

Gwyneth Walker

The Circus of Creation

*a musical drama for
Narrator, Brass Quintet and Percussion
(with optional actors/dancers)
based on the poem
Circus of the Sun
by Robert Lax*

THE CIRCUS OF CREATION is a staged presentation of selections 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, or piano) and optional actors/dancers.

In the simplest performance format, only one reader and one pianist are 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 the 20th 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.

Circus of the Sun expresses 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 of the Sun* presents a powerful spiritual vision for the present day.

The Scenes:

Prologue

Ringmaster comes on stage and introduces the circus

musical introduction: fanfare

"Fields were set for the circus..."

Have You Seen My Circus?

Ringmaster describes setting up the circus, while music plays in the background

[the elephants and other circus animals may be portrayed by dancers]

"Have you seen my circus? Have you known such a thing?"

Mogador Arrives

Ringmaster proudly announces the arrival of Mogador, the acrobat

[optional dancer portrays Mogador]

"The moment is a sphere moving with Mogador."

Acrobat's Song

Ringmaster describes Mogador walking on the high wire

"Lady, we are Thy acrobats...jugglers, tumblers, walking on wire..."

Penelope and Mogador

Mogador boasts to Penelope about his acrobatic feats on horseback

"I am a bird, and will land like a bird!"

La Louisa

the trapeze artist performs while swaying back and forth

"Her toes almost touch the top of the tent; she lies out, balanced at the arch of her back..."

Mogador Running with Horse

the boy and horse are running together

"What was begun as a run through the field is turned to ritual."

Mogador's Poem

the poem read without music

"Nights I am contemplative, drinking deep of silence."

Epilogue

the circus tent is taken down, the circus leaves town

The Ringmaster presents a final celebration of the circus, and then exits the stage, bowing gracefully as he leaves

recap of opening brass fanfare music

"Have you known such as thing? Have you seen the noonday banners of this wedding?"

performance history:

March 6, 2011

*The Sarasota Brass Quintet with Cliff Roles, Narrator-Ringmaster
Sarasota, FL*

June 21, 2012

*Olean High School students assisted by community brass players
St. Bonaventure University – Olean, NY*

March 8, 2013

*Olean High School students assisted by community brass players
St. Bonaventure University – Olean, NY*

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 $\text{♩} = 72$

Percussion
(Glockenspiel, Snare Drum,
Hi and Low Bongos,
Large and Medium Tom-Toms,
Suspended Cymbal,
Hi-Hat Cymbal, Bass Drum,
Triangle, 5 Temple Blocks,
Maracas)

Tom-Tom

S. D.

1
2

Trumpets in C

Horn in F

Trombone

Tuba

5

Perc.

1
2

Tpts.

Hn.

Tbn.

Tuba

Poetry from *Circus Days and Nights* by Robert Lax (Overlook Press, 2000) based on his travels with the Cristiani Bros. family circus.
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9 Hi Bongo

Perc. 1 2 Hn. Tbn. Tuba

This musical score covers measures 9 through 12. The Percussion part features a Hi Bongo line with rhythmic patterns. The Trumpets (1 and 2), Horns, Trombones, and Tubas have various melodic and harmonic parts, including rests and active lines.

13 Tom-Tom *rit.* Susp. Cym. *mp* *p*

Perc. 1 2 Hn. Tbn. Tuba

This musical score covers measures 13 through 16. The Percussion part includes Tom-Tom and Suspended Cymbal parts. The *rit.* (ritardando) marking is present. The dynamic markings *mp* and *p* are indicated. The score concludes with a *p* dynamic and a *short pause*.

Have You Seen My Circus?

Ringmaster (*spoken with excitement and reverence*)

Have you seen my circus?
Have you known such a thing?

Did you get up in the early morning
and see the wagons pull into town?

Did you see them occupy the field?
Were you there when it was set up?

Perc.

2 (*approximately synchronize the reading with the music*)

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*

Cup mute *p* *sneak breath when needed*

1 Tpts. Cup mute *p* *sneak breath when needed*

2 Tpts. Cup mute *p* *sneak breath when needed*

Hn. Cup mute *p* *sneak breath when needed*

Tbn. Cup mute *p* *sneak breath when needed*

Tuba Cup mute *p* *sneak breath when needed*

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

Perc. Glock. *p*

1 Tpts. *p* *mp*

2 Tpts. *p* *mp*

Hn. *p* *mp*

Tbn. *p* *mp*

Tuba *p* *mp*

8

♩ = 60
at the tempo of "lumbering elephants"

were you there when the animals came forth, the

Hn. *p* ————— *mf* *p echo*

Tbn. *lightly tongued* *p* ————— *mf* *p echo*

Tuba *mf* *p echo*

12

***great lumbering elephants to drag the poles**
and unroll the canvas?

Were you there when the morning moved over
the grasses?

B. D.

Maracas

Perc. *p*

1 Tpts. *p*

2 Tpts. *p*

Hn. *p*

Tbn. *lightly tongued* *p*

Tuba *p*

16

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?

Tri.

Hi Bongo

Perc. Tri. Hi Bongo

1 Tpts.

2 Tpts.

Hn.

Tbn. *remove mute*

Tuba *remove mute*

*Words in bold print are intended to coincide with the downbeat of the measure in which they appear, or as indicated in relation to the Narrator's spoken part.

20

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

Perc. *Glock.* *f* *6* *p*

1 *(p) lightly, as laughter*

2 *(p) lightly, as laughter*

Hn. *(p) lightly, as laughter*

24

Have you looked at spheres of dew on spears of grass?
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.

Were you there when we

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

Perc. *p*

1 *p* *mp*

2 *p* *mp*

Hn. *p* *mp*

26

stretched out the line, when we rolled out the sky, when we set up the firmament?

Were you

Perc.

1 *p* *mp*

2 *p* *mp*

Hn. *p* *mp*

Tbn. *p* *mp* *p* *mp* *p* *mp*

30

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

Perc. *mp*

1 Tpts. *p mp* *p mf*

2 Tpts. *p mp* *p mf*

Hn. *p mp* *p mf*

Tbn. *p mp* *p mf*

Tuba *p mf*

34

joy!

accel.

Glock.

joyous glis., ad lib., both hands

With energy $\text{♩} = 72$

Perc. *f*

1 Tpts. remove mute Open *mf* *f crisply*

2 Tpts. remove mute Open *mf* *f crisply*

Hn. remove mute Open *mf* *f crisply*

Tbn. remove mute Open *mf* *f crisply*

Tuba *mf* *f crisply*

38

Perc.

1 Tpts.

2 Tpts.

Hn.

Tbn.

Tuba

grandly

grandly

42 S. D.

Perc.

f

1 Tpts.

2 Tpts.

Hn.

Tbn.

Tuba

grandly

47 Hi Bongo

Perc.

1 Tpts.

2 Tpts.

Hn.

Tbn.

Tuba

51 Tom-Tom *rit.* Susp. Cym. *mp*

Perc. 1 Tpts. 2 Hn. Tbn. Tuba

Ringmaster (read without music)

55

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. *p* Susp. Cym. *ff* very triumphantly

1 Tpts. 2 Hn. Tbn. Tuba

Connect to next scene
with minimal pause

Mogador Arrives

Ringmaster

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.

p (background rhythm)

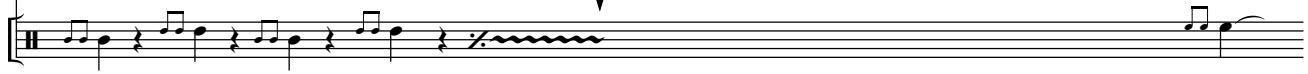


Beneath his feet the world is buoyant,
thin and alive as a bounding rope.
He stands on it poised,
a gyroscope on the rim of a glass,
sustained by the whirling of an inner wheel. [stop tapping]

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

Perc.

Susp. Cym.



The moment is a sphere moving with Mogador.

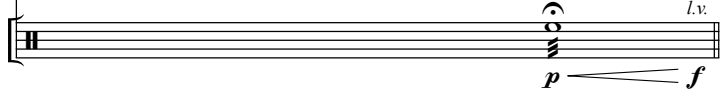
Susp. Cym.

l.v.

Perc.

p ← *f*

Connect directly to Acrobat's Song



Acrobat's Song

♩ = 66

Hi-Hat Cym. (closed)

Perc. *mf* *p*

1 Tpts.

2 Tpts. *mf*

Hn.

Tbn. *mf*

Tuba *mf*

RINGMASTER speaking as an acrobat, and pretending to walk on a high-wire.

[approximately synchronize the reading with the music]

9

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

Perc.

1 Tpts. *p*

2 Tpts. *p*

Hn. *p delicately* *tr* *tr*

Tbn. *p*

Tuba *p*

17

RINGMASTER

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

Hi Bongo

Perc. *p*

1 Tpts.

2 Tpts.

Hn.

Tbn.

Tuba

25

Tri.

Susp. Cym.

Perc. *p*

1 Tpts. (*p*)

2 Tpts. (*p*)

Hn.

Tbn.

Tuba (*p*)

33

RINGMASTER continues

Seen or unseen in a shield of light,

Perc. *mf*

1 Tpts. *mf*

2 Tpts. *mf*

Hn. *mf*

Tbn. *mf*

Tuba *mf*

41

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

Perc. *mf*

1 Tpts.

2 Tpts.

Hn.

Tbn.

Tuba

49

the players dancing in light:

Perc. Glock. *mf*

1 Tpts.

2 Tpts.

Hn.

Tbn.

Tuba *(mf)*

57 RINGMASTER continues

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

Perc.

1 Tpts. *p*

2 Tpts. *p*

Hn. *p* *mf*

Tbn. *p*

Tuba *p*

*referring to the Virgin Mary

65

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

Susp. Cym.

Perc. *mf*

1 Tpts. *mf* *p*

2 Tpts. *mf* *p*

Hn. *p*

Tbn. *mf* *p*

Tuba *mf* *p*

73

Glock.

Perc. *mf*

1 Tpts. *mf* *breathe ad lib.*

2 Tpts. *(p)*

Hn. *breathe ad lib.* *mf* *p*

Tbn. *(p)* *breathe ad lib.*

Tuba *(p)*

81

RINGMASTER continues

Lady, we perform before Thee, walking a joyous discipline,

1 Tpts.

2 Tpts.

Hn.

Tbn. *(p)*

Tuba *(p)*

89

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

1 Tpts. *(p)*

2 Tpts. *(p)*

Hn. *(p)*

97 Hi Bongo

Perc. *mf*

1 Tpts. *mf*

2 Tpts. *mf*

Hn. *mf*

Tbn. *mf*

Tuba *mf*

105

RINGMASTER

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 *f*

1 Tpts. *f* *p*

2 Tpts. *f* *p*

Hn. *f* *p*

Tbn. *f* *p*

Tuba *f* *p*

111 *a tempo* (♩ = 66)

Perc. Glock. *mf* *rit.* *p*

1 Tpts.

2 Tpts.

Hn.

Tbn.

Tuba *p delicately*

[end of Section]*

119 RINGMASTER

we leave the wire, leave the line, vanish into light. [RINGMASTER leaves the stage]

Perc. *pp* *slow gliss.*

1 Tpts.

2 Tpts.

Hn.

Tbn.

Tuba

*Allow a short pause before continuing.

Penelope and Mogador

$\text{♩} = 80$

as a horse trotting lightly around a ring

Hi & Low Bongos

Tri.

Perc. *mf*

6

RINGMASTER *as if telling a story*

[approximately synchronize the reading with the music]

One time Penelope the tightrope walker

Perc. *p unobtrusively*

11

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

Perc.

16

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.

Perc. *rit.*

18

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

a tempo ($\text{♩} = 80$)

Hi-Hat Cym. (closed)

Perc. *p* *fade out*

Hn. *p*

Tbn. *p*

Tuba *p*

24

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

1 *p*

2 *p*

Hn.

Tbn.

Tuba

30

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

Perc. *rit.* Tri.

1

2

Hn. [lip trill] *f with bravura*

Tbn.

Tuba

33

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.]

Perc. Tambourine *f*

1 *quickly* *p* [lip trill] *f*

2 *p* [lip trill] *f*

35

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

a tempo (♩ = 80)

(Tamb.)

Perc. *p* *f*

1 Tpts. *f*

2 Tpts. *f*

Hn. *p* *f*

Tbn. *p* *f*

Tuba *p* *f*

41

and did a somersault through it!

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;

Perc. *tr*

1 Tpts. Cup mute *p* *sweetly*

2 Tpts. Cup mute *p* *sweetly*

Hn. *quickly, as a somersault*
f with bravura *6* *6*

Tbn. *tr*

Tuba *tr*

43 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

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

Perc. *f*

1 remove mute *f* [All players, heavy thud of foot on floor]

2 remove mute *f*

Hn. *f* *p*

Tbn. *f* *p*

Tuba *f* *p*

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

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. *f* *p*

1 Open *p*

2 Open *p*

Hn.

Tbn.

Tuba

51

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.

1 Tpts.

2 Tpts.

Hn.

Tbn.

Tuba

56

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.]

[two heavy thuds] B. D. Tamb.

[All players, two heavy thuds of foot on floor]

f

Perc.

1 Tpts.

2 Tpts.

Hn.

Tbn.

Tuba

58

Mogador threw it into the air and caught it;

leapt up and did a somersault through it.

Perc. *p*

1 Tpts. *p with building excitement*

2 Tpts. *p with building excitement*

Hn. *p with building excitement*

Tbn. *p with building excitement*

Tuba *p with building excitement*

64

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.

[three heavy thuds]
B. D.

Perc. *f*

1 Tpts. *f*

2 Tpts. *f*

Hn. *f*

Tbn. *f*

Tuba *f*

[All players, three heavy thuds of foot on floor]

67

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

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

a tempo (♩ = 80)
Hi-Hat Cym. (closed)

B. D. *p* *fade out*

Hn. *p*

Tbn. *p*

Tuba *p*

74

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

1 *p*

2 *p*

Hn. *p*

Tbn. *p*

Tuba *p*

79

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.

1 Tpts.

2 Tpts.

Hn. *quickly, as a somersault*

Tbn.

Tuba

81

Then he rode halfway around the ring and got off with a beautiful scissors leap. Penelope applauded and, clasping her hands overhead, shook them like a boxer,

a tempo (♩ = 80)

Susp. Cym. (tap on crown)

Perc. *p*

[All players clasp hands and shake them overhead like a boxer]

83

Mogador looked at her, and then back at the horse, and with a gesture of two arms he said it was nothing. [end of Section]*

[All players raise hands as if to say "it was nothing."]

(short celebratory roll)

Perc. Tamb. *f*

*Allow a short pause before continuing.

La Louisa

RINGMASTER looks upward at LA LOUISA, swaying on her trapeze, back and forth.

$\text{♩} = 72$
as a trapeze swaying

Perc. *Tri.* *p*

[All players sway to and fro in time with the music.]
(even when not playing)

1 *p*

2 *p*

Hn. *p*

Tbn.

Tuba *mf*

6

Perc. *(p)*

1 *(p)*

2 *(p)*

Hn.

Tbn. *(mf)*

Tuba *(mf)*

11 Tom-Tom *mf*

Musical score for measures 11-15. Percussion: Tom-Tom, *mf*. Tpts. 1 & 2: *mf*. Hn.: *mf*. Tbn.: *mf*. Tuba: *mf*.

16 Hi Bongo *p*

Musical score for measures 16-19. Percussion: Hi Bongo, *p*. Tpts. 1 & 2: *dim.*. Hn.: *dim.*. Tbn.: *p*. Tuba: *p*.

20 Tri. *p*

Musical score for measures 20-24. Percussion: Tri., *p*. Tpts. 1 & 2: *p*. Hn.: *p*. Tbn.: *mp*, *p*. Tuba: *mp*, *p*.

25 RINGMASTER

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

1 Tpts. *(p)*

2 Tpts. *(p)*

Hn. *(p)*

Tbn. *(p)*

Tuba *(p)*

31

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

Hi & Low Bongos

Perc. *p*

1 Tpts. *(p)*

2 Tpts.

Hn.

Tbn.

Tuba

36

RINGMASTER continues

Her arms lie out gracefully behind

Tom-Tom

Perc. Tom-Tom

1 Tpts. *mf* *p*

2 Tpts. *mf* *p*

Hn. *mf* *p*

Tbn. *mf* *p*

Tuba *mf* *p*

41

her head, her long hair rides behind her as she swings forward:

there is a flower in
Glock. *gentle gliss.* (pitches approx.)

Perc. *p*

1 Tpts. *(p)*

2 Tpts. *(p)*

Hn. *(p)*

Tbn. *(p)*

Tuba *(p)*

46

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

Perc.

1 Tpts.

2 Tpts.

Hn.

Tbn.

Tuba

51

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

spoken
Now she drops.

Perc. *mf*

1 Tpts. *mf*

2 Tpts. *mf*

Hn. *mf*

Tbn. *mf*

Tuba *mf*

"falling" gesture
f

[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.

f

“falling” gesture *Dozt.* *f*

“falling” gesture *Dozt.* *f*

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

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

a tempo (♩. = 72)

p

p

p

p

p

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

Hi & Low Bongos

p

66

pointed, the flower riding in her long hair.

Perc. Susp. Cym. *pp* *p* *pp* *p* *f*

1 Tpts. *f*

2 Tpts. *f*

Hn. *f*

Tbn. *f*

Tuba *(p)* *f*

71

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.

1 Tpts. *p*

2 Tpts. *p*

Hn. *p*

72

a tempo (♩ = 72)

Glock. gentle gliss. (pitches approx.)

rit.

[end of Section]*
[RINGMASTER bows all players bow.]

Perc. *mf* *p*

1 Tpts. *p*

2 Tpts. *p*

Hn. *p*

Tbn. *mf* *p*

Tuba *mf* *p*

*Allow a short pause before continuing.

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.

4

p

Low Tom-Tom (played with hands) Hi Bongo

play pattern 4 more times

4

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

Hi Bongo

p

play pattern 3 more times

[all players tap side of chair]

p

play pattern 3 more times

1 Tpts. play pattern 3 more times

2 Tpts. play pattern 3 more times

Hn. play pattern 3 more times

Tbn. play pattern 3 more times

Tuba play pattern 3 more times

p

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

p

Low & Med. Tom-Tom

play pattern 4 more times

p

1 Tpts. play pattern 4 more times

2 Tpts. play pattern 4 more times

Hn. play pattern 4 more times

Tbn. play pattern 4 more times

Tuba play pattern 4 more times

p

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

(played with hands)
 5 Temple Blocks
 [arranged low to high]

repeat pattern until reading ends

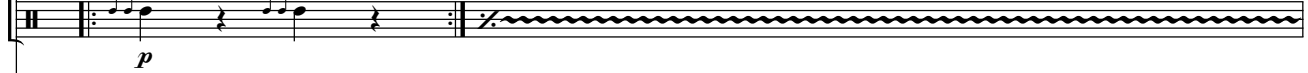
Perc. 

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

Percussionist and all Brass players rock forward and back, in rockinghorse manner, in time with the music.

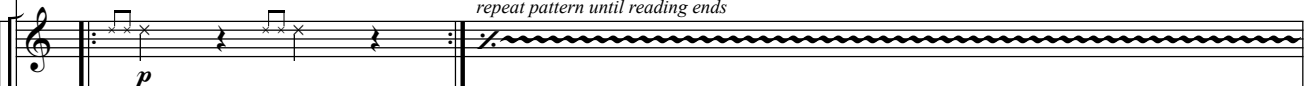
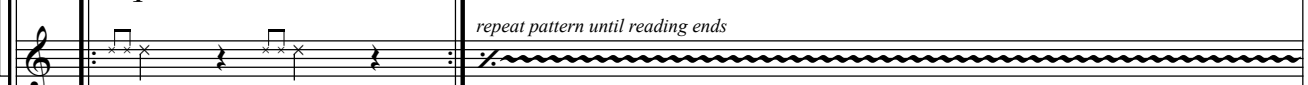

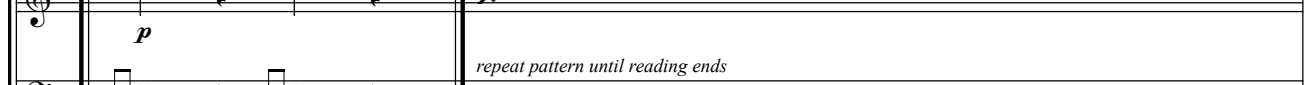
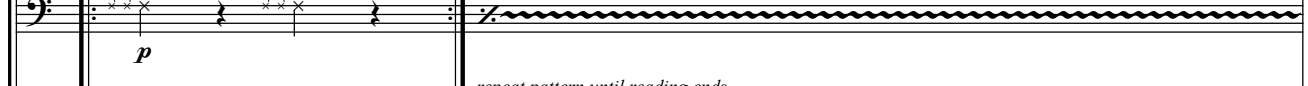
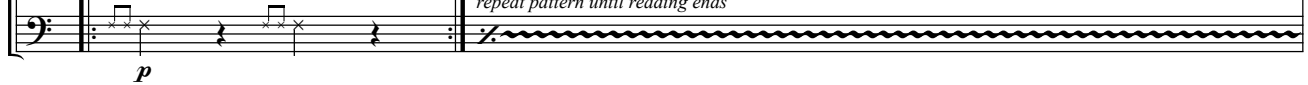
Hi Bongo

repeat pattern until reading ends

Perc. 

[all players tap side of chair while rocking]

repeat pattern until reading ends

1 
 Tpts. 
 2 
 Hn. 
 Tbn. 
 Tuba 

15 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

Hi & Low Bongos

Tri.

Perc. 

(17)

Now he splits, sits riding bareback
pointing his toes to the ground spinning beneath them.
His arms are held in air relaxed.

He rides lightly, barely touching, his arms in air.
Then he leaps up and with a pirouette begins his dance.

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

19

a tempo (♩ = 72)
Hi Bongo

What was begun as a run through the field

23

is turned to ritual.

rit.

[end of Section]*

Tri.

*Allow a short pause before continuing.

Mogador's Poem

The following reading is performed without accompaniment

Ringmaster

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. (sft. mlts.)
as a quiet background, descriptive of nightfall

Perc. *p* gently *pp*

1 Tpts.

2 Tpts.

Hn. Cup mute *p*

Tbn. Cup mute *p*

Tuba Muted *p*

9

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

Have you known such a thing? That men and animals light and air, graceful acrobats, and musicians

Perc. Glock. *pp* (barely audible)

1 Tpts. Cup mute *p*

2 Tpts. Cup mute *p*

Hn. *(p)*

Tbn. *(p)*

Tuba *(p)*

15

could come together in a single place, occupy a field by night, set up their tents in the early morning

Musical score for measures 15-19. The score includes parts for Percussion (Perc.), Trumpets (Tpts. 1 and 2), Horns (Hn.), Trombones (Tbn.), and Tuba. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). The Percussion part features a rhythmic pattern of quarter notes and rests. The Tpts. 1 part has a melodic line with slurs. The Tpts. 2 part has a rhythmic accompaniment. The Hn. part has a melodic line with slurs. The Tbn. part has a rhythmic accompaniment. The Tuba part has a melodic line with slurs.

20

perform their wonders in the afternoon wheel in the light of their lamps at night?

rit.

Musical score for measures 20-24. The score includes parts for Percussion (Perc.), Trumpets (Tpts. 1 and 2), Horns (Hn.), Trombones (Tbn.), and Tuba. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). The Percussion part features a rhythmic pattern of quarter notes and rests. The Tpts. 1 part has a melodic line with slurs. The Tpts. 2 part has a rhythmic accompaniment. The Hn. part has a melodic line with slurs. The Tbn. part has a rhythmic accompaniment. The Tuba part has a melodic line with slurs. The score includes dynamic markings: *ppp* (pianissimo) and *rit.* (ritardando).

25

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. *p* Glock.

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*

1 Tpts. *rem. mute* *Open* *f* *crisply, celebratory*

2 Tpts. *rem. mute* *Open* *f* *crisply, celebratory*

Hn. *rem. mute* *Open* *f* *crisply, celebratory*

Tbn. *rem. mute* *Open* *f* *crisply, celebratory*

Tuba *rem. mute* *Open* *f* *crisply, celebratory*

30

Perc.

1 Tpts.

2 Tpts.

Hn.

Tbn.

Tuba

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

34 Hi Bongo

Perc.

1 Tpts.

2 Tpts.

Hn.

Tbn.

Tuba

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

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

Perc.

1 Tpts.

2 Tpts.

Hn.

Tbn.

Tuba

to Glock.

p

pp

pp

pp

pp

pp

Total duration: 24 minutes
This version completed: November 17, 2010
Braintree, Vermont