# Clarinet Concerto Conversations and Observations 



Reflections of a Homeless
Newspaper Seller in Winter

Peter Dyson<br>2006

Introductory text to "Conversation and Observations: Reflections of a Homeless Newspaper Seller in Winter"- a concerto for clarinet and orchestra.
"The homeless newspaper seller stands on the corner of the street by the traffic lights. All of life passes by there. It is a busy street. Recently they changed the sequence on the traffic lights so that one light remains on green when the other has already gone to red. People waiting to cross can't see the green light, only the red one and so they cross, feeling safe. The coming cars blow their horns because their light is still on green. There have been four accidents so far with cars slamming into the sides of cars of cars thinking it is okay to cross the junction.

Yesterday it was an old man walking across. Fortunately the car was not going too fast and he lay in the road for twenty minutes until the ambulance came with people driving around him. The Driver stopped and stood in front of the old man to protect him from the oncoming cars. He got out his mobile phone and phoned for the ambulance. Whilst they were waiting, I thought about the parable of the Good Samaritan: all those people driving past without stopping to find out, including two militia cars. But you get used to people passing by on the other-side when you're a Bomsh. I am not sure if you can tell whether I am one or not: lots of people come and talk to me, so maybe not.

I watched a wild man the other day. He was walking down the middle of the tramline waving his arms and talking excitedly. The ice on the ground was hard packed down and there was a cold wind blowing. He looked as if he was wearing pyjamas with an orange street menders jacket over the top. My eyesight is not as good as it used to be but I swear he had nothing on his feet. I watched him disappear into the distance. Funny nobody even turned their heads. It was as if no-one could see him. He's not long for this world I thought. After a while I began to wonder if I had imagined the whole thing. Perhaps I'd been out in cold too long too. A piece of cardboard is not much protection from the creeping cold of the pavement under your feet. What you need is soup but most of the stolovayas around here won't serve you. I'm lucky, that one over there does and they let me use the toilet too.

You know, there has always been homelessness. I expect there always will be. Did you know the first Poor Law was made by Elizabeth the First of England in 1601 and the 1662 Act of Settlement meant we had to go back to the parishes we came from? Sounds all a bit like something out of a Nativity story and Mary and Joseph on a donkey. Jesus was one of us you know; all that wandering around the wilderness; not registered anywhere. Nothing's changed much has it. Half the people in this city haven't got propiskas either!

Some days this part of the city looks really beautiful. The other day it was minus 18 and the sun was shining so strong and brilliant, low on the horizon. Not strong enough for you to feel the heat but the light was so bright and on days like this, it makes even this shabby bit of town look good. Sometimes when the sun is shining my mind wanders. I can't help it but I hear this music. Orchestra starts playing

## Conversations and Observations:

Reflections of a Homeless Newspaper Seller in Winter. Movement I



Cl .

Hn. 1


Timp.





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Cl .














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## Movement II


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# Cl . <br>  <br>  





Vln I







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Cl .









St Petersburg, 29th December 2005




Vimp.






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Cl . Hn. 1


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Cl.











Db. $=$



St Petersburg, Christmas Eve, January 6th 2006


