

# IMPROVISATIONS ON LOSS



for Piano

Ben Ponniah

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for Piano

(2022)

For Phillip A. Cooke

**Duration:** 11 minutes  
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## PROGRAMME NOTE

The *Improvisations on Loss* were composed during a particularly challenging time. I live separately from my son, and the handover process after our time together is sometimes very sad. On one of these occasions, I returned home and 'The Handover' poured out of me as I sat at the piano. It needed very little editing afterwards, which is why I decided to call these pieces *improvisations*. My love of melody, minimalism and jazz harmony can be found in these miniatures.

BJP

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for Phillip A. Cooke

# IMPROVISATIONS ON LOSS

for Piano

BEN PONNIAH (b. 1984)

## I. Broken

Mournful ♩ = 78

First system of musical notation (measures 1-4). The piece is in 3/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The tempo is marked 'Mournful' with a quarter note equal to 78 beats per minute. The dynamics are marked 'mp' (mezzo-piano). The music features a long melodic line in the right hand and a steady accompaniment in the left hand. The left hand consists of a series of chords: F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F#5, G5, A5, B5, C6, D6, E6, F#6, G6, A6, B6, C7, D7, E7, F#7, G7, A7, B7, C8, D8, E8, F#8, G8, A8, B8, C9, D9, E9, F#9, G9, A9, B9, C10, D10, E10, F#10, G10, A10, B10, C11, D11, E11, F#11, G11, A11, B11, C12, D12, E12, F#12, G12, A12, B12, C13, D13, E13, F#13, G13, A13, B13, C14, D14, E14, F#14, G14, A14, B14, C15, D15, E15, F#15, G15, A15, B15, C16, D16, E16, F#16, G16, A16, B16, C17, D17, E17, F#17, G17, A17, B17, C18, D18, E18, F#18, G18, A18, B18, C19, D19, E19, F#19, G19, A19, B19, C20, D20, E20, F#20, G20, A20, B20, C21, D21, E21, F#21, G21, A21, B21, C22, D22, E22, F#22, G22, A22, B22, C23, D23, E23, F#23, G23, A23, B23, C24, D24, E24, F#24, G24, A24, B24, C25, D25, E25, F#25, G25, A25, B25, C26, D26, E26, F#26, G26, A26, B26, C27, D27, E27, F#27, G27, A27, B27, C28, D28, E28, F#28, G28, A28, B28, C29, D29, E29, F#29, G29, A29, B29, C30, D30, E30, F#30, G30, A30, B30, C31, D31, E31, F#31, G31, A31, B31, 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B321, C322, D322, E322, F#322, G322, A322, B322, C323, D323, E323, F#323, G323, A323, B323, C324, D324, E324, F#324, G324, A324, B324, C325, D325, E325, F#325, G325, A325, B325, C326, D326, E326, F#326, G326, A326, B326, C327, D327, E327, F#327, G327, A327, B327, C328, D328, E328, F#328, G328, A328, B328, C329, D329, E329, F#329, G329, A329, B329, C330, D330, E330, F#330, G330, A330, B330, C331, D331, E331, F#331, G331, A331, B331, C332, D332, E332, F#332, G332, A332, B332, C333, D333, E333, F#333, G333, A333, B333, C334, D334, E334, F#334, G334, A334, B334, C335, D335, E335, F#335, G335, A335, B335, C336, D336, E336, F#336, G336, A336, B336, C337, D337, E337, F#337, G337, A337, B337, C338, D338, E338, F#338, G338, A338, B338, C339, D339, E339, F#339, G339, A339, B339, C340, D340, E340, F#340, G340, A340, B340, C341, D341, E341, F#341, G341, A341, B341, C342, D342, E342, F#342, G342, A342, B342, C343, D343, E343, F#343, G343, A343, B343, C344, D344, E344, F#344, G344, A344, B344, C345, 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2

a tempo

17

21

25

*f*

29



(8)

49

Musical score for measures 49-52. The piece is in G major (one sharp). The right hand features a melodic line with a long slur over measures 49-52, including a fermata over the final note. The left hand plays a steady eighth-note accompaniment, also slurred across the measures. A dashed line with the number (8) is positioned above the staff.

(8)

53

rit.

*pp*

Musical score for measures 53-56. The right hand has a melodic line with a slur and a fermata over the final note, marked with a *rit.* (ritardando) hairpin. The left hand continues with eighth-note accompaniment, slurred across measures 53-56. A dashed line with the number (8) is positioned above the staff. The piece concludes with a double bar line and a *pp* (pianissimo) dynamic marking.

## II. Separation

Melancholic  $\text{♩} = 54$ 

The first system of the musical score consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and contains a melodic line starting with a half note G4, followed by a half note F4, and then a half note E4, all under a single slur. The lower staff is in bass clef and contains a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes: G2, B1, D2, F2, G2, B1, D2, F2. The key signature has three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat), and the time signature is 2/4. The dynamic marking *p* is placed below the first measure of the upper staff. The instruction *con pedale* is written below the first measure of the lower staff.

The second system of the musical score consists of two staves. The upper staff continues the melodic line from the first system, starting with a quarter rest, followed by quarter notes G4, A4, B4, and C5, all under a single slur. The lower staff continues the rhythmic accompaniment with eighth notes: G2, B1, D2, F2, G2, B1, D2, F2. The key signature and time signature remain the same as in the first system.

The third system of the musical score consists of two staves. The upper staff continues the melodic line, starting with a quarter rest, followed by quarter notes B4, A4, G4, and F4, all under a single slur. The lower staff continues the rhythmic accompaniment with eighth notes: G2, B1, D2, F2, G2, B1, D2, F2. The key signature and time signature remain the same as in the first system.

The fourth system of the musical score consists of two staves. The upper staff continues the melodic line, starting with a quarter rest, followed by quarter notes E4, D4, C4, and B3, all under a single slur. The lower staff continues the rhythmic accompaniment with eighth notes: G2, B1, D2, F2, G2, B1, D2, F2. The key signature and time signature remain the same as in the first system.

6

17

Musical score for measures 17-20. The piece is in 3/4 time with a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat). The melody in the right hand features a long slur over four measures, starting with a dotted quarter note and followed by eighth notes. The bass line consists of chords with a half note bass note and a quarter note chord. Measure 17 starts with a half note bass note. Measure 18 has a half note bass note with a fermata. Measure 19 has a half note bass note with a fermata. Measure 20 has a half note bass note with a fermata.

21

*mp*

Musical score for measures 21-24. The piece is in 3/4 time with a key signature of three flats. The melody in the right hand features a long slur over four measures, starting with a dotted quarter note and followed by eighth notes. The bass line consists of chords with a half note bass note and a quarter note chord. Measure 21 starts with a half note bass note. Measure 22 has a half note bass note with a fermata. Measure 23 has a half note bass note with a fermata. Measure 24 has a half note bass note with a fermata.

25

Musical score for measures 25-28. The piece is in 3/4 time with a key signature of three flats. The melody in the right hand features a long slur over four measures, starting with a dotted quarter note and followed by eighth notes. The bass line consists of chords with a half note bass note and a quarter note chord. Measure 25 starts with a half note bass note. Measure 26 has a half note bass note with a fermata. Measure 27 has a half note bass note with a fermata. Measure 28 has a half note bass note with a fermata.

29

Musical score for measures 29-32. The piece is in 3/4 time with a key signature of three flats. The melody in the right hand features a long slur over four measures, starting with a dotted quarter note and followed by eighth notes. The bass line consists of chords with a half note bass note and a quarter note chord. Measure 29 starts with a half note bass note. Measure 30 has a half note bass note with a fermata. Measure 31 has a half note bass note with a fermata. Measure 32 has a half note bass note with a fermata.

33

*mf*

This system contains measures 33 through 36. The music is in a minor key, indicated by three flats in the key signature. The right hand features a melodic line with a long slur spanning across measures 33, 34, 35, and 36. The left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and single notes. A dynamic marking of *mf* (mezzo-forte) is present in the second measure of this system.

37

This system contains measures 37 through 40. The melodic line in the right hand continues with a slur across measures 37, 38, 39, and 40. The left hand accompaniment consists of chords and single notes, maintaining the harmonic structure of the piece.

41

This system contains measures 41 through 44. The melodic line in the right hand continues with a slur across measures 41, 42, 43, and 44. The left hand accompaniment consists of chords and single notes, maintaining the harmonic structure of the piece.

45

*mp*

This system contains measures 45 through 48. The melodic line in the right hand continues with a slur across measures 45, 46, 47, and 48. The left hand accompaniment consists of chords and single notes, maintaining the harmonic structure of the piece. A dynamic marking of *mp* (mezzo-piano) is present in the first measure of this system.

8

49

Musical score for measures 49-52. The right hand has a long melodic line with a slur over measures 49-52. The left hand has a steady accompaniment of chords.

53

Musical score for measures 53-56. The right hand has a melodic line with a slur over measures 53-56. The left hand has a steady accompaniment of chords.

poco accel. . . . .

57

Musical score for measures 57-60. The right hand has a melodic line with a slur over measures 57-60. The left hand has a steady accompaniment of chords. A dynamic marking *mf* is present in measure 59.

rit. . . . .

61

Musical score for measures 61-64. The right hand has a melodic line with a slur over measures 61-64. The left hand has a steady accompaniment of chords. A dynamic marking *f* is present in measure 63.

a tempo ♩ = 54

poco rit. . . . .

65

Musical score for measures 65-68. The piece is in 3/4 time with a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat). Measure 65 starts with a treble clef and a bass clef. A slur covers measures 65, 66, 67, and 68. The melody in the treble clef consists of quarter notes: G4, A4, B-flat4, C5, B-flat4, A4, G4. The bass line consists of quarter notes: G3, F3, E3, D3, C3, B2, A2. A dynamic marking of *mp* is placed above the bass line in measure 67. A dotted line indicates the continuation of the *poco rit.* marking.

poco meno mosso ♩ = 48

69

Musical score for measures 69-72. The piece is in 3/4 time with a key signature of three flats. Measure 69 starts with a bass clef. A slur covers measures 69, 70, 71, and 72. The melody in the bass clef consists of quarter notes: G3, F3, E3, D3, C3, B2, A2. The bass line consists of quarter notes: G3, F3, E3, D3, C3, B2, A2. A dynamic marking of *p* is placed to the right of the treble staff in measure 71. A dotted line indicates the continuation of the *poco meno mosso* marking.

rit. . . . .

73

Musical score for measures 73-76. The piece is in 3/4 time with a key signature of three flats. Measure 73 starts with a bass clef. A slur covers measures 73, 74, 75, and 76. The melody in the bass clef consists of half notes: G3, F3, E3, D3. The bass line consists of half notes: G3, F3, E3, D3. A dotted line indicates the continuation of the *rit.* marking.

## III. Loneliness

**Forlorn** ♩ = 70

*p*

*con pedale*

5

9

*mp*

*mp*

*mp*

13

*rit.*

The musical score is for a piece titled "Forlorn" in 4/4 time, with a tempo of ♩ = 70. It is written for piano and includes the instruction "con pedale". The score is divided into four systems of two staves each (treble and bass clef). The first system (measures 1-4) is marked *p* and includes the instruction "con pedale". The second system (measures 5-8) is also marked *p*. The third system (measures 9-12) is marked *mp*. The fourth system (measures 13-16) is marked *mp* and includes the instruction "rit." at the end. The piece features a melancholic melody with a descending line in the right hand and a more active bass line. The key signature has one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4.

17 a tempo ♩ = 70

Musical score for measures 17-20. The piece is in 3/8 time with a tempo of a tempo (♩ = 70). The music is marked *mp*. The right hand features a melodic line with a long slur over measures 17-20, and the left hand provides a rhythmic accompaniment with slurs and a key signature change to one sharp in measure 19.

21

Musical score for measures 21-24. The music is marked *mp*. The right hand contains several triplet markings (3) and a final measure with a fermata. The left hand continues with a rhythmic accompaniment, including a key signature change to two sharps in measure 23.

25

Musical score for measures 25-28. The music is marked *p*. The right hand features a melodic line with slurs and a key signature change to one sharp in measure 27. The left hand provides a rhythmic accompaniment with slurs and a key signature change to two sharps in measure 27.

29

Musical score for measures 29-32. The music is marked *p*. The right hand features a melodic line with slurs and a key signature change to one sharp in measure 29. The left hand provides a rhythmic accompaniment with slurs and a key signature change to one sharp in measure 29.

12

33

*p*

This system contains measures 33 through 36. The music is written for piano in a two-staff format. The right hand features a complex texture of chords and arpeggiated figures, with some notes marked with accents. The left hand plays a more melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes. A dynamic marking of *p* (piano) is present at the beginning of the system.

37

This system contains measures 37 through 40. The right hand continues with a melodic line, often featuring dotted rhythms and slurs. The left hand provides harmonic support with chords and moving lines. The overall texture is dense and expressive.

41

*mp* *p* *pp*

*rit.*

This system contains measures 41 through 44. The right hand has a melodic line with slurs and accents. The left hand has a more rhythmic accompaniment. Dynamic markings include *mp* (mezzo-piano), *p* (piano), and *pp* (pianissimo). A *rit.* (ritardando) marking is placed above the right hand in the third measure, with a dashed line extending to the end of the system. The system concludes with a double bar line and repeat signs.

## IV. The Handover

**Tearful** ♩ = 66

*p*  
*con pedale*

5 *espressivo*

*mp* *p*

9

*mf*

13 *rit.*

*mp* *rit.*

14

17 **a tempo** ♩ = 66 **poco rit.** . . . . .

*p* *mf*

**Molto espressivo** ♩ = 66

21

*p* *mf*

25

*mf*

29

*mp* *ff*

Lacrimoso

33

rit. . . . .

Musical score for measures 33-36. The piece is in a minor key (three flats) and 3/4 time. The tempo is marked 'Lacrimoso'. The score consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The right hand plays a melodic line with slurs and ties, while the left hand provides harmonic support with chords and moving lines. A 'rit.' (ritardando) marking is placed above the staff at the beginning of measure 35, with a dashed line extending to the end of the system.

37

a tempo ♩ = 66

molto rit. . . . .

Musical score for measures 37-41. The tempo is marked 'a tempo' with a tempo indicator of ♩ = 66. The score consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The right hand has a melodic line with a crescendo leading to a 'pp' (pianissimo) dynamic marking. The left hand plays a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes. A 'molto rit.' (molto ritardando) marking is placed above the staff at the beginning of measure 40, with a dashed line extending to the end of the system.