

Buffalo Altar

a Texas Symphony

Pianist to cue narrator at each "*"

Liberal use of Piano sustain pedal throughout

Ensemble may need to adjust tempo, especially in slower sections, in response to narrators pacing

For narrator, piano and percussion
(snare w. snare sticks and brushes, triangle, chimes, western wind chimes, cow bell)
adapted from the full orchestra version

Text by Stephen Harrigan

Music by J. Todd Frazier

♩ = 112 Robust

Percussion

Snare *sf* *p* *f*

Piano

ff *p*

♩ = 112 Robust

5

Pno.

ff

8va

Ped. *

9

Perc.

Western Wind Chimes

p *f*

9 (8va)

Pno.

2 3 1

Ped. *

12 $\text{♩} = 56$ expressive

Pno.

p *mp* *p* *mf*

3

16 *rit.* *a tempo*

Pno.

mp *f*

3

20 *rit.* *molto* $\text{♩} = 112$ Snare

Perc.

p

16

20 *rit.* *molto* $\text{♩} = 112$

Pno.

mp *mf* *p*

16

24 *on rim*

Perc.

f

24

Pno.

ff *f*

28

on side

Perc. 

Pno. 

32

natural

on side

Perc. 

Pno. 

36

natural


Perc. 


Pno. 

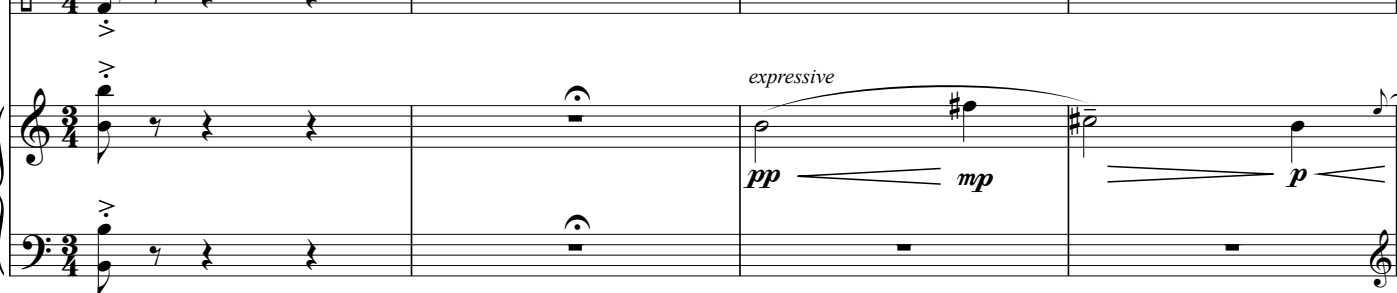
40 $\bullet = 72$

* I been in the oil business for fifty-eight years, and I ain't tired of it yet...

Oil could fall a nickel a barrel, and I'd still be out there

Nar. 

Perc. 

Pno. 

44 driving the back roads, trying to talk some old rancher out of his mineral rights. I guess, when you think about it, it's the driving I always

Nar. 

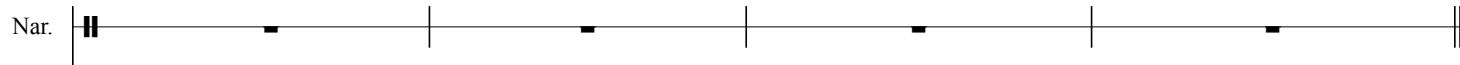
Pno. 


48 liked best. Godalmighty, Texas is a beautiful country to drive in!

Nar. 


Pno. 

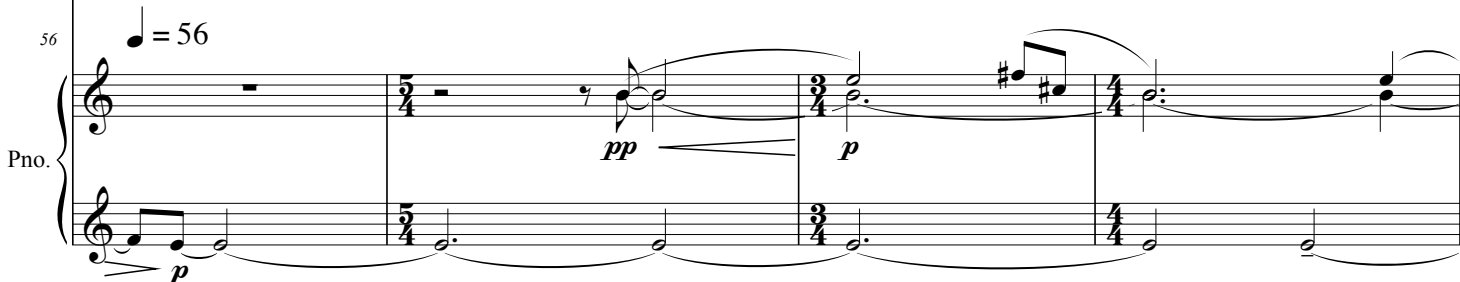
52 *Sometimes I'll pull over to the side of the road, and turn off the ignition and just sit there, looking at things. At the moon rising over the

Nar. 

Pno. 

56 Caprock. At a jackrabbit flats. At the birds flying high above of dumb birds they are, but it gives me a shiver to watch them skittering across the creosote me... I don't even know what kind sailing over... wave after wave

Nar. 

Pno. 

60 after wave of them, and to hear their voices calling out to each other across the sky.

Nar.

Pno.

60

rit.

f

p

a tempo

64 *I got to be careful about driving these days, though,... cause I aint exactly

Nar.

Perc.

Pno.

64

rit. molto

♩ = 72

Cow Bell

f *p*

rit. molto

♩ = 72

mp *p* *f* *p*

68 legal no more.

*They wouldn't renew my license last time I went

Nar.

Perc.

Pno.

68

Snare

f

f

p

f

71 down to the Department of Motor Vehicles... Said I was too old and too blind... Said I could take the bus...

Nar.

Pno.

74 *Well I got news for them... *I ain't never taking no dumb bus!

Nar.

Perc.

Pno.

78 *But if you think I'm gonna stand here and whine about things... you don't know C. L. Pettigrew Senior.

Nar.

Pno.

82 *I'm eighty-one years

Nar.

Pno.

86 old, but I ain't about to give her up yet... I still keep an office in the Petroleum Building in downtown Midland, and I got a

86 *rit. poco a poco*

90 deal about to come together any day now up in Briscoe County... I been through every boom and bust you can name. I was here

94 for the Goldsmith strike, I watched them drill the discovery well for the Spraberry Field, I made a million dollars in the

94 $\bullet = 56$ *Western Wind Chimes*

94 $\bullet = 56$

7/16

7/16

7/16

7/16

Scurry County Boom til I lost it all in a dry hole near LaMesa. But it was pert'near as much fun losing money as making it, back in those days. Because we were young it seemed Texas was young too. And every time a well came in it was like the land itself was whispering a secret in your ear.

I seen tornadoes and flash floods and every other damn thing. I seen a man struck by lightning on the 8th hole at Lions Club Municipal Golf Course in Sweetwater, dead as a biscuit and his clothes on fire too. I was there in forty-eight when they opened up the Shamrock Hotel in Houston. That was a party! I remember there was a riot out on the streets that night... everybody was trying to get inside and see Dorothy Lamour. It broke my heart when they tore that old hotel down. What the hell are they going to do tear down next? The Alamo?

But like I said, I ain't complaining. I've had my share of fancy hotels and wild parties and two-inch-thick ribeyes and cold Mexican beer. It's the driving I can't give up: roaring down a Texas highway in a big old Oldsmobile, with the windows open and the bugs splattering on the windshield and me feeling as wild and free as a Comanche Indian. I guess those were about the best days of my life... those

98 lease-buying trips when I was a young landman with a big car and an expense account.

Nar. 7/16 2/4

Perc. 7/16 2/4
Robust *Snare*
p *f*

Pno. 7/16 2/4
Robust
p (Ped. Sim.)

102

Pno. 2/4
ff *8va*

106 *Western Wind Chimes*

Perc. 3/4
p *f*

Pno. 3/4 2/4
8va

109 *expressive*

Pno. 4/4 2/4
p *mp* *p* *mf* *3*

113 *rit.* *a tempo*

Pno. *mp* *f*

117 *rit.* *molto* ♩ = 112 Snare

Perc. *p*

Pno. *mp* *mf* *p*

121 *on rim*

Perc. *f*

Pno. *ff* *f*

125 *on side*


Perc. *mp* *f*

Pno. *fp*

129

natural

on side

Perc. 

Pno. 

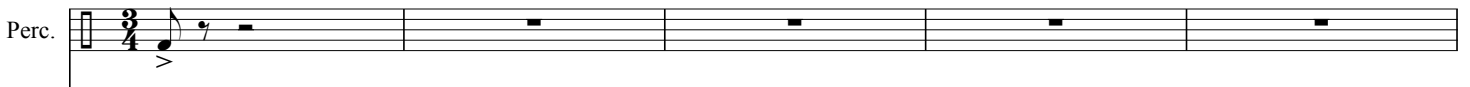
133

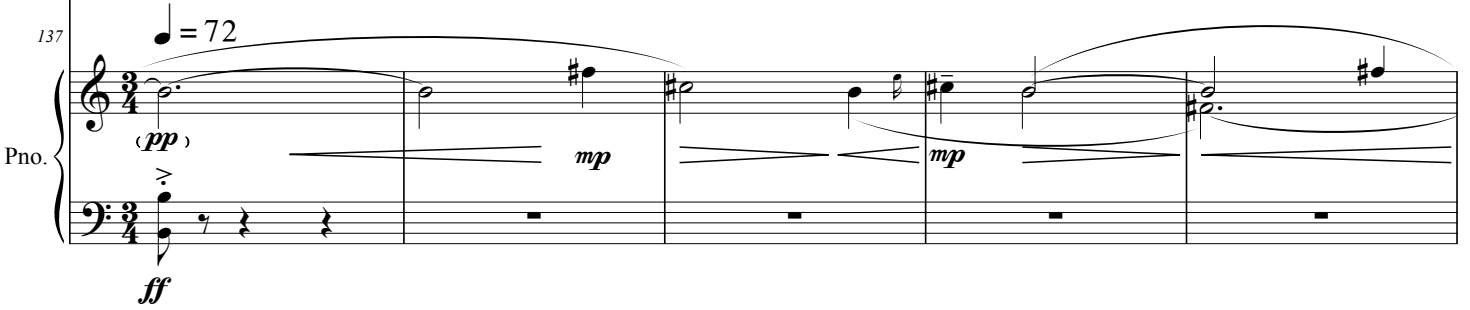
Perc. 

Pno. 

137

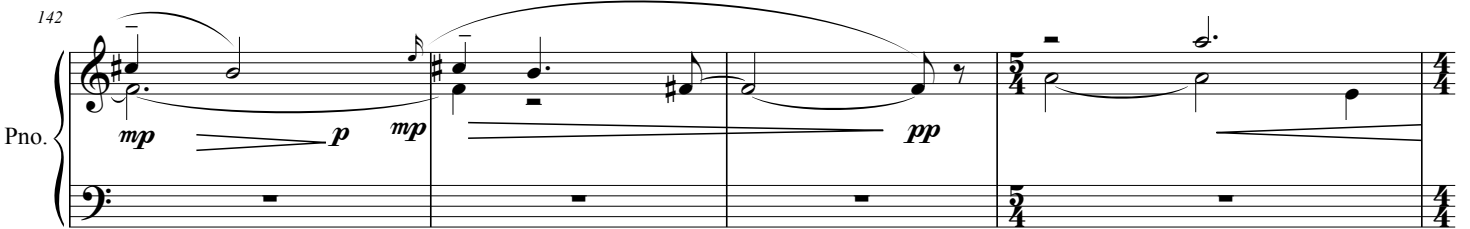
$\bullet = 72$

Perc. 

Pno. 

142

rit.

Pno. 

146

Pno.

f

a tempo

150

Nar. *But when I think about those old times now, there's one day that stands out as special,

Pno.

p *mf*

154 one day I won't ever get out of my mind as long as I live.

Nar.

154

Pno.

pp

(to be coordinated/timed during rehearsal, pianist resumes music at mm.157 at the appropriate word, (i.e. anywhere from "war" to "Mexico") in order to arrive at mm.170 approximately with the narrator, using the formata as a safeguard)

157 They warned me a the courthouse about this fella... said to honk all the way up to the house

Nar.

157 ♩. = 69

Pno.

mp expressive

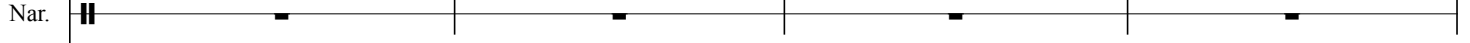
161 cause he was the sort that didn't like being taken by surprise,... But he was friendly enough... just an old,


Nar. 

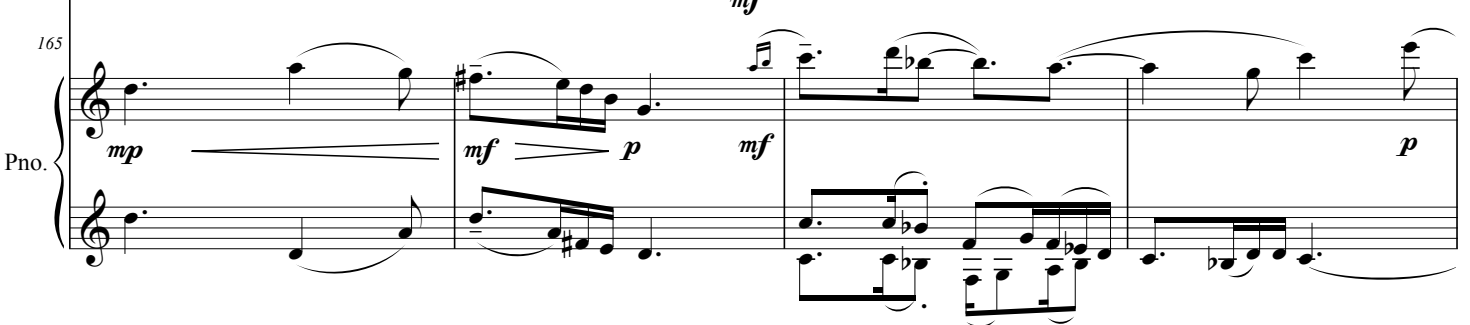
Perc. *Triangle* 

Pno. *mp* *mf* 

165 old man... with a bad eye... and a missing thumb he said he'd lost in a roping accident when he was a kid driving

Nar. 

Perc. *Snare* 

Pno. *mp* *mf* *p* *mf* *p* 

169 cattle up the Goodnight - Loving Trail.

Nar. 

Perc. *Cow Bell* *Snare* *Western Wind Chimes* 

Pno. *f* 

hold only if needed

*He wasn't half as ornery as the people at the courthouse said he'd be. Just lonely, really; his wife dead and his children

Nar.

Perc.

Pno.

We sat out there on his porch drinking orange soda pop and I listened to him talk on about cattle diseases and the neighbor who'd been trying to steal his riparian rights for forty years and wheather Jim Bowie had really hidden all that silver over in San Saba County like people said...

scattered and nothing for him to do except listen to the stock report on the radio...

Nar.

Perc.

Pno.

(timed during rehearsal as before)

Then he showed me his arrowhead collection... I'd never seen a collection like that. He kept it all in shoeboxes, and there must have

Nar.

Perc.

Pno.

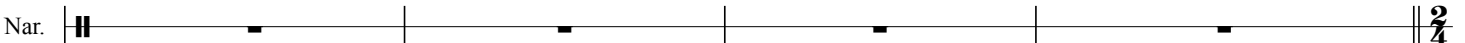
185 been three hundred shoeboxes stacked up on the floor of the front room alone,... and every one of them filled up to the top with


Nar. 

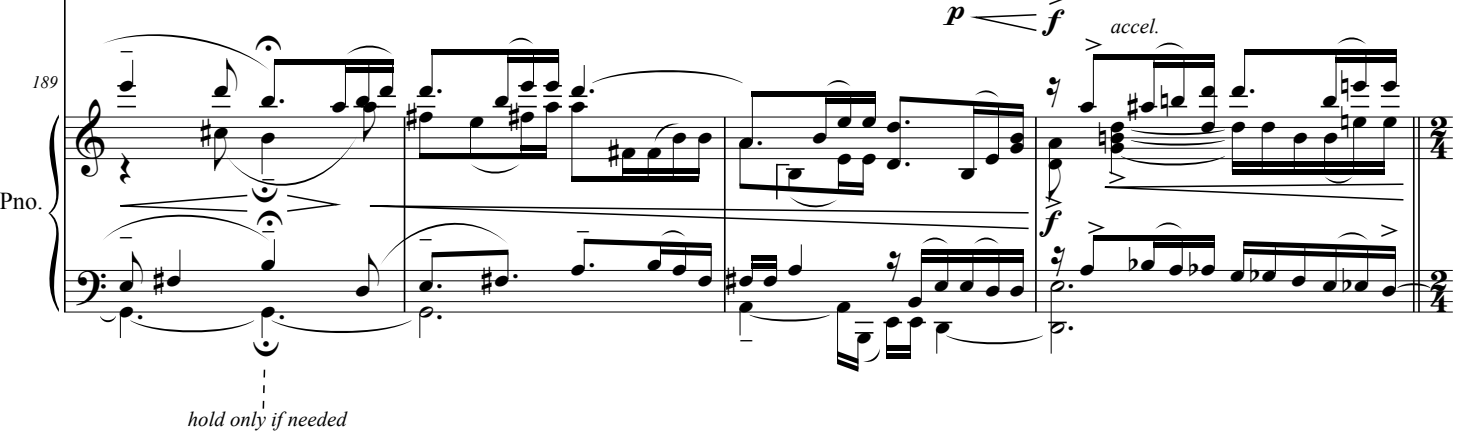
Perc. 
mf

Pno. 
mf p mf p

189 arrowheads... and spear points... and scrapers... and I don't know what all.


Nar. 


Perc. 
p f accel.

Pno. 
accel.

hold only if needed

193 ♩ = 112 *Western Wind Chimes*

Perc. 
p f

Pno. 
ff (take time to set chords)

196

*Every one of these things, he said, had come from this land... He even had a rusty old sword from the Spanish days, and you could still read the writing on the blade.

Nar.

Pno.

200

On one side it said... "Draw me not in anger"... and on the other it said... "Sheath me not in shame."

Nar.

Pno.

204

*After I'd admired his arrowheads for about an hour

Nar.

Pno.

or so... I finally worked the conversation... around to his mineral rights.

*I told him I'd come out there to make him a rich man. He said he guessed he wouldn't mind that, since he worked hard all his life and figured the Lord owed him a

208

Nar.

208

Perc.

Cow Bell

f

208

Pno.

ff

211 little money for his trouble.

Nar.

211

Pno.

p

f

(in one)

216 *So we went over the contract and argued back and forth about royalties and bonus payments and such.

Nar.

216

Pno.

p

f

p

221

When we got all that worked out I handed him a pen, but just before he was about to sign he looked up at me and said...

Nar.

Pno.

He pointed to the map. "Right here, on top of this bluff..." Well, that was a problem, because that bluff was the same place the geologists had told me the first well was supposed to go. I asked the old man why we couldn't drill there. He gave me a squinty look, took a sip of his soda pop' and said, "I'll show you." So I said "All right, let's go." But he shook his head and said, "Not now..."

226

"There's one place you can't drill." And I said, "Where is that, sir?"

Nar.

Perc.

Pno.

230

*...You got to wait til sunrise..."

Nar.

Perc.

Pno.

*There wasn't no
use to argue with an
old man like that,... not if I wanted his signature on the lease,

235

Nar.

235

Perc.

Pno.

rit. $\bullet = 56$

$\bullet = 69$
Triangle

p

mp

(timed during rehearsal as before)

239

Nar.

239

Perc.

Pno.

so I spent the night on an old army cot in that room with the shoeboxes. And then way before daylight he woke me up and

Snare
 \emptyset

f

mf

f *p* *mf* *mp*

243

Nar.

243

Perc.

Pno.

put me on a horse and we rode for an hour or more in the dark till we came to that bluff... Sitting on his horse...

mf *p*

that old man looked about twenty years younger.

Nar.

Perc.

Pno.

Western Wind Chimes

*We tied the horses

Nar.

Perc.

Pno.

to a mesquite bush and then I followed the old man as he walked along in the dark, down through a big

crevice in the rock and out on the floor of Yamparika Canyon... Then we climbed up to this cave sitting there on the canyon wall...

Nar.

Perc.

Pno.

Triangle = 56

Western Wind Chimes

258 $\bullet = 69$ Snare \emptyset

Perc.

Pno.

258 $\bullet = 69$ *mp* *f* *mp* *f*

262 *p* *rit.*

Pno.

266 Chime $\bullet = 56$ *forward*

Perc.

Pno.

266 *ff* *L.V.* $\bullet = 56$ *p* *forward* *pp* *p*

271 *The cave wasn't deep... It just went back about twenty feet or so, and when we turned around...

Nar.

Pno.

271 *rit.* *a tempo* *rit.* *mf* *pp* *mp*

275 we could see the sky growing light... way out to the east.

Nar.

Perc.

Pno.

Perc.

Pno.

Perc.

Pno.

288 *rit.*

Perc. $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{6}{16}$ $\frac{3}{8}$ $\frac{6}{16}$ $\frac{2}{4}$

Pno. *pp* *ff*

293 *a tempo* *rit.*

Perc. $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$

Pno. *pp* *mp* *pp* *f* *rit.*

$\bullet = 69$
forward espress. *rit.* *molto*

299 *p* *mf* *pp*

mp *mf* *p* *mp*

304 *a tempo* *Chime* *rit.*

Perc. *p* *ff* L.V.

Pno. *a tempo* *rit.* *ff*

308

*"I can't see nothing in here," I said to the old man.

Nar.

Perc.

Pno.

312

"What is it you wanted to show me?"

*He turned around with a perturbed look in his eyes and said...

*"Hush up and wait."

Nar.

Perc.

Pno.

316

*So I hushed,

Nar.

Perc.

Pno.

and I waited..., and pretty soon the sun started to slip up over the horizon... *I could hear mourning doves calling, and there were swallows flying in out of their mud nests at the top of the cave. Then this one ray of

321

Nar.

Pno.

321

$\text{♩} = 69$

pp

mp

mf

f

3

light started to travel across the plains, moving across the grass and then along the floor of the canyon like it was looking for something...

326

Nar.

Perc.

Pno.

326

mf

pp

p

f

p

ff

p

8va-----

3

6

6

3

6

6

Finally it came into the cave and settled on a pile of rocks a few feet behind where we was standing and lit it up like a Christmas tree...

330

Nar.

Perc.

Pno.

330

$\text{♩} = 112$ *rit.*

molto

$\text{♩} = 69$

$\text{♩} = 112$ *rit.*

molto

$\text{♩} = 69$

f

p

f

mp

3

3

335 It was then I saw it wasn't rocks;...
it was bones.

Nar. $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{2}{4}$

Perc. $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{2}{4}$ Triangle rit. *pp*

Pno. $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{2}{4}$ *p* *pp* *f* *rit.* *p*

339 *It seemed that somebody had taken a bunch of old jawbones
and set them up on end so that they made a kind of platform...

Nar. $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{6}{8}$

Perc. $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{6}{8}$

Pno. $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{6}{8}$ *mf* *p*

343 *And on that platform was a skull from some animal I'd never seen before... The skull was big...

Nar. $\frac{6}{8}$

Perc. $\frac{6}{8}$ Triangle *p*

Pno. $\frac{6}{8}$ *p* $\text{♩} = 56$

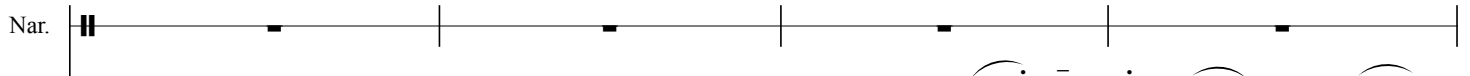
347 and thick... and flat... and prehistoric looking;... and it had two horns that swept out from either side like a longhorn

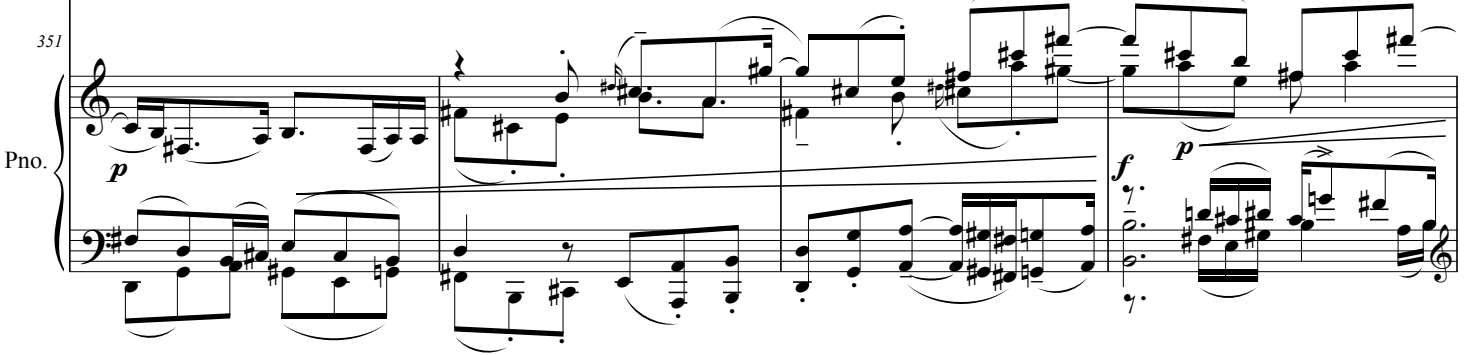
Nar. 

Perc. 

Pno. 
mp
mf

351 steer's... The skull's eye sockets were as big as my fists... and they were staring out toward the plains...


Nar. 

Pno. 
p
f
p

355 I had this strange feeling that those empty eye holes were watching the sunrise just like I was... "What the

Nar. 

Perc. 

Pno. 
mf
rit.
molto
a tempo
f
mp
f
mf
p
f
mp

359 hell is that" I asked the old man... "By God, son," he said,... "that... is an altar."

Nar.

Perc. *Snare*
p

Pno. *ff*
RH
Ped. *Ped.*

362 *rit.* -----

Perc. *ff* *rit.* -----

Pno. *8va*
Ped. *Ped.*

365 *brushes* *p* *mp* *p* *. = 69*

Perc.

Pno. *mp* *f* *expressive and intense* *. = 69*
f *Ped.* *Ped.*

369

Perc. *Snare* *Triangle*

369

Pno. RH LH

mp *f* *p* *p* *f*

372

Perc. *Western Wind Chimes*

372

Pno.

pp *f* *f* *p*

375

Perc. *Chime* *rit.* *molto*

375

Pno. *rit.* *molto*

ff *rit.* *molto* *ff* *mf* *ff*

5:3 5:3

378 *a tempo* *rit. poco a poco* *Triangle* *p*

Perc.

378 *a tempo* *rit. poco a poco* *mp* *mf*

Pno.

382 *p*

Perc.

382 *mp* *(from the distance, colorful)* *mp* *(foreground, aspiring)*

Pno.

$\bullet = 56$

386 *rit.*

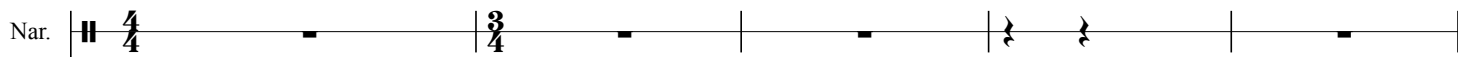
Perc.


386 *rit.*


Pno.

390

*The old man said the skull belonged to an old buffalo.


Nar. 

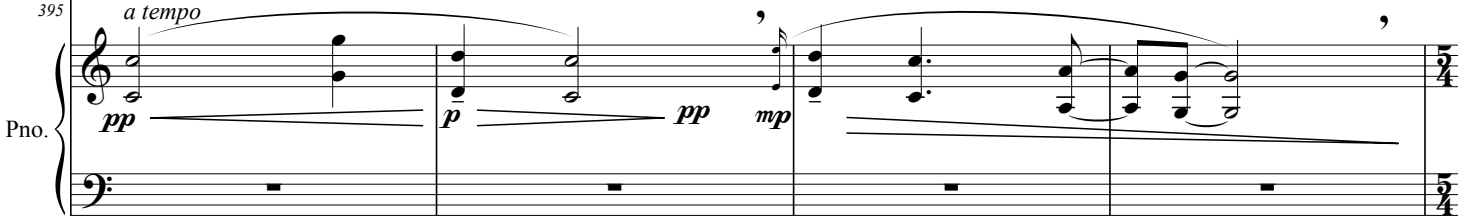
Perc. 

Pno. 

395


Not the kind of buffalo we know about, but the kind that died out thousands and thousands of years ago. Way back in those times some fella had

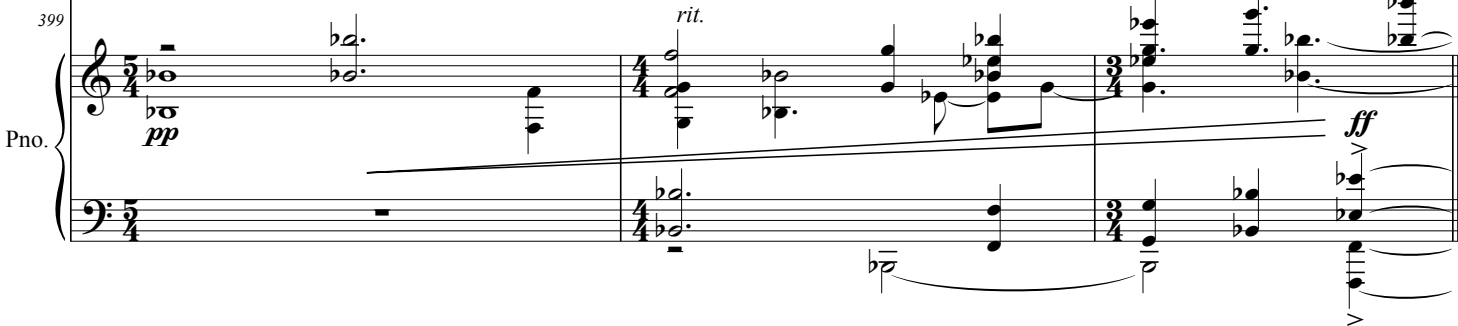
Nar. 

Pno. 

399

climbed up to this cave with this buffalo skull and very carefully set it up on these jawbones so that it was looking east... across the plains.

Nar. 

Pno. 

402 **Why do you suppose he did that?"* I asked the old man. "Why do you think?" he said, looking out to where the sun was rising and the hawks were circling in the sky.

Nar.

Perc.

Pno.

406 "They didn't have no First Baptist Church back in those days. Where else were you going to go and do your worshipping? Besides, a sunrise up here is a pretty sight... and I guess that old boy

Nar.

Perc.

Pno.

410 wanted the buffalo to see it."

Nar.

Perc.

Pno.

414 *a tempo*

Perc.

Pno.

418 *rit.* *molto* *Western Wind Chimes*

Perc.

Pno.

422 ♩ = 56 *rit.*

Perc.

Pno.

426

*He never
would let us

Nar. ||

Pno. 426

Ped. Ped.

430

drill on that bluff. We tried all around it, but all we ever got was dry holes, and that old man died without any royalty at all.

Nar. ||

Pno. 430

a tempo *rit.* *a tempo*

pp *mp* *pp*

434

Pno. 434

rit. *molto*

mp

*I come to this cafeteria for lunch pert'near every day, except for once or twice a year when one of the kids might fly in to visit. The girls behind the counter all know me and they treat me pretty well. They all pretend to flirt with me, but I tell 'em I ain't interested in any woman that wears a hairnet...

438

Nar.

Pno.

(timed during rehearsal as before)

439

Nar.

And then I take my tray over to the same table by the window. I eat my lunch and then my jello and then usually I'll take

439 $\bullet = 69$

Pno.

mp expressive

443

Nar.

out a geologist's report or a survey map and study it for a while. You don't want to get behind in this business... But my mind

443 *Triangle*

p

f *Snare*

443

p ∇ *mp* *f* *p*

447

sometimes drifts, and these days it drifts mostly to that buffalo skull sitting there in that cave out in Floyd County. I keep thinking

Nar.

Perc.

Pno.

451

about the old boy who built that altar... He was a Texan like me, I guess,... though it was a hell of a different place back then.

Nar.

Perc.

Pno.

hold only if needed

455

accel.

♩ = 112

Western Wind Chimes

rit.

Perc.

Pno.

ff (take time to set chords)

459

*Or, maybe it wasn't... Maybe it's the same. Maybe all these

Nar.

Pno.

cities and Taco Bells and Dairy Queens and outlet malls don't have a thing in the world to do with what Texas is.

Texas is what connects me and that prehistoric fella and that old rancher and that dead buffalo...

463

Nar.

Pno.

It's not just the place we live in, it's the place that lives in us... even after we're dead... and looking toward the sun... with empty eyes.

467

Nar.

Perc.

Pno.

468

♩ = 72

Western Wind Chimes

rit.

Perc.

Pno.

473

molto

♩ = 112

Perc.

Pno.

478

rit. -----

Perc.

Pno.

483 *a tempo* *rit.*

Perc. $\frac{6}{16}$ $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{2}{4}$

Pno. $\frac{6}{16}$ $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{2}{4}$

pp *mp* *pp* *f*

a tempo *rit.*

3

489 $\text{♩} = 69$ *forward espress.* *rit.* *molto*

Pno. $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{2}{4}$

p *mf* *pp*

mp *mf* *p* *mp*

495 *a tempo* *Chime* *rit.*

Perc. $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{5}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$

Pno. $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{5}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$

p *a tempo* *rit.*

498 *a tempo rit.*

Perc. *ff* *L.V.* *p*

Pno. *ff* *pp* *mp*

a tempo rit.

503 *molto* *a tempo* *Western Wind Chimes* *pp rit.*

Perc. *pp* *p*

Pno. *pp* *p* *a tempo* *rit.*

508 *niente*

Perc. *pp* *ppp*

Pno. *ppp*