

*Dedicated to Mary Kay Fink*

# Miniatures from Phoenicia

For Flute Alone

(2020)

**Sami SEIF**

سامي سيف

Duration: 9 minutes

Copyright © 2020, Sami Seif

**Sami SEIF**

سامي سيف

## Miniatures from Phoenicia

I. Vowels

II. Plosives

III. Sibilances and Fricatives

Duration: 9 minutes

### **Program Notes:**

Around 1050 BC, the Phoenicians invented the very first writing system based on phonetics. Spread by Phoenician merchants across the Mediterranean world, it evolved and was assimilated by many other cultures and became the foundation for the Roman alphabet used by Western civilization – as well as all other alphabetic writing systems currently in use.

*Miniatures from Phoenicia* intersects my curiosity about linguistics (specifically the branch of phonology) with my interest in the history of my ancestors, the Phoenicians, particularly their groundbreaking innovation – the phonetic alphabet – into my music. The music is partially inspired by the main phonological groups: vowels, plosives (p, t, k, etc...), sibilances/fricatives (s, sh, f, etc...).

The music of Phoenicia has been lost. With this piece, however, I invite the audience to re-imagine what it might have sounded like. I ask the flutist to play in a number of unconventional ways – sometimes superimposing multiple extended techniques on top of each other.

The language of the music is constructed with the help of small cells that form recursive patterns – mimicking the recursive nature of Semitic languages. Perhaps one might hear the spirit of ancient Phoenicia come back to life through these miniatures.

*Miniatures from Phoenicia* is dedicated to Mary Kay Fink who so generously helped me, and without whom this piece would not exist in its current form. I am eternally grateful for all of her guidance, ideas and inspiration – as well as for premiering the piece.

*Miniatures from Phoenicia* was awarded first prize for the 2021 Ohio Federation of Music Clubs Collegiate Composition Contest, the winner for the 2021 Warren County Summer Music School's Promising Young Composers Competition, the winner for the 2021 Arizona Flute Society Composition Competition, second prize at the 2021 Vienna Academia Musica International Music Competition, and third prize for the 2021 Cleveland Composer's Guild Contest.

### **Performance Notes:**

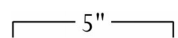
The interpretation of rhythm in the first and third movement are meant to be free in order to permit maximum personal expression from the performer.

Grace notes should fall on the beat except when indicated otherwise – however loosely the rhythm or beat is interpreted.

Hairpins with no indication of dynamics on either end are meant to be very light, “expressive” crescendos or decrescendos.

A thick line indicates that musical event (or held note) is to continue until the end of the line.

**X** senza misura, cancels time signature


 indicates that what is within the bracket should last 5 seconds. Indications of duration in seconds are approximate


♯ half-sharp

♭ half-flat

^ short fermata (*ad lib.*)

◌ normal fermata (*ad lib.*)

 gradual increase in speed. The absolute note values do not necessarily need to be strictly observed.

 gradual decrease in speed. The absolute note values do not necessarily need to be strictly observed.

 crescendo from niente

 decrescendo to niente

Airy tone a tone in which air and pitch are heard in approximately equal amounts

Air almost no pitch at all, the pitch should still be discernible, but hardly so

Notes with slashes crossing the beam are supposed to be played as fast as possible. This includes grace notes.
























Horizontal arrows indicate a smooth, gradual transition from one sound or playing technique to another.

Following convention, accidentals apply for the entire measure.

In several instances in the piece, consonances will be indicated for the player to tongue. An **X** notehead indicates percussive effects. The player is to tongue the indicated note with the indicated consonant.

Movements or a single movement from this work may be selected to be performed with the exclusion of others.

Fingerings for microtones and key gliss. trills.

		
		
		
		
		
		
		
		
<p>Trill LH middle and RH index at different and irregular speeds for the “crazy” trill on measure 33 of the second movement.</p>		

(This page has been intentionally left blank in order to facilitate page turns.)

Dedicated to Mary Kay Fink

# Miniatures from Phoenicia

Sami SEIF

سامي سيف

## I. Vowels

Quasi improvisando

4" 5" 3"

hum over flute (sing and play) add overtones

Flute

1-2" *pp* *ff*

♩=60, Freely

4 play only bend bend change color as much as possible 6-7"

*pp* *fp* *sub.*

7 3 5 5-6"

*f poco* *p* *molto*

11 3-4"

*f* *ff* *pp* *ff* *mp* *poco f*

14 poco a poco 3 5:4

17 5" 3

*f sub.* *pp* *p*

19

5:4 *f* *mf* *ff* *p* *molto*

22

*ff* 3 5:4

24

*p* 4'' 4'' *f* *ff*

## II. Plosives

Flute

**f** **sfz pp** **f**

4

6 **pp** **mp** **ff**

*rall.* **pp** *start slow* *start slow*

14 ♩ = 63 **p espr.** *sim. cresc. when you go up* *dim. when you go down*

20 *slower*

26 **fp**

30 **sfz**

Chi

× = beatbox whilst fingering specified pitch



31 *pp* *ffpp* *f*

3-4" 4-5" start ord, get crazy

34 *sfz pp*

$\text{♩} = 60$  Cha

41 *poco accel, gradually turn into even quintuplets*

49 *mp* *f*

start slow, accel.

51

52

55 *ff pp cresc.*

Sti

57 *sfz* *sfz*

T K

*poco rit.* *fff fff*

K

### III. Sibilances and Fricatives

Grace notes in this movement are meant to be slower and expressive.

#### Freely Always

air — 4" → pitch  
Sah!

♩=60

Flute

*sfz, ppp* *f* *pp espressivo*

5 Tsrrr (fltr.) , Trrr (fltr.)

pitch — 7" —> pitch, air → pitch

*sfz* *pp* *sfz* *pp* *ff* *f* *p* *f* *ff*

10

pitch — 5" —> air → airy tone

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

13

*rit.*

*mp* *p* *pp*

(a tempo)

15 Tsrrr

pitch — 5-7" —> air → airy tone

*sfz, mp* *f* *pp* *f* *p espr.*

19

air —> airy tone

*f poco*

20

pitch, fltr.

*pp* *f* *poco* *p dolcissimo*

22 *poco rall.* *airy tone* *a tempo* *sing and play* *poco rit.* 6

25 *air* *start very slow, molto accel.* *ord. tone* *rall.* *pp* *ff*

27 T (fltr.) , T , Tsa , *6"* *Play* *Play and hum* *Hum only\**

*ffffz* *pp* *ffz* *pp* *sfz* *pp* *f*

The musical score consists of three staves. The first staff (measures 22-26) features a melodic line with a 'poco rall.' marking, followed by 'airy tone' and 'a tempo' markings. It includes triplet markings and a 'sing and play' instruction. The second staff (measures 25-26) starts with 'pp' and 'ff' dynamics, includes a '6"' marking, and has 'air' and 'ord. tone' instructions. The third staff (measures 27-30) includes the lyrics 'T (fltr.) , T , Tsa ,' and a '6"' marking. It features dynamic markings: *ffffz*, *pp*, *ffz*, *pp*, *sfz*, *pp*, and *f*. Performance instructions include 'Play', 'Play and hum', and 'Hum only\*'. The page number '6' is in the top right corner.

\*Hum and slowly put the flute down while still humming.  
Hum should still be audible after flute is away from mouth.  
Audience should be surprised that sound is not coming from the flute.