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# Afilador

for orchestra

Andrea Casarrubios

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## ***Afilador para orquesta (2022-2023)*** **Andrea Casarrubios (1988\*)**

Cada persona guarda en su memoria ciertos decorados sonoros que han marcado momentos de su infancia. En mi caso han sido los melismas de los afiladores – sonidos que resuenan como una mágica llamada atemporal.

Nací en un precioso pueblo de la provincia de Ávila (España) al sur de la Sierra de Gredos, y solía escuchar el sonido del afilador que llegaba al valle cada semana. Felices y ansiosos, nos preparábamos en familia para acudir a su presencia; conocedores de sus melismas, sabíamos exactamente cuánto tiempo tardaría en llegar a nuestra calle. Ahora ya llevo casi la mitad de mi vida viviendo en Estados Unidos, pero durante una de las visitas a mi querida tierra natal ocurrió que estaba paseando cuando, de pronto, me hipnotizó el sonido del “chiflo” de un afilador – no lo había escuchado en veinte años. Como si el tiempo no hubiese pasado, me apresuré por las calles, intentando acercarme para atrapar ese sonido con una preciosa sensación de inocencia que pronto se convirtió en melancolía.

Poco después recibí una llamada con el fin de escribir una obra para la Chicago Symphony Orchestra y decidí que sería una cápsula de esa experiencia. La música comienza con una ráfaga de aire, intentando tomar perspectiva al flotar por encima de todo lo terrenal. Escuchamos entonces al piccolo imitando los lejanos melismas de un afilador. La flauta y el clarinete responden, acercándose cada vez más. El afilador, como idea musical, pretende arrancarnos del bucle de nuestro ruido mental y, a partir de ahí, llevarnos de viaje al mundo de nuestros recuerdos. Después de la primera iteración del tema del afilador, la música se vuelve casi como un mantra tocado por la cuerda al que pronto se unen instrumentos de viento madera, metales y percusión. Tras una intensa tormenta escuchamos el doblar de las campanas, emulando el fatídico momento sonoro en las aldeas anunciando luto por joven partida. El final de la obra nos transporta a la abundante explosión de color del Valle del Tiétar, invitando al desafío vital de transformar la tragedia en un eterno esplendor.

Esta obra está escrita en memoria de Diego Casarrubios García, mi hermano. Encargada por Chicago Symphony Orchestra MusicNOW, se estrenó en Chicago Symphony Center en 2023.

— Andrea Casarrubios

***Afilador* for orchestra (2022-2023)**  
**Andrea Casarrubios (b. 1988)**

We all keep certain sounds that decorate our childhood. Whether it is the jingle of an ice cream truck — or, in my case, the whistle of an *afilador* — they resound perennially fresh in our memory. Those who grew up in Latin America are well acquainted with the immediately recognizable scales of an *afilador*. Playing a whistle or flute called a *chiflo*, the *afilador* bikes from town to town with their equipment attached to the handlebars, attending to the dull knives and razors of the residents.

I was born in a small village in the Tiétar Valley, surrounded by a mountain range in Spain called Sierra de Gredos. Until I was seven, I used to hear the sound of the knife sharpener every week. Although this profession has been disappearing, the *afilador* was for many generations part of the natural sound world of all of the villages in the valley. I have been living in the United States for almost half of my life now, but last year I was finally able to spend a whole month in my hometown. During a walk, I heard the *chiflo* of the knife sharpener in the distance. I hadn't heard one in twenty years. I found myself following the music through the streets, radiating with a sensation of intactness, a wholeness which now exists for me only in flashes of scent and sound.

In this work the music begins with a breath of fresh air, seeking to float above everything earthbound, gathering perspective from a bird's eye. The piccolo flute then starts imitating the distant melismas of a sharpener's whistle. The flute and the clarinet respond, getting closer and closer. The *afilador* as a musical idea is intended to appear as a call to come back to presence; to snap out of our mental noise, and from there, perhaps, to be ushered immediately into memory and meaning. After the first iteration of the *afilador* theme, the music becomes almost like a mantra played by the strings and soon joined by woodwinds, brass, and percussion. Drifting through an intense ice storm where all the elements eventually align, we hear the sound of bells — typically played in small villages when someone passes away. The ending returns to the abundant color of the valley, and represents a transformation; turning tragedy and hardship into as much beauty and warmth as possible.

This work was written in memory of my brother, Diego Casarrubios García. *Afilador* is a Chicago Symphony Orchestra commission for MusicNOW and it was premiered at the Symphony Center in 2023.

— Andrea Casarrubios

## Orchestration

1 Piccolo Flute  
1 Flute  
1 Oboe  
2 Clarinets  
1 Bassoon

1 Horn  
1 Trumpet  
1 Tuba  
1 Trombone

1 Timpani  
Percussion (2 players):  
Tubular Bells  
Snare Drum

Strings  
Preferable count:  
6-8 Violins I  
6-8 Violins II  
6-8 violas  
6 celli  
4 bass

Minimum count:  
4 violins I  
4 violins II  
4 violas  
4 celli  
2 bass

# Afilador

for orchestra

Commissioned by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association for MusicNOW

Riccardo Muti, Zell Music Director

Jessie Montgomery, Mead Composer-in-Residence

Andrea Casarrubios (\*1988)

$\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 60$

Piccolo (off-stage)

Flute

Oboe

Clarinet 1 (A)

Clarinet 2 (A)

Bassoon

Horn (F)

Trumpet (B $\flat$ )

Trombone

Tuba

Timpani

Tubular Bells

Snare Drum

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Violoncello

Double Bass

*pp* *unfold* *p* *mp*

*p espress.* *mp*

*p* *mp*

*pp* *p* *p* *mp*

9  $\text{♩} = 70$

Fl. *pp*

Ob. *mp espressivo*

Cl. 1 (A) *pp*

Bsn. *pp*

Vln. I *mp* *pp*

Vln. II *mp* *pp*

Vla. *warm* *mf* *mf espressivo* *pp*

Vc. *mp* *mf espressivo*

Div. unis. *mf espressivo*

Db. *mp* *pp*



16 **rall.** **a tempo**

Fl. *p* *p floating*

Ob. *abundant*

Cl. 1 (A) *p* *mp* *p*

Cl. 2 (A) *p* *p*

Bsn. *p*

Vln. I *p* *mf espressivo* *p floating with a shimmering sound*

Vln. II *p* *mf espressivo* *p floating with a shimmering sound*

Vla. *div.* *unis.* *p cantabile*

Vc. *abundant* *div.* *unis.* *div.* *unis.* *p*

Db. *p* *mf* *p*

23

Fl.

Cl. 1 (A)

Cl. 2 (A)

Bsn.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc. div. unis. *espressivo*

Db. div.

Detailed description: This system contains measures 23 through 28. The Flute part has a melodic line with slurs and ties. Clarinets 1 and 2 play a rhythmic eighth-note pattern. Bassoon has a few notes with an *espressivo* marking. Violins I and II play a simple harmonic accompaniment. Viola has a melodic line. Violoncello and Double Bass play a bass line with *espressivo* and *unis.* markings. The time signature changes from 3/4 to 2/4 and back to 3/4.



29

Fl.

Ob.

Cl. 1 (A)

Cl. 2 (A)

Bsn.

Vln. I *mp warm*

Vln. II *mp warm*

Vla.

Vc. *3*

Db. *unis.*

Detailed description: This system contains measures 29 through 34. Flute has a melodic line with a slur. Oboe has a melodic line with a slur and a *pp* marking. Clarinets 1 and 2 continue their rhythmic pattern. Bassoon has a melodic line with a slur and a triplet of eighth notes. Violins I and II play a simple harmonic accompaniment with *mp warm* markings. Viola has a melodic line. Violoncello and Double Bass play a bass line with a triplet of eighth notes and a *unis.* marking. The time signature changes from 3/4 to 2/4 and back to 3/4.



$\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 80$   
*free, imitating the melismas of an afilador's flute*

Picc. (o.-s.)  
Fl.  
Bsn.  
Vln. I  
Vln. II  
Vla.  
Vc.  
Db.

*pp*  
*from a distance*

*espress. > pp*

$\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 80$

*pp*  
*pp*  
*mp > espressivo*  
*p > pp*  
*p > pp*



*free, imitating the melismas of an afilador's flute*

Fl.  
Vc.  
Db.

*p*  
*from a distance*



*free, imitating the melismas of an afilador's flute*

Cl. I (A)  
Vc.  
Db.

*p*  
*from a distance*

51  $\text{♩} = 60$  to Clarinet 1 (B $\flat$ )

Cl. I (A)

Vln. I  $\text{pp}$   $\text{mp sonoro}$

Vln. II  $\text{pp}$

Vla.  $\text{pp}$

Vc.  $\text{pp}$  div.

Db.  $\text{pp}$



58 **poco a poco accel.**

Cl. I (B $\flat$ )  $\text{pp}$   $p$

Vln. I  $\text{pp}$  **poco a poco accel.** *with urgency*  $\text{mp}$  *espress.*

Vln. II  $\text{pp}$  *with urgency*  $\text{mp}$  *espress.* div.

Vla.  $\text{mp sonoro}$  *cresc. molto*

Vc. unis. div.  $p$  unis. *cresc. molto*

Db.  $p$  *cresc. molto*

64

Fl. *p*

Ob. *p*

Cl. 1 (Bb) *mp* *mf* 3 7

Cl. 2 (Bb) *mf* 7

Bsn. *p*

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

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

Vla. *unis.* *f* *div.*

Vc. *f*

Db. *f*

69 *rit.* ♩ = 60

Fl. *p* singing the top line

Ob.

Cl. 1 (Bb) *mp* *p* floating, searching

Bsn.

73 *rit.* ♩ = 60

Hn. (F) *mp* searching, solemn

Vln. I *pp* *mf* singing the top line

Vln. II *pp*

Vla. *pp*

Vc. *pp* *mf* searching, solemn

Db.

74

Fl.  
Ob.  
Cl. 1 (Bb)  
Cl. 2 (Bb)  
Hn. (F)  
Vln. I  
Vln. II  
Vla.  
Vc.

*pp*  
*mp*  
*espressivo*  
*pp*

79

$\text{♩} = 70$

Fl.  
Ob.  
Cl. 1 (Bb)  
Cl. 2 (Bb)  
Bsn.  
Hn. (F)  
Tpt. (Bb)  
Tbn.  
Tba.  
Vln. I  
Vln. II  
Vla.  
Vc.  
Db.

*f*  
*f vibrant*  
*f*  
*f*  
*f vibrant*  
*mf*  
*mf*  
*mf*  
*f vibrant*  
*f vibrant*  
*ff*  
*f*  
*f*  
*div.*  
*div.*  
*f*

84

Fl. *ff*

Ob. *ff*

Cl. 1 (Bb) *ff*

Cl. 2 (Bb) *ff*

Bsn. *ff*

Hn. (F) *cresc.*

Tpt. (Bb) *ff*

Tbn. *f* *cresc.*

Tba. *f* *cresc.*

Vln. I *div.* *unis.* *ff*

Vln. II *div.* *unis.* *ff*

Vla. *div.*

Vc. *ff* *unis.*

Db. *ff* *unis.*

89

Fl. *fff* *tempestuous* *ff*

Ob. *tempestuous ff*

Cl. 1 (Bb) *tempestuous ff*

Cl. 2 (Bb) *fff* *tempestuous ff*

Bsn. *fff* *tempestuous ff*

Hn. (F) *ff*

Tpt. (Bb)

Tbn. *ff*

Tba. *ff*

Timp. *tr* *mf* *ff*

Tub. B. *f resounding*

S. D. *mf* *ff*

Vln. I *div.* *fff* *tempestuous ff* *unis.*

Vln. II *div.* *fff* *tempestuous ff* *unis.*

Vla. *unis.* *fff* *tempestuous ff* *div.*

Vc. *div.* *fff* *tempestuous ff* *div.*

Db. *div.* *fff* *tempestuous ff* *unis.* *tempestuous*

93 ♩ = 80

Fl. *f*

Ob. *f*

Cl. 2 (Bb) *f*

Timp. *mf* *tr* *mp* *mf* *tr* *mp* *tr* *mp* *tr*

S. D. *mp* *mf* *mp* *mp* *mp*

Vln. I *f* *div. unis.* *sim. div.*

Vln. II *f* *div. unis.* *sim. div.*

Vla. *f* *unis.*

Vc. *f* *unis. div.* *sim. div.*

Db. *f*

Detailed description: This system contains measures 93 through 96. The tempo is marked ♩ = 80. The woodwinds (Flute, Oboe, Clarinet 2) play a melodic line starting with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The timpani and snare drum provide a rhythmic accompaniment with triplets and trills. The strings (Violins I & II, Viola, Violoncello, Double Bass) play a steady accompaniment with triplets and some divisi/unison markings.

97

Cl. 1 (Bb) *angular*

Timp. *tr* *3* *tr* *3* *tr* *3* *tr*

S. D. *mp*

Vln. I *3* *3* *3* *3*

Vln. II *3* *3* *3* *3*

Vla. *3* *3* *3* *3*

Vc. *3* *3* *3* *3*

Db. *3* *3* *3* *3*

Detailed description: This system contains measures 97 through 100. A double bar line is present at the beginning of the system. The Clarinet 1 part is marked *angular*. The timpani and snare drum continue with their rhythmic patterns. The string section plays a consistent accompaniment of triplets.

100

Fl. *ff*

Ob. *mf*

Cl. 1 (B $\flat$ ) *ff*

Cl. 2 (B $\flat$ ) *ff*

Bsn. *mf*

Timp. *f*

S. D. *f*

Vln. I *ff*

Vln. II *ff*

Vla. *ff*

Vc. *ff*

Db. *ff*



103

Fl.

Ob.

Cl. 1 (Bb)

Cl. 2 (Bb)

Bsn.

Hn. (F)

Timp.

S. D.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

*f*

*f* monumental

*f*

*f*

*f* resounding

*f*

*f* monumental

*mf*

*mf*

*f*

*f*

monumental

div.

*f*

*f*

106

Fl.

Ob.

Cl. 1 (Bb)

Cl. 2 (Bb)

Bsn.

Hn. (F)

Tpt. (Bb)

Tbn.

Tba.

Timp.

S. D.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

*mf*

*f*

*tr*

*div.*

*unis.*

3

109

Hn. (F)  
*resounding*

Tpt. (Bb)  
*resounding*

Tbn.

Tba.

Timp.  
*f* *tr* *mf*

Tub. B.

S. D.  
*mf* *mf* *mf*

Vln. I  
*ff* *resounding*

Vln. II  
*resounding*

Vla.  
*resounding* *div.*

Vc.  
*unis.* *tempestuous*

Db.

112

Musical score for measures 112-116. The score includes parts for Horn (F), Trumpet (Bb), Trombone, Tuba, Timpani, Snare Drum, Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, and Double Bass. The key signature has two flats. The score features various dynamics such as *mf*, *p*, *cresc.*, and *intense*. There are also performance markings like *div.* and *unis.*. The Snare Drum part has a triplet marked *mf*. The Tuba part has triplets marked *p* and *cresc.*. The Violin I part has *intense* and *div.* markings. The Viola part has *unis.* and *p* markings. The Violoncello part has *div.* markings. The Double Bass part has *mf* markings.



117

Musical score for measures 117-121. The score includes parts for Flute, Clarinet 1 (Bb), Horn (F), Tuba, Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Violoncello. The key signature has two flats. The score features various dynamics such as *f* and *p*. There are also performance markings like *div.* and *unis.*. The Flute and Clarinet 1 parts have complex rhythmic patterns with triplets and septuplets. The Tuba part has triplets marked *f* and *p*. The Violin I part has *f* and *div.* markings. The Violin II part has *mf* markings. The Viola part has *mf* markings. The Violoncello part has *mf* markings.

121

Fl. *mf*

Cl. 1 (Bb) *mp*

Vln. I *f* *mf*

Vln. II *mf* div. unis.

Vla. *f* *mf*

Vc. *mf*

Detailed description: This system contains measures 121 through 125. The Flute and Clarinet 1 (Bb) parts feature a complex rhythmic pattern with a '7' above the notes, indicating a seven-measure rest or a specific articulation. The Violin I part starts with a forte (*f*) dynamic and transitions to mezzo-forte (*mf*) by measure 125. The Violin II part is marked mezzo-forte (*mf*) and includes 'div.' (divisi) and 'unis.' (unison) markings. The Viola and Violoncello parts provide a steady accompaniment with dynamics ranging from forte (*f*) to mezzo-forte (*mf*).



126

Cl. 1 (Bb) *p*

Vln. I *p*

Vln. II *p*

Vla. *p* div. unis.

Vc. *p*

Detailed description: This system contains measures 126 through 132. The Clarinet 1 (Bb) part has a '7' above the notes and is marked piano (*p*). The Violin I and II parts are also marked piano (*p*). The Viola part includes 'div.' and 'unis.' markings and is marked piano (*p*). The Violoncello part is marked piano (*p*). The music is characterized by sustained notes and a quiet dynamic level.



133

Fl.

Cl. 1 (Bb) to Clarinet 1 (A)

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla. *mf* div.

Vc. *mf*

Detailed description: This system contains measures 133 through 137. The Flute part has a '7' above the notes. The Clarinet 1 (Bb) part is marked 'to Clarinet 1 (A)'. The Violin I and II parts are marked mezzo-forte (*mf*). The Viola part includes 'div.' (divisi) and is marked mezzo-forte (*mf*). The Violoncello part is marked mezzo-forte (*mf*). The music features sustained notes and a mezzo-forte dynamic level.

139 rit.

Picc. (O.-S.)

Fl.

145 **a tempo**

Ob.

Cl. 1 (B $\flat$ )

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

152 **rit.**  $\text{♩} = 75$

Ob.

Cl. 1 (A)

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

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