

Mel Zhang

choking hazard

for woodwind trio



for musicians of the New York Philharmonic
art by Mel Zhang

Duration ~4 min
Instrumentation 1 Flute in C, 1 Clarinet in Bb, 1 Bassoon in C

Performance The “+” ornament means to play with slap tongue;
Notes An “X” notehead means to play key clicks;
Strikes through the stem of notes means to play with
fluttersong.

In all instances, the note should maintain rhythm and pitch. If that’s not possible, no worries—the primary effect should be that the music literally chokes, moving from steady playing to slaptongue to key clicks. Rhythm and pitch helps maintain motifs across that choking section. Beginning on m. 59, play as if the freedom of sound is overwhelming; we’re no longer silenced.

Written for musicians of the New York Philharmonic in 2025.

Link to recording: <https://tinyurl.com/4ywudyj3>

choking hazard

for musicians of *The New York Philharmonic*

Mel Z

♩ = 44

Flute

Clarinet in B $\flat$

Bassoon

p

7

♩ = 44

p

p *pp* *p* *pp*

p *pp*

12

p *mf* *f*

p *mf*

mf

16

mp

sfz *p* *p*

sfz *p* *p*

accel. -----

19

f
f
f

22

$\text{♩} = 80$

Slap tongue

f *mf* *f* *ff*

Slap tongue

f *mf* *f* *ff*

26

p *mf* *f*

p *mf* *f*

29

Slap tongue

f *p* *f* *mf*

f *p* *f* *mf*

Slap tongue

32

Slap tongue

f

Key clicks

35

ff

mf

Key clicks

Key clicks

Key clicks

2 2

39

$\text{♩} = 80$

Melody chokes out; something's stuck.
Notes are almost like coughs with occasional clarity.

mp

mp

mp

41

mf

f

mf

mf

mf

mf

45

Musical score for measures 45-48. The score is written for three staves (Treble, Middle, and Bass). The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The time signature is 4/4. The dynamics are marked as *mf* (mezzo-forte) and *f* (forte). The notation includes various note values, rests, and articulation marks (accents and slurs).

49

Musical score for measures 49-51. The score is written for three staves (Treble, Middle, and Bass). The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The time signature is 4/4. The dynamics are marked as *mp* (mezzo-piano), *sfz* (sforzando), and *mf* (mezzo-forte). The notation includes various note values, rests, and articulation marks (accents and slurs).

52

Musical score for measures 52-54. The score is written for three staves (Treble, Middle, and Bass). The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The time signature is 4/4. The dynamics are marked as *mf* (mezzo-forte), *f* (forte), and *ff* (fortissimo). The notation includes various note values, rests, and articulation marks (accents and slurs).

55

Musical score for measures 55-57. The score is written for three staves (Treble, Middle, and Bass). The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The time signature is 4/4. The dynamics are marked as *mf* (mezzo-forte), *f* (forte), and *ff* (fortissimo). The notation includes various note values, rests, and articulation marks (accents and slurs). The piece concludes with a *rit.* (ritardando) marking in measure 57.

Jubilant; unchoked. As if what was blocking the airway has been spit out.

58 (rit.) — a tempo

61

64

68

Fluttertongue

Fluttertongue

ff *mf* *ff* *mf* *ff* *mp* *mf* *f* *mf* *f* *mf* *ff* *f*

rit. ----- a tempo

 $\text{♩} = 40$
(Half speed)

71

f *pp* *p* *mp* *mf*

ppp

ppp