



Taja Astar

**The Checkered Flag  
Villanelle**

Toccata for piano and orchestra

## Score in C

### THE CHECKERED FLAG VILLANELLE

*Toccata for piano and orchestra*

by Taja Astar

2022

Duration ~ 7 min

### INSTRUMENTATION

Flute 1	Fl. 1
Flute 2 (doubling Piccolo)	Fl. 2 (Picc.)
Oboe 1	Ob. 1
Oboe 2	Ob. 2
Clarinet 1 in Bb	Cl. 1
Clarinet 2 in Bb	Cl. 2
Bassoon 1	Bsn. 1
Bassoon 2	Bsn. 2
Horns 1 in F	Hn. 1
Horns 1 in F	Hn. 2
Trumpet 1 in Bb	Tpt. 1
Trumpet 2 in Bb	Tpt. 2
Percussion (1 player)	
Timpani	Timp.
Whip	Whip
Marimba	Mar.
Vibraphone	Vib.
Crotales	Crot.
Suspended Cymbal	Cym.
Bass Drum	B. D.
Strings	
Violins I	Vln. I
Violins II	Vln. II
Violas	Vla.
Violoncellos	Vc.
Double Basses	D. B.

### THE CHECKERED FLAG VILLANELLE - PERFORMANCE NOTES

1. Piano part is going to be mostly improvised. It consists of material for improvisation and some cues for the conductor and musicians. Even the notated elements are not obligatory to be performed completely as written.
2. Hairpins without a new dynamic mark indicate slight changes within the given dynamics.

### PROGRAMME NOTE

This piece is both an exploration of integrating improvisation techniques in an orchestral setting and an attempt at intertextuality in uniting poetry and music. The work correlates with the topics dealt with in a villanelle by Anna Astar (below), and tries somehow to reflect in its structure this traditional poetry form, characterized by a complex pattern of rhyming and refrains. It plays also with the concept of a checkered flag with its combination of black and white colors. The piano part represents a continuous improvisation based on two motifs, one of which is played on the black keys, the other on the white keys, with the hands alternating, when one hand touches rather only black or white keys.

### The Checkered Flag by Anna Astar

It's sport: you're playing white, I'm playing black  
and always seem to move one step behind.  
The game's about who takes the checkered flag.

We race across the board and down the track.  
Fate on piano sets the tempo high,  
his right hand playing white, left playing black.

Two lines now clash, now kiss, now throttle back.  
Hands changed, this time it's I who's playing white,  
but I don't care about the checkered flag.

I move and watch the patterns interact,  
their smart confusion capturing my mind -  
all mixed: who's playing white, who's playing black...

And suddenly, our ways that zig and zag  
from light to night, then back, get justified  
and fill the matrix of the checkered flag.

And you, my darling. When you start to lag,  
I slow my pace, to tango by your side.  
You'll see: one playing white, the other black,  
it takes us both to weave the checkered flag.

**The Checkered Flag Villanelle**

toccata for piano and orchestra

Taja Astar, 2022

**Molto energico**

**A**  $\text{♩} = 180$

**Free piano solo (c. 20 s)**

Flute 1  
Flute 2  
Piccolo  
Oboe 1  
Oboe 2  
Clarinet 1 in B♭  
Clarinet 2 in B♭  
Bassoon 1  
Bassoon 2

Horn 1 in F  
Horn 2 in F  
Trumpet 1 in B♭  
Trumpet 2 in B♭

Timpani  
Whip  
Marimba  
Vibraphone  
Crotales  
Susp. Cymbal  
Bass Drum

Piano

**Molto energico**

**A**  $\text{♩} = 180$

**Free piano solo (c. 20 s)**

Violin I  
Violin II  
Viola  
Violoncello  
Double Bass

1      2      3      4      5      6

Musical score for *The Checkered Flag Villanelle* (Score in C), page 2.

The score consists of two systems of music. The top system spans measures 7 through 13, and the bottom system spans measures 14 through 20.

**Top System (Measures 7-13):**

- Fl. 1:** Rests throughout.
- Fl. 2:** Rests throughout.
- Ob. 1:** Rests throughout.
- Ob. 2:** Rests throughout.
- Cl. 1:** Rests throughout.
- Cl. 2:** Rests throughout.
- Bsn. 1:** Rests throughout.
- Bsn. 2:** Rests throughout.
- Hn. 1:** Rests throughout.
- Hn. 2:** Rests throughout.
- Tpt. 1:** Rests throughout.
- Tpt. 2:** Rests throughout. Dynamics: **f**, **p**.
- Mar.:** Rests throughout.
- Pno.:** Rests throughout. Dynamics: **f**.

**Bottom System (Measures 14-20):**

- Vln. I:** Sixteenth-note patterns with grace notes.
- Vln. II:** Sixteenth-note patterns with grace notes.
- Vla.:** Sixteenth-note patterns with grace notes.
- Vc.:** Slurs and sixteenth-note patterns.
- D. B.:** Slurs and sixteenth-note patterns.

Measure 14: **mf**

Measure 15: **p**

Musical score page 14-20 showing the following instrumentation:

- Fl. 1
- Fl. 2
- Ob. 1
- Ob. 2
- Cl. 1
- Cl. 2
- Bsn. 1
- Bsn. 2
- Hn. 1
- Hn. 2
- Tpt. 1
- Tpt. 2
- Mar.
- Pno.
- Vln. I
- Vln. II
- Vla.
- Vc.
- D. B.

Measure 14: Flutes 1 & 2 play eighth-note patterns. Oboe 1 and Clarinet 1 play sustained notes. Bassoon 1 and Bassoon 2 play eighth-note patterns. Measure 15: Flutes 1 & 2 play eighth-note patterns. Oboe 1 and Clarinet 1 play sustained notes. Bassoon 1 and Bassoon 2 play eighth-note patterns. Measure 16: Flutes 1 & 2 play eighth-note patterns. Oboe 1 and Clarinet 1 play sustained notes. Bassoon 1 and Bassoon 2 play eighth-note patterns. Measure 17: Flutes 1 & 2 play eighth-note patterns. Oboe 1 and Clarinet 1 play sustained notes. Bassoon 1 and Bassoon 2 play eighth-note patterns. Measure 18: Flutes 1 & 2 play eighth-note patterns. Oboe 1 and Clarinet 1 play sustained notes. Bassoon 1 and Bassoon 2 play eighth-note patterns. Measure 19: Flutes 1 & 2 play eighth-note patterns. Oboe 1 and Clarinet 1 play sustained notes. Bassoon 1 and Bassoon 2 play eighth-note patterns. Measure 20: Flutes 1 & 2 play eighth-note patterns. Oboe 1 and Clarinet 1 play sustained notes. Bassoon 1 and Bassoon 2 play eighth-note patterns.

**B**

Fl. 1  
Fl. 2  
Ob. 1  
Ob. 2  
Cl. 1  
Cl. 2  
Bsn. 1  
Bsn. 2

Hn. 1  
Hn. 2  
Tpt. 1  
Tpt. 2

Mar.  
*mf*

Pno.  
*p*

**B**

Vln. I  
Vln. II  
Vla.  
Vc.  
D. B.

pizz.  
*mf* pizz.  
*mf* pizz.  
*mf* pizz.  
*mf* pizz.  
*mf* pizz.  
*mf* pizz.  
*f*  
unis.

21 22 23 24 25 26 *p*

Fl. 1

Fl. 2

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

Cl. 1

Cl. 2

Bsn. 1

Bsn. 2

Hn. 1

Hn. 2

Tpt. 1

Tpt. 2

Mar.

Pno.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

D. B.

27

28

29

30

31

**C**

Fl. 1

Fl. 2

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

Cl. 1

Cl. 2

Bsn. 1

Bsn. 2

Hn. 1

Hn. 2

Tpt. 1

Tpt. 2

Vib.

Pno.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

D. B.

*f*

*mf*

*mf*

*mp*

*f*

*mp*

Improvisation on given material (cond.)

*p*

*Led.*

\*

**C**

32

33

34

35

36

37

38

39

Fl. 1

Fl. 2

To Picc.

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

Cl. 1

Cl. 2

Bsn. 1

Bsn. 2

*f*

Hn. 1

Hn. 2

Tpt. 1

Tpt. 2

*p*

*f*

Vib.

Pno.

*f*

Vln. I

*mp*

*tr*

Vln. II

*mp*

Vla.

Vcl.

D. B.

**D**

Fl. 1  
Picc.  
Ob. 1  
Ob. 2  
Cl. 1  
Cl. 2  
Bsn. 1  
Bsn. 2  
Hn. 1  
Hn. 2  
Tpt. 1  
Tpt. 2  
Vib.  
Pno.

**Vibraphone**

Improvisation on given material (cond.)

**D**

Vln. I  
Vln. II  
Vla.  
Vc.  
D. B.

Fl. 1

Picc.

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

Cl. 1

Cl. 2

Bsn. 1

Bsn. 2

Hn. 1

Hn. 2

Tpt. 1

Tpt. 2

Vib.

Pno.

To Timp.

Improvisation on given material (cond.)

Vln. I

Vln. II

(tr) Vla.

Vc.

D. B.

54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62

**Short piano solo,  
not cond.**

**E A tempo**

Fl. 1  
Picc.  
Ob. 1  
Ob. 2  
Cl. 1  
Cl. 2  
Bsn. 1  
Bsn. 2

Hn. 1  
Hn. 2  
Tpt. 1  
Tpt. 2  
Tim.

Pno.

Short solo (not cond.)

**Short piano solo,  
not cond.**

**E A tempo**

Vln. I  
Vln. II  
Vla.  
Vc.  
D. B.

div.

Fl. 1

Picc.

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

Cl. 1

Cl. 2

Bsn. 1

Bsn. 2

Hn. 1

Hn. 2

Tpt. 1

Tpt. 2

Tim.

To B. D.

Improvisation on given material (cond.)

Pno.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

D. B.

**F**

Fl. 1  
Picc.  
Ob. 1  
Ob. 2  
Cl. 1  
Cl. 2  
Bsn. 1  
Bsn. 2

Hn. 1  
Hn. 2  
Tpt. 1  
Tpt. 2

B. D.

Pno.

Vln. I  
Vln. II  
Vla.  
Vc.  
D. B.

**Bass Drum**  
*pp*

**F**

*p*

*p*

*p*

*pp*

*col legno*

*col legno*

*col legno*

*col legno*

**77**      **78**      **79**      **80**      **81**      **82**

Fl. 1

Picc.

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

Cl. 1

Cl. 2

Bsn. 1

Bsn. 2

Hn. 1

Hn. 2

Tpt. 1

Tpt. 2

B. D.

Pno.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

D. B.

To Crot.

*Improvisation on given material (cond.)*

ord.

ord.

ord.

ord.

unis.

div.

p

ff

83

84

85

86

87

88

89

90

91

92

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**G** Piano solo,  
not cond. (c. 20 s)

**H** A tempo

Fl. 1  
Picc.  
Ob. 1  
Ob. 2  
Cl. 1  
Cl. 2  
Bsn. 1  
Bsn. 2

Hn. 1  
Hn. 2  
Tpt. 1  
Tpt. 2

Crot.  
Pno.

Piano solo (not cond.)      Improvisation on given material (cond.)

**G** Piano solo,  
not cond. (c. 20 s)

**H** A tempo

Vln. I  
Vln. II  
Vla.  
Vc.  
D. B.

pp  
pp  
pp

rit.

Fl. 1  
Picc.  
Ob. 1  
Ob. 2  
Cl. 1  
Cl. 2  
Bsn. 1  
Bsn. 2

Hn. 1  
Hn. 2  
Tpt. 1  
Tpt. 2

Crot. Crotales  
*f*

To Mar.  
(four mallets)

Pno.

rit.

Vln. I  
Vln. II  
Vla.  
Vcl.  
D. B.

sul pont.  
*ppp*

sul pont.  
*ppp*

sul pont.  
*ppp*

pizz.  
3

100

101

102

103

104

105

106

*mf* 3

107

108

**I A tempo**

Fl. 1      *mf*

Picc.      *mf*

Ob. 1      *mp*

Ob. 2      *mp*

Cl. 1      *mf*

Cl. 2      *mf*

Bsn. 1      *mp*

Bsn. 2      *mp*

Hn. 1

Hn. 2

Tpt. 1

Tpt. 2

Mar.      **Marimba**      *f*

Pno.

**I A tempo**

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

D. B.

Fl. 1

Picc.

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

Cl. 1

Cl. 2

Bsn. 1

Bsn. 2

Hn. 1

Hn. 2

Tpt. 1

Tpt. 2

Mar.

To Timp.

Pno.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

D. B.

115      116      117      118      119      120      121

**J**

Fl. 1  
Picc.  
Ob. 1  
Ob. 2  
Cl. 1  
Cl. 2  
Bsn. 1  
Bsn. 2  
Hn. 1  
Hn. 2  
Tpt. 1  
Tpt. 2  
Timp.

Pno.

**J**

Vln. I  
Vln. II  
Vla.  
Vc.  
D. B.

Improvisation on given material (cond.)

*p*

*sul tasto*

*pp*

*sul tasto*

*pp*

*sul tasto*

*pp*

*sul tasto*

*pp*

122      123      124      125      126      127      128      129

Fl. 1

Picc.

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

Cl. 1

Cl. 2

Bsn. 1

Bsn. 2

Hn. 1

Hn. 2

Tpt. 1

Tpt. 2

Tim. Timpani

Pno.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

D. B.

130      131      132      133      134      135      136      137      138      139

**K**

Fl. 1  
Picc.  
Ob. 1  
Ob. 2  
Cl. 1  
Cl. 2  
Bsn. 1  
Bsn. 2  
Hn. 1  
Hn. 2  
Tpt. 1  
Tpt. 2  
Timp.  
Pno.

Vln. I  
Vln. II  
Vla.  
Vc.  
D. B.

140 141 142 143 144 145

Fl. 1

Picc.

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

Cl. 1

Cl. 2

Bsn. 1

Bsn. 2

Hn. 1

Hn. 2

Tpt. 1

Tpt. 2

Tim. *f* *mp*

Pno.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc. *ff*

D. B.

146

147

148

149

150

151

**L**

Fl. 1  
Picc.  
Ob. 1  
Ob. 2  
Cl. 1  
Cl. 2  
Bsn. 1  
Bsn. 2

Hn. 1  
Hn. 2  
Tpt. 1  
Tpt. 2

Tim. *To Cym.* *f*

Pno. *ff*

Vln. I *dim.*  
Vln. II *dim.*  
Vla. *dim.*  
Vc. *dim.*  
D. B. *arco* *f* *dim.*

152 153 154 155 156

fl. t. *f* fl. t.

**rit.**

**M** Short piano solo,  
not cond.

Fl. 1

Picc.

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

Cl. 1

Cl. 2

Bsn. 1

Bsn. 2

Hn. 1

Hn. 2

Tpt. 1

Tpt. 2

Cym.

**p**

Pno.

**rit.**

**M** Short piano solo,  
not cond.

Vln. I *pp*

Vln. II *pp*

Vla. *pp*

Vc. *pp*

D. B. *pp*

**157** *pp* **158** **160** **161** **162**

N A tempo

N A tempo

Musical score for strings (Vln. I, Vln. II, Vla., Vc., D. B.) showing measures 163 through 170. The score consists of five staves. Vln. I and Vln. II play eighth-note patterns. Vla., Vc., and D. B. play sustained notes. Measure 163: Vln. I and Vln. II play eighth notes. Vla., Vc., and D. B. play sustained notes. Measure 164: Vln. I and Vln. II play eighth notes. Vla., Vc., and D. B. play sustained notes. Measure 165: Vln. I and Vln. II play eighth notes. Vla., Vc., and D. B. play sustained notes. Measure 166: Vln. I and Vln. II play eighth notes. Vla., Vc., and D. B. play sustained notes. Measure 167: Vln. I and Vln. II play eighth notes. Vla., Vc., and D. B. play sustained notes. Measure 168: Vln. I and Vln. II play eighth notes. Vla., Vc., and D. B. play sustained notes. Measure 169: Vln. I and Vln. II play eighth notes. Vla., Vc., and D. B. play sustained notes. Measure 170: Vln. I and Vln. II play eighth notes. Vla., Vc., and D. B. play sustained notes.

Fl. 1

Fl.

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

Cl. 1

Cl. 2

Bsn. 1

Bsn. 2

Hn. 1

Hn. 2

Tpt. 1

Tpt. 2

Cym.

Pno.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

D. B.

171 172 173 174 175 176 177 178 179 180

**O**

Fl. 1  
Fl.  
Ob. 1  
Ob. 2  
Cl. 1  
Cl. 2  
Bsn. 1  
Bsn. 2

Hn. 1  
Hn. 2  
Tpt. 1  
Tpt. 2

Cym.

Pno.

**O**

Vln. I  
Vln. II  
Vla.  
Vc.  
D. B.

To Whip  
Improvisation on given chords

181      f      182      183      184      185      186      187      188      189

Fl. 1

Fl.

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

Cl. 1

Cl. 2

Bsn. 1

Bsn. 2

Hn. 1

Hn. 2

Tpt. 1

Tpt. 2

Whip

Pno.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

D. B.

190 191 192 193 194 195 196 197

Musical score for "The Checkered Flag Villanelle" by Taja Astar, page 28. The score is in C major and consists of two systems of music.

**System 1 (Measures 198-207):**

- Fl. 1:** Playing eighth-note patterns with grace notes.
- Fl. 2:** Playing eighth-note patterns with grace notes.
- Ob. 1:** Playing eighth-note patterns with grace notes.
- Ob. 2:** Playing eighth-note patterns with grace notes.
- Cl. 1:** Playing eighth-note patterns with grace notes.
- Cl. 2:** Playing eighth-note patterns with grace notes.
- Bsn. 1:** Playing eighth-note patterns with grace notes.
- Bsn. 2:** Playing eighth-note patterns with grace notes.

**System 2 (Measures 198-207):**

- Hn. 1:** Playing eighth-note patterns with grace notes.
- Hn. 2:** Playing eighth-note patterns with grace notes.
- Tpt. 1:** Playing eighth-note patterns with grace notes.
- Tpt. 2:** Playing eighth-note patterns with grace notes.
- Whip:** Indicated by a whip symbol, consisting of a series of short vertical dashes.
- Pno.:** Playing eighth-note patterns with grace notes, indicated by arrows pointing right.
- Vln. I:** Playing eighth-note patterns with grace notes.
- Vln. II:** Playing eighth-note patterns with grace notes.
- Vla.:** Playing eighth-note patterns with grace notes.
- Vc.:** Playing eighth-note patterns with grace notes.
- D. B.:** Playing eighth-note patterns with grace notes.

**Measure Numbers:** 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207

**P**

Fl. 1  
Fl.  
Ob. 1  
Ob. 2  
Cl. 1  
Cl. 2  
Bsn. 1  
Bsn. 2

Hn. 1  
Hn. 2  
Tpt. 1  
Tpt. 2  
Whip

Pno.

Vln. I  
Vln. II  
Vla.  
Vc.  
D. B.

**P**

208 *f* 209 210 211 212 213 214

Piano cadenza,  
**Q** not cond. (c. 20-30 s)

Musical score page 30. The top section shows staves for Flute 1, Flute 2, Oboe 1, Oboe 2, Clarinet 1, Clarinet 2, Bassoon 1, Bassoon 2, Horn 1, Horn 2, Trumpet 1, Trumpet 2, and a Whip. The Whip part starts with a dynamic ***ff***. The piano part (Pno.) begins with a pedaled bass line and a treble arpeggio, followed by a dynamic ***sfz***. The section ends with a piano cadenza ending with an arpeggio on given pitches (c. 20-30s). The bottom section shows staves for Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Cello, and Double Bass. The violins play eighth-note patterns, while the double bass provides harmonic support. Measure numbers 215, 216, 221, 222, and 223 are indicated at the bottom.

**Whip** ***ff***

**Pno.** ***sfz***

Cadenza ending with arpeggio  
on given pitches (c. 20-30s)

**Vln. I**

**Vln. II**

**Vla.**

**Vc.**

**D. B.**

215 216 221 222 223

**R**  $\text{♩} = 160$

**Fl. 1** **ff**

**Fl.** **ff**

**Ob. 1** **ff**

**Ob. 2** **ff**

**Cl. 1** **ff**

**Cl. 2** **ff**

**Bsn. 1** **ff**

**Bsn. 2**

**Hn. 1** **ff**

**Hn. 2**

**Tpt. 1** **ff**

**Tpt. 2**

**Timp.**

**Pno.**

**Vln. I** **ff**

**Vln. II** **ff**

**Vla.** **ff**

**Vc.** **ff**

**D. B.** **ff**

**Timpani**

Improvisation on the final chord

**R**  $\text{♩} = 160$

**224** **225** **226** **227** **228** **229** **230** **231** **FINISH**