

CHAPTER EIGHT

KUPALA NIGHT BY ELIZABETH RAUM

Year of Composition: 2020

Duration: ~15 minutes

Movements: 3 (“Dance of the Young Man,” “Floating Flowers,” “Search for the Flowering Fern”)

Range: A3 - C6

Instrumentation: Trumpet in C, Piano (orchestral accompaniment available)

Composer Biographical Background:

A prominent Canadian composer, Elizabeth Raum has composed over ninety chamber works, four operas, numerous vocal works, concerti, and several orchestral works. Of these works, several feature the trumpet, including solos and several mixed chamber works. Her compositions are performed frequently internationally and she has been a featured composer of the International Women’s Brass Conference in Toronto.⁸³ Raum’s notable compositions also include music written for several award winning documentaries.⁸⁴ In addition to composing, Raum is an oboist who has performed as a member of the Atlantic Symphony Orchestra and the Regina Symphony Orchestra.⁸⁵

Raum grew up in a musical family, beginning her piano studies at the age of four. Her mother played piano, her father sang, and she frequently listened to records with her brother. She was assigned to the oboe in middle school, initially being upset as she had confused it with the bassoon, but finding herself excited when she received the instrument and realized it resembled

⁸³“Elizabeth Raum, Composer,” Elizabeth Raum, 2022, <https://elizabethraum.com/>

⁸⁴Editions BIM & The Brass Press, “Elizabeth Raum,” Editions BIM, 2022, <https://www.editions-bim.com/composers/elizabeth-raum>

⁸⁵Orchestra Toronto, “Elizabeth Raum, Composer in Residence,” 2021, <https://orchestratoronto.ca/orchestra/introducing-elizabeth-raum-composer-in-residence/>

the clarinet that her brother played.⁸⁶ She received both her bachelor's degree and performer's certificate in Oboe Performance from the Eastman School of Music. After winning her part-time position with the Regina Symphony Orchestra in 1975, Raum spent time raising her children and composing. A self-taught composer, Raum studied the compositions of Bach and Brahms, along with the music of prominent 20th-century composers. She claims that her time playing in orchestras provided her with her most effective studies of orchestration techniques.⁸⁷

After extended compositional study on her own, Raum earned her master's degree in composition from the University of Regina, studying with Tom Schudel. Together, they collaborated on Raum's first serious composition, an opera titled *The Final Bid*.⁸⁸ Preceding this one-act opera, Raum and Schudel collaborated on pop song compositions.⁸⁹ During her master's degree, Raum hesitated to begin writing music for a brief period. The idea of a woman composer was, at the time, fairly uncommon. During her time at Eastman, there were no women composers at the school, she had never played under a woman conductor, and had never performed a piece written by a woman. She described her view on composers at the time as "belonging to a secret society of men." Teachers of larger sized instruments were allowed to deny women admission because they believed they could not handle the size of the instrument and, when orchestral openings would surface, there would often be an asterisk next to the opening indicating "women need not apply." Regardless, Raum persevered and began the process of writing an aria from *The Final Bid*, finding herself surprised at how naturally it came to her. Despite the barriers faced and

⁸⁶Shayna Stahl, "Wind Chamber Music by Women Composers - the Biographies, Compositional Techniques, and Perspectives of Jocelyn Morlock, Elizabeth Raum, Marilyn Shrude, and Augusta Read Thomas," Ph.D. diss., (University of Washington, 2019), 46.

⁸⁷Kaylene Beal, "Original Works Featuring Horn by Elizabeth Raum: A Performer's Guide." Ph.D. diss., (The University of Nebraska - Lincoln, 2017), 1-2.

⁸⁸Ibid, 2.

⁸⁹Elizabeth Raum, email message to author, August 28, 2022.

her struggle to be taken seriously early in her composing career, people began to notice the high quality of her music and wanted to play it.⁹⁰

Raum composes music that is accessible to both performers and audiences, with emphasis on making the music sound beautiful regardless of its complexity.⁹¹ She likes to write for a specific person or ensemble in mind, and prefers to have a picture and background information when possible. Occasionally, she will begin writing with a form in mind and, in other instances, she will begin writing and see what type of form emerges from her “arsenal of compositional techniques.” When just starting a piece, Raum will often write down a series of notes that she feels go well together, take a break, and find that when she returns, the notes are suggesting patterns to her and ways she can work with them.⁹²

As an oboist, Raum is aware of the endurance challenges that emerge from a piece that is too high or does not include enough rest, and this informs her approach to writing for brass instruments. Particularly for trumpet, Raum appreciates its ability to project so that she does not have to worry about its sound being buried by an orchestra. Part of what makes Raum’s music both appealing and accessible to performers is her dedication to collaborating with instrumentalists to ensure playability. Raum’s husband is a trombonist and her daughters play both percussion and violin, so she is able to consult with all of them when writing music.⁹³

Overview of Work and Pedagogical Notes:

Elizabeth Raum’s *Kupala Night* is a three-movement concerto for trumpet. It can be performed as a solo with orchestral or piano accompaniment, though the orchestral version is un-premiered. *Kupala Night* is in three movements and is ideal for advanced trumpeters and

⁹⁰Ibid.

⁹¹Beal, "Original Works Featuring Horn by Elizabeth Raum: A Performer's Guide," 2.

⁹²Elizabeth Raum, email message to author, August 28, 2022.

⁹³Ibid.

those looking to expand their repertoire of concertos. Written for C Trumpet, range and technique are the most prominent challenges of this work. The performer will benefit from the meticulous slow practice necessary to play this piece's many runs cleanly and accurately.

Movement one, "Dance of the Young Man," is the most demanding of the three movements in terms of range. There is an instance of a C6 in measure 51, and a significant portion of the first page remains at the top of the staff, creating an endurance challenge as well. Considering the combination of range and technical demands in this movement, pairing this piece with etudes from Walter Smith's *Top Tones for the Trumpeter: 30 Modern Etudes* can provide effective supplementation to set the performer up for success. The preparatory studies in this text, featuring scales for range expansion and patterns spanning several octaves in a single phrase, can be used as a precursor to studying "Dance of the Young Man." Once the performer begins to extend their upper register and gain comfort maintaining a clear and consistent sound between registers, the regular study of the thirty characteristic studies can provide additional exposure to playing that is similarly demanding to Raum's work.

Movement two, "Floating Flowers," opens with a piano introduction followed by a soft, muted trumpet line reminiscent of a fanfare. Three measures later, the trumpet returns with a similar line played open, slightly louder, and in a higher range. While more lyrical interjections exist in "Floating Flowers" than in "Dance of the Young Man," finger dexterity demands remain a factor in this movement. The middle section of the movement features significant stretches of thirty-second note passages, which require quick and accurate dexterity even at the marked quarter note equals 60 tempo. With a mix of scalar movement and several instances of accidentals, it is essential that the performer combines preparation of this movement with an emphasis on finger dexterity in their fundamental practice. The first study in Herbert L. Clarke's

popular book, *Technical Studies for the Cornet*, can assist the performer with developing fast and reliable technique, while the fourth study features more scalar motion and prepares the performer for dexterity demands spanning a wide range. Practicing these exercises on C Trumpet will help in transferring the technique to Raum's work. The movement ends with a slower, lyrical passage and the final phrase is muted. Especially after performing the taxing content preceding this phrase, it is imperative that the player work to keep this final passage in tune. Drone work and adding muted practice, even of simple exercises already in a performer's daily routine, can assist with increased comfort in this final passage.

Movement three, "Search for the Flowering Fern," is an exciting finale, featuring technical passages, shifting meters, and great dynamic contrast. The cadenza in measure 160 provides the performer with freedom to make a unique musical statement. In addition to the range and technical demands discussed in the previous movements, this movement requires great musical expression and the performer must have a clear idea of how they would like to portray the style changes in order to play this movement effectively. Ease of flexibility is required to portray the musical aspects of this movement, especially in the passage between Rehearsal B to Rehearsal C, which contains slurred lines spanning over an octave and a half. Jean Baptiste Arban's "Major and Minor Chord Studies" from his *Complete Celebrated Method for the Cornet* can supplement the skills necessary to maintain ease and flexibility in "Search for the Flowering Fern." Practicing Arban's studies both as written and fully slurred will assist the performer with the slurred wide interval passages in Raum's work.

While still technically demanding in terms of range, endurance, dexterity, and flexibility, the performer must take equal care to develop a strong musical message to portray in "Search for the Flowering Fern." There are several instances of tempo changes, ritardando and accelerando

sections, and a section marked “a la cadenza (freely).” The performer is given an opportunity to portray their own unique interpretation of this piece through the musical freedom presented in the final movement. Additionally, several instances of trills and flutter tonguing require the performer to be practicing these skills as part of their daily routine.

While challenging, *Kupala Night* is comparable in difficulty to other commonly performed concertos, such as Arutunian’s *Trumpet Concerto* and Vladimir Peskin’s *Trumpet Concerto No. 1 in C Minor*. *Kupala Night* is an ideal substantial work for a recital program, though there are benefits to performing any individual movement from the piece as a jury or semester performance piece, since each movement is technically challenging with an active trumpet part.