

Narrator

Gwyneth Walker

The Circus of Creation

*a musical drama for
Narrator, Brass Quintet and Percussion
based on the poems
Circus of the Sun
by Robert Lax*

THE CIRCUS OF CREATION is a staged presentation of selected poems from *Circus of the Sun* (1950) by Robert Lax (1915-2000). This new work combines readings of the poems with instrumental music (brass quintet and percussion) and optional actors/dancers.

In the simplest performance format, only one reader is required. The Narrator plays the role of **Ringmaster**, introducing the circus performers and describing their acts. He brings to life in our imagination a troop of **Jugglers** and **Acrobats**, and then the very special **Mogador**, who performs somersaults while riding on horseback. **La Louisa** on her trapeze sways overhead. The elephants and circus crew labor to erect the tents. And of course, **Penelope** the tightrope walker is there to applaud Mogador's feats of bravery!

These characters come forth within one day to create their moments of adventure (worship), and then they steal away, "leaving the field of wonders darkened." "Have you known such a thing?"

The Robert Lax poems in *Circus of the Sun* present the circus as entertainment and reverence. The topics range from lighthearted and action-filled to contemplative and spiritually profound. And thus the **CIRCUS OF CREATION** intends to explore and celebrate this unusual blending of diverse elements. Scenes may be excerpted as desired.

Performance Notes

The optimum performance situation would include actors and dancers to portray the circus characters, while the music and readings are taking place. However, in lieu of these additional performers, some clever stage sets and props can provide abundant circus atmosphere. It is suggested that drawings of circus entertainers be displayed on panels. Various props (hoops, juggling pins, a small trapeze) may be placed on the stage. Thus, the **Ringmaster** can gesture towards the drawings and props when referring to specific characters and their acts. And the circus can come alive in our imaginations!

about Robert Lax and his poetry

Robert Lax was born in Olean, NY in 1915. He has been described by Jack Kerouac as "One of the great original voices of our time...a Pilgrim in search of beautiful innocence, writing lovingly, finding it, simply, in his own way." Though many hold him to be one of the greatest American poets of this century, Lax maintained a low profile, living and writing in seclusion on the Greek island of Patmos.

In 1943, Robert Lax first met the family of circus performers who were to become the subject of *Circus of the Sun and Mogador's Book*. Lax accompanied New Yorker writer Leonard Robinson who was interviewing the Cristiani family for a piece he was doing for the "New Yorker." Lax's fascination with the circus had taken root, and in 1950 he traveled through western Canada with the Cristiani family, observing and absorbing their world.

The poems in *Circus of the Sun* express a reverence for the acts of daring, beauty and grace that make the circus the singular event that it is. What also emerges is the drawing of a link between this world of the circus – wherein a tent is erected, acts are performed, and then the tent is disassembled only to be re-erected the next day – and Lax's faith. As Denise Levertov has said "the radiant security of Lax's faith appears in his work as a serenity of tone." *Circus Days and Nights* presents a powerful spiritual vision for the present day.

Narrator

The Circus of Creation

for Narrator, Brass Quintet and Percussion

Robert Lax (1915-2000)

Gwyneth Walker

Prologue

The RINGMASTER comes to the front/center of the stage to address the audience. His introductory words are intended to express the excitement of the circus.

Ringmaster (*spoken*)

Fields were set for the the circus,
stars for the shows
before ever elephant lumbered
or tent rose.

begin music

With energy $\text{♩} = 72$

Tom-Tom

S. D.

Musical score for Percussion and Ensemble, measures 1-4. The Percussion part (Tom-Tom) starts with a *p* dynamic and increases to *f*. The Ensemble part starts with a *f* dynamic and is marked *crisply, celebratory*. The key signature is two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and the time signature is 2/4. The Percussion part includes a section labeled 'S. D.' (Soprano Drum) starting in measure 4.

5

Musical score for Percussion and Ensemble, measures 5-9. The Percussion part continues with the Tom-Tom. The Ensemble part continues with the *f* dynamic and *crisply, celebratory* marking. The key signature and time signature remain the same.

10

Musical score for Percussion and Ensemble, measures 10-14. The Percussion part includes Hi Bongo and Tom-Tom. The Ensemble part continues with the *f* dynamic and *crisply, celebratory* marking. The key signature and time signature remain the same.

Poetry from *Circus Days and Nights* by Robert Lax (Overlook Press, 2000) based on his travels with the Cristiani Bros. family circus. Used with permission of the Lax Literary Trust.

© Copyright 2009 by Gwyneth Walker
273 Brainstorm Rd., Braintree VT 05060
All Rights Reserved.

14 *rit.* Susp. Cym.

Perc. *mp* *p*

Ens. *short pause*

Have You Seen My Circus?

Ringmaster (*spoken with excitement and reverence*)

Narr. { Have you seen my circus? Did you get up in the early morning Did you see them occupy the field?
Have you known such a thing? and see the wagons pull into town? Were you there when it was set up?

Perc.

(approximately synchronize the reading with the music)

2 Did you see the cookhouse set up
in dark by **lantern light?** Did you see them
build the fire and sit around it smoking
and talking quietly?

Perc. *Glock.* *p*

Ens.

4 As the first rays of dawn came, did you see them roll in blankets and go to sleep?
A little sleep until time came to
unroll the canvas, raise the tent,
draw and carry water for the men and animals;

♩ = 120
Glock. *p*

Perc.

Ens.

*Allow a short pause before continuing.

8

Narr. were you there when the animals came forth, the

♩ = 60
at the tempo of "lumbering elephants"

Ens.

12

Narr. ***great** lumbering elephants to drag the poles and unroll the canvas? Were you there when the morning moved over the grasses?

Perc. B. D. Maracas

Ens.

16

Narr. Were you there when the sun looked through the dark bars of clouds at the men who slept by the cookhouse fire? Did you see the cold morning wind nip at their blankets? Did you see the morning stars twinkle in the firmament?

Perc. Tri. Hi Bongo

Ens.

20

Narr. Have you heard their laughter around the cookhouse fire? When the morning stars threw down their spears and watered heaven...

Perc. Glock.

Ens. (*p*) lightly, as laughter

*Words in bold print are intended to coincide with the downbeat of the measure in which they appear, or to the indicated musical entrance or effect.
Walker | The Circus of Creation | *Have You Seen My Circus?*

24

Narr. Have you looked at spheres of dew on spears of grass? Were you there when we stretched
 Have you watched the light of a star through a world of dew?
 Have you seen the morning move over the grasses?
 And to each leaf the morning is present.

Perc. Hi-Hat Cymbal
 begin during the reading ad lib. (to provide motion during reading)

Ens.

26

Narr. out the line, when we rolled out the sky, when we set up the firmament? Were you

Perc.

Ens.

30

Narr. there when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for

Perc.

Ens.

34

Narr. joy!

Perc. Glock.
 joyous glis., ad lib., both hands

Ens.

38

Perc.

Ens.

grandly

42

Perc.

Ens.

S. D.

f

47

Perc.

Ens.

Hi Bongo

51

Perc.

Ens.

Tom-Tom

rit.

Susp. Cym.

mp

p

Ringmaster *(read without music)*

55

Narr.

A song rises up from the ground, herbs from the field.
Who will watch the green grass growing; who will hear
the song of earth?

Children who come to see the tent set up in the morning.

Three masts stand on a sea of canvas. Rope line loops
from one to another, drops into a gentle arc to the ground.
Bagonghi swings his hand toward the gesture in midair.

“Look! The big top!” [gestures across the stage] **Slowly**

Perc.

Musical notation for Percussion. It starts with a 4/4 time signature, then changes to 3/2. The first measure has a half note with a fermata, marked *p*. The second measure is a whole rest. The third measure has a half note with a fermata, marked *ff* very triumphantly. Above the staff, 'Susp. Cym.' is written above the final note.

Ens.

Musical notation for Ensemble. It starts with a 4/4 time signature, then changes to 3/2. The first measure has a half note with a fermata. The second measure has a whole rest. The third measure has a half note with a fermata, marked *f* very triumphantly. A hairpin crescendo is shown at the end of the staff.

Mogador Arrives

*Connect to next scene
with minimal pause*

Ringmaster

Narr.

Mogador comes down the field.
“There he is!”

He walks the earth like a turning ball: knowing
and rejoicing in his sense of balance:
he delights in the fulcrums
and levers, teeterboards, trampolines, high wires,
swings, the nets, ropes, and ring curbs of the natural universe.

♩ = 132 (*Mogador and his energy*)
Hi & Low Bongos

Perc.

Musical notation for Percussion. It starts with a 4/4 time signature. The first measure has a quarter note with a fermata, marked *p* (background rhythm). The second measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The third measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The fourth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The fifth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The sixth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The seventh measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The eighth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The ninth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The tenth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The eleventh measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The twelfth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The thirteenth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The fourteenth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The fifteenth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The sixteenth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The seventeenth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The eighteenth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The nineteenth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The twentieth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The twenty-first measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The twenty-second measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The twenty-third measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The twenty-fourth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The twenty-fifth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The twenty-sixth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The twenty-seventh measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The twenty-eighth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The twenty-ninth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The thirtieth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The thirty-first measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The thirty-second measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The thirty-third measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The thirty-fourth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The thirty-fifth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The thirty-sixth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The thirty-seventh measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The thirty-eighth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The thirty-ninth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The fortieth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The forty-first measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The forty-second measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The forty-third measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The forty-fourth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The forty-fifth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The forty-sixth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The forty-seventh measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The forty-eighth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The forty-ninth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The fiftieth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The fifty-first measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The fifty-second measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The fifty-third measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The fifty-fourth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The fifty-fifth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The fifty-sixth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The fifty-seventh measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The fifty-eighth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The fifty-ninth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The sixtieth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The sixty-first measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The sixty-second measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The sixty-third measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The sixty-fourth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The sixty-fifth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The sixty-sixth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The sixty-seventh measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The sixty-eighth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The sixty-ninth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The seventieth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The seventy-first measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The seventy-second measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The seventy-third measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The seventy-fourth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The seventy-fifth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The seventy-sixth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The seventy-seventh measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The seventy-eighth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The seventy-ninth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The eightieth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The eighty-first measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The eighty-second measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The eighty-third measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The eighty-fourth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The eighty-fifth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The eighty-sixth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The eighty-seventh measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The eighty-eighth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The eighty-ninth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The ninetieth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The ninety-first measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The ninety-second measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The ninety-third measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The ninety-fourth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The ninety-fifth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The ninety-sixth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The ninety-seventh measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The ninety-eighth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The ninety-ninth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The hundredth measure has a quarter note with a fermata.

Narr.

Beneath his feet the world is buoyant,
thin and alive as a bounding rope.
He stands on it poised,
a gyroscope on the rim of a glass,
sustained by the whirling of an inner wheel. [stop tapping]

He steps through the drum of light and air,
his hand held forth.

Perc.

Musical notation for Percussion. It starts with a 4/4 time signature. The first measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The second measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The third measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The fourth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The fifth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The sixth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The seventh measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The eighth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The ninth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The tenth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The eleventh measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The twelfth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The thirteenth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The fourteenth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The fifteenth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The sixteenth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The seventeenth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The eighteenth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The nineteenth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The twentieth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The twenty-first measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The twenty-second measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The twenty-third measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The twenty-fourth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The twenty-fifth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The twenty-sixth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The twenty-seventh measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The twenty-eighth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The twenty-ninth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The thirtieth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The thirty-first measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The thirty-second measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The thirty-third measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The thirty-fourth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The thirty-fifth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The thirty-sixth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The thirty-seventh measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The thirty-eighth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The thirty-ninth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The fortieth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The forty-first measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The forty-second measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The forty-third measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The forty-fourth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The forty-fifth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The forty-sixth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The forty-seventh measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The forty-eighth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The forty-ninth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The fiftieth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The fifty-first measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The fifty-second measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The fifty-third measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The fifty-fourth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The fifty-fifth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The fifty-sixth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The fifty-seventh measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The fifty-eighth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The fifty-ninth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The sixtieth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The sixty-first measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The sixty-second measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The sixty-third measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The sixty-fourth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The sixty-fifth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The sixty-sixth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The sixty-seventh measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The sixty-eighth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The sixty-ninth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The seventieth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The seventy-first measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The seventy-second measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The seventy-third measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The seventy-fourth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The seventy-fifth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The seventy-sixth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The seventy-seventh measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The seventy-eighth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The seventy-ninth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The eightieth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The eighty-first measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The eighty-second measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The eighty-third measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The eighty-fourth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The eighty-fifth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The eighty-sixth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The eighty-seventh measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The eighty-eighth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The eighty-ninth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The ninetieth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The ninety-first measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The ninety-second measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The ninety-third measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The ninety-fourth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The ninety-fifth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The ninety-sixth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The ninety-seventh measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The ninety-eighth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The ninety-ninth measure has a quarter note with a fermata. The hundredth measure has a quarter note with a fermata.

Narr.

The moment is a sphere moving with Mogador.

Perc.

Musical notation for Percussion. It starts with a 4/4 time signature. The first measure has a quarter note with a fermata, marked *p*. The second measure has a quarter note with a fermata, marked *f*. Above the staff, 'Susp. Cym.' is written above the final note. Below the staff, 'l.v.' is written above the final note.

Acrobat's Song

♩. = 66

Hi-Hat Cym. (closed)

Perc.

Ens.

RINGMASTER speaking as an acrobat, and pretending to walk on a high-wire.
[approximately synchronize the reading with the music]

9

Narr. Who is it for whom we now perform cavorting on wire: for whom does the boy

Ens.

17

Narr. climbing the ladder balance and whirl— for whom, seen or unseen in a shield of light?

Perc.

Ens.

25

Perc.

Ens.

33

Narr. [Seen or unseen in a shield of light,

Perc. *mf* *p* Susp. Cym.

Ens. [Horn]

41

Narr. [at the tent top where rays stream in watching the pinwheel turns of

Perc. *mf*

Ens. [Tpts.]

49

Narr. [the players dancing in light:

Perc. Glock.

Ens.

57

Narr. [Lady,* we are Thy acrobats; jugglers, tumblers; walking on wire, dancing on air, swinging

Perc.

Ens. [Tpts.] [Hn. & Tbn.]

*referring to the Virgin Mary

65

Narr. [on the high trapeze: we are Thy children, flying on the air of that smile: rejoicing in light.

Perc. Susp. Cym. *mf*

Ens. [Tpts.] [Hn. & Tbn.]

73

Perc. Glock. *mf*

Ens.

81

Narr. [Lady, we perform before Thee, walking a joyous discipline,

Ens. [Tbn.] [Horn]

89

Narr. [thin thread of courage, slim high-wire of dependence over abysses.

Ens. [Tpt. 2] [Tpt. 1]

97

Perc. Hi Bongo *mf* *rit.*

Ens.

105 RINGMASTER
 Narr. What do we know of the way of our walking? Only this step, this moment, gone as we name it. Here at the thin rim of the world we turn for Our Lady, who holds us lightly

Perc. Tom-Tom

Ens.

111 *a tempo* (♩ = 66)

Perc. Glock. *rit.*

Ens.

119 RINGMASTER
 Narr. we leave the wire, leave the line, vanish into light. [end of Section]* [RINGMASTER leaves the stage]

Perc. *slow gliss.*

Ens.

*Allow a short pause before continuing.

[Page left blank for turn]

Penelope and Mogador

$\text{♩} = 80$

as a horse trotting lightly around a ring

Hi and Low Bongos

Tri.

Perc.

6

RINGMASTER *as if telling a story*

[approximately synchronize the reading with the music]

One time Penelope the tightrope walker

Narr.

Perc.

11

Narr.

asked Mogador how he was able to land so gracefully after he did a somersault on horseback.

Perc.

16

Narr.

Mogador said:
It is like a wind that surrounds me
or a dark cloud,
and I am in it,
and it belongs to me
and it gives me the power
to do these things.

And Penelope said,
Oh, so that is it.

And Mogador said,
I believe so.

rit.

Perc.

18

Narr.

The next day Mogador leaped up on the horse. He sat on it sideways
in the ring,

a tempo ($\text{♩} = 80$)

Hi-Hat Cym. (closed)

Perc.

Ens.

[Tuba]

24

Narr. [and jogged around the ring; then he stood up on the horse's back with a single leap; he rode around balancing

[Tpts.]

Ens.

30

Narr. [lightly in time to the music; he did a split jump— touching his toes with his hands;

rit.

Tri.

[Horn] [lip trill]

Perc.

Ens.

33

Narr. [he did a couple of entrechats— braiding his legs in midair like a dancer: then Oscar threw him a hoop.

[RINGMASTER tosses an imaginary hoop (tambourine) to percussionist.]

Tambourine

f

[Tpts.] *quickly* [lip trill]

Perc.

Ens.

35

Narr. [Mogador tossed it up in the air and spun it. He caught it, leapt up,

a tempo (♩ = 80)

Tamb.

[Tuba]

Perc.

Ens.

He thought:
 I am a flame,
 a dark cloud,
 a bird;
 I will land like spring rain
 on a mountain lake
 for the delight of Penelope
 the tightrope walker;

41

Narr. { and did a somersault through it!

Perc. (Tamb.)

Ensl. [Horn] quickly, as a somersault

[Tpts.] Cup mute

43

Narr. { He landed on one foot, lost his balance, waved his arms wildly, and fell off the horse. He looked at Penelope, leapt up again, did a

Perc. [one heavy thud] B.D. a tempo (♩ = 80)

Ensl. [Thud of foot on floor]

[Tuba]

46

Narr. { quick entrechat, and Oscar tossed him the hoop. He spun it in the air and caught it. He did a somersault through it

Perc. Tamb.

Ensl. [RINGMASTER tosses an imaginary hoop (tambourine) to percussionist.]

f *p*

51

Narr. and he thought: It is like a dark cloud, and I am in it; it belongs to me, and it gives me the power to do these things.

Perc. *rit.*

Ens.

56

Narr. He landed on one foot, lost his balance, waved his arms wildly and fell off the horse. Penelope the tightrope walker looked very calm, Mogador leapt on the horse again. Oscar frowned and tossed him the hoop. [RINGMASTER tosses an imaginary hoop (tambourine) to percussionist.]

Perc. [two heavy thuds] B.D. Tamb.

Ens.

58

Narr. Mogador threw it into the air and caught it; leapt up and did a somersault through it.

Ens. [Tbn.] [Horn] [Tpt. 2] [Tuba]

64

Narr. He thought: I am a bird and will land like a bird! He landed on one foot, lost his balance, waved his arms wildly and fell off the horse.

Perc. Tamb. [three heavy thuds] B.D.

Ens.

67

Narr. { Now in the Christiani family, when you fall off the horse three times, they grab you by one ear and bend you over, and one of the brothers kicks you. And that is what they did to Mogador. Then the circus band started playing again.

Perc. { *f* Slapstick

68

Narr. { And Mogador looked at Penelope: then he looked at the horse and flicked his ear

Perc. { *a tempo* (♩ = 80) Hi-Hat Cym. (closed) B.D.

Ens. { [Tuba]

74

Narr. { with his hand; he jumped up on the horse and landed smartly; he stood up in one leap and caught the hoop;

Ens. {

79

Narr. { and then did a somersault through it. He didn't think anything. He just did a somersault— and landed with two feet on the horse's back.

Perc. { Tamb.

Ens. { [Horn] *quickly, as a somersault*

20

Perc. *Tri.*

Ens.

25 RINGMASTER

Narr. Her toes almost touch she lies out; her toes are pointed,
the top of the tent; balanced at the arch of her back, her long slim

Ens.

31

Narr. legs stretch before her, her waist is taut, her whole body is semi-relaxed.

Perc. *Hi and Low Bongos*

Ens.

36

Narr. RINGMASTER continues
Her arms lie out gracefully behind

Perc. *Tom-Tom*

Ens.

* "Wedding" refers to the union/merging of the circus performers.

41

Narr. { her head, her long hair rides behind her as she swings forward: there is a flower in

Perc. Glock. *gentle gliss.*

Ens.

46

Narr. { her hair, it hugs her head as she swings back, back and forth, back and forth,

Perc.

Ens.

51

[RINGMASTER turns to the players and "pseudo conducts" the "back-and-forth" rhythm.]

spoken

Now she drops.

Narr.

Perc.

Ens. [Horn] *"falling" gesture*

*Allow a short pause before continuing.

[RINGMASTER looks away and covers his eyes.]

54 Head first:

her hair and
the flower tumbling
toward the ground.

Look away!

*Precipito –
volissimo –
volmente! –*

Glock. rapid descent, ad lib.

Narr. {

Perc. {

Ens. {

[Tpts.] "falling" gesture

[RINGMASTER slowly uncovers eyes and turns back to look at "La Louisa," realizing that she is unharmed.]

55

She has caught herself, is hanging by her feet; She

Narr. {

Ens. {

[Horn]

[Tbn. & Tuba]

61

swings back and forth, her back beautifully arched, her hands and fingers

Narr. {

Perc. {

Ens. {

Hi and Low Bongos

p

66

Narr. [pointed, the flower riding in her long hair.

Perc. *Susp. Cym.*
pp \leftarrow *p* *pp* \leftarrow *p* *rit.* *f*

Ens.

71

Narr. [She pulls herself up,
hangs by her hands,
grasps the rope between her legs,
slides down it to the ground. Bows gracefully,
accepts applause with lifted arm,
and leaves the ring.

Ens. [Tpt.] [Tpt. & Hn.]

72 *a tempo* (♩. = 72) *rit.* [end of Section]*
[RINGMASTER bows all players bow.]

Perc. Glock. *gentle gliss.*

Ens.

Mogador Running with Horse

In this scene, the RINGMASTER reads accompanied only by percussion and various tapping sounds produced by the brass players

Ringmaster

Mogador is running along with the horse.
 His eyes are serious, full of thought.
 His mouth is a little open as he runs and breathes.
 He is smiling a little.
 His lips are thin.

Narr. {

♩ = 72

Low Tom-Tom Hi Bongo

Perc.

4

Narr. { As he runs, bending the knees, dancing lightly beside the horse, he is in step with the horse.

Hi Bongo *play pattern 3 more times*

Perc.

[Brass players tap side of chair] *play pattern 3 more times*

Ens.

7 They both land lightly. They both spring from the earth;
 their movement is through the air.
 Their feet drop lightly to earth and push off from it.

Hi & Low Bongos *play pattern 4 more times*

Perc.

Low & Med. Tom-Tom

[Brass players tap side of chair] *play pattern 4 more times*

Ens.

10 As they rise and fall, their heads rise too They rise
 rise, and fall in regular rhythm. and the hair of the horse's mane clings to him,
 fly, pointing to earth.
 and (momentarily) fall, They drop down
 and each hair of the white long mane
 remains in air

5 Temple Blocks *repeat pattern until reading ends*
 [arranged low to high]

Perc.

p

13 The boy's hair too, They come around the ring, The boy with his horse as they turn
 Narr. dark silk The boy runs on the inside. in the ring are boy and horse running in
 rides close as he rises; The horse trots along close blue and green field: his hand is on the
 then rises in the air to the curb. horse's back the horse is to him
 falling lightly over his forehead as close as hand.
 as he drops to earth.

Hi Bongo *repeat pattern until reading ends*

Perc.

[Brass players tap side of chair] *repeat pattern until reading ends*

Ens.

15 Narr. They round the turn, the boy is out of sight. But now, behold! He flies above the horse,
 ↓ holding a strap at his shoulders.
 ↓ His feet fly out behind.
 His toes are together and pointed like closed scissors.

Temple Blocks

Perc. Hi & Low Bongos

Tri.

(17) Narr. Now he splits, sits riding bareback He rides lightly, barely touching, his arms in air.
 pointing his toes to the ground Then he leaps up and with a pirouette begins his dance.
 spinning beneath them.
 His arms are held in air relaxed.

[Brass players roll fingers very gently on side of chair]

Ens.

19 Narr. What was begun as a run through the field

Hi Bongo

Perc.

[Brass players tap side of chair]

Ens.

23 Narr. is turned to ritual. *rit.* [end of Section]*

Perc.

[Brass players tap side of chair]

Ens.

*Allow a short pause before continuing.

Mogador's Poem

The following reading is performed without accompaniment

Ringmaster (*portraying the Circus Acrobat*)

By day I have circled
like the sun,
have leapt like fire.

At night I am a wise man
on his palanquin.

By day I am an acrobat,
spinning brightly,
a juggler's torch.

Nights I am contemplative,
drinking deep of silence.

Road, prairie, night
go through me:
Songs of praise
like mist rise up:
Blessings
tumble down
like dew.

Epilogue

$\text{♩} = 72$
Glock.

Perc. *p gently*

[Hn., Tbn. & Tuba]

Ens.

9 RINGMASTER (*addressing the audience with wonderment*)
[reading approximately synchronizes with the music]

Narr. Have you known such a thing? That men and animals light and air,

Perc.

Ens.

13


Narr. graceful acrobats, and musicians could come together in a single place,


Perc. Glock. *pp (barely audible)*

Ens.

17

Narr. [occupy a field by night, set up their tents in the early morning perform their wonders

Perc. 

Ens. 

21

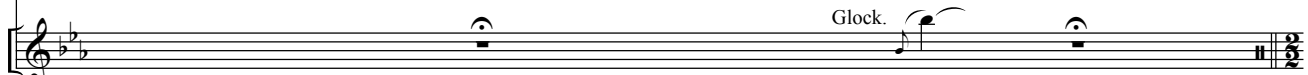
Narr. [in the afternoon wheel in the light of their lamps at night?

Perc. 

Ens. 

25

Narr. [Have you seen the circus steal away? Leaving the field of wonders darkened, leaving the air where the tent stood empty, silence and darkness where sight and sound were, living only in memory? Have you seen the noonday banners of this wedding?*

Perc. 

* "Wedding" refers to the union/merging of the circus performers.

The RINGMASTER grabs a colorful banner and walks proudly across the stage, giving a final acknowledgement of the circus performers.

26 *a tempo* (♩ = 72) S. D.

Perc. Tom-Tom *p* *f*

Ens.

30

Perc.

Ens.

34 Hi Bongo

Perc.

Ens.

The RINGMASTER departs the stage quietly, perhaps backing off the stage in a bowing gesture.

38 *rit.* Glock. *gentle gliss.*

Perc. Tom-Tom

Ens.