

# STOMPING GROUNDS

*for violin, clarinet & piano*

Karim Al-Zand  
(2015)



PROGRAM NOTE:

In early music, a “ground bass” (or simply, a “ground”) is a composition built upon a repeating melodic phrase or harmonic progression. *Stomping Grounds* comprises four diverse character pieces, each one using a repeating *rhythmic* idea as its musical basis. The first movement, *hop|skip|jump*, is playful and animated, with a fanfare-like theme and a persistent seven-note chord that serves as the movement’s musical “clock.” Behind its exuberant surface is a fourteen-beat rhythmic scheme (2+3, 2+3, 2+2) that is followed throughout. The second movement, *dog days dirge*, is slow and languid, the instruments seeming to move as little as possible. The piano repeats thick chords in a pattern which moves ever-so-slowly, while the violin and clarinet echo each other’s motives lazily. A welcome freshness arrives in the next movement, *mbira song*. The mbira, or “thumb piano,” is an indigenous percussion instrument of Central and Southern Africa. Its music is characterized by numerous rhythmic layers, superimposed and interwoven to create a sort of syncopated “music box.” The third movement tries to capture the charming grooves of this musical texture. Rhythmic performance anchors the last movement even more prominently. In early jazz, “stop time” is the term for a sparse, punctuated accompaniment, one usually meant to support a showy tap dance routine. In *sto(m)p time dance*, the trio provides both the song and the dance. The players trade solos, bang out rhythms with their feet, and bounce along briskly in a spirited finale. *Stomping Grounds* was commissioned by Brian Connelly and CONTEXT, with grant support from the city of Houston through the Houston Arts Alliance.

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DURATION:

1. hop   skip   jump	3'30"
2. dog days dirge	3'30"
3. mbira song	3'30"
4. sto(m)p time dance	3'30"

TOTAL: ca. 14'



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1. hop | skip | jump

Fast; lively, a bouncing groove ♩ = 144

Violin *pp*

Clarinet *pp*

Piano *pp*

⑧ arco

Vln. *cresc.* *f*

Cl. *cresc.* *f* *p* *mf*

Pno. *cresc.* *f* *p* *fp*

⑰

Vln. *mf* *pizz. (dampen)* *arco*

Cl. *fp* *mf*

Pno. *p* *mf*

26

Vln. *pizz. arco* *pizz. arco*

Cl.

Pno.

34

Vln. *fp* *mf* *pizz. arco* *pizz. arco*

Cl. *fp* *mf*

Pno. *mp* *mf*

43

Vln.

Cl.

Pno.

51

Vln.

Cl.

Pno. *mf* *poco f*

58

Vln.

Cl.

Pno.

65

Vln. *vigorous*  
*f*

Cl. *mf*

Pno. *mf*

73

Vln.

Cl. *f*

Pno.

81

Vln. *mf* *cresc.* *f*

Cl. *mf* *cresc.* *f*

Pno. *f* *cresc.* *f*

89

Vln.

Cl.

Pno.

97

Vln.

Cl.

Pno.

*cresc.* *ff*

*cresc.* *ff*

*cresc.* *ff*

*8<sup>va</sup>* *8<sup>va</sup>* *8<sup>va</sup>*

105

Vln.

Cl.

Pno.

*gliss.*

112

Vln.

Cl.

Pno.

*mf* *mp* *p*

*mf* *mp* *p*

*mf* *mp* *p*

121

Vln.

Cl.

Pno.

129

Vln.

Cl.

Pno.

136

Vln.

Cl.

Pno.

143

Vln.

Cl.

Pno.

149

Vln. *mf*

Cl. *mf*

Pno.

155

Vln. *poco f*

Cl. *poco f*

Pno.

162

Vln. *mp*

Cl. *mp*

Pno. *mp*

168

Vln. *sul IV* *cresc.* *mf*

Cl. *cresc.* *mf*

Pno. *cresc.* *mf*

175

Vln. *poco f*

Cl. *poco f*

Pno. *poco f*

181

Vln.

Cl.

Pno. *f*

187

Vln. *cresc.*

Cl. *cresc.*

Pno. *cresc.*

*S<sup>no</sup>*

193

Vln.

Cl. *tr.* *ff*

Pno. *ff*

*S<sup>no</sup>*

15:10

199

Vln. *pp* *cresc.*

Cl. *pp* *cresc.*

Pno. *pp* *cresc.*

209

Vln. *f*

Cl.

Pno. *f*

217

Vln. *ff*

Cl. *f* *ff*

Pno. *ff*

224

Vln. *fff*

Cl. *fff*

Pno. *fff*

233

Vln.

Cl.

Pno.

*sub. p* *molto cresc.* *fff*

*sub. p* *molto cresc.* *fff*

*sub. p* *molto cresc.* *fff*

## 2. dog days dirge

Slowly; languid, humid, a stillness in the air ♩ = 72

warmly, expressive;  
at first gently wafting overtop

Violin

Clarinet

Piano

*p* but with a weighty resonance throughout

plenty of  $\text{♩}$

*p*

(3+2)

*sim.*

7

*warmly, expressive;*  
† *at first gently wafting overtop*

*p*

*mp*

*mp*

Pno.

14

*mf*

*mf*

Pno.

21

*cresc.*

*poco f*

*cresc.*

*poco f*

*cresc.*

*poco f*

Pno.

\* Grace notes should be played "lazily" —i.e., somewhat long, perhaps a sixteenth-note's value.

† The violin and clarinet parts are written in  $\frac{5}{8}$  simply for the convenience of coordinating with the piano ostinato. With the exception of certain arrival points, their phrasing is independent of the written meter. The slurring/bowing in the individual parts provides an idea of the metric groupings.

27

Vln. *mp* *mf*

Cl. *mp* *mf*

Pno. *mp*

34

Vln. *cresc.*

Cl. *cresc.*

Pno. *cresc.*

40

Vln. *ff* *gradual decresc. to the end*

Cl. *ff* *gradual decresc. to the end*

Pno. *ff* *gradual decresc. to the end*

46

Vln. *p* *ppp*

Cl. *p* *ppp*

Pno. *pp* *ppp*

IV

# 3. mbira song

Quickly; a polymetric music box ♩ = ca. 160

Violin

A Clarinet

Piano

*rocking back and forth*

*poco f*

⑤

Vln.

A Cl.

Pno.

*insistent*

*pizz. I II sim.*

*bouncing*

*poco f*

⑨

Vln.

A Cl.

Pno.

*bring out inner voice*

⑬

Vln.

A Cl.

Pno.

CYCLE 1

17  $\frac{9}{8}$  arco sul IV prominent, but relaxed; seeming to float above the meter

Vln. *mf*

2nd x

3rd x

4th x

A Cl. *p* 4xs

Pno. *p* 4xs

21  $\frac{12}{8}$  swaying

Vln. *mp*

A Cl. timbral alternation *mp* — *mf* sim.

Pno. *mp* spinning

more  $\text{ped.}$  →

25  $\frac{12}{8}$

Vln.

A Cl.

Pno.

delicate "pings" above and below

CYCLE 2

29 4xs  
Vln. *pp*  
softly, but still singing wistfully;  
seeming to float above the meter  
A Cl. *mp*  
2nd x  
3rd x  
4th x  
Pno. *pp* 4xs

33  
Vln. *poco f*  
vigorous  
pizz.  
buoyant  
A Cl. *poco f*  
Pno.

CYCLE 3

37 4xs >

Vln. *mp*

A Cl. *mp*

*gently ringing tunelessly;  
seeming to float above the meter*

9 4

Pno. *mf* *sim.*

2nd x

3rd x

4th x

Repeat several times and fade to nothing\*

41 *murmuring arco*

Vln. 1x, 2x *mp, p*

3x... *pp* → niente *quietly bouncing again*

A Cl. *mp* → niente

Pno. (non arp.) *mf* → niente

\* The C# octaves in the piano should be the last notes struck. The sound should then decay naturally.

# 4. sto(m)p time dance

Very Fast; a brisk, tightly-wound "two-feel"  $\text{♩} = 152+$

Violin

(B♭) Clarinet

Piano

⑩

Vln.

Cl.

Pno.

⑪

Vln.

Cl.

Pno.

*lively*  
quick slide, on the beat  
(II) *poco f* (sim.)

*mf*

*mf*

\* Rhythms in this staff are to be performed as foot taps/stomps. They should be executed prominently and deliberately, with one foot (either foot, though it should be the same one throughout). The exact technique will vary according to the indicated dynamics.

28

Vln.

Cl.

Pno.

*poco f*

36

Vln.

Cl.

Pno.

*ringing f*

*ringing f*

*ringing f*

*pizz. mp*

45

Vln.

Cl.

Pno.

*dogged mf*

53

Vln.

Cl.

Pno.

*skittish arco sub f*

*skittish f*

*skittish sub f*

*sub p*

61

Vln. *pizz.*  
*mp*

Cl. *mf*

Pno.

69

Vln. *arco*  
*mf*

Cl. *mf*

Pno. *f*  
on the beat

76

Vln. *f*

Cl.

Pno. *f*  
"stride"

82

Vln. *pizz.*

Cl. *solo*

Pno.

89 arco

Vln.

Cl.

Pno.

95 solo

*sempre f*

Vln.

Cl.

Pno.

102

Vln.

Cl.

Pno.

108

*fp* *fp* *fp* *poco f*

quick slide, on the beat (sim.)

Vln.

Cl.

Pno.

116

Vln.

Cl.

Pno.

124

Vln.

Cl.

Pno.

133

Vln.

Cl.

Pno.

*p*

*mp*

141

Vln.

Cl.

Pno.

*mf*

149

Vln. *f*

Cl. *f* on the beat

Pno. *f*

155

Vln. *p*

Cl. *p*

Pno. *p*, *f*, *p*

163

Vln. *mf*

Cl. *mf* *cresc.*

Pno. *f*, *mp* *cresc.*

170

Vln. *ff* huge!

Cl. *ff* huge!

Pno. *ff* huge!

176

Vln. *f*

Cl. *f*

Pno. *sub pp* *f crashing*

*8va*

*8va*

big bass! somewhat blurred with *leg.*

183

Vln.

Cl.

Pno.

*8va*

190

Vln. *cresc.* *ff*

Cl. *cresc.* *ff*

Pno. *cresc.* *ff* *immense, grand*

198

Vln. *cresc.*

Cl. *cresc.*

Pno.

becoming frenzied

G.P. Even faster! ♩=160+  
(ca. 4 meas.)

205

Vln. *pp* *pizz.* *p but sonorous!*

Cl. *pp* *solo*

Pno. *pp* *P*

gradual crescendo to m. 230

213

Vln.

Cl.

Pno.

221

Vln.

Cl.

Pno.

228

(in time)

Vln. *ff* interrupt clarinet *pp* *a "toss off" (arp.)* 4:3J 4:3J

Cl. *ff* *gliss. ad lib.* *cut off playing* *pp* *a "toss off"*

Pno. *ff* interrupt clarinet *pp* *a "toss off"*









