

Jeffrey Ryan

# BELLATRIX

for contrabass solo

*Commissioned by CBC Radio Music  
in partnership with the Canada Council for the Arts*

## **Performance notes:**

Total performance time ca. 8'

*s.t.* = sul tasto  
*s.p.* = sul ponticello  
*n.v.* = non vibrato

Tenuto markings indicate a slight dynamic and rhythmic stress on the note.

All glissandi should start immediately upon sounding the initial pitch. Glissandi longer than a quarter note are notated with an opening eighth note and the required total duration. It is important to note that some glissandi end with a bow change (e.g. from m. 2 into m. 3) while others have no bow change at the end (e.g. m. 26).

**BELLATRIX** is a highly dramatic work that requires the soloist's awareness of the theatrical aspect of concert performance. It is essential that the singing, humming, breathing and vocalisations be integrated into the character of the music, be it aggressive or lyrical.

## **Programme note:**

I have been interested in astronomy for many years. As a child growing up in rural Ontario, Canada, I had many opportunities for star-gazing, and I voraciously studied both the constellations and the mythologies behind them. I was always excited when Orion, the Hunter, would first appear in the evening sky, because it heralded the advent of winter, bringing with it the many bright stars and favourite constellations of those long clear nights.

*Bellatrix* is the Latin name given to the star that marks Orion's left shoulder. Traditionally, Orion is depicted as a man holding up a shield and brandishing a club. *Bellatrix* translates as "female warrior" and I find it cosmologically comforting that many years ago someone recognised the importance of acknowledging Orion's feminine side. It is this Female Warrior that has provided the inspiration for this extroverted and dramatic work.

**BELLATRIX** (the music) is a virtuosic tour de force for the soloist. Within an overall tone of aggression and emphatic outward energy there are moments of reflection and lyricism, and the integration of vocalisations and breath sounds into the soundworld of the piece draws on the full resources of the player's performance skills, resulting in a work that demands a dramatic stage presence and a recognition of the concert experience as an act of theatre.

**BELLATRIX** was commissioned by CBC Radio Music in partnership with the Canada Council for the Arts, as the imposed piece for the 31st CBC Radio National Competition for Young Performers.

# BELLATRIX

for contrabass solo

♩ = 72 *Very aggressively*  
*a war cry* (1)

*ff* Huh - ah - uh (2)

*ff* breathe (3) IN OUT IN

(change bow as necessary to sustain intensity)

*ff* *tr* *gl.* *V* (change bow)

*ff* breathe IN *sempre*

(as before)

*ff* Huh - ah - uh

*gl.* *V* (slow to fast)

(voice tacet) *sul pont.* *ord.* *sul pont.*

*pp* 8 *ff* (no *gl.*) (no bow change) *pp* 7

(1) Pitch is not important, but the general shape of the line should be followed. While the performer should feel free to experiment to find an effectively aggressive interpretation, it is suggested that the tone should be very straight and pushed, with a nasal quality if possible. Women should feel free to use the chest register or a “belt” tone.

(2) A complete and forceful exhalation of remaining air, from the diaphragm. There should be a sense that this action then triggers the instrument's entry.

(3) The breathing must be very angry here, strongly diaphragmatic, and should connect with both the energy of the preceding release and the following instrumental entry.

sing (4) *p sempre*

15 *ord.* *ff* *gl.* *p* *pp*

21 *pp* *gl.* *f* *tr* *slide* *(non tr.)*

25 (voice tacet) *delicately* *pp* *gl.* 3 3 3 3 6

29 *ff* Huh - ah 4 Huh - ah 4

33 (voice tacet)

36 *sfp* (IV) →

(4) All sung and hummed tones may be transposed by octave into a comfortable register for the player.

39 *poco rit.* *a tempo* *poco rit.*

43 *slow gl. (o)* *poco rit.* *breathe mf IN*  
*(more relaxed, but audible)* *meno mosso*

*p* *mf* *pp* *n.*

*mf* *IN*  
*(more relaxed, but audible)*  
*meno mosso*

49 *OUT* *n.* *meno mosso* *(voice tacet)*

*espr.* *gl.* *pp*

53 *p* *pp* *pp* *rit. to*

56 *gl.* *n.v.* *(fast, not wide)* *molto vib.*

*mf* *pp* *n.* *mf*

60 *p* *n.* *sul tasto* *pp*

63 *pizz.* *arco* *s.t.* *s.p.* *s.t.*

*pp* *(pluck first note only)* *(pizz. low to high)* *pp* *p* *pp*

(5) If desired, other harmonic positions may be substituted which will yield the same pitches.

*hum p*  $\bullet = 48-60^{(6)}$   
*con rubato*

67 *s.p.* *s.t.* *s.p.* *s.t.* *n.v.* *mm.* *ord.* *molto espr. tentative, searching*  
*p* *pp* *p* *pp* *n.* *n.* *p*

*breathe p IN*

72 *mm.* *mm.* *p*

*open to "ah" without break*

76 *mf* *mf sempre* *mf*

80 *p* *mf*

(6) From mm. 71-88, the tempo should be *very flexible* and expressive with the given range.

accel. to

*mf*

83

5/16 7/16

gl.

ah

*ff*

$\text{♩} = 72$  *f*

85

12

12

*f*

ah

accel.

rit. to

$\text{♩} = 60$

87 (voice tacet)

*f*

*ff*

*ff* < *f* poss.

gl.

*furioso!*

$\text{♩} = 84$  ( $\text{♩} = 168$ )  
leggiero, tempo giusto  
(ricochet)

arco

arco

arco

arco

89

2/4 16/16 2/4 2/4 2/4 2/4

*p*

gl.

arco

very rough - at the heel

92 (II)  $\square \square \square \square \square$  sempre

II holds D

2/4 3/4 2/4 2/4 2/4 2/4

*ff* sub.

(III)

III moves by quartertone

95 0  
0

98

102

107

111

114

117 ♩ = ♩ = 168

121 rit. poco a poco to

125 (molto) ♩ = 60  
l.h. only --  
(hammered) ♩ = ♩

128  $\bullet = 60$   
arco  
*a bit laboured*

*p* *mf* *p* *mf* *p*

133  $\bullet = 48$   
espr.

*p* *mf* *p*

137

*n.* *mf*

141

*pp* *ppp* *arco* *gl.*

146  $\bullet = 72$   
arco (II)

*pp* *pp* *5* *ff sub.* *pp* *5* *ff sub.*

(alternate between fundamental and harmonic)

150

*pp* *f* *f poss.*

*gl. (o)* *tr* *gl. (o)*

(gl. while trilling) *tr* *gl. (o)* (highest note on II)

(voice tacet)  $\bullet = 168$  sub.

155

*f*

158



161

163

166

169

*hum p*

172

176

(voice tacet)

*arco*

179

182

185

Musical notation for measures 185-187. Measure 185 is in bass clef, 4/4 time, featuring a melodic line with slurs and accents. Measure 186 continues the melodic line. Measure 187 is in treble clef, 7/8 time, with a melodic line and slurs.

188

Musical notation for measures 188-190. Measure 188 is in treble clef, 7/8 time, with a melodic line and accents. Measure 189 continues the melodic line. Measure 190 is in 4/4 time, with a melodic line and accents.

191

Musical notation for measures 191-194. Measure 191 is in treble clef, 4/4 time, with a melodic line and accents. Measure 192 continues the melodic line. Measure 193 is in bass clef, 7/8 time, with a melodic line and accents. Measure 194 is in 7/8 time, with a melodic line and accents. Dynamics: *sfp*, *f*, *sfp*.

195

Musical notation for measures 195-197. Measure 195 is in bass clef, 7/8 time, with a melodic line and accents. Measure 196 continues the melodic line. Measure 197 is in 4/4 time, with a melodic line and accents. Dynamics: *f*, *sfp*, *f*, *sfp*.

198

Musical notation for measures 198-201. Measure 198 is in bass clef, 7/8 time, with a melodic line and accents. Measure 199 continues the melodic line. Measure 200 is in treble clef, 3/4 time, with a melodic line and accents. Measure 201 is in 7/8 time, with a melodic line and accents. Dynamics: *f*, *ff*.

202

Musical notation for measures 202-205. Measure 202 is in treble clef, 7/8 time, with a melodic line and accents. Measure 203 continues the melodic line. Measure 204 is in 2/4 time, with a melodic line and accents. Measure 205 is in 7/8 time, with a melodic line and accents. Dynamics: *gl.*, *gl.*, *gl.*, *gl.*.

206

Musical notation for measures 206-210. Measure 206 is in treble clef, 7/8 time, with a melodic line and accents. Measure 207 continues the melodic line. Measure 208 is in 2/4 time, with a melodic line and accents. Measure 209 is in 3/4 time, with a melodic line and accents. Measure 210 is in 7/8 time, with a melodic line and accents. Dynamics: *pp*.

211

Musical notation for measures 211-214. Measure 211 is in bass clef, 7/8 time, with a melodic line and accents. Measure 212 continues the melodic line. Measure 213 is in treble clef, 4/4 time, with a melodic line and accents. Measure 214 is in bass clef, 3/4 time, with a melodic line and accents. Dynamics: *fff*.

215

Musical notation for measures 215-218. Measure 215 is in bass clef, 3/4 time, with a melodic line and accents. Measure 216 continues the melodic line. Measure 217 is in 4/4 time, with a melodic line and accents. Measure 218 is in treble clef, 7/8 time, with a melodic line and accents. Dynamics: *gl. (o)*, *gl.*.