

Why the parrot repeats human words

for narrator, clarinet, viola and percussion

based on a Thai folk tale

for Meduse

commissioned by the Canada Council for the Arts

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Why the parrot repeats human words

based on a Thai folk tale, retold by the composer
for

narrator

clarinet (B $\flat$ and bass)

viola

percussion:

vibraphone

marimba

bass drum (small)

tambourine (large)

sleigh bells (2 sets, one for narrator)

metal wind chimes (also for narrator)

triangle (played by narrator)

duration: approx. 16'30"

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Accidentals apply to the whole measure (only to the octave in which they are given), though reminder accidentals are given frequently.

In the vocal part:

dashed vertical lines connecting a note and a word indicate that the note and the word should be lined up approximately (the word could occur several beats before or after the note)

dashed vertical lines before a word indicate that the word should come after the note the line is attached to

solid vertical lines connecting a note and a word indicate that the note and the word should be lined up precisely

For ease of alignment, the percussionist, rather than the narrator, could speak the words which are rhythmically notated.

Please contact the composer to obtain scores or parts, and notify her of any performances. emilydoolittle@gmail.com

Why the parrot repeats human words

for narrator, clarinet, viola, and percussion

commissioned by the Canada Council for Meduse

Score in C

Thai Folktale, adapted by Emily Doolittle

Emily Doolittle, 2005

like bells
♩ = 108

narrator

clarinet
B $\flat$ clarinet
mf

viola
mf

percussion
vibraphone
mf

7

nar

cl

vla

perc

mf

mf

mf

Original story from "Ride with the Sun", edited by Harold Courlander for the United Nations Women's Guild © 1955 by McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc.
Adapted and retold by Emily Doolittle.

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13

nar H $\frac{5}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$

cl f $\text{piu } f$ $\text{sub. } mf$ $< > < >$

vla f $\text{piu } f$ $\text{sub. } mf$ $< > < >$

perc f $\text{piu } f$ $\text{sub. } mf$ $< > < >$

19

nar $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{5}{4}$

cl mp

vla mp

perc mp

25

nar $\frac{5}{4}$ $\frac{6}{4}$ $\frac{7}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$

cl p

vla p

perc p take tambourine

approx. 20"

30 *mf mp*

nar 

Long ago, it was not the parrot which humans kept as a household companion, but the crow.

The crow was quick and bright, and could easily repeat human words.

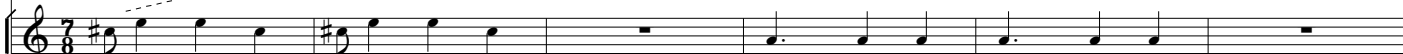
What's more, he could use human language to express his own thoughts.

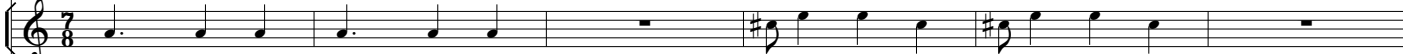
Human and crow passed their days in lively conversation. One was seldom seen without the other.

31 *rhythmic, lively*
♩ = 216

(music begins right on word "other" or immediately after)

nar 

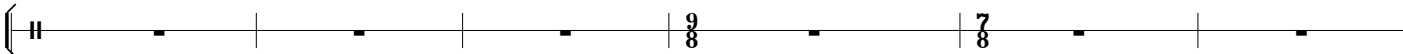
cl 
pp *pp*

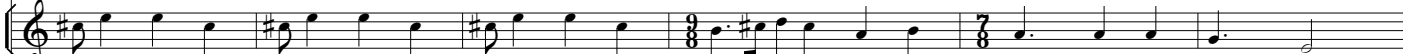
vla 
pp *pp*

perc 
ppp *ppp*

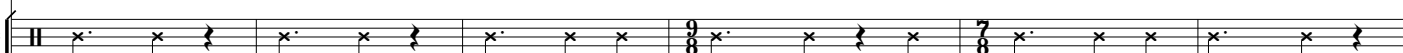
tambourine
top line -- high, dry drum sound
middle line -- jingles only
bottom line -- low, resonant drum sound

37

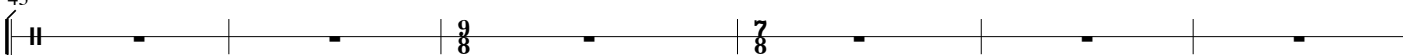
nar 

cl 
pp *mp*

vla 
pp *mp*

perc 
pp *p*

43

nar 

cl 
p *mp*

vla 
p *mp*

perc 
pp *p*

49

nar

cl

vla

perc

=

56

nar

cl

vla

perc

=

62

nar

cl

vla

perc

70

nar

cl

vla

perc

f *mp* *f* *mp*

mf *p* *mf* *p*

76

nar

cl

vla

perc

f *mp* *mf*

f *mp* *mf*

mf *p* *mp*

82

nar

cl

vla

perc

piu f *mf*

piu f *mf*

mf *mp*

rit. (to approx. ♩ = 132 in m. 91)

88 (rit.) *mp* $\text{♩} = 132$

nar 

This happy companionship was not to last

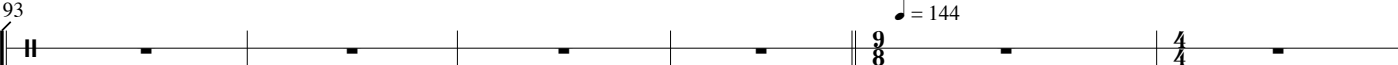
cl  *p* *pp*

vla  *p* *pp*

perc  *pp*

take marimba

93 moving forward (to $\text{♩} = 144$ in m. 97)

nar  $\text{♩} = 144$

cl  *pp* *p*

vla  *pp* *p*

perc  *pp* *p*

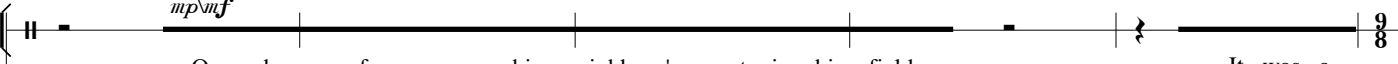
marimba

legato but tongued

legato

legato

99 *mp* *mf*

nar  *mp* *mf*

One day, a farmer saw his neighbour's goat in his field. It was a

cl  *p* *mp* *p*

vla  *p* *mp* *p*

perc  *p* *mp* *p*

104

nar H $\frac{9}{8}$ fine goat: $\frac{4}{4}$ young, fat, lively. $\frac{6}{4}$

cl $\frac{9}{8}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{6}{4}$

vla $\frac{9}{8}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{6}{4}$

perc $\frac{9}{8}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{6}{4}$

mp

mp

mp

108

nar $\frac{6}{4}$ - $\frac{4}{4}$ - $\frac{9}{8}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{6}{4}$

The farmer wanted it. Instead of returning the goat, as you or I would have done,

cl $\frac{6}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{9}{8}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{6}{4}$

vla $\frac{6}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{9}{8}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{6}{4}$

perc $\frac{6}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{9}{8}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{6}{4}$

p *mp* *p* *mp*

112

nar $\frac{6}{4}$ $\frac{5}{4}$ - $\frac{6}{4}$ - $\frac{5}{4}$ $\frac{mf}{\text{He}}$

he took the goat for him - - - - - self.

cl $\frac{6}{4}$ $\frac{5}{4}$ $\frac{6}{4}$ $\frac{5}{4}$

vla $\frac{6}{4}$ $\frac{5}{4}$ $\frac{6}{4}$ $\frac{5}{4}$

perc $\frac{6}{4}$ $\frac{5}{4}$ $\frac{6}{4}$ $\frac{5}{4}$

mf *mf* *mf*

115

nar killed the goat, he cooked the meat, he ate his fill; the rest he hid un-der the

cl *mf* *mp* *mp*

vla *mf* *mp* *mp*

perc *mf* *mp* *mp*

= faster **=**

119 ♩ = 162

nar bed.

cl *mf pp* *pp* *p*

vla *mf* *pp* *p*

perc *mf* *pp* *p*

=

123

nar

cl *pp* *mp* *mf* *mp*

vla *pp* *mp* *mf*

perc *mp* *mf* *mp*

128 *mp>mf*

nar

cl

vla

perc

mf

133

nar

cl

vla

perc

piu f

138 *f* (for ease of coordination, mm. 140 - 145 could be spoken by the percussianist)

nar

cl

vla

perc

8va

f

snap pizz.

143

nar
ate his fill; the rest he hid un - der the bed."

cl
flutter tongue
subito *pp* < *mp*

vla
tremolo arco
subito *pp* < *mp*

perc
loco
subito *pp* < *mp*

148

nar
The neighbour looked under the bed

cl
pp

vla
pp *mp* *pp*

perc

155

nar
and there she found the sad re - - mains

cl
mp *p*

vla
mp *p*

perc
p

♩ = 180

161

nar *mf* of her goat! The farmer again played innocent;

cl *mf* ordinary *mf* *piu f*

vla *mf* ordinary *mf* *piu f*

perc *mf* *piu f*

==

167

nar said he had seen no goat; said the meat was that of another animal; said it wasn't meat;

cl *f, cresc.*

vla *f, cresc.*

perc *f, cresc.*

==

172

nar said he hadn't put it there anyway. And again the crow called out

cl

vla tremolo ordinary

perc

(mm. 177 - 182 could be spoken by percussionist)

177 *ff*

nar He killed the goat, he cooked the meat, he ate his fill, the

cl *ff*

vla *ff*

perc *ff*

181

nar rest he hid un-der the bed ____.

cl *mf*

vla *mf*

perc *mf*

187 approx. 25" *mp\mf*

nar

The neighbour decided to take the matter to court.

This worried the farmer.

What if the judge listened to the crow?

What if the farmer got caught in his own lies?

He sat down to think.

He thought,
and thought,
and thought,

until he had devised a cunning plan.

[PAGE TURN]

very freely, as if unmeasured
(meters give approximate relative lengths of phrases, but this section should not sound counted)

188 approx. 3" $\text{♩} = \text{approx. } 72$

nar *mp* **triangle** *mp*
(one triangle stroke, at approximately the middle of this phrase)

Night came

cl (notated one octave above sounding pitch) *legato*
p *mp* *n*

vla *p* *n*

perc *p* *mp* *n*
(not tremolo)

repeat figure, starting very slowly ($\bullet = \text{approx. } 60$), gradually speeding (to $\bullet = \text{approx. } 240$), then slowing (approx. 15 repetitions of the triad figure)

8va

etc.

==

191

nar *p*

cl *pp* *p* *n* *p* *mp*

vla *pp* *n* *p*

as in m. 190

perc *pp* *p* *n* *p*

pp *p* *mp*

194

nar *mp* *mf* *mp*

sleigh bells
(at approximately the middle of this phrase)

The moon rose.

cl *n* *mp* *mf* *n*

vla *n* *mp* *n*

perc (approx. 12 repetitions) (approx. 15)

mp *n* *mp* *mf* *n*

mp *mf*

197

nar triangle *mp*

The stars shone.

cl *mp* *mf* *n* *p* *mp*

vla *mp* *n* *p*

perc (approx. 12)

mp *n* *mp* *p* *mp*

200

sleigh bells *mf*

mp

The farmer took a large brass pot,
and placed it over the head
of the sleeping crow.

nar

cl

vla

perc

n

p

mp

loco $\sharp$

p

mf

n

p

=

=

203

metal wind chimes let resonate

take B $\flat$ clarinet

nar

cl

vla

perc

n

p

pp

(approx. 8)

mf

mp

p

207 $\text{♩} = 144$

nar H $\frac{3}{4}$

He dripped water on the pot,

cl B^b clarinet

vla pizz. p

perc p p

216

nar first slowly, then faster and faster until it sounded like rain

cl

vla p mp

perc

225

nar

cl

vla p

perc mp

bass drum

Both the rate of the tremolo and the rate of the cresc./decresc. should be uneven and impulsive throughout this section.

pp mp

233

nar

cl (round, resonant, slightly rough staccato)

vla

perc

p *mp* *p* *p* *mp*

240 *mp* *mf*

nar He began pounding on the pot, first quietly, then louder

cl *p* *mp*

vla *p* *mp*

perc *pp*, cresc.

irregular cresc. and decresc. swells (roughly following clarinet and viola), crescendoing overall to ***ff*** in m. 257

247

nar and louder until it sounded like thunder.

cl *mf* *mp*

vla arco *mp* *mf* *mp*

perc *

* Optional: from here until m. 269 add occasional, loud, dry strikes of metal and/or skin percussion ad. lib. (like lightning), though the bass drum should remain the predominant sound.

252

nar

cl

vla

perc

257

nar

cl

vla

perc

He kept this up all night, and removed the pot

ff

ff *f* *mf*

ff continue cresc./decrec. swells, with decrec. overall to niente in m. 269

263

nar

cl

vla

perc

only as the first rays of the sun were about to peek over the horizon.

mf *mp* *p* *pp*

mp *p*

take sleigh bells
take vibraphone

n

approx. 4" approx. 10"

nar H *mp* *mf* H $\frac{3}{4}$

[PAGE TURN]

When the sun had risen high in the sky, the farmer, the neighbour,
and the crow set off in solemn procession for the courthouse.

like a procession coming from afar

272 H $\frac{3}{4}$ *mp* $\text{J} = 80$

The farmer went first, then the neighbour, then the crow.

cl H $\frac{3}{4}$ *mp*

vla H $\frac{3}{4}$ *p* *mp*

perc H $\frac{3}{4}$

sleigh bells

perc H $\frac{3}{4}$ *pp* *p*

280

nar H

When they arrived, they seated themselves on the floor and waited for the entrance of the honored judge.

cl H $\frac{3}{4}$ *mf* *f*

vla H $\frac{3}{4}$ *mf* *f*

vibraphone

perc H $\frac{3}{4}$ *mf* *f*

perc H $\frac{3}{4}$ *mp* *f*

287 $\text{mp} \rightarrow \text{mf}$ $\text{♩} = \text{approx. 144 (follow rhythms of speech)}$

nar The judge asked the farmer for his story. He asked the neighbour, and

cl mf bell-like $\text{mf} p$ ($\text{mf} p$)

vla mf bell-like $\text{mf} p$ ($\text{mf} p$)

perc mf bell-like $\text{mf} p$ ($\text{mf} p$)

perc n

292

nar found that there were few points of a - greement between the two. So he asked the

cl ($\text{mf} p$) $\text{piu } f p$ ($f p$) $\text{mf} p$

vla ($\text{mf} p$) $\text{piu } f p$ ($f p$) $\text{mf} p$

perc ($\text{mf} p$) $\text{piu } f p$ ($f p$) $\text{mf} p$

296 $\text{♩} = 108$

nar H $\frac{8}{4}$ $p\text{mp}$ $\frac{12}{16}$

crow to tell what he had seen. The crow looked uneasy.

cl mp pp

vla mp pp

perc mp take marimba

302

nar H

He cleared his throat.

cl pp mp

vla pp mp

perc

310

nar H

He ruffled his feathers.

cl p pp p

vla p pp p

perc

317

nar He shuffled his feet. He paced

cl *p* *mp* *p*

vla *p* *mp* *p*

perc

much slower

322 ♩ = 44

nar back and forth. He looked around for an escape. slight accel. (♩ = approx. 66)

cl *p* *mp* *mf*

vla *p* *mp* *mf*

perc

gradually becoming agitated

begin gradual accel. (to approx. ♩ = 60 in m. 334)

327

nar He wanted to protect his friend the farmer, but found that he was unable to tell a lie.

cl *pp*, poco a poco cresc.

vla *pp*, poco a poco cresc.

perc

more rapid accel. (to ♩ = 108 in m. 339)
(going out of control)

331 *mpmf* (♩ = 60)

nar He sputtered, he coughed, he choked;

cl (*mp*, cresc.)

vla (*mp*, cresc.)

perc *mp*, poco a poco cresc.

marimba

335

nar but try as he might, he could not hold back the words, could not stop himself from

cl (*mf*, cresc.)

vla (*mf*, cresc.)

perc (*mf*, cresc.)

♩ = 108 (♩ = 162) (mm. 340 - 349 could be spoken by percussionist)

339 *ff*

nar calling out: "He killed the goat, he cooked the meat; he

cl (*f*) *ff* 8va

vla (*f*) *ff* 8va

perc (*f*) *ff* 8va

351 *mf* *f*

nar

As the judge raised his hammer
to pronounce the farmer's guilt,

the farmer asked: "How can you trust
such a bird? He tells nothing but lies!"

cl

vla

perc

perc

take bass drum

bass drum (dampened)

ff

356 *f*

nar

Ask him another question . . . Ask him . . . Ask him . . . Ask him . . . Ask him how the weather was last night."

cl

vla

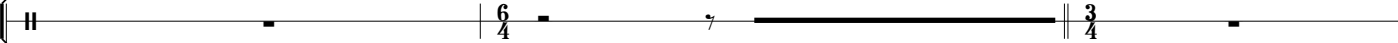
perc

perc

(dampened)

ff

361 ♩ = 144

nar 

So the judge asked, and the crow replied

cl 

vla 

perc 

perc 

(dampened) uneven strokes and cresc./decresc.
ff niente

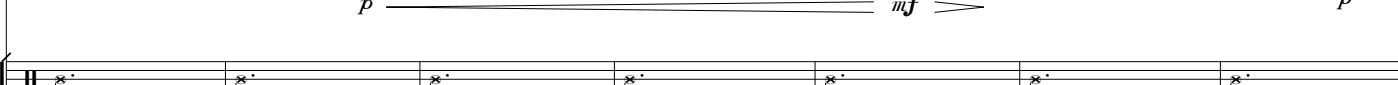
364

nar 

"Last night was a fearsome storm. The rain poured,

cl 

vla 

perc 

ordinary *mf* *mp*
p *mf* *p*

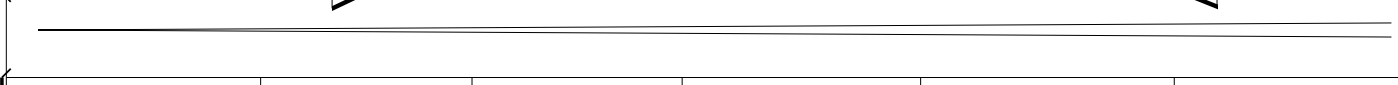
371

nar 

and the thunder roared, and it didn't let up until dawn.

cl 

vla 

perc 

mp *mf*

377

nar

cl

vla

perc

f *mf* *mp* *p*

f *mf* *mp* *p*

f *p*

383

nar

cl

vla

perc

p *pp* *p* *nothing*

8va

pp *p* *n*

vibraphone

pp *p*

sleigh bells

p

p = 72 very freely

[PAGE TURN] The farmer smiled. (accent very slight)

He looked at the

388

nar

cl

vla

perc

judge. He asked: Remember last

pp *p* *nothing* *pp* *p*

8va

loco *pp* *p* *n* *pp* *p* *n*

pp *p* *pp* *p*

392

nar H $\frac{4}{4}$ night? $\frac{3}{4}$ How the moon rose, $\frac{5}{4}$ How the stars shone,

cl C $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{5}{4}$

vla C $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{5}{4}$

perc C $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{5}{4}$

p *mp* *p* *mp* *p* *mp*

loco 8va

mp *mp* *mp*

397

nar H $\frac{5}{4}$ How clear it was $\frac{4}{4}$ Would you really take this bird's word above mine? $\frac{6}{4}$

cl C $\frac{5}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{6}{4}$

vla C $\frac{5}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{6}{4}$

perc C $\frac{5}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{6}{4}$

mp *n* *f pp* *p* *n*

loco 8va

pp *p* *n*

take metal wind chime *pp* *p* metal wind chime *p*

400 $\text{♩} = 144$

nar H $\frac{5}{4}$ The judge apologized. $\frac{6}{4}$ "I almost let this lying bird de - $\frac{5}{4}$

cl C $\frac{5}{4}$ $\frac{6}{4}$ $\frac{5}{4}$

vla C $\frac{5}{4}$ $\frac{6}{4}$ $\frac{5}{4}$

perc C $\frac{5}{4}$ $\frac{6}{4}$ $\frac{5}{4}$

mp *mf* *mf* *f* *mp* *mp*

vibraphone

405

nar stroy your reputation. He is dangerous, deceitful, not to be trusted. We have

cl

vla

perc *mf*

6/4 5/4

409

nar cared for crow, have fed him, have welcomed him into our homes, and this is how he treats us.

cl

vla

perc *mf*

7/4 6/4

412

nar *f* Let our com - - - - panionship now be ended. *f*

cl *mf* *f*

vla *mf* *f*

perc *mf* *f* to marimba

6/4 8/4 2/4 4/4

415

nar 

Crow went to live in the forest, saddened by the loss of his human friends.
To this day, he wears black feathers as a symbol of his mourning.

cl  *p* *mp* *p*

vla  *p* *mp* *p*

perc  *niente* *p* *ppp*

marimba

423 approx. 35"

nar 

[PAGE TURN]

Time passed, and crow became comfortable living in the wild.
Though the pain of the betrayal never left him entirely, he thought less and less often
of his life among humans.

One day, he saw a new bird in the forest.
She was brilliant green and red, and sang a song crow had never heard before.
I am parrot, she said.
"I speak the language of humans, and have come from far away to be their companion."

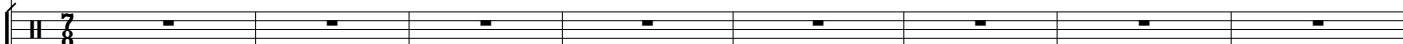
"Welcome", said crow, "but please heed my warning.
I, too, speak human language, and for many years was human's favourite friend.

424  $\text{♩} = 216$ *mp*

Humans housed me and gave me food, and we were together all our waking hours.

cl  *ppp*

vla  *pp*

perc 

432

nar

cl

vla

perc

p *pp* *p* *mp*

p *mp*

438

nar

cl

vla

perc

p *mp*

mp *p* *mp*

445

nar

vla

vla

perc

p *mp*

p *mp*

tambourine

middle line -- jingles only
bottom line -- low, resonant drum sound

We spoke together freely.

451

nar H $\frac{1}{4}$ $\frac{1}{4}$ $mp \rightarrow mf$

We shared our thoughts, our secrets, our best ideas.

cl f

vla f

perc f

457

nar $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{7}{8}$ $\frac{9}{8}$ $\frac{1}{4}$

For many years, our friendship flourished.

cl mp

vla mp

perc mp

462

nar $\frac{1}{4}$ $\frac{1}{4}$ $\frac{1}{4}$ $\frac{1}{4}$ $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{1}{4}$

But when my words clashed with a human lie, they threw me out."

cl $mp, cresc.$

vla $mp, cresc.$

perc $mp, cresc.$

469

nar

cl
(*mf*, cresc.) (*f*, cresc.)

vla
(*mf*, cresc.) (*f*, cresc.)

perc
(*mf*, cresc.) (*f*, cresc.)

476

nar

If you want to be welcome in the human household

cl
ff *mp* sweetly

vla
ff *mp* sweetly

perc
ff take vibraphone

484

nar

cl
mf

vla
mf

perc

492

nar

And so it happened that humans invited parrot to be their new companion.

cl

becoming dull

mp, poco a poco decresc.

vla

becoming dull

mp, poco a poco decresc.

perc

500

nar

Parrot, ever mindful of crow's advice, has been careful to repeat only what humans say to her,

cl

(*p, decresc.*)

vla

(*p, decresc.*)

perc

509

nar

and to keep her own wise counsel to herself.

cl

pp

vla

pp *ppp*

perc

♩ = 108
like bells

517

nar

cl

vla

perc

vibraphone

f

f

f

f

522

nar

cl

vla

perc

f *piu f*

f *piu f*

f *piu f*

528

nar

cl

vla

perc

f *f* *mf*

f *f* *mf*

f *f* *mf*

534

a little slower
(♩ = 104)

slower
(♩ = 100)

faster
(♩ = 132)

nar

cl

vla

perc

mp

p

mf

mp

p

mf

mp

p

mf