

Matthew Barnson

Another Tyger

Instruments: violoncello, piano, E-flat clarinet

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No one writes for the E-flat clarinet anymore. It is the most underestimated of the clarinets and its confined repertoire, while brightly hued, is basically monochromatic. It's not just a witch's cackle, or Richard Strauss' urchin's terrified scream; it can be supple, dynamic, virtuosic and dramatic.

I composed *Another Tiger*, a two-movement trio with violoncello and piano, for the E-flat clarinet and attempted to write a virtuosic, glittering, hard-edged, but lyrical music with bright-hued "West Coast" harmonies. The episodic first movement alternates between hushed lyricism, aggressive, forward-thrusting rhythms and highly-charged, suspended stasis that ends exhausted and still; the second movement—a "slow movement" based on a tremolo transition midway through first movement- liquid-like, builds towards a single, hammered climax that echoes, fades and, like the first movement, ends in exhausted fragmentation.

But *Another Tiger* does not depict a tiger. I took the title from Jorge Luis Borges' poem "The Other Tiger." Borges' description of writing and creation, "Another tiger, the beast not found in verse," described my own compositional concerns as I synthesized disparate formal and stylistic elements: "the tiger addressed in my poem is a shadowy beast, a tiger of symbols/And scraps picked up at random out of books,/A string of labored tropes that have no life,/And not the fated tiger, the deadly jewel/That under sun or stars or changing moon/Goes on in Bengal or Sumatra fulfilling/Its rounds of love and indolence and death."

Another Tiger, in its original form, was premiered at Field Hall at the Curtis Institute by Robb Patterson, clarinet; Eugenia Cheng, cello; and Amy Yang, piano on April 17, 2005. In its revised form, Jon Troy, clarinet; Jee-hee Ju, cello and Jessica Osborne gave the premiere at Sprague Hall at Yale University on December 13, 2007.