

STEVEN SNOWDEN

STEAM MAN OF THE PRAIRIES

*FOR ALTO SAXOPHONE, PIANO  
AND ELECTRONICS*

STEAM MAN OF THE PRAIRIES  
COMMISSIONED BY SUNIL GADGIL

PROGRAM NOTES:

*Steam Man of the Prairies* was a dime store science fiction novel written by Edward S. Ellis in 1868 and is widely considered to be the earliest depiction of a humanoid robot in popular culture. Despite Ellis's rather clumsy writing style and overtly racist depictions of Irish immigrants and Native Americans, this novel provides an interesting perspective on the excitement surrounding innovations in steam technology and exploration of the Western United States in the late 1800's.

Just as the *Steam Man* represented the attainment of superhuman capabilities through the use of technology, this piece utilizes electronics to expand the sonic palate of the piano and alto sax. By limiting electronically produced sounds to only recordings of extended piano techniques (bowed, plucked, muted, and scraped) my goal was to create a sonic bridge between the timbres of the sax and piano in an attempt to create the illusion of a single super-instrument. As a means to take this sonic cohesion one step further, amplification of the electronic sounds in this piece forgoes a typical loudspeaker setup in favor small vibration speakers attached to the soundboard of the piano. This method allows the strings of the piano to vibrate sympathetically with the electronics and takes advantage of the instrument's natural acoustic resonance.

-Steven Snowden

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Get technical info about running the electronics for this piece at  
<http://www.stevensnowden.com/tech/>

# STEAM MAN OF THE PRAIRIES

FOR ALTO SAX, PIANO, AND ELECTRONICS

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♩ = 96  
(empty bar)

**Like a prolonged scream**

Alto Sax

Piano

(empty bar) strum lowest 3-4 octaves of strings

*fff* *ff* *mf* *f*

Ped.

**Gradually dissolving**

Alto Sax

Pno.

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

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

Alto Sax

Pno.

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

*f* *mp*

+456 (quarter-tone trill) *tr* +Tf *tr*

STEAM MAN OF THE PRAIRIES

8 (tr) (quarter-tone trill)

Alto Sax

Piano: *mf* *p* *mp* *pp* *mf*

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

gradually lift pedal to hear individual dampers touch the strings

12

Alto Sax

Piano: *ppp* *ppp* *pp* *mp*

*ppp* *ppp* *pp* *mp*

Silently depress pitches

\* Sos. Ped. \_\_\_\_\_ (hold down until M. 71)

**19** Serene, but with a strong sense of anticipation

Alto Sax

Piano: *mp* *pp* *pp* *ppp* *mp*

*mp* *pp*

Ped. \_\_\_\_\_

25

Alto Sax

Piano: *mp* *pp*

29

Alto Sax

Pno.

*Red.* \_\_\_\_\_

32

Alto Sax

Pno.

*Red.* \_\_\_\_\_

38

40

Alto Sax

Pno.

*Red.* \_\_\_\_\_

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43

Alto Sax

Pno.

*p* *ppp* *tr* *pp* *ppp*

48

Alto Sax

Pno.

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

*mp*

51 (8)

Alto Sax

Pno.

*p* *mf* *p* *ppp*

*pp*

55

Match articulation and dynamics to short bowed piano sound in the electronics

Alto Sax

*ppp*

*mp*

8<sup>va</sup>

58

Alto Sax

*p* *ppp* *ppp*

*mf*

61

Alto Sax

*ppp*

63

Alto Sax

*p* *ppp* *ppp*

Pno.

*mp*

66

Alto Sax

Pno.

68

Alto Sax

*mp* *ppp*

Pno.

*p*

71

Alto Sax

*ppp*

Pno.

*release Sos. Ped*



73

Alto Sax

*mp* *pp* *ppp*

Pno.

*mf* *mp*

77

Alto Sax

*ppp*

Pno.

80

Alto Sax

*p*

Pno.

82

Alto Sax

Pno.

*ppp*

84 85 ♩ = 128 (←  $\frac{1}{2}$  ♩ =  $\frac{1}{3}$  ♩ →)

Alto Sax *pp*

Pno.

86 **Gradually accumulating rhythmic density**

Alto Sax *ppp*

Pno. *pp* *pp*

90

Alto Sax *ppp*

Pno. *p* *p*

95

Alto Sax *pp*

Pno. *mp* *mp*

100

Alto Sax

Pno.

*p*

*ppp*

*p*

105

Alto Sax

Pno.

*pp*

*ppp*

110

112

Alto Sax

Pno.

*pp*

*p*

*mp*

114

Alto Sax

Pno.

*pp*

117

Alto Sax

Piano part for measures 117-119. The right hand plays a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with accents. The left hand plays a bass line with quarter notes and rests. Dynamics include *p* and *pp*.

120

Alto Sax

Piano part for measures 120-123. The right hand continues the rhythmic pattern. The left hand has a steady bass line. Dynamics include *pp* and *mp*.

124

Alto Sax

Piano part for measures 124-127. The right hand has a more active melodic line with eighth notes. The left hand continues the bass line. Dynamics include *p* and *pp*.

128

Alto Sax

Piano part for measures 128-130. The right hand continues the melodic line. The left hand has a simple bass line. Dynamics include *pp*.

131

Alto Sax

Pno.

*mp* *p*

Detailed description: This system contains measures 131 through 134. The Alto Saxophone part features a rhythmic pattern of quarter notes with eighth-note accents. The Piano accompaniment consists of chords in the right hand and rests in the left hand. Dynamic markings are *mp* for measures 132 and 133, and *p* for measure 134.

135

Alto Sax

Pno.

**138** A bit funky

*pp* *p* *pp*

Detailed description: This system contains measures 135 through 138. Measure 138 is highlighted with a box and the instruction 'A bit funky'. The Alto Saxophone part continues with a similar rhythmic pattern. The Piano accompaniment includes chords and eighth-note patterns. Dynamic markings are *pp* for measures 136 and 138, and *p* for measure 137.

139

Alto Sax

Pno.

*p*

Detailed description: This system contains measures 139 through 142. The Alto Saxophone part continues with a similar rhythmic pattern. The Piano accompaniment includes chords and eighth-note patterns. A dynamic marking of *p* is present at the end of the system.

143

Alto Sax.

Pno.

*mp* *p* *pp*

Detailed description: This system contains measures 143 through 146. The Alto Saxophone part continues with a similar rhythmic pattern. The Piano accompaniment includes chords and eighth-note patterns. Dynamic markings are *mp* for measure 143, *p* for measure 144, and *pp* for measure 145.

147

Alto Sax.

Pno.

151

Alto Sax.

Pno.

155

Alto Sax.

Pno.

Escalating intensity  
timbre trill

*pp*  $\leftarrow$  *mf*

159 (tr) **160** Bold, impassioned

Alto Sax. *p* *f* *mp*

Pno. *f*

162

Alto Sax. *f*

Pno. *p* *mf* *8va*

165

Alto Sax.

Pno. *p* *f* *p* *8va*

169

Alto Sax.

*mp* *f* *mp* *f*

(8)

*mf* *p* *f*

173

Alto Sax.

*f* *mf*

**177**

Alto Sax.

*f* *mp* *f*



**180**

Alto Sax.

Pno.

15<sup>ma</sup>

182

Alto Sax.

Pno.

*mp* *pp*

(15)

*mf*

184

Alto Sax.

Pno.

(15)

186

Alto Sax.

Pno.

(15)

*mp*

189

Alto Sax.

Pno.

(15)

*p*

*pp*

193

Alto Sax.

Pno.

(15)

*ppp*

198

$\text{♩} = 96$  Serene again, but this time with a sense of prolonged resolution

Alto Sax.

Pno.

*mp*

Ped.

206

Alto Sax.

*pp* *p* *pp* *mp* *ppp*

Pno.

211

Alto Sax.

*mp* *pp* *mp*

Pno.

215

Alto Sax.

*tr*

*ppp pp mp > p ppp < mp*

Pno.

220

Alto Sax.

*pp mp pp mp pp mp*

Pno.

223

Alto Sax.

pp pp pppp

8va--

Pno.

mf

Detailed description: This system contains measures 223, 224, and 225. The Alto Saxophone part features a continuous eighth-note trill pattern. The dynamics are marked as *pp* for measures 223 and 224, and *pppp* for measure 225. The Piano part is mostly silent, with a final measure (225) containing a single eighth-note chord marked *mf*. An *8va--* marking is present above the piano staff in measure 225.

trill speed slows as  
dynamic level decreases

226

Alto Sax.

fpp n fpp pppp > n fpp pppp > n

Pno.

8

Detailed description: This system contains measures 226 through 231. The Alto Saxophone part features a trill that begins in measure 226 and continues through measure 231. The trill speed is indicated to slow as the dynamic level decreases. The dynamics are marked as *fpp* in measures 226 and 228, and *pppp* in measures 227 and 229. The notes are marked with *n* for natural. The Piano part has a treble clef and contains a few notes in measures 226 and 227, with a circled '8' above the staff in measure 226. The rest of the piano part is silent.