UNGROUNDED
BASE
(2012)

Kathryn Salfelder
Program Note:

_Ungrounded Base_ is a double entendre on the term "ground bass," the compositional device of the seventeenth century, in which a series of variations occurs over a recurring bass line. The seven pitches of this descending chromatic bass (B A# A G# G F# F) differ from historical practice with the addition of the final pitch (F), which obscures the tonic/dominant relationship of B-F#. Unlike earlier repertoire (from the keyboard works of Couperin and Frescobaldi to Beethoven's _32 Variations in C Minor_ and the finale of Brahms' _Symphony #4_, to name a few examples), each pitch of the chromatic bass is not assigned the same duration. This obscures the listener's ability to trace the ground bass line.

The work is structured on a modified sonata form. The first theme, rooted in the harmony of the chromatic bass, is an ascending gesture introduced by the solo cello at the onset of the work. The more distant and haunting second theme integrates the ground bass as a melodic line. This theme quotes the recitative that precedes Purcell's *When I Am Laid in Earth* (also known as "Dido's Lament"), from his opera *Dido and Aeneas*, an aria frequently referenced in music history texts as an example of ground bass, chaconne, and chromatic expressivity in late-seventeenth-century music. Development ensues, and the mirror recapitulation presents the two themes in reverse order. Upon arrival at the first theme, the bass line is left unfinished; the brass section continues its ascent, rising to a soaring conclusion.

_Ungrounded Base_ was commissioned by the United States Air Force Band, Washington D.C., as a follow-on commission to _Cathedrals_, winner of the 2009 United States Air Force Arnaud D. Gabriel Award.

Performance Notes:

Accidentals remain in effect for the duration of the measure at the octave in which they occur. They are sometimes rewritten within a measure for clarity.

Glissandi occur over entire note durations; grace notes occur before the beat; trills preceded by the same pitch should be approached from above.

--- Dotted slurs indicate phrasing

Performance time: c. 8'15"

Instrumentation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Piccolo</th>
<th>C Trumpet 1, 2, 3 &amp; 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flute 1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>Horn in F 1, 2, 3 &amp; 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oboe 1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>Trombone 1 &amp; 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eb Soprano Clarinet</td>
<td>Bass Trombone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bb Clarinet 1, 2 &amp; 3</td>
<td>Euphonium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bb Bass Clarinet</td>
<td>Tuba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bassoon 1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>Cello</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eb Alto Saxophone 1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>String Bass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Db Tenor Saxophone</td>
<td>Harp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eb Baritone Saxophone</td>
<td>Timpani</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percussion 1: Triangle, 4 Tom-Toms, Orchestral Bells (shared w/Perc. 2), Large Sus. Cymbal (shared w/Perc. 2), Crotales (1 octave - low)

Percussion 2: Vibraphone, Bass Drum, Orchestral Bells (shared w/Perc. 1), Large Sus. Cymbal (shared w/Perc. 1)

To the Conductor:

_Ungrounded Base_ may be performed one-on-a-part (with two players on each Clarinet 1, 2 & 3) or with additional doublings at the conductor's discretion.

The opening directive, "Intensely; With a Focused, Driven Sound," remains in effect until Meas. 30, irrespective of tempo marking.
KATHRYN SAIFELDER

UNGROUNDED BASE

Tempo I (L = 152)

With a Focused, Driven Sound

Commissioned by the United States Air Force Band, Washington D.C.
Driven!

\( \text{q} = 168 \)

Driven!

\( \text{mp} \)

Driven!

\( \text{p} \)

Driven!

\( \text{f} \)

Driven!

\( \text{p} \)