thesis submitted to the
College of Music
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Music

Degree Awarded:
Spring Semester, 2012
Michael Broder defended this thesis on March 27, 2012.

The members of the supervisory committee were:

Clifton Callender
Professor Directing Thesis

Ladislav Kubik
Committee Member

Matthew Shaftel
Committee Member

The Graduate School has verified and approved the above-named committee members, and certifies that the thesis has been approved in accordance with university requirements.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TITLE PAGE</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INSTRUMENTATION</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PERFORMANCE NOTES</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE SHIELD OF ACHILLES</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REFERENCES</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ABSTRACT

W. H. Auden's poem "The Shield of Achilles" contrasts idealized expectations of humanity with a much harsher, grimmer reality. In particular, the poem paints a disparity between civilization's potential for balance and constructive order and its capability of barbarous destruction. The poem tells an alternate version of a scene from Homer's *Iliad* in which the nymph Thetis, mother of Achilles, gazes upon the decorated shield the armorer-god Hephaestos has created to console her grieving son and protect him in battle.

The poem consists of nine stanzas total, four shorter-lined octets and five longer-lined septets. The octets tell of Thetis' expectation of civilized imagery on the shield, describing in brief, rhythmic lines the idealized illustrations of reverence and harmony she has imagined. The septets, which occur in pairs between the octets, describe the illustrations Hephaestos has actually put onto the shield: barren wastelands; depersonalized, obedient armies; onlookers apathetic to a ruthless execution; and a jaded youth continuing the violent actions that have surrounded him his entire life. A final octet concludes the poem, betraying Thetis' disappointment with the shield's grim depiction of humanity and foretelling of Achilles' impending death.
Michael Broder
(b. 1988)

The Shield of Achilles
for Soprano and Chamber Ensemble

Text by W. H. Auden

Score
INSTRUMENTATION

Soprano
Flute (doubling Piccolo)
Bass Clarinet in B-flat (doubling Soprano Clarinet in B-flat)
Violin
Violoncello
Percussion 1
  Vibraphone (equipped with a motor with continuously adjustable speed)
  Suspended Cymbal
  Tam-Tam
  Snare Drum
  Floor Tom (or Tenor Drum)
Percussion 2
  Marimba (five-octave)
  Mark Tree (large)
  Bass Drum

Percussion Notation

N.B.: The marking "Tom" always refers to the Floor Tom and should not be confused with "Snare Drum, snares off." Percussion instrument names are given above the staff when instrument changes occur, except when the Tom and Snare Drum are played together in a passage, in which case only the first instrument change of the passage is labeled (e.g. m. 106).
PERFORMANCE NOTES

Accidentals carry throughout the measure and affect only the register in which they appear. Courtesy accidentals are used frequently to avoid confusion.

Arrows indicate a gradual change from one mode of playing to another (see note on vibrato).

A vertical bracket before a pair of rolled notes in the second percussion part indicates that both notes should be struck simultaneously on the first stroke of the roll. Subsequent strokes of the roll should alternate between notes in a usual manner.

A vertical bracket before a pizzicato double-stop in the cello part indicates that both notes should be plucked at the same time (using two fingers).

Crescendi and diminuendi without target dynamics indicate small changes of less than one dynamic level.

Dampening of a ringing percussion instrument is indicated by a cross overlapping a circle (similar to the symbol for “Coda”).

Dead stroke in the percussion parts is indicated by an “x” through the stem of a note. In one particularly long passage in the marimba (mm. 105-115), the “x”s are omitted and “dead stroke (sempre)” is specified. An “x” in parenthesis through the stem of a note indicates quasi dead stroke, which is used as a transition between dead stroke and ordinario.

Dynamics indicated in the soprano part are understood to be louder than those of the other instruments. Thus, in a passage where everyone is given the same dynamic marking, the soprano should be clearly heard.

The dynamic marking $n$ stands for niente (nothing).

Feathered beams indicate a gradual acceleration or deceleration for the duration indicated above the bracket. When notes that lack beams (i.e. notes of longer value) are “feathered,” dotted lines are given in the place of beams.

Fluttertongue in the flute is indicated by three slashes through the stem of a note.

Pedalings given in the vibraphone part are suggestions. Passages without pedal markings should be pedaled freely unless “senza pedale” is indicated. Passages marked “secco” may be played without pedal or pedaled to reflect the duration of the notes indicated (but no longer).

A plus sign (+) over a note in the clarinet part indicates slap tongue. If slap tongue is not possible, a short marcato or a staccatissimo note may substitute.

Unless rolled, notes on suspended cymbal should be played with a hard stick or beater whenever possible (preferably a snare drum stick, though when this is not possible, the butt or shaft of a mallet may be used).
A sforzando indicates additional weight on the attack of a note similar to an accent, but without the separation usually associated with an accent. Sforzandi occur at a variety of dynamic levels. When a sforzando coincides with a change in dynamic level or the restatement of a dynamic after a measure or more of rest, the symbols are shown close to each other (such as $fsfz$, $mpsfz$, etc.) An $sfz$ marking by itself is to be played within the current dynamic level (i.e. the most recently indicated dynamic marking).

Sul ponticello passages in the string parts should sound quite eerie. It is preferable to aim at playing these passages “too sul ponticello” than “not sul ponticello enough.”

Timbral trills (or “color” trills) are indicated by a (t) above a $tr$ marking followed by a wavy line. For these types of trills, players should rapidly alternate between two different fingerings for the same pitch, producing an effect similar to a tremolo on a string instrument. Conventional trills are indicated in the usual manner by a $tr$ marking followed by a wavy line.

Vibrato is indicated by the following abbreviations: s.v. (senza vibrato) and v.n. (vibrato normale).

In the soprano part, three special vocal “timbres” are called for:

1) A breathy, dramatic tone as often heard in Broadway (indicated by an “x” through the stem of a note). Notes marked in this manner should receive portamenti ad libitum. Occasionally, portamenti are indicated before or after these notes, but the singer should add more wherever she desires. These notes should have some semblance of the pitches indicated, though they need not necessarily start or end on the pitches indicated.

2) A somewhat breathy tone (indicated by an “x” in parenthesis through the stem of a note). Notes marked in this manner should sound halfway between the breathy, dramatic tone described in no. 1 and the singer’s default tone. Portamenti should not be used unless indicated; pitch should be nearly constant. This second tone is often used as a transition between the tone of no. 1 and the singer’s default tone and usually lasts just a few notes.

3) Speech (indicated by notes without noteheads and the word “spoken”). Rhythms should be followed as precisely as possible. Accents in parenthesis often indicate syllabic stress in a metrically weak position; the singer should accent these syllables as she would in normal speech. Contour and range are vaguely indicated by the position of the stems (i.e. where the notehead would be).

Notes in the soprano part not marked in one of the above ways should be sung in the conventional manner, though nuance and variation within this style are welcomed.

The score is in C. All instruments sound as written except piccolo, which sounds an octave higher.

Duration is approximately 20 minutes.
Score in C

for Rachel Eve Holmes

The Shield of Achilles

W. H. Auden
(1907–1973)

Michael Broder
(2011)

Celebratory \( \frac{3}{4} = 76 \)

\( \frac{3}{4} = 76 \)

\( \frac{3}{4} = 76 \)

\( \frac{3}{4} = 76 \)

Celebratory

VIBRAPHONE

motor off

secco

molto rit.

VIBRAPHONE

motor on (moderate)

*Always unless indicated otherwise.
\[ a \text{ tempo} \quad \left( \frac{\text{q} = 76}{\text{c} 50} \right) \]

Soprano

\[ f \]

Flute

\[ f \]

Bassoon

\[ f \]

Violin

\[ f \]

Viola

\[ f \]

Vibraphone

\[ f \]

Piano

\[ f \]

Percussion 1

\[ f \]

Percussion 2

\[ f \]
*The marking "vibrato espressivo" in mm. 23-28 indicates the use of vibrato typical of a high, expressive, lyrical cello passage, while "fast, narrow vibrato" (indicated in mm. 19-23) should sound a little unnatural.
*Hold the fermata in m. 31 until the tam-tam has decayed to about mp.
Sop.
Fl.
Cl.
Vln.
Vc.
Perc. 1
Perc. 2
All notes in the marimba from mm. 105-115 (including grace notes) should be performed dead stroke.
Celebratory $\frac{1}{4} = 72$

Sop.

Fl.

Bs. Cl.

Vln.

Vc.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Celebratory $\frac{1}{4} = 72$

VIBRAPHONE

pizz.

TOM

CYMBAL

arco
Sop.  
Fl.  
Bs. Cl.  
Vln.  
Vc.  
Perc. 1  
Perc. 2  

Port.  fast, narrow vibrato  
intense, but legato

VIBRAPHONE  
fast motor

MARK TREE  
noisy
*Hold the fermata in m. 157 until the tam-tam has decayed to about mp. Measure 158 should follow in time with the ringing tam-tam dampened abruptly on beat 3.
Sopr.

Fl.

Bass Clar.

Violin

Viola

Percussion 1

Percussion 2

\[ \text{spoken \textit{mf}} \]

\[ \text{with mock pity} \]

\[ \text{(change bow imperceptibly when needed)} \]
Sop.

Fl.

Cl.

Vln.

Vc.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

176 177 178 179
Pochissimo più mosso  $q = 56$

Sop.

Fl.

to piccolo

Cl.

Vln.

Vc.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Poco a poco cresc. (to m. 190)

Poco a poco cresc. (to m. 190)

Poco a poco cresc. (to m. 190)

Poco a poco cresc. (to m. 190)

Poco a poco cresc. (to m. 190)
To facilitate performance, a restatement of this metric modulation with context-specific rhythmic values is given in each of the instrumental parts. These restatements are given in addition to the general marking shown above the soprano part.
Appassionato, tempo rubato $\frac{3}{8} = 54-72$

Soprano (Sop.)

Flute (Fl.)

Clarinet (Cl.)

Violin (Vln.)

Viola (Vc.)

Percussion 1 (Perc. 1)

Percussion 2 (Perc. 2)
*The intended effect in the flute part here is a transition from fluttetongue to a timbral trill as seamlessly as possible.
Sop.

Pic.

Cl.

Vln.

Vc.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

\[ \text{string.} \]

\[ \text{mf} \]

\[ \text{poco a poco cresc. (to m. 251)} \]

\[ \text{string.} \]

\[ \text{piccolo} \]

\[ \text{string.} \]

\[ \text{poco a poco cresc. (to m. 251)} \]

\[ \text{poco a poco cresc. (to m. 251)} \]

\[ \text{poco a poco cresc. (to m. 251)} \]

\[ \text{poco a poco cresc. (to m. 251)} \]
Celebratory, but less than before $\frac{\text{b}}{\text{d}} = 66$

Sop.

Perc. 1

Vln.

Vc.

Perc. 2

Cl.

Vln.

Celebratory, but less so than before $\frac{\text{b}}{\text{d}} = 66$
Meno mosso $\frac{d}{q} = 60$

VIBRAPHONE
moderate motor

SNARE DRUM
snare on
*Hold the fermata in m. 354 until the tam-tam has decayed to about \( p \). If the wait is too long, the percussionist may begin gradually dampening the tam-tam during this fermata instead of in m. 355.

---76---
A little slower, but still rubato  \( \frac{\text{363}}{\text{364}} \) \( \frac{\text{365}}{\text{366}} \) \( \frac{\text{367}}{\text{368}} \)

The percussionist should nudge the lowest bar of the mark tree toward the other bars gently enough that only the very lowest bars clink against each other a few times. The eighth note in this figure indicates the approximate "duration" of the gesture required to set the bars in motion; the resulting sound will last longer.
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Education
Florida State University
  Master of Music in Composition – expected May 2012
  Clifton Callender, major professor
University of Georgia
  Bachelor of Music in Composition – May 2010, Magna Cum Laude
  Leonard V. Ball, Jr. and Adrian P. Childs, major professors

Teaching Experience
Teaching Assistant, Sight Singing and Ear Training, Florida State University
  Full classroom control; taught Unit I (Fall 2010), Unit II (Spring 2011), Unit III
  (Fall 2011), and Unit IV (expected Spring 2012) of a four-unit course series; taught
two sections of approx. 15 students each twice a week; created lesson plans,
administered grades and exams, held office hours

Awards
Winner, Duo Fujin One-Day Composition Competition – 2011
  One of three winners including Adrian P. Childs and Russ Grazier, Jr.; composition
  performed on tour by Duo Fujin in various venues in the Southeast as well as
  recorded and posted on YouTube
Outstanding Sophomore, University of Georgia School of Music – Spring 2008
Elected Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society – Spring 2010
First Place, Arnold Salop Memorial Composition Contest – 2009
  Awarded for "Suite for Clarinet and Piano"
First Place, Arnold Salop Memorial Composition Contest – 2008
  Awarded for "Sonatina for Bassoon and Piano"

Scholarships
John H. Corina Scholarship – Spring 2009
  Awarded by the University of Georgia composition faculty "for outstanding work
  as a student composer"
University of Georgia Bands Scholarship – Fall 2006 to Spring 2010
HOPE Scholarship – Fall 2006 to Spring 2010

Leadership
Treasurer, Society of Composers, Incorporated, Student Chapter at Florida State
University – Fall 2011 to Spring 2012
  Helped organize and program events such as recitals and guest artists / lecturers,
  requested funding
Vice President, Student Composers' Association – Fall 2009 to Spring 2010
   Led group discussions and gave presentations on various subjects such as prominent new music ensembles and a biography of Erik Satie

Professional Development

Mathematics in Music Workshop, Music Theory Southeast Conference at Florida State University – February 2011
   Selected to participate in group discussion and review of articles and musical analytical methods incorporating mathematics; led by Adrian Childs

Music Engraving
   Entered, edited, and produced musical scores from manuscript using Finale notation software; jobs included musical examples for two doctoral dissertations and many pieces for various instrumentations including choir, organ, solo wind, and chamber ensembles

Trombone Performance
   Played various gigs for public and private occasions, including weddings and church services; jobs included both paid and volunteer performances