An exploration of opera-ballet as a music theatre trend: from the Ballets Russes to the present day

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Introduction

This thesis seeks to shed light on the emergence and evolution of opera-ballet over the past century, providing a foundation for further exploration of this music theatre trend in an accompanying composition portfolio. Ten years ago, I began my career at the Royal Opera House as a Cover Conductor for The Royal Ballet and have since worked as Music Staff for English National Opera. Consequently, I have grown artistically embedded in the tradition of "grand" opera and ballet and I have developed a keen interest in the productions commissioned by the Ballets Russes that have sought to bring opera and ballet together. This led me to found Constella OperaBallet (now Constella Music) in 2011 with the sole purpose of performing modern and contemporary opera-ballet, including much of my own work. Consequently, the influence of the Ballets Russes has extended beyond my composing and conducting endeavours and has shaped the forming of my own interdisciplinary company and my role as Artistic Director. Specifically, I have come to admire the entrepreneurship and vision of the Ballets Russes' impresario Sergei Diaghilev and his ability to bring together some of the greatest musicians, dancers, writers, and painters of the day. Although many of the Ballets Russes' productions are now a hundred years old, their practice is deeply significant to my own and therefore forms the starting point of this doctoral study.

The opera-ballet term may be familiar in relation to French baroque stage works, however it has also been applied by musicologists to delineate a specific marriage of song and dance in more recent times. For example, the opera-ballet term is used by Richard Taruskin and, more recently and in greater depth by Davina Caddy, to discuss the Ballets Russes' first hybrid

production in 1914, which radically reimagined Rimsky-Korsakov's opera *Le Coq d'Or* (1909).[1] This was a pivotal moment in the Ballets Russes journey, as Taruskin articulates:

> All agreed, when the dust had settled, that this production had not been merely the hit of the 1914 season, but a pathbreaker and a course-charter for many seasons to come.[2]

Considering the significance of this production, my first chapter seeks to explore what motivated the company to achieve this artistic breakthrough. Whilst critics have proposed various and conflicting influences, there is compelling evidence to suggest that Diaghilev and, his creative partner Alexander Benois, sought to present a response to Richard Wagner's *Gesamtkunstwerk* (total work of art). However, this response was not Germanic in style, but distinctly French. I believe there is a rationale for connecting the application of the opera-ballet term in both French baroque stage works and the productions of the Ballets Russes. As will be discussed, during the Ballets Russes time in Paris, there was a revival of French baroque stage works. This appears to have inspired, or at least steered, Diaghilev and Benois to shape their answer to *Gesamtkunstwerk* to align with the Parisian tastes for productions where the narrative delivery was shared between song and dance.

Whilst the Ballets Russes' modernist opera-ballets are significant to my artistic thinking, my own works live in today's world, where there is great enthusiasm for interdisciplinary work,

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[1] Richard Taruskin, *Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions: A Biography of the Works through Mavra*. Berkeley, University of California, vol. 2, 1996, pp. 1068 – 1091; Davinia Caddy, *The Ballets Russes and beyond: Music and Dance in Belle-Époque Paris*. Cambridge, University of Cambridge Press, 2016, pp. 161 – 214.
[2] Taruskin, *Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions,* p. 1068.

manifesting in a great variety of forms. I see my work as contemporary opera-ballet. One may argue why a distinct term is required when the label of music theatre can be readily applied. However, as Anthony Sheppard discusses, music theatre is such an expansive and elusive genre, it makes comparative study and the identification of developing traditions challenging.[3] By using the Ballets Russes' modernist opera-ballets as the foundation for a discussion on more recent works and productions, it is possible to define contemporary opera-ballet as a trend within music theatre.

By identifying a field of study, it enables me to demonstrate how my composition portfolio is expanding the field of contemporary opera-ballet. Accompanying this thesis is a collection of five opera-ballet works, representing three distinct branches of my compositional aesthetic. *London Portraits,* scored for mezzo-soprano, piano and dance, and *Ted's Passing* for sung and danced soloists, brass band and chorus, explore my interest in fusing contemporary classical and jazz idioms. In contrast, *Water Hymn* for choir and dance, and *Sea Garden* for mezzo-soprano, small ensemble and dancer, showcase my soundworld that takes influence from nature. Finally, the major work in my composition portfolio is *The Orchestras of Auschwitz,* which illustrates my creative engagement with 'found' music.

[3] Anthony Sheppard, *Revealing Masks: Exotic Influences and Ritualized Performance in Modernist Music Theater*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2001, pp. 3 – 9.

1 The Ballets Russes' Opera-ballet: a Revival

The significant and numerous innovations of the Ballets Russes have instilled a legacy that remains present in today's theatres. Arguably, some of their most impressive work concerns the company's hybrid and interdisciplinary endeavours, notably sharing the dramatic delivery between song and dance. These opera-ballets include *Pulcinella*, *Renard* and *Les Noces*, but what led them to this fused artform? As will be discussed, scholars including Richard Taruskin, Davina Caddy, Margarita Mazo and Glenn Watkin have presented various and opposing theories ranging from Futuristic superimposition, biomechanic theatre practice, hidden choir boys and lampooning parodies. A more compelling argument proposes that the Ballets Russes sought to respond to Richard Wagner's *Gesamtkunstwerk.* Sergei Diaghilev described himself as a "Wagner fanatic" in his letters to his stepmother as a young man, so it is certainly plausible that Diaghilev was striving to create his own "total work of art."[4] In this quest, there is evidence to suggest that the Ballets Russes was inspired by the overlooked revival of the French baroque opera-ballet, even though there are no statements from artists associated with the company to support this. This chapter will explore the creative thinking behind the Ballets Russes' first opera-ballets and how this established a working model for future artists to follow.

During the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, the newly founded Opéra de Paris staged performances of *tragédies en musique* (or *tragédies lyriques), ballet-héroïque, pastorale-héroïque* and opera-ballet, all defined strictly by structure and subject matter. An opera-ballet specifically, would contain an overarching idea that would span a prologue and

[4] Sjeng Scheijen, *Diaghilev: A Life*. Translated by Jane Hedley-Prôle and S.J. Leinbach. London, Profile, 2009, p.57.

three or four entrées (acts), each with its own plot, characters, and at least one divertissement of songs and dances to support the story.[5] James Anthony highlights numerous issues with the boundaries of these forms due to the changing perception and "carelessness" of their application throughout the subsequent centuries.[6] Briefly, it can be summarised that French stage work of this period was concerned with the presentation of dramatic song and dance, with the equal or near equal importance given to singing and dancing.[7] As described by the seventeenth-century French philosopher Jean de la Bruyère, the principle behind these works was "to hold the spirit, the eyes and the ears in an equal enchantment".[8] In name, the opera-ballet term perfectly describes the dramatic ambitions of this period.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, historic opera-ballet was revised with enthusiasm which has received little critical acknowledgement. Amongst those impresarios who were active in the field was Jacques Rouché, director of Paris's Théâtre des Arts from 1910 to 1913, who produced numerous baroque opera-ballets and court spectacles, including for his first performance as director.[9] In 1915, with the war in progress, Rouché took over as director of the Paris Opéra and continued these revivals, banishing German composers and replacing them with works by Lully and Rameau.[10] These performances were not merely revivals but were distinctly modern productions, reimagined for the twentieth century Parisian appetite for

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[5] James Anthony, "The French Opera-Ballet in the Early 18th Century: Problems of Definition and Classification," *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, vol.18, no.2, 1965, p.200.
[6] Ibid. pp. 197 – 206.
[7] Debra Craine and Judith Mackrell, "Opera-ballet", *The Oxford Dictionary of Dance*. 2nd ed., Oxford University Press, 2010. https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199563449.001.0001/acref-9780199563449-e-1776?rskey=W1bDzM&result=4 Accessed 16 Sept. 2020.
[8] Jean De La Bruyère, *Les Caracteres De Theophraste*. 10. Ed., Revue, Corrigée & Augmentée. ed. Paris: Etienne Michallet, 1699. p.20, quoted in Graham Sadler "Tragédie en musique" *Grove Music Online, Oxford* University Press, 2001. https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000044040?rskey=hrO3rm&result=1 Accessed 2 Nov. 2020
[9] Claire Paolacci, *L'ère Jacques Rouché à l'Opéra de Paris (1915-1945): modernité théâtrale, consécration du ballet et de Serge Lifar,* Sorbonne University, 2006, pp. 131 – 32.
[10] Lynn Garafola, *Diaghilev's Ballets Russes*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1989, p. 116.

escapism during the war.[11] Dance critic Lynn Garafola has shown that this French classicism was not restricted to Rouché, but could also be found in the productions of Ballets Suédois and the pages of the magazine *Soirées de Paris* which explored French period themes.[12] Interest in the historic opera-ballet genre extended to Parisian composers such as Claude Debussy, who began writing the opera-ballet *Fêtes galantes* in 1913.[13] Although, sadly, this project remained unfinished, Debussy publicly advocated for this growing movement in *L'Excelsior:*

> In my opinion, they [the composers of today] could adapt and rejuvenate – by removing all its wrinkles – the venerable opera-ballet of our ancestors.[14]

Albert Roussel also wrote of his support for rejuvenating opera-ballet and went further by composing *Padmâvatî* which was premiered at the Paris Opéra in 1923, commissioned by Rouché.[15] This demonstrates that the interest in modernising opera-ballet was widespread in Paris during the Ballets Russes' time in the city.

In their histories of the Ballets Russes, Caddy and Garafola have shed some light on this opera-ballet revival, although it is only mentioned as a passing reference, and neither author considers the impact of these revivals on the Ballets Russes in depth.[16] At its inception, the

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[11] Garafola, *Diaghilev's Ballets Russes*, p.116.
[12] Ibid, p.120.
[13] Robert Orledge, *Debussy and the Theatre*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1982, pp. 206 – 216.
[14] Claude Debussy, "L'Opera de demain", *L'Excelsior*, 15 September 1913, p. 2, quoted in Caddy, *The Ballets Russes and beyond,* p. 201.
[15] Davinia Caddy, *The Ballets Russes and beyond: Music and Dance in Belle-Époque Paris*. Cambridge, University of Cambridge Press, 2016*,* pp. 201 – 202.
[16] Ibid*,* pp. 200 – 205; Garafola *Diaghilev's Ballets Russes,* pp.115 – 120.

Ballets Russes' impresario Diaghilev sought to 'sell' Russian art to Europe, and in particular, to Paris, where much of the company's activities were focused. Though Russian culture certainly had Parisians enthralled with its exoticism, much of the company's success can ironically be attributed to their embodiment of French cultural identity. For instance, the Ballets Russes' first season in 1909, billed Vaslav Nijinsky as "the new [Auguste] Vestris", the legendary French dancer of the eighteenth century.[17] These performances were reminiscent of the flamboyant French spectacles of old, employing two-hundred and fifty dancers, singers and technicians, and specially commissioned visual effects including decadent fountains that pumped water from the Seine.[18] An even more striking example was *Aurora's Wedding* (1923), a glitzy display of song and dance performed in Versailles's Hall of Mirrors, the same gallery where opera-ballet performances were staged in which the Sun King himself took part.[19] As explored in depth by Richard Taruskin, despite the emphatic display of Russian identity in the Ballets Russes' early productions – with an entirely Russian cast and company – French critics often considered the Ballets Russes as the realisation of their own cultural identity.[20] This consideration is most evident in Henri Ghéon's review of *L'Oiseau de feu* (1910) in *Nouvelle revue française* which said: "How Russian it all is, what these Russians have made, but also how French!".[21] It is clear that a key component in the Ballets Russes successful occupation in Paris was the exploitation of France's hugely significant dance culture, which unequivocally centres on Louis XIV and the hybrid forms of his court and theatre. This engagement with the French baroque stage aligns the Ballets Russes with the opera-ballet revival. In fact, the company's production of Nikolai Rimsky-

[17] Sjeng Scheijen, *Diaghilev: A Life*. Translated by Jane Hedley-Prôle and S.J. Leinbach. London, Profile, 2009, p.181.
[18] Ibid, pp. 181 – 183.
[19] Garafola, *Diaghilev's Ballets Russes,* p. 118.
[20] Richard Taruskin, *Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions: A Biography of the Works through Mavra*. Berkeley, University of California, vol. 2, 1996, p. 989.
[21] Henri Ghéon, "L'Oiseau de feu." *Nouvelle revue françaises,* no.4. 1910, pp. 210 – 211, quoted in ibid.

Korsakov's opera *Le Coq d'Or* (1909) demonstrates how the opera-ballet movement may have influenced the Ballets Russes creative practice.

Le Coq d'Or

The influence of the opera-ballet revival can be seen in the Ballets Russes' first opera-ballet production in 1914. By this point, the company was considered scandalous by the French press for *tripatouillage* (tampering) and dancing to non-dance music.[22] The Ballets Russes' production of Rimsky-Korsakov's opera *Le Coq d'Or* (1909) saw considerable *tripatouillage* with major cuts to the music, despite the emphatic instructions in the score prohibiting such modifications.[23] The production presented equally drastic *mise-en-scène*. Caddy describes how each character was played by a dancer onstage and a singer on the side of the stage as "*un double momifié* (a mummified double)", in reference to the 1914 review by Émile Vuillermoz.[24] Caddy's explanation becomes clear when referring to Natalia Goncharova's stage design.

[22] Caddy, *The Ballets Russes and beyond,* pp.147 – 159.
[23] Taruskin, *Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions*, p. 1074, and Caddy, *The Ballets Russes and beyond,* pp.160 – 161.
[24] Émile Vuillermoz, Les Ballets Russes à l'Opéra', *Comœdia*, 26 May 1914, p.3, as quoted in Caddy Caddy, *The Ballets Russes and beyond,* pp. 160.

Fig. 1.1 Natalia Goncharova, scene design for Act One of the Ballets Russes' *Le Coq d'Or* (1914), Harvard Theatre Collection.

Whilst there was both a dancer and singer for each role, the audience was not expected to experience each character in duplication. The singers were made to appear as invisible as possible. Presumably due to vocal projection and a lack of physical space in the orchestra pit, Goncharova dressed the singers in a camouflage to blend in with the stage curtains. The singers were not to be 'seen', but rather to be heard as the voices of the characters. Meanwhile, the dancers were to be viewed as the bodies of the characters. Therefore, the characters in *Le Coq* were not doubled but split, in a transfer that can be understood as the displaced voice. This resonates with Alexandre Benois, artist and right-hand man to

Diaghilev, who was the driving force behind the staging, describing it as "splitting the operatic performance into two planes."[25]

Benois did not divulge the source of inspiration behind this radical bifurcation of the stage, which has provoked much scholarly speculation. Margarita Mazo proposes that Russian director, Vsevolod Meyerhold's innovations in 'biomechanics', a precursor to physical theatre, may have been an influence on Benois to fuse artforms.[26] However, this seems unlikely as biomechanics did not take off until the 1920s.[27] Glenn Watkin proposes that Benois was aware of a production over a century earlier when ballet master Jean-Georges Noverre, unable to find a chorus for Gluck's *Orpheus and Eurydice* (1762), employed the services of a cathedral choir in the wings at the Paris Opéra.[28] Caddy has explored ideas of superimposition as employed in the Futuristic movement.[29] Though convincingly argued, it was not until after *Le Coq* that Diaghilev took a serious interest in the movement during his time in Italy.[30] Finally, Taruskin proposes that Benois's idea was a reaction against the "ugliness" of opera as portrayed in Mikhail Volkonsky's famous lampoon parodying operatic clichés.[31] This aversion to opera does appear to be consistent with many in the Ballets Russes entourage, yet this does not appear to be a strong enough motive on its own.[32] Whilst all these suggestions may have played a part in Benois's creative

[25] Alexandre Benois, *Moi vospominaniya.* Moscow, Nauka, 1980, pp. 531 – 532, quoted in Taruskin *Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions,* p.1020.
[26] Margarita Mazo, "Igor Stravsinky's *Les Noces*, the Rite of Passage" in Igor Stravinsky, *Les Noces,* London, Chester Music Ltd, 2005.
[27] Braun, Edward. *Meyerhold : a Revolution in Theatre*, revised and expanded. ed., London, Methuen Drama, 2013, pp. 170 – 188.
[28] Glenn Watkins, *Pyramids at the Louvre : Music, Culture, and Collage from Stravinsky to the Postmodernists*. Cambridge, Belknap of Harvard University Press, 1994, pp. 46 – 47.
[29] Caddy, *The Ballets Russes and beyond,* p.160 – 214.
[30] Scheijen, *Diaghilev : A Life* pp. 309 – 310.
[31] Taruskin, *Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions*, p. 1072.
[32] Caddy, *The Ballets Russes and beyond,* p.161. pp. 172 – 173.

thinking, Taruskin acknowledges in a footnote that the baroque opera-ballet may also have been a legitimate source of inspiration.[33]

Benois was a second-generation Frenchman in Russia, his family having emigrated during the French Revolution.[34] As a young man, Benois was so obsessed with the French baroque that his friends would call him "the bard of Versailles" and he frequently sketched scenes from his imagination depicting the court of Louis XIV.[35] Take for instance his watercolour series *Last Promenades of Louis XIV* (1898), in which Benois brought to life the fashion, settings and spectacles of the palace in its golden age.

Fig. 1.2 Alexandre Benois, *Masquerade under Louis XIV* (1898), State Russian Museum, Saint Petersburg.

[33] Taruskin, *Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions*, p. 1072.
[34] Peter Lieven, and Leonid Sergeevich Zarin. *The Birth of Ballets-russes*. London, Allen & Unwin, 1956, p.267
[35] Alexandre Benois. *Memoirs*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1960, vol.1, p.193

Following his later visit to the palace, he described living "in a state of ecstatic intoxication… and when the first snow came it suggested to me a series of carnival masques, a masquerade emerging from the fountain."[36] This indicates Benois's passionate obsession with Louis XIV and his dance culture, which may have played a role in Benois's thinking to present *Le Coq* as an opera-ballet.

Although Benois was the author of the unusual staging, Diaghilev would have been involved in the decision-making, and he was not naïve about the baroque opera-ballet or the influence that it had on the Ballets Russes. Maureen Carr states in her book on the origins of Stravinsky's opera-ballet *Pulcinella* (1920)*,* "[w]ith his vast historical knowledge, Diaghilev would certainly have been aware of this [eighteenth century opera-ballet]."[37] Carr also notes that the absence of a reference to opera-ballet in the Ballets Russes' publicity does not indicate Diaghilev's lack of acknowledgment of this historic form on the company's practice.[38] Though an engagement with French cultural trends was productive for the company's box office success, it was equally important that Parisians continued to regard the company's unique identity as a vehicle for progressive and exotic Russian art. Indeed, it may well be that Diaghilev approved of Benois's proposal for the staging, because it was *progressive*. The Ballets Russes' *Le Coq* brought artforms together in a 'total work of art' that engaged with Wagner's *Gesamtkunstwerk* ideas which Diaghilev had been so infatuated. Prior to founding the Ballets Russes, Diaghilev and Benois established the journal *Mir Iskusstva* which published numerous articles about Wagner.[39] In fact, Benois said in a review of *Le Coq d'Or,* "Who knows, perhaps the union of the arts Wagner dreamed about has been

[36] Alexandre Benois. *Memoirs*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1960, Vol. 2, p.227
[37] Carr, *Stravinsky's Pulcinella,* pp. 43 – 44.
[38] Ibid.
[39] Rosamund Bartlett, *Wagner and Russia*, Cambridge University Press, 1995, p.67.

realised at last by us."[40] Consequently, it appears a distinctly cunning move by the Ballets Russes to take Russian opera and reconsider it in the image of the Parisian vogue as opera-ballet, and in doing so, find a form which could be considered a response to Wagner's *Gesamtkunstwerk.*

Unfortunately, Diaghilev failed to obtain permission from Rimsky-Korsakov's estate to re-stage the work in this radical fashion, and the production received only three performances before it was cut short by a court ruling in the estate's favour.[41] Taruskin remarks, "it would be hard to imagine more painful slaps in the face of all that was holy in Russia."[42] The Russian cultural class sided with Rimsky-Korsakov's widow in her public outcry of these "crimes against art", resulting in the Ballets Russes' cultural excommunication from Russia, accelerating it away from a nationalist vehicle for Russian culture.[43] Even before this incident, Diaghilev's connection with Russia was becoming increasingly distant and fraught.[44] The Ballets Russes had ceased to be a short touring venture funded by Russian royalty with hired artists from the Imperial Ballet in St Petersburg, and from 1911, it became entirely independent, housed in Paris and funded by local patrons and performance contracts.[45] Diaghilev needed to evolve the artistic vision of the company to answer to Parisian tastes, and it would appear logical to bend Russian models to align with the growing interest in the opera-ballet revival.

[40] Nikolai Minsky, Soyedineniye iskusstv: pis'mo iz Parizha," *Utro Rossii*, 24 May 1914; quoted in Taruskin, *Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions*, p. 1071.
[41] Caddy, *The Ballets Russes and beyond,* p. 161.
[42] Taruskin, *Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions*, p. 1035.
[43] Ibid, pp.1040 – 1047.
[44] Scheijen, *Diaghilev: A Life,* p. 214.
[45] Ibid., pp.155 – 214.

The Ballets Russes' opera-ballets

The concept explored in *Le Coq* had a profound impact on Diaghilev and Stravinsky during their time apart in the war and they both independently began developing opera-ballet ideas, including *Pulcinella* (1920), *Renard* (1922), *Les Noces* (1923) and *Liturgie* (which despite considerable creative efforts between 1914 and 1915, did not make it to production). Stravinsky and Diaghilev's interest in opera-ballet flourished despite the questionable success of the premiere of Stravinsky's opera *Le Rossignol* (1914) which was billed with *Le Coq.* Diaghilev had suggested *Rossignol* should be presented in a similar manner to *Le Coq* with the singers in the pit and the dancers engaged in mime.[46] However, the opera was not intended for this purpose and, unlike *Le Coq*, despite the somewhat radical last-minute changes, did not go far enough to accommodate the new hybrid presentation.[47] The Ballets Russes' first production that was wholly conceived and performed as opera-ballet, brought Stravinsky, choreographer Leonide Massine and artist Pablo Picasso together in the emphatically neoclassical work, *Pulcinella*. This work developed eighteenth-century opera-ballet principles explored in *Le Coq,* re-oriented to holistically engage with the Italian baroque. Unlike most of the Ballets Russes opera-ballets which employ the displaced voice as means to enable song and dance to coexist, in *Pulcinella*, there are three off-stage singers, who act as poetic narrators. Whilst singing is not present throughout *Pulcinella*, the voices articulate poignant moments in the narrative. To illustrate this, we can turn to the sombre trio sung whilst the 'fake' Pulcinella, who pretends to be dead, is mourned.[48]

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[46] Scheijen, *Diaghilev: A Life*, 297.
[47] Ibid.
[48] Igor Stravinsky, Leonide Massine and Pablo Picasso, *Pulcinella,* directed by Lorca Massine, performances by Pompeii's Grand Theatre and Corps de Ballet of the Teatro dell'Opera di Roma, 2017 https://www.medici.tv/en/ballets/parade-pulcinella-grand-theatre-romain-de-pompei/ Accessed 14 Oct. 2020.

Ex.1.1 Igor Stravinsky, *Pulcinella*, vocal score, J. & W. Chester, London, 1920, fig.108-112.

Shortly afterwards, the jealous men celebrate, thinking that they are finally rid of Pulcinella during an impetuous tongue-twisting tenor aria.[49]

[49] Stravinsky, Massine, Picasso, *Pulcinella,* Pompeii's Grand Theatre.

Ex.1.2 Igor Stravinsky, *Pulcinella*, vocal score, J. & W. Chester, London, 1920, fig.119-120.

The operatic element (text and music in combination) does not *tell* the story on its own, as one would usually expect in a concert (non-staged) opera performance, particularly considering that the libretto comprises of a poetic text written in an archaic Neapolitan dialect. The sung element provides the emotional and expressive sentiment whilst guiding the trajectory and pacing of the action. If deprived of the narrative dance, the story cannot be

told. This is contrary to the French baroque where the story would be mostly delivered by song and embellished with dance.[50] In *Pulcinella*, the dramatic delivery can only be understood with operatic and balletic components in combination. This is even more relevant in Stravinsky's later opera-ballet works, where characters' voices are displaced and split across several singers making it exceptionally challenging to follow the narrative on purely musical terms. As Jonathan Cross explains, in *Les Noces* "the Bridegroom is represented by different voices on different occasions", whereas in *Renard*, "the four singers are not specifically assigned to any of the four characters".[51] This makes clear the necessity to critically engage with these works in a combined audio-visual sphere. This is consistent across the Ballets Russes' opera-ballet works which engage the equal or near equal employment of song and dance in the dramatic delivery, a feature borrowed and developed upon the French baroque opera-ballet.

Conclusion

Both Diaghilev and Benois went to great lengths to see performances of Wagner and in Rosamund Bartlett's book, *Wagner and Russia,* she writes that Wagner was a "towering figure" for Diaghilev and Benois and the other writers for *Mir Iskusstva.*[52] Consequently, it seems likely that Diaghilev and Benois were searching for a form in which total synthesis of the arts was possible. It would appear that the revival of the French baroque opera-ballet assisted Benois and Diaghilev to find a way to create a 'total art'. Benois was clearly deeply fascinated and knowledgeable about the French baroque as evidenced by his paintings and his nickname, "the bard of Versailles". This obsession coupled with the Parisian appetite for revitalised baroque opera-ballet, created the perfect condition for Benois to propose *Le Coq's*

[50] Carr, *Stravinsky's Pulcinella,* p. 44.
[51] Jonathan Cross, "Stravinsky's theatre", *The Cambridge Companion to Stravinsky*, edited by Jonathan Cross, Cambridge University Press, 2003, p. 141.
[52] Rosamund Barlett, *Wagner and Russia,* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995, p. 66.

hybrid staging, fulfilling the ambition to create a true *Gesamtkunstwerk.* The production of *Le Coq* clearly served as a starting point for the Ballets Russes' further explorations in opera-ballet. In turn, these productions have become the archetype for contemporary opera-ballet.

2 Defining Contemporary Opera-ballet

My composition portfolio draws on the opera-ballets created by the Ballets Russes. I see my work as 'contemporary opera-ballet' which engage with modernist opera-ballet productions and exist as part of today's diverse interdisciplinary practice. Therefore, it is important to articulate how my work relates to present-day artists exploring the relationship between song and dance. By identifying a field of study, it becomes possible to articulate how my compositions are furthering contemporary opera-ballet. Considering the significant legacy of the Ballets Russes' modernist opera-ballets, it is logical to use their works as the foundation for an understanding of today's contemporary opera-ballet.

Today, the fundamental aesthetic properties of opera and ballet are broadly agreed upon, so opera-ballet might be defined as a dramatic work that is classically sung, containing theatrical dance based upon the *danse d'école* (classical school). However, even during the Ballets Russes' time, the boundaries of 'classical' were being tested, and even more so today. We have become accustomed to 'contemporary opera' and especially 'contemporary ballet', to mean that the work is rooted in tradition with an avant-garde ambition. We would expect to see flexibility in form, style and artistic approach resulting in some uniqueness and disparity from other similarly 'contemporary' works. This is also true of contemporary opera-ballet productions, which often look and sound highly distinctive. Consequently, a definition of contemporary opera-ballet must articulate the meaning of 'classical' and how this is different from musical theatre for instance, where both narrative song and dance are employed.

A definition of opera-ballet must also go beyond simply denoting the presence of 'classical' song and dance; it must address the equilibrium of artforms. For example, ballet has occurred *within* opera since the inclusion of *divertissements* in the grand opera tradition, which is entirely contrasting to sharing the narrative delivery between song and dance as practised by the Ballets Russes and others.[53] Consequently, this ambition to synthesise and blur artforms aligns opera-ballet within the music theatre genre. The need for a distinct term may be questioned, however, as will be discussed, the parameters of music theatre have provoked such fierce debate over the last half century that comparative analysis and the study of developing traditions has become problematic. This is most apparent in the linguistic disparity in academic circles where a range of terms is used to describe contemporary opera-ballet, including "ballet-cantata", "dance (or danced)-opera" and the French equivalent *opéra-dansé*. This proliferation of terms discourages the critique of an increasing preoccupation within today's theatres.

The elusive identity of music theatre

To identify the body of work with which my compositions resonate with, it is necessary to distinguish between contemporary opera-ballet and music theatre. Today, music theatre is a widely used term to denote modern interdisciplinary performance, although its application is questionable given the broad nature of dictionary definitions. For instance, *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, defines music theatre as "a kind of opera and opera production in which spectacle and dramatic impact are emphasised over purely musical factors."[54] That found in the *New Harvard Dictionary of Music* is equally unspecific: "the combination of elements

[53] Hervé Lacombe, *The Keys to French Opera in the Nineteenth Century,* Berkley, University of California Press, 2001, p. 239.
[54] Andrew Clements, "Music theatre", *Grove Music Online,* Oxford University Press, 2001. https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000019452. Accessed 16 Sept. 2020.

from music and drama in new forms distinct from traditional opera".[55] To hold some useful categorising value, most definitions and theorists associate the music theatre genre with the 1960s and 1970s, specifically the works of Harrison Birtwistle, Peter Maxwell Davis, Alexander Goehr, Hans Werner Henze and Luciano Berio.[56] However, in a comprehensive book on music theatre, Anthony Sheppard has argued that the predominant association between this period and music theatre under acknowledges the genre's growth and multiplicity at the beginning of the century.[57] Sheppard notes Arnold Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire* (1912) and Igor Stravinsky's *L'Histoire du soldat* (1918) as hugely significant works that shaped the course of modern music and have acted as archetypes for subsequent explorations in music theatre.[58] This enlarges the categorisation of the already expansive music theatre genre to encapsulate several decades, embracing many more stage works of intense diversity.

During the 1960s and 1970s, critics and composers were struggling to formulate a definitive manifesto for the music theatre movement. For instance, in Michael Nyman's review of the premiere performance of Goehr's *Naboth's Vineyard* (1968), he highlighted the difficulty in defining music theatre by citing no less than three descriptions given by Goehr himself; a "dramatic madrigal", "a stylised opera of a kind" and, most amusingly, "a semi-cabaret theatre with real music".[59] Nyman presents music theatre as "a fairly radical alternative to 'straight' opera, an attempt to revitalise the often-fossilised audience-performance relationship".[60] This disenchantment with opera is mostly consistent across the 1960's avant

[55] Don Michael Randel, "Music theatre", *The Harvard Dictionary of Music*. 4th ed. Cambridge, Harvard University Press Reference Library, 2003, p. 544.
[56] Clements, "Music theatre", *Grove Music Online.*
[57] Anthony Sheppard, *Revealing Masks: Exotic Influences and Ritualized Performance in Modernist Music Theater*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2001, p. 4.
[58] Ibid.
[59] Michael Nyman, "Alexander Goehr's 'Naboth's Vineyard," *Tempo*, no. 86, 1968, pp. 14 – 15.
[60] Ibid.

garde, spearheaded by Pierre Boulez who proposed blowing up opera houses.[61] Whilst it can be argued that some music theatre work can be defined by the opposition between opera and anti-opera, opinion remains divided on considering this an inclusive characteristic of the genre as a whole. Indeed, in his article on developments within music theatre scholarship, Björn Heile discusses *Musiktheater Heute: Internationales Symposion der Paul Sacher*, one of the most substantial collections of academic writing in the field, noting that it is framed by two opposing views of the genre: anti-opera and, curiously, "anti-anti-opera", set against a more conservative, visually engaged form of music theatre.[62] One can conclude that the music theatre is a an elusive, shape-shifting genre, in contrast to the defined profiles of other stage forms.

Rather than define music theatre as a genre with specific characteristics, it might be better understood as a net to catch works and productions that cannot be easily categorised elsewhere. As Sheppard notes, it is due to the very nature of the form that these definitions have been unsatisfactory, as music theatre persistently strives to reach out beyond the confines of artistic disciplines.[63] An example of this would be Maxwell Davies's *Vesalii Icones* (1969) for dancer, solo cello and ensemble which takes inspiration from Andreas Vesalius's images on the fourteen Stations of the Cross. Maxwell Davies describes in detail how the principle of superimposition is shared in both musical and choreographic terms and dictates that the placement of the cellist should not just be near the dancer but "*vis-à-vis*." [64] Here, integration goes beyond form and conceptual ideas are simultaneously played out on multiple artistic planes, demanding a holistic interdisciplinary approach to critique.

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[61] Pierre Boulez and Liebermann Rolf. "'Opera Houses? – Blow Them Up!': Pierre Boulez versus Rolf Liebermann", *Opera Magazine*, no. 19, 1968, pp. 440 – 50.
[62] Björn Heile, "Recent Approaches to Experimental Music Theatre and Contemporary Opera." *Music and Letters*, vol. 87, no. 1, 2006, pp. 74 – 75.
[63] Sheppard, *Revealing Masks*, p. 3.
[64] Peter Maxwell-Davies, *Vesalii Icones.* London, Boosey & Hawkes, 1978, p. i.

Sheppard's solution is that it "may be wrong even to think of music theatre as a genre, since so much twentieth-century art has been concerned with genre-blurring". One could continue this line of thought and propose that music theatre is in fact *a method*; an ambition to holistically embrace the arts. If we accept this, surely it could be argued that there are specific strands within it. Indeed, returning to *Musiktheater Heute*, scholarship is divided into three categories - Text-Dramaturgie, Musik-Dramaturgie, and Bild-Dramaturgie, to distinguish between some broad concerns within the genre.[65] A more refined trend is the use of pantomime, which David Beard identifies as Birtwistle's means of exploring the relationship between music, gesture, and physical movement across his stage works, enabling a comparative study of *Down by the Greenwood Side* (1969), *Gawain* (1991), *The Second Mrs Kong* (1994), and *The Io Passion* (2003).[66] Therefore, one could argue that contemporary opera-ballet is a trend *within* music theatre.

Mostly consistent across the music theatre movement is an engagement with archaic dramatic models to inform new theatrical languages, whether in reaction against Romanticism or motivated by a more aggressive rejection of traditional practices. As Sheppard writes, artists were "more radical (in the etymological sense) than revolutionary, in that many prominent works sought to restore theatrical performance to its legendary roots, to a time when all forms were one."[67] Sheppard does not state specifically what these "legendary roots" are, but they appear to be those from classical Greek theatre. As discussed in the previous chapters, the Ballets Russes' pursuits to unify song and dance in dramatic unity drew on an alternative 'legendary root' – the French baroque opera-ballet. In turn, the Ballets Russes have had an

[65] Hermann Danuser and Matthias, Kassel. *Musiktheater Heute: Internationales Symposion Der Paul Sacher Stiftung Basel 2001*. Mainz, Schott, 2003.
[66] David Beard, *Harrison Birtwistle's Opera and Music Theatre*. Cambridge, University of Cambridge Press, 2012, pp. 1 – 37.
[67] Sheppard, *Revealing Masks*, p. 4.

influence on twentieth and twenty-first century stage-work. One can propose viewing the baroque opera-ballet as the root, the Ballets Russes as the trunk, and today's practice as the sprawling branches. In fact, in some of today's productions, such as Pascal Dusapin's *Passion* (2011), the whole tree is plain to see. Although Dusapin acknowledges the influence of Claudio Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo* (1607) which can be heard in the score, the influence of the French Baroque is also evident, as noted by critic Tim Ashley:

> The score engages in a dialogue with baroque tradition. A harpsichord underpins Dusapin's quietly dissonant textures, while an offstage group of vocalists comments, like a madrigal consort, on the emotions at the work's centre. As in the *opéras-ballets* of Campra and Rameau, dance is as integral to the piece as song.[68]

The reimagining of 'found' music was an important part of the Ballets Russes' practice, such as *Les Tentations de la Bergère, ou l'Amour Vainqueur* (1924), with music by the French baroque composer Michel de Montéclair, arranged and orchestrated by Henri Casadesus.[69]

Dusapin has similarly written a "neo-baroque" work drawing on 'found' music and develops his language in a distinctly contemporary guise through the addition of synthesisers and fixed tape electronics. His contemporary aesthetic is also mirrored in the dance, first choreographed by Sasha Waltz, which is definitively contemporary dance rather than the Ballets Russes' modernist ballet style. Although this may appear circumstantial, it is worth noting that Dusapin is a Parisian and *Passion* was performed at Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, Paris; the home of both the baroque opera-ballet, and the Ballets Russes.

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[68] Tim Ashley, *Passion review – Pascal Dusapin's haunting retelling of the Orpheus legend*, The Gurdian, https://www.theguardian.com/music/2018/oct/15/passion-review-dusapin Accessed 1 Jan. 2025.
[69] https://www.loc.gov/collections/bronislava-nijinska/articles-and-essays/les-tentations-de-la-bergere/

Aesthetics of Contemporary Opera-ballet

Whilst a score and libretto might suggest an artform balance, the manifestation can vary significantly in different productions. While a work conceived as an opera-ballet might be transformed into an opera due to a less engaged dance component in a particular interpretation, an opera, oratorio or music theatre work might be expanded into an opera-ballet following the addition or inflation of a dance element, as pioneered by the Ballets Russes. There are many notable examples of such reimagined productions that expand the dance element of pre-existing musical works, including: Pina Bausch Company's "danced opera" 1975 production of Gluck's *Orpheus and Eurydice* (1762), now an integral repertoire piece for Ballet de l'Opéra national de Paris; Glen Tetley's production of Schoenberg's melodrama *Pierrot Lunaire* (1912), revived by Scottish Ballet in 2003; and Rambert Dance Company's 2016 production of Haydn's oratorio *The Creation* (1799). [70] It is important to note that whilst some of the works listed would usually include a dance element, the role of the dance is significantly amplified to carry narrative weight equal to that of song. It should also be noted that although some of these works are clearly not contemporary music, the pursuit of reconsidering works with a greater dance role as practised by the Ballets Russes, aligns this reimagining trend with contemporary opera-ballet.

Debate among critics regarding the equal importance of song and dance in the dramatic delivery of works and productions can call into question the designation of opera-ballet. This might include Carlos Acosta's 2015 reimagining of Bizet's opera *Carmen* (1875), which retains a selection of the original arias and choruses, and at moments the stage is flooded with singers and dancers alike.[71] Critics responded to the imbalance between dance and music in

[70] "Orpheus and Eurydice - Ballet - Season 17/18 Programming." *Opéra National De Paris*, 2020, www.operadeparis.fr/en/season-17-18/ballet/orphee-et-eurydice Accessed 14 Oct. 2020.
[71] Georges Bizet, Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy *Carmen*, directed by Carlos Acosta, performance by The Royal Ballet, 12 Nov 2015. Royal Opera House, London.

the production, with Roslyn Sulcas suggesting that "this *Carmen* suffers from a multiple personality disorder. These sudden vocal entries are inconsistent, without any particular reason for occurring at one point rather than another."[72] In a complete reversal of *divertissement* in grand opera, one could describe this as opera *within* ballet. Most productions of Richard Strauss's *Salome* (1905) present a noteworthy dance challenge for the eponymous soprano during the Dance of the Seven Veils, which lasts ten minutes, a tenth of the duration of the whole opera performance, with no sung material from any characters. It is an exceptionally poignant moment in the narrative, where the dramatic delivery is passed from song to dance, unveiling Salome's true colours. This can be seen in productions such as the Dutch National Opera's 2017 staging where Malin Byström performs a seductive yet sinister solo dance for the entire duration. Opera critic Shirley Apthorp described how "she has the physique of the child-woman, the lithe grace to hold the stage as she dances, and dark, charismatic power to burn."[73] So, perhaps *Salome*, depending on the interpretation, may sit somewhere between an opera and an opera-ballet.

The rationale for different labels other than contemporary opera-ballet is extensive and designed to have a variety of purposes. In premiere productions, there is a marketing motivation to either align or distinguish against a particular trend or genre. For example, *Les Enfants Terribles* (1996) with music by Philip Glass and choreography by Susan Marshall, was promoted as a 'dance-opera', in order to make Marshall's contemporary style distinct from classical ballet.[74] Vaughan Williams' *The Bridal Day* (originally written in 1953 before being modified in 1957 as the choral work *Epithalamion*) was described as a 'masque' to

[72] Roslyn Sulcas, "Review: The Royal Ballet's 'Carmen' in London". *The New York Times,* 27 October 2015, https://www.nytimes.com/2015/10/28/arts/dance/review-the-royal-ballets-carmen-in-london.html Accessed 16 Sept. 2020.
[73] Shirley Apthorp, "A Salome to die for at Dutch National Opera", *The Financial Times*, 14 June 2017. https://www.ft.com/content/5b5e9f92-5021-11e7-a1f2-db19572361bb Accessed 16 Sept. 2020.
[74] Susan Marshall & Company, *Les Enfants Terribles (Children of the Game)*, 2020. http://www.sumac.org/les-enfants-2 Accessed 16 Sept. 2020.

distinguish it from other stage traditions and instead align the work to the revival of the nationalist and historic English form of the same name. The rationale for more permanent labels on scores for instance, are often more explicit descriptions of how these hybrids have been conceived and how future artists might consider their interpretation. For example, Stravinsky's *Les Noces* (1923) is typically defined as a 'dance cantata' to reflect the work's structure which has a basis in the exchange between soloists and chorus, akin to the cantata tradition. The designation 'dance cantata' has resulted in productions that present the chorus as a static non-dramatised entity, as was the case at its premiere. [75] These three examples showcase a range of different rationales for terms other than opera-ballet that portray explicit details about the work and its wider context within the music and dance canons. Importantly, these labels do not interfere with the principle of bringing song and dance in equal measure thus the opera-ballet term may still be applied.

Musical theatre or musicals (to avoid the obvious confusion with music theatre) often employ dance and song in equal measure not so unlike opera-ballet. Musicals can incorporate singing-dancers, which is largely because the style of both the music and dance is not 'classical', though in some cases informed by classical practice. Broadly, there is an understanding of the aesthetic qualities of musicals and how they differ to opera, music theatre and therefore opera-ballet. To summarise, the dance style in musicals is more difficult to pinpoint as it can take the form of anything from hip hop to ballet, so definitions of musicals usually centre around the alternation between spoken dialogue and song.[76] In today's West End and on Broadway, a much more striking feature is the use of amplification,

[75] Igor Stravinsky and Robert Craft, *Expositions and developments*, New York, University of California Press, 1962, pp. 117 – 118.
[76] Geoffrey Block and Kate Van Winkle Keller, "Musical Theatre", *Grove Music Online*. Oxford University Press, 2001. https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.A2262833 Accessed 12 Nov. 2015.

which is now commonplace even for musicals conceived for acoustic performance.[77] This has led to an unmistakable musical theatre 'sound' that infuses popular singing styles and "belt" technique.[78] As to be expected, there are some intriguing crossovers such as the 'musical' *An American in Paris* (2014), which reimagines George Gershwin's songs and instrumental music with balletic choreography, featuring pointe work choreographed by the Royal Ballet's Artistic Associate, Christopher Wheeldon.[79] Another example is the 2014 'opera-ballet' of Thomas Adès's *Life Story* (1994) in which soprano Claire Booth was amplified to enable her to create an intimate jazz-influenced sound akin to that of Billie Holliday, which Adès asks for in his score.[80] Despite these examples, musical theatre can be broadly characterised by narrative dance across a wide range of styles and by a vocal practice that relies on amplification.

Understanding the aesthetic properties of musicals enables the articulation of the distinctive features of 'opera' in the context of contemporary opera-ballet. It could be argued that most operas are written for the classically trained voice without amplification. However, today's opera scene is exceptionally diverse and companies such as Tête à Tête, present works which represent a much-expanded conception of opera. In Tête à Tête's 2022 festival alone, productions included: "a fusion of Western and Arabic music", a hip-hop opera, a Sanskrit opera drawing on North Indian traditions, and also an "immersive new opera" where "singers use the edges of their voices – from stuttering to wolves howling".[81] It is also important to acknowledge that some opera productions also employ amplification, though this is mostly

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[77] Block, Keller. "Musical Theatre", *Grove Music Online*.
[78] Tray Bourne and Maëva Garnier, "Physiological and Acoustic Characteristics of the Female Music Theater Voice." *The Journal of the Acoustical Society of America,* vol. 131, no. 2, 2012, pp. 1586 – 1594.
[79] George Gershwin, Ira Gershwin and Craig Lucas, *An American in Paris*, directed Christopher Wheeldon, performances by Playful Productions, 17 April 2017. Dominion Theatre, London.
[80] Thomas Adès, *Life Story,* London, Faber Music, 2004, p.iv, and Thomas Adès, *Life Story.* Directed by Karole Armitage, performance by Armitage Gone! Dance Company, 2 Nov 2014. Sadlers Wells.
[81] Tête à Tête, *Tête à Tête Opera Festival 2022*, https://www.tete-a-tete.org.uk/festival/tete-a-tete-the-opera-festival-2022/ Accessed 24 August 2023.

harnessed subtly for scoring and acoustic reasons, such as the BBC Proms 2023 performance of György Kurtág's *Endgame* (2018).[82] Clearly, even from the few productions listed here, attempting to define contemporary opera's aesthetic qualities is challenging. In the context of contemporary opera-ballet, my interest has focused on works and productions which employ the dexterity and expressivity of the classically trained voice, with or without amplification.

It is possible to apply the same approach to unravel the meaning of 'ballet' in contemporary opera-ballet; the movement and technique that can be achieved by classically trained dancers. However, there are disagreements over what "classical dance", or indeed what "classically trained" actually means. *The Oxford Dictionary of Dance* denotes that the term ballet should only be applied to works based strictly on the *danse d'école.*[83] Yet, today's ballet companies rarely abide by this orthodoxy. To return to the Ballets Russes, Diaghilev moved away from classical grammar, discarding ballet's association with mere entertainment, transforming it into an artform that pleased and shocked audiences with equal measure.[84] For instance, in the choreography for *Le Sacre du printemps* (1913), Nijinsky disregarded classical gestures, and instead, as Garafola describes, "The dancers trembled, shook, shivered, stamped; jumped crudely and ferociously, circled the stage in wild khorovods [ancient pagan dance circles]."[85] Throughout the twentieth century there continued to be developments within ballet including the fusing of national dance styles. In addition, what came to be called 'contemporary dance' emerged as a new, opposing movement. Artists such as Isadora Duncan, Ruth St. Denis, and Martha Graham rejected the use of pointe shoes and elegant posturing for more fluid forms

[82] György Kurtág, Samuel Beckett *Endgame*, directed by Victoria Newlyn, performance by BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra conducted by Ryan Wigglesworth, 17 Aug 2023. Royal Albert Hall, London.
[83] Debra Craine and Judith Mackrell. "Ballet", *The Oxford Dictionary of Dance*. 2nd ed., Oxford University Press, 2010. https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199563449.001.0001/acref-9780199563449-e-214?rskey=Ikvmcl&result=1 Accessed: 14 Oct. 2020.
[84] Stoyan Sgourev, "Brokerage as Catalysis: How Diaghilev's Ballets Russes Escalated Modernism." *Organization Studies*, vol. 36, no. 3, 2015, pp. 343 – 361.
[85] Alex Ross, *The Rest is Noise*, London, Harper Perennial, 2007, p.81.

and a barefoot, earthy connection to the floor.[86] Like ballet, these artists were still largely engaged in exploring narrative, using movement to deliver drama. Merce Cunningham is often cited as a key figure in the development of contemporary dance, as he sought to break from narrative, presenting dance as an abstract artform.[87] Overtime, these movements have become porous, resulting in a fluidity of style between classical ballet, neoclassical ballet, contemporary ballet and contemporary dance. Dancers today are expected to have at least some ability in both classical and contemporary schools, evidenced in dance education where students take classes in both disciplines.[88] It is also made clear in the profession, for example the contemporary dance figurehead Wayne McGregor has remained The Royal Ballet's Resident Choreographer since 2006, and presented a notable opera-ballet double-bill in 2009, which reimagined Handel's *Acis and Galatea* (1739) and Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* (1689).[89] As a consequence of the plurality of today's dance scene, the Oxford Dictionary of Dance is forced to conclude its definition of ballet somewhat loosely by stating that "the term took on a much broader meaning and is now frequently used to describe a wide range of non-classically based theatrical dance."[90] A more satisfying conclusion might refer to the continued and prominent use of the ballet term by dance companies to describe a narrative dance work, in contrast to the abstract, non-narrative performances more typical in contemporary dance. In the context of contemporary opera-ballet, I have been focused on works and productions which engage with the ballet tradition of narrative dance, which encapsulates a broad understanding of classical ballet and contemporary dance.

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[86] Craine, Debra, and Judith Mackrell. "Modern dance (contemporary dance)", *The Oxford Dictionary of Dance*. 2nd ed., Oxford University Press, 2010. https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199563449.001.0001/acref-9780199563449-e-1654 Accessed: 14 Oct. 2020.

[87] Ibid.

[88] BA (Hons) Contemporary Dance**,** *Trinity Laban Conservatoire for Music and Dance*, https://www.trinitylaban.ac.uk/study/dance/undergraduate-programmes/ba-hons-contemporary-dance Accessed 14 Oct. 2020.

[89] https://www.roh.org.uk/tickets-and-events/acis-and-galatea-stream-details Accessed 24 Oct 2023

[90] Debra Craine and Judith Mackrell, "Ballet", *The Oxford Dictionary of Dance*. 2nd ed., Oxford University Press, 2010.

The purpose of exploring the aesthetics of today's opera-ballet scene is to develop my own creative practice informed and contextualised by the work of others. Whilst it might be possible to formulate a precise definition of contemporary opera-ballet and delineate what can and cannot be categorised accordingly, this is unlikely to be helpful in my pursuit as a composer. It has however been productive to identify a field of study, wherein some works and productions sit firmly, and others sit just outside. In terms of my creative development both are valid and of use. In fact, the works that sit at the edge of contemporary opera-ballet are perhaps the most useful as it demonstrates where creative developments are taking place, and where there is opportunity for further exploration. For instance, Soweto Kinch's *The Legend of Mike Smith* (2013) is a theatrical work that defies genre pigeon-holing and has been an influence on my composition *London Portraits*.[91] It is clearly not a contemporary opera-ballet but contains elements thereof. Originally conceived as a contemporary jazz album exploring the seven deadly sins, Kinch, in collaboration with hip-hop choreographer Jonzi D, transformed *The Legend of Mike Smith* into a theatrical work with the narrative flitting between hip-hop dance, rap and classical song. Kinch may well have been influenced by Kurt Weill's opera-ballet *Die sieben Todsünden (The Seven Deadly Sins)* (1933) where the protagonist Anna, is played by both a dancer and soprano, each representing a different aspect of her personality. Similarly, In *The Legend of Mike Smith*, the protagonist is played by three performers each representing different aspects of Smith's psyche. The performers include Kinch himself rapping and playing saxophone, Richardo Da Silva dancing and rapping, and perhaps most impressively, Tyrone Isaas-Stuart, who duels on saxophone and dances with fiery energy and acrobatic virtuosity. Kinch incorporates classical singing as part of the electronic soundscape, performed by the multitracked mezzo-soprano Rachel Maby in a fusion of classical and jazz worlds representing angelic beings. Clearly, *The*

[91] Soweto Kinch and Jonzi D, *The Legend of Mike Smith,* Albany Theatre, London, 23 Sept 2013.

Legend of Mike Smith is aesthetically situated outside the classically rooted opera-ballet, but it does still incorporate classical singing. Moreover, Kinch and Jonzi D have applied the opera-ballet principle of presenting song and dance as equally important vehicles in the storytelling, albeit if ‘song’ is expanded from sung-word to spoken word.

3 Commentary on Compositions

To enable explore contemporary opera-ballet in depth, my composition portfolio comprises: two works with poetic narratives, one short, single-act work, one scene from a large-scale production, and a long-form opera-ballet. My compositional aesthetic has three distinct branches which are represented across these five works. The two poetic works, *Sea Garden* and *Water Hymn,* are examples of my work which explore natural themes with pitched content drawing on permutations of the lydian and whole-tone scales. In contrast, both *London Portraits*, and *Ted's Passing* from *The Canary Boys,* present my compositional style that draws on jazz influences, through the incorporation of jazz harmony and groove. Finally, the major work in my portfolio, lasting forty minutes, is *The Orchestras of Auschwitz,* which showcases my creative engagement with 'found' music.

Nature Aesthetic

One of the branches of my compositional aesthetic, concerns music inspired by nature, with works scored for strings and voices, such as *Sea Garden* and *Water Hymn*. As shown by these two compositions, I always seek to establish a strong relationship between the text and music, and I have sought to engage in vivid word painting to evoke the subject matter. As I value words so significantly, it has led me to write my own text so that I can construct scenes, stories and images as I imagine them, not so unlike Richard Wagner who wrote both the libretto and music for his music dramas. The great advantage of being the author and composer is that one does not need to negotiate any text alterations. I can evolve the text as I compose and treat the text more liberally to suit the music, such as repeating phrases. I also shape the poetry to determine or support the musical structure and employ particular words for their rhythmic possibilities or sound quality.

Beyond the strong correlation between music and words, my nature inspired compositions exploit a soundworld that draws on the lydian and whole-tone scales. There is commonality between the two, as they start with the same four notes:

C Lydian = C D E F# G A B

Whole-Tone on C = C D E F# G# Bb (or A#)

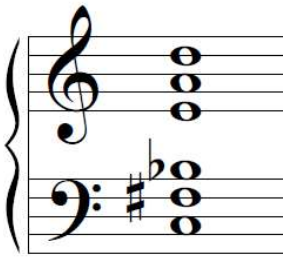
I do not strictly distinguish between the two; instead, I envision a single harmonic language with various possibilities:

The nature collection = C D E F# G/G# A Bb/B

I also strive to create a fluid language without a fixed tonal centre or note hierarchy. Consequently, the music moves freely through various transpositions of the 'nature collection' which is also embellished with additional chromatic notes. I have always found this collection of pitches to be beautiful and very evocative of the natural world. To reflect on my aesthetic preferences, I am adhering to the tradition of using the whole-tone scale as a symbol of the mystical or otherworldly, which stems back to works such as Mikhail Glinka's *Ruslan and Lyudmila* (1846). In this opera, Glinka uses the whole-tone scale to depict supernatural characters, most notably Chernomor.[92] In my case, I use whole-tone languages to evoke the natural world rather than the fanciful. However, in my works, I picture nature with a sense of awe, majesty and timelessness. It was not an intentional relationship, but my

[92] Mary Woodside, "Leitmotiv in Russia: Glinka's Use of the Whole-Tone Scale." *19th-Century Music*, vol. 14, no. 1, 1990, pp. 68 – 69.

nature collection contains all the notes required for Alexander Scriabin's "chord of pleroma".[93]



Ex.3.1 Leo Geyer, Chord of pleroma.

Scriabin went as far as to say, that the chord "was designed to afford instant apprehension of - that is, to *reveal* - what was in essence beyond the mind of man to conceptualise. Its preternatural stillness was a gnostic intimation of a hidden otherness."[94] Clearly Scriabin had more divine associations for this soundworld, yet perhaps we both align with the feeling that this harmonic sonority can express what lies beyond mankind.

Another composer with whom I feel a sense of synergy regarding this harmonic language is Olivier Messiaen. A notable feature of the whole-tone and lydian scales, and therefore also my nature collection and Scriabin's chord of pleroma, is the prominence of the tritone. This interval has been referred to as the "*diabolus in musica"* (devil in music) and avoided or indeed embraced for its dissonant qualities.[95] In the context of my nature collection, I do not hear the tritone as dissonant, but rather as harmonic brightness. Messiaen boldly claimed that "In the resonance of a low C, a very fine ear perceives a F-sharp".[96] This statement is

[93] Simon Morrison, "Skryabin and the Impossible", *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, Vol. 51, No. 2. Summer, 1998, p. 314.
[94] Ibid.
[95] Jeffery Kite-Powell, *A Performer's Guide to Renaissance Music*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2007, p. 357.
[96] Olivier Messiaen, *The Technique of My Musical Language*, vol. 1 and 2, Paris, Alphonse Leduc, 1956, p. 31.

accompanied by an example, demonstrating that Messiaen is referring to the ability to pick out the F# partial from the harmonic series on C.

Ex.3.2 Olivier Messiaen, Example no.70, *The Technique of My Musical Language*, Paris, Alphonse Leduc, 1959, p. 30.

Messiaen goes on to say that because of the audible presence of F# in the note of C, "there is an attraction between the F# and the C, the former tending to resolve itself upon the latter".[97] It seems to me unlikely that Messian could audibly hear such a distant partial, and I cannot say that I can specifically hear a F# in the note C either. However, I do agree there is an attraction between these notes, and a harmonic sense of pull, which I exploit in all my nature inspired compositions. Also, in my jazz-inspired compositions, I am often drawn to write chords with a sharp eleventh, which creates a tritone from the root note. So, perhaps Messiaen's analysis answers my aesthetic fascination with the tritone, as well as the lydian and whole-tone modes which feature this interval

Commentary on *Sea Garden*

The purpose of this composition was to create a work whereby music, poetry, dance, as well as architecture and garden design, come together in a coherent interdisciplinary work. This composition started life as an entirely different work called *The Bronze Garden* inspired by

[97] Olivier Messiaen, *The Technique of My Musical Language*, vol. 1 and 2, Paris, Alphonse Leduc, 1956, p. 47.

Dame Barbara Hepworth's sculpture garden in St. Ives, Cornwall. Scored for alto flute, harp and string trio, it was commissioned by Barbara Hepworth's niece, Sophie Bowness to open a new exhibition of Hepworth's work at the New Art Centre. This performance captured the interest of the garden designer Stuart Towner who was seeking inspiration for a show garden at the Chelsea Flower Show. Eventually, the Royal Horticultural Society approved the project, and funding was obtained for a multi-sensory garden called the *Spirit of Cornwall.*

The garden's design incorporated the visual representation of the waveform from a recording of *The Bronze Garden*. Specifically, the waveform can be seen in the fence of metal bars around the garden's perimeter, as well as the bridge across the water.

Fig. 3.1 Stuart Towner, design for *The Spirit of Cornwall,* 2018.

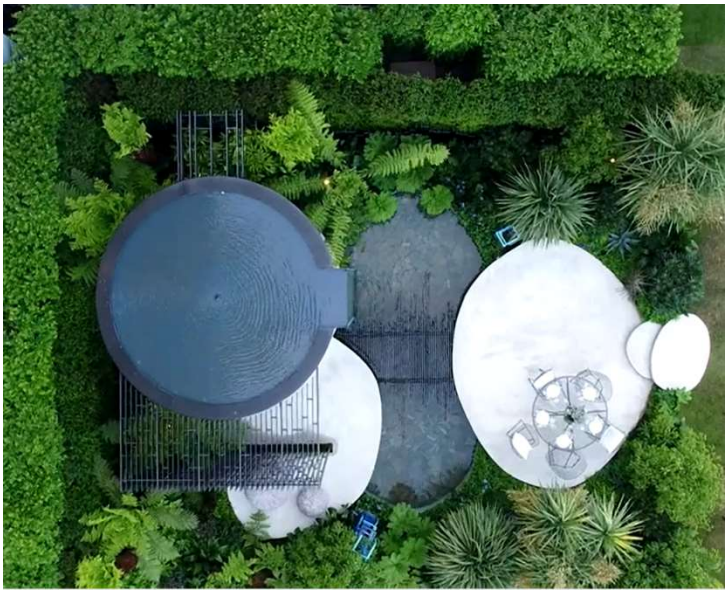


Fig. 3.2 Stuart Towner, birds eye photo of *The Spirit of Cornwall,* 2018.

The design and planting also sought to reflect the sanctuary-like environment and atmosphere that is expressed in *The Bronze Garden.* The plan was to play a recording of the music on loop whilst visitors to the Chelsea Flower Show experienced the garden, and for the opening press event, we would perform the music live. However, Towner requested a new version of the music with voice to enable text to add more specificity to the inspiration behind the garden, and to guide the audience's emotive response to it. Towner was also eager to heighten the visual display for the opening press event, and it was agreed that I would create an opera-ballet scene. So, I completely reimagined *The Bronze Garden* and created *Sea Garden* with words written by myself and choreography by Sarah-Louise Kristiansen. Towner's suggestion for the new version certainly paid off, and the BBC chose to televise the performance by Constella Music and I, as well as broadcast an audio recording on Radio 3. *The Spirit of Cornwall* was also awarded a Silver-gilt Medal by the Royal Horticultural Society.

In *Sea Garden*, I was eager to further the sense of stillness and sanctuary that was present in *The Bronze Garden.* In the first iteration of this work there was a prolonged fast section which did not feel appropriate within the context of *The Spirit of Cornwall.* I also needed to entirely reconsider the alto flute part as a mezzo-soprano line. In essence, I restarted the compositional process by returning to the raw musical ideas. I sought to create a different journey through the music led by a new text. My only restriction was to ensure that the waveform shape of the music would conform to that of *The Bronze Garden* which had informed the design of the fence and bridge in the garden.

The poem describes a sense of journey from the sea to Hepworth's sculpture garden, which are a few minutes away from one another. Additionally, I sought to draw on the symmetry between the sea landscape and Hepworth's Garden and sculpture, a relationship Hepworth imagined herself. In a BBC documentary which sought to show "how Cornish landscapes have influenced sculptor Barbara Hepworth's work", Hepworth famously said "I, the sculptor, am the landscape."[98] Consequently, the opening section of *Sea Garden* which describes the sea in music and words, is reconsidered at the end, this time to reflect Hepworth's Garden.

[98] John Read, "Barbara Hepworth", BBC, 17 Sep 1961, https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p013h27r Accessed 1 Jan. 2025.

Sea Garden

I float on a flowing green sea
and bask in the warmth from the Stream.
I see the seamless pearl blue sky
and watch distant gulls glide the zephyr.
I hear the babble beyond the grey cliffs,
listen to its distant song sail the breeze.
I feel rays of yellow sun
and blush like coral in Spring.

Sculpted sea-rocks painted lime by rain
emerge from rippling olive waters,
sparkling with blooming flowers.

Giant cliffs carved of walled seashell stone
make waves reach for white clouds
and explode in fountains of shamrock spray,
glistening with flowering blossom.

I escape in a flowering green sea
and hide in the garden cove.
I hear the stillness of thought
and echo of tide and breath.
I see the towering weathered casts of jade
and watch them become nature's treasure.
I honour the green sea of Summer.

In the performance, the singer and dancer are presented as the same character, one providing the voice and the other the body. This directly relates to the approach employed by the Ballets Russes' production in *Le Coq D'or.* The text could be understood as a poetic soliloquy with the protagonist expressively and emotively implying what is happening and is purposely somewhat abstracted. This provides the space for the choreography to carry narrative meaning and combine with the sung word to enable the fullness of the drama to be told. Importantly, the choreography does not rely on mime; much like the text and music, it

has the freedom to be poetic and suggestive. Much like Stravinsky's opera-ballets, the drama can only be fully understood when all artforms are present together.

At the beginning, Kristiansen's choreography, performed by Alice Oakley-Jones, utilises fluid arm gestures and arched back movements to suggest floating on the sea as described in the sung word. Oakley-Jones changes position as the narrative moves from describing the sea to the sky, and the choreography increases in energy reflecting the joy of the protagonist enjoying the blue sky and warmth of the sun. During the section which describes the noisy tourists ("the babble"), marked by the *sul ponticello* entry in the strings, the choreography calls for Oakley-Jones to sit on the floor. This notable change in stance and energy portrays the protagonist cowering at the tourists ruining the sanctuary. In the section that follows, the choreography depicts sea rocks which the sung word describes, with large and bold gestures, until "flowers" is sung. At this point, Oakley-Jones performs *petit battements* while promenading, with the arms opening independently. This marriage of ballet and contemporary dance creatively evokes the opening of buds. Similarly, at "flowering blossom", Oakley-Jones compacts her body into a ball and expands her limbs outwards, evocative of blooming blossom. Kristiansen's choreography returns to portray the protagonist in the closing section, where Oakley-Jones is seen to peacefully lie on the concrete slabs as "hide in the garden cove" is sung. Finally, Oakley-Jones performs a series of turning gestures with balletic arm movements gesturing towards the surroundings, acknowledging the beauty and tranquillity of the garden.

I sought to marry the text with the music by prioritising word painting. This includes the vocal line, such as the beginning where I employed both melisma and glissandi to evoke the protagonist floating on the sea. From bar 45, in total contrast to the sustained and fluid chord changes, the strings play together in a fast-alternating *sul ponticello* passage to portray the

babbling tourists. I also incorporated an extended technique in the cello in bar 28 to reflect the lyrics, “the gulls glide the zephyr”. Often referred to as the “seagull gliss.”, this technique is achieved by playing an artificial harmonic and moving down the string whilst maintaining the same hand shape, which causes the harmonic glissando to restart at the top, akin to the call of a seagull. An even more emphatic example of sound effects is at the opening, where the harpist is called to play a wind machine to recreate the sound of the Cornish seaside. This sound is reprised later when the three string players whisper “sea shell stone”. Over a series of bars, the alliteration is joined together to create a continuous sound like that of waves which the singer describes using further alliteration with the words “shamrock spray”.

The music largely concerns the manipulation of tetrachords, which blur from one to another. Principally, these are major tetrachords often enhanced by a fifth note which gradually shift to an entirely different transposition, drawing on micropolyphony as explored in works such as *Lontano* (1967) by György Ligeti. For example, the opening starts with the F major tetrachord, and at different times, each part moves to D major tetrachord with an added 6^{th}. Broadly, the vocal line exploits the pitches from the major tonality suggested in the tetrachord. As one of my nature inspired compositions, I utilise my ‘nature pitch collection’ at poignant moments. Bar 12 is the first moment where a lydian/whole-tone tetrachord is heard, specifically Eb, F, G, A. Above this chord, the voice part begins on D to suggest the lydian scale, and then resolves to B, implying the whole-tone scale. This is a perfect example of how I employ my nature collection, by fluidly moving between lydian and whole-tone soundworlds. This harmonic moment is heard at the first presentation of a word from nature - “green sea”, thus emphasising the beauty and mysticism of the ocean.

At Figure G, the tetrachords evolve to illustrate the journey from the sea to the shore. The tetrachords become three-note chords, comprising of 2nds, 4ths and 5ths, creating a more

hollow sound, contrasting with the close harmony in the opening which paints a luscious picture of the sea. The string parts continue to evolve independently to new chords, while the harp punctuates the notes, evocative of raindrops. At Figure J, which depicts flowers, the tetrachord micropolyphony evolves into a sequence of call and response gestures, opening with a lydian/whole-tone tetrachord created from the melodic lines in the voice and cello.

Sea Garden Conclusion

The aspiration for *Spirit of Cornwall,* of which *Sea Garden* was composed for, was to unite music, dance and design in a coherent work – my response to Wagner's *Gesamtkunstwerk.* Although all artforms were drawing on Barbara Hepworth's sculpture garden¸ we did not seek to recreate the sound, sight or experience of being in it. Instead, we sought to present a poetic and expressive impression of journeying from the Cornish Sea to the sanctum of Hepworth's garden. We wanted to instil the feeling of being in such a beautiful place, and each artform had a role in evoking the audience's emotive response. Crucially, each art gave space for the other to co-exist through poetic suggestion, enabling the others to complete the narrative and sense of place. Specifically, the garden's design *suggests* Hepworth's garden, calling forth song and dance to fill the space left by the absence of her sculptures. The garden engages with the music through the physical representation of the waveform. It is through the partnership of the sung word and dance that the poetic story of being in the most beautiful of gardens is told.

Commentary on *Water Hymn*

Water Hymn was commissioned by the Derwent Valley World Heritage Site to showcase the significance of the cotton industry and the water mill that powered it in the village of Darley Abbey. Created and performed during the height of the pandemic lockdowns, there were significant restrictions, forbidding large group numbers, and social distancing remained

enforced. Consequently, the choir had to be recorded in self-isolation and the dancers had to perform outside socially distanced.

Water Hymn is a short opera-ballet scene, scored for four-part choir and is an example of my nature-inspired compositions. Although this work is about water, it is in equal measure, about mankind harnessing the power of water. For this reason, the music is fast, driven by mechanical rhythmic energy with an ostinato that opens the piece. However, this ¾ pattern is regularly disrupted by different time signatures with lyrical and flowing lines that express the River Derwent. As this composition is about water, whether as a river or as part of a mill, I employed my nature pitch collection. The composition begins in the whole-tone scale on C# and is soon developed by the introduction of notes outside the scale such as F# and C. From rehearsal figure B, there is a modulation to the whole-tone scale on C which is immediately developed by the incorporation of Db.

Another quality to much of my nature-inspired writing is the organic development of ideas reflecting the growth from seed to tree; and the incorporation of symmetry as seen in water. *Water Hymn* is no exception, and the opening bars determine all the material that follows. Symmetry can be seen on a micro level in the contrary motion of the melodic lines as seen in the soprano and bass in the opening. Further symmetry is employed through the mirroring of the rhythm in the accompaniment, which begins in the alto and tenor parts. Symmetry is also used in the macro, determining the structure of both poetry and music.

In *Water Hymn*, I sought to build upon the idea in *Sea Garden*, whereby a poetic text requires the dance to 'complete' the narrative suggested in the sung word. Specifically, I wanted to push the idea of multi-layered narratives by writing an invertible poem, so that it can be read in two distinct ways.

Water Hymn – River Derwent Version

Stanza 1

Above
subtle clouds dance
across a rippling stage
watched by aged willows bent.

Stanza 2

Below
ancient power writhes
over a winding valley
unchecked by all that be.

Stanza 3

Ahead
rushing water tamed
through a turning wheel
unfurled by memories.

Stanza 4

Behind
the everlasting mill
beyond trading end
unturned by water that is past.

In this iteration, the narrative focuses on the flow of water. It describes the River Derwent as it travels and makes its way across the valley, through the waterwheel and eventually leaving the mill behind.

In the alternative organisation of the text, the emphasis shifts to the mill itself. Firstly, the prepositions convey a sense of rotational movement, and the second stanza contextualises this movement as the watermill. Finally, the last two stanzas articulate that despite the passing of time, the watermill still stands today.

Water Hymn – Watermill Version

Above
Below
Ahead
Behind

subtle clouds dance
ancient power writhes
rushing water tamed
the everlasting mill

across a rippling stage
over a winding valley
through a turning wheel
beyond trading end

watched by aged willows bent
unchecked by all that be
unfurled by memories
unturned by water that is past.

In the composition, the poem is heard four times, and the text is heard in every cycle in the order as written in the Watermill version. However, in each cycle, every vocal part performs just one stanza as written in the River Derwent version. Consequently, invertible counterpoint is employed so that the same text and the same music is redeployed by a different part in every cycle so that every voice sings all four stanzas. To avoid harmonic stagnancy and to enable the musical lines to sit comfortably within the respective vocal ranges, each cycle is transposed up a major second, reflecting the major second motif that continually recurs after the first introduction in bar 7. As a consequence of the cyclic nature of the text setting, the structure of the composition can be understood as written below, with the numbers reflecting the stanzas as per the River Derwent version.

Part	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3	Cycle 4
Soprano	1	4	3	2
Alto	3	2	1	4
Tenor	2	3	4	1
Bass	4	1	2	3
Dance	1	2	3	4

On hearing the composition alone, the listener is presented with the Watermill version of the *Water Hymn* poem four times, albeit with a different voicing each time. To enable audiences 'to hear' the River Derwent Version, my intention was for the choreography to express each stanza in order. Specifically, using ideas of so-called "Mickey Mousing", whereby the dance synchronises with the music's rhythm, energy and word painting. This approach enables the dance to emphasise a particular vocal line and text. Consequently, the viewer is given the opportunity to hear *Water Hymn* in both the River Derwent and Watermill versions. This approach echoes that of Mark Morris, who has established a reputation for choreography that articulates contrapuntal lines of music.[99] Unfortunately, it was not possible to completely fulfil my ambitions for the choreography in *Water Hymn* due to the severe rehearsal limitations during the pandemic. Regrettably most of the dance rehearsals took place online, with the dancers doing their best to learn the choreography over Zoom in confined spaces in their homes. We only had a few hours of socially distanced rehearsal to prepare the work before undertaking the filming on the same day. Given these considerable obstacles,

[99] Joan Acocella, *Mark Morris,* Connecticut, Wesleyan University Press, 1994, p. 174.

choreographer Sarah-Louise Kristiansen and the dancers achieved extremely impressive results. Specifically, Kristiansen was able to choreograph two stanzas. To create a compelling chorographical outcome despite this restriction, Kristiansen employed canons and superimpositions.

	Cycle 1	**Cycle 2**	**Cycle 3**	**Cycle 4**
Soprano	1	4	3	2
Alto	3	2	1	4
Tenor	2	3	4	1
Bass	4	1	2	3
Dance	2 in canon	1 followed by 2	1 in canon	1 and 2 superimposed with tutti coda

Although the outcome was not as I truly intended, I believe that it does demonstrate the potential for dance to highlight lines of text and music.

Water Hymn **Conclusion**

The principle aim of *Water Hymn* was to explore how the relationship between song and dance could be strengthened beyond the compatibility to coexist. In *Water Hymn,* the choreography does not simply articulate the text but rather expresses a particular line in an otherwise polyphonic texture. Without the choreography, the audience would struggle to perceive and understand the text in the River Derwent version. This demonstrates the potential for dance to add layers of meaning that is alluded to in the text and music. This is comparable to the use of leitmotif whereby musical ideas can add meaning beyond the text.

In the Ballets Russes' opera-ballets, the music and dance deliver the narrative in parallel by coming together, often in mime, to tell the story. *Water Hymn* demonstrates that it is possible to tell an alternative narrative, concurrent to that expressed by the sung word. This reveals new possibilities whereby the story or thoughts of multiple characters could be presented simultaneously across song and dance - an interdisciplinary version of the Act II finale in Amadeus Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro* (1786) where the thoughts of seven characters are heard at the same time.[100]

Jazz-infused Aesthetic

My music that fuses jazz and contemporary classical music is notably contrasting to that of my nature-inspired compositions. Firstly, while I write for acoustic voices and strings in my nature compositions, I gravitate towards winds and amplified voices in my jazz works. Rhythmically, I often write in compound time or incorporate triplet rhythms to create rhythms that sound swung, as is stylistic of jazz. Perhaps most different from my nature compositions, is the harmonic language. In place of whole-tone and lydian pitch collections, I engage with jazz harmony. Specifically, I manipulate jazz chords, usually by starting with 11th and 13th chords, and remove some of the inner notes to create more unusual chordal structures. I do not usually conform to standard chord progressions and instead place chords of different tonalities in sequence to create evolving harmonic languages without a tonic or pitch hierarchy.

Commentary on *London Portraits*

Kinch's *The Legend of Mike Smith* was the starting point for *London Portraits*, and I also collaborated with the same mezzo-soprano, Rachel Maby, who is unusually versed in both

[100] Charles Rosen, *The Classical Style: Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven*. New ed., Faber and Faber, 2005, London, p. 183

classical and jazz singing. Like *The Legend of Mike Smith*, *London Portraits* has an urban setting and shares the influence of street dance in my collaboration with the choreographer Tiara Foo. Foo's practice fuses ballet with street dance, a combination that is well suited to express both the thematic exploration of love and the cityscape in *London Portraits.*

London Portraits explores the jazz-influenced branch to my compositional aesthetic and much of the language is based on the superimposition of a pair of fifths, a semi-tone apart e.g. B, F# over C, G. On hearing, this sounds like the relatively commonplace jazz chord $Cmaj^{9\sharp11}$ (C, E, G, B, D, F#), however the absence of the inner notes, creates a hollow, and somewhat melancholic atmosphere that I felt was appropriate for this narrative. I viewed this chord not as the governing principle, but rather as a harmonic quality whereby much of my chordal writing utilises perfect fifths and major sevenths in their construction. The jazz influence can also be heard in much of the melodic writing, whereby there is particular emphasis on the minor third evoking a 'blue note'. I worked closely on an initial recording with Maby to find the right vocal style that incorporates a microphone to enable the straight tone sound of jazz with the expressive control and dexterity that is available with a classical approach. Rhythmically, there are clear moments of swing, but most of the language has a more free and expressive quality, and the vocal writing aims to reflect spoken rhythm so that the text can be clearly heard and understood. Elements of 'groove' appear in the repeated chord sequences and rhythmic patterns; however, the rhythm and metre remain flexible, changing to create a continuous sense of flow.

Synopsis

Unlike *Sea Garden* and *Water Hymn, London Portraits* has a more conventional narrative journey. It tells of two couples seeking romance in a city, which does not always seem to cooperate. One couple appears more open to falling in love, whereas the other is more

uncertain. The couples' strengths are tested across four scenes: the sleepless night, the busy commute, the sunset and the London underground. During the piece, the uncertain couple gradually find their confidence and seal their love in a kiss, whilst the other couple find themselves drifting further apart and become separated.

Text

In writing the text for *London Portraits*, my ambition was to avoid relying on dialogue for storytelling and enable the dance to carry the essence of the narrative. Consequently, the sung voice resembles a distant narrator, not so far removed from the unseen, angelic voices in *The Legend of Mike Smith.* Specifically, the text seeks to detail the sense of place and provide the richness of emotion felt by the protagonists, which could not be expressed through the dance alone.

1. Blink

Quiet,
the stillness between,
the quiet stillness between night and light,
the quiet, still half-tide between ebbing wine and surging coffee,
the still emptiness between blurry last orders and focused first sprint,
the quiet, still emptiness where Depravity and Purity squint in the grey light,
In the quiet stillness before dawn, the city that never sleeps, blinks in the half-light.

2. The Stream

At dawn,
the grey trains
sidle into Waterloo.
Bankers in sharp blue suits
trickle out one by one into filling streets.
Like droplets feeding a mountain stream, the flow hurries,
racing ever onwards, charging through ever space,
in swift, unforgiving currents,
pouring,
whilst the city's restless guests
flood winding streets, surging over smooth worn pebbles,
Like chattery rapids, they twist and turn, crash head-on with incoming tides,
and merge in great gushing waterfalls cascading
down into the Underground depths,
whilst the Londoner,
soars,
sailing across
turbulent flows of rushing feet,
cutting through the roaring waves,
navigating the familiar waters
with the speed and grace
of bygone clippers
filled with tea.

3. Sunset in Grey

Rose, lilac and marigold
shade the clouds
with the light of the dying sun.
Like a giant lake the sky is reflected
in a mass of rippling grey coats
with black umbrella lilies.
Iris, violet and lavender
paint the raincoats
with the last of summer frocks.

4. Underground Kiss

Can love exist in a place where everything is “to go”?
the swarm ant-like with coffee-fuelled energy.
The clock is ticking and seconds counting,
there is no time for heart beating.
Streams of commuters flow,
the rest as stubborn rocks.
On falling flight of steps,
eyes meet eyes,
lips on lips.
Two in
love.

1. Blink

I was inspired by *Easter Wings* from *The Temple* (1633) by George Herbert (1593 – 1633), in which he constructed the poem to visually create wings. Whilst the text for *London Portraits* is designed for song rather than print, I found that this approach was a productive way of structuring the poetry. By including the poems as text in the score, it provides the performers with guidance on how to read and interpret the poem to inform their performance.

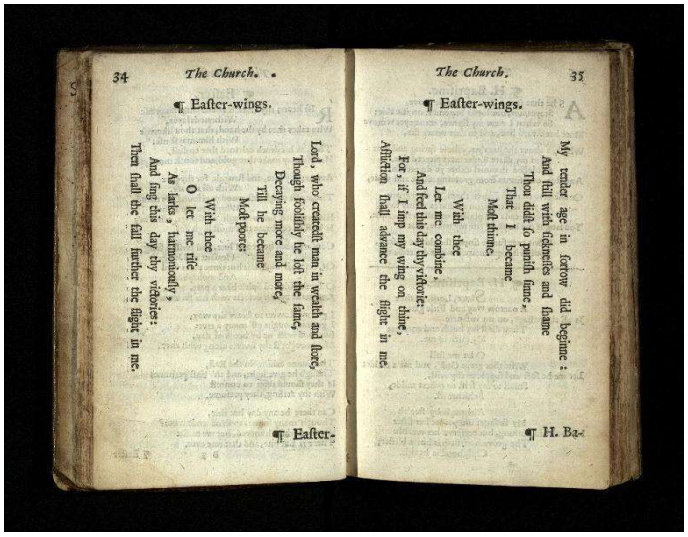


Fig. 3.1 George Herbert, “Easter Wings.” *The Temple. Sacred Poems and Private Ejaculations. By Mr George Herbert*, 1633, pp. 35–34.

Each poem is written in a way that visually represents the subject matter which also served as the basis for designing the musical structure. *Blink* is a reimagining of the cumulative tale (or chain tale) form, whereby lines of text are repeated and built upon to create a longer form narrative.[101] The nursery rhyme *This Is the House That Jack Built* is probably the best-known example of this:

This is the house that Jack built.

This is the malt
That lay in the house that Jack built.

This is the rat,
that ate the malt
That lay in the house that Jack built...[102]

I was interested to use this structure poetically to create the shape of a half-risen sun that the poem seeks to describe. I also wanted to use the cumulative structure in the music, though I think of this as more a spiral, rather than repeated material with block-like additions. Specifically, the form begins with the presentation of a musical phrase followed by an extended variation of the first. The third phrase is then an extended variation of the second, and so it continues; thus spiralling out as each cyclic variation becomes larger and increasingly more developed.

[101] Dee Ashliman, "Chain Tale", *The Greenwood encyclopaedia of folktales and fairy tales,* edited by Donald. Haase, New York, Greenwood Press, 2008, p. 176.
[102] James Orchard Halliwell, *The Nursery Rhymes of England: Collected Chiefly from Oral Tradition*, 4th edition, London , John Smith, 1846, pp. 175 - 178.

To reflect the poem, I personified the low register of the piano as night (and Depravity) and the upper register as dawn (Purity). The voice is placed in the middle of these two extremes, signifying this half-light that the protagonists find themselves in. The quiet stillness that the poem describes is depicted by sparse textures and soft dynamics. Our choreographic ambition was to juxtapose the stillness of the setting, with the distressed energy of one female dancer expressing their isolation. From the third cycle at bar 17, one of the male dancers begins to mirror the female, sharing in their collective loneliness and in doing so, make a connection. Meanwhile the other couple, who have remained upstage, have been together at a bar and make themselves present in the action with the lyrics “blurry last orders”. At the fifth cycle, from bar 49, all four dancers come together in an ensemble and crumble to the floor at the lyric “emptiness”, conveying the lovelessness between them. This is followed by the most dramatic moment in the scene, where both music and choreography share rhythmic language for the first and only time. Specifically, “Depravity and Purity squint in the grey light” is heard expressing both the desire and obstacles that lie before the couples, and at the end of the phrase, they are all seen separate and alone. In the final cycle, both the poem and music seek to distil the image and scene that has occurred. This is echoed in the choreography which summarises the couples’ relationships; one intimate at the bar and the other more distant and lost.

2. Stream

The poem is written in the form of three waves, reflecting the turbulent flow of people. My initial idea was to follow this structure, but instead I chose to structure the piece with a continual descent in the piano register. The opening begins with the piano at the uppermost register and with great energy, both rhythmically and harmonically. In collaboration with Foo, we found rhythmic anchors for the choreography to align with the music with hard gestures to represent the bankers. In-between these rhythmic signposts the choreographic

language becomes watery and fluid, expressing the imagery of a torrent of people. The relentless speed of city life provides little opportunity for the couples, and they are seen snatching moments with one another only to be flung apart by the necessity to keep up with the pace of life. Following this, the piano writing cascades down to the bottom register coinciding with the words "Underground depths" as sung by the mezzo-soprano. To build suspense and tension, there is a moment of multiple tempi, reflecting the protagonists' struggle. This tempo dissonance is resolved with an overtly jazzy section, during which the couples dance together having found their groove.

3. Sunset in Grey

The poem is written in a quasi-palindromic form with the central stanza as the mirror line, and the third stanza reflecting the first. The music follows a similar structure, with bar 59, as the symmetry point marked by the loudest and largest piano chord in the piece. Rather than the strict palindromic symmetry as displayed in *Lulu* (1929 - 1935) by Alban Berg in which pitch and rhythm are truly reflected, the symmetry I have employed is broadly on a bar-by-bar basis. In other words, the bar order is reflected but the notes and rhythms retain their original order. Whilst I find symmetrical structures fascinating and productive, there is a degree of predictability with symmetry which I have sought to disrupt. Specifically, in the second half, both pitch and rhythm are developed beyond the parameters of direct symmetry, and in some cases, material is not reprised at all. For instance, the section from bar 83 to the end, is a much-truncated version of bars 1 to 31. In this song, the register of the piano is not controlled as in the other songs, reflecting the newfound, freedom, expression, and love between the protagonists. This is furthered by the incorporation of improvisation in the vocal part, showcasing the individuality and expression that the protagonists feel.

Building on symmetry as a choreomusical bond, Foo also drew on a similar non-strict symmetry approach as the music. The downstage couple demonstrate the emotional distance between one another and rarely touch, whereas the upstage couple demonstrate their closeness by mirroring the choreography with altered gestures so that are always touching. Further to this, the upstage couple perform turns at half speed, resulting in a more intimate feeling than the faster turns of the uncertain couple. At the musical symmetry point, the couples switch places, in terms of the stage placement and romantic intentions. The former downstage couple moves to the upstage left and remain in a loving embrace. Meanwhile, the other couple grapple with the umbrella, which results in separation at the close of the scene.

4. Underground Kiss

To portray the protagonists' descent underground, the poem's structure visually tapers downwards. I decided to use the piano register expressively to reflect this, and in consideration of the protagonists travelling underground, the music begins at the middle register and descends throughout. In this movement, the music and words marry closely to provide clear pictures for the dance to express. The descending stream of piano music reflects the lyrics "commuters' flow", halting abruptly at "the rest as stubborn rocks", providing opportunity for the distant couple to act as irritable commuters now that their romance has crumbled. Meanwhile the other couple navigate the stage with fluidity and remain connected with one another, and in one of the few moments where the poem expresses the action literally, the couple kiss.

London Portraits Conclusion

My aspiration with *London Portraits* was to push at the 'classical' boundaries of contemporary opera-ballet by creating a jazz-infused score to accompany choreography drawing on both ballet and street dance. Importantly, I wanted to explore this stylistic fusion

within the contemporary opera-ballet context rather than that of musical theatre where jazz and street dance crossovers are commonplace. I feel that this was achieved because both Foo and I were creating work for classically trained artists which enabled particular expressive possibilities. For example, the range of the vocal part requires classical technique to produce and control the upper register, and much of Foo's choreography demanded the elegant gesturing found in ballet. The other distinguishing factor that discerns *London Portraits* from musical theatre is the lack of spoken or sung dialogue. I believe that employing the singer as a poetic narrator does not just enable dance to coexist but demands the choreography to complete the storytelling.

Ted's Passing

Ted's Passing is a scene from a full-length opera-ballet *The Canary Boys* commissioned by Constella Music to explore and showcase coal mining heritage. The libretto was written by Luke Barnes following a series of music, dance and drama outreach projects in mining communities in Yorkshire and Kent. Barnes completed the entire libretto, and for the last of the outreach events, I composed the music for the last scene of the opera-ballet. The performance was given by Constella Music, the Carlton Main Frickley Colliery Band and local community choirs at the National Coal Mining Museum for England.

Unlike the previous compositions discussed in this commentary which have more poetic and abstracted narratives, *Ted's Wake* is rooted in realism with sung dialogue. This extends to the presentation of the instrumental music-making which is performed by an on-stage brass band as part of the drama. This concept builds on my first opera-ballet *Sideshows* where the instrumentalists perform as clowns, in full costume, and are actively involved in the drama, including 'speaking' through their instruments. In *Sideshows*, I conduct as the unhinged Ringmaster who addresses the audience and attempts to keep the circus acts under control. In

complete contrast, in *Ted's Wake,* I played the role of the conductor-priest, leading the congregation in music and mourning.

Synopsis

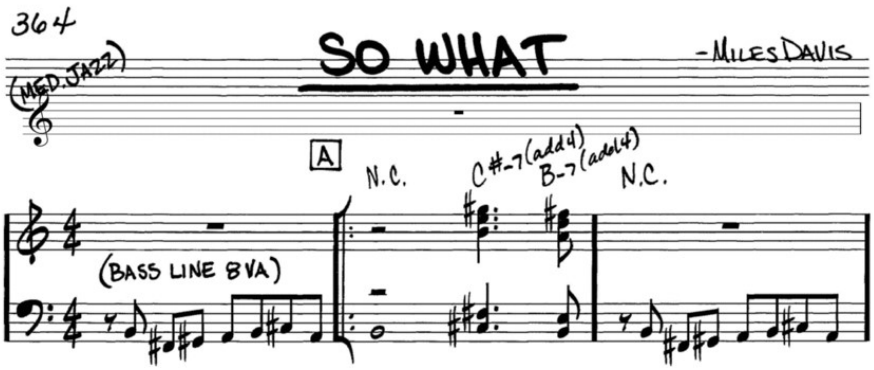
Based on real stories collected from coal mining communities, *The Canary Boys* follows the struggle for acceptance of a family who have walked from Scotland to the South of England to work in the coal mines. Upon their arrival, the local community rejects the miners, treating them as lower-class citizens. The father, Ted, and sons, Howard and Tom, work in the mines, and both boys fall in love with Sarah, leading them to fight, and driving Tom out of the community. Time passes and Tom returns to the mining community, having lived in isolation and poverty. Howard, on the other hand, has been working hard to support the mining community and helped to establish schools and the welfare club. Tom arrives too late to reconcile with his father who has died. However, at his funeral, the two brothers make peace.

In the scene included in this submission, the whole community gather in a funeral service to mourn the passing of Ted. After years living apart from the community, Tom returns and is deeply distraught to discover his father has died. Whilst the band performs sorrowfully as part of the service, Tom expresses his grief. In the last few moments of the band's performance, Tom turns to his brother, and they embrace, resolving years of fraught estrangement. Together, the two brothers say farewell to their father, and the priest leads the congregation in a hymn.

To distinguish between Howard and the mining community, who all sing, the estranged Tom is performed by a dancer. I was inspired by Benjamin Britten's *Death in Venice* (1973), which calls for several silent danced roles to distinguish the Polish family from the rest of the characters. In *Ted's Wake,* Tom arrives during the brass band's performance, and he

expresses his grief through dance, before embracing his brother in reconciliation. To portray Tom's return to the mining community, he begins to find his voice again, and speaks, initially on his own, and then with Howard as he sings. In the closing hymn, Tom sings with the congregation.

Ted's Passing is written in my jazz-inspired aesthetic. The opening brass band music is based on a chord sequence from G#min6 to Emaj7 (no 5th). I was drawing on *So What* (1959) by Miles Davis, which incorporates stepwise movement in a two-chord sequence.



Ex.3.3 Miles Davis, *So What*, lead sheet, Sony Music, Tennessee, 1959, bars 1 - 3 of the head.

Rather than continue with the sequence unchanged as Davis does, I alter the rhythm by extending the duration of the second chord in the 7/8 bars. Alternative chords are also substituted to avoid harmonic stagnation, such as the F# minor chord in bar 12. The opening principally utilises a 6/8 metre, which enables written out swing rhythms, evocative of jazz idioms. This contrasts with the sighing melodic material, comprising a falling major second with a dotted quaver rhythm, which goes against the compound metre and swung accompaniment. I felt that the combination of the falling line and the cross-rhythm, evokes a sense of sorrow that is fitting for the narrative.

I wanted to write recitative to distinguish between the singing that occurs as part of the drama. In place of a keyboard instrument which is commonplace in recitative, I chose to write for harp and exploit its lower register where the strings reverberate longer to create a muddy and ominous sound. The recitative utilises a similar musical language as the opening, now reconsidered for the harp. The same chord sequence is present and the ostinato that first appears in the tenor horns, is transposed down a fifth, and becomes chromatic and continues downward rather than returning upwards to the main note as it does previously. This creates a greater sense of grief and sorrow, particularly when married with the reverberance of the strings which blurs the definition of the harmony. Although it is a recitative in style, the music is structured with two verses sung by Howard and Susan respectively. The musical material in the verses is moulded to fit the text both rhythmically and expressively. For instance, in bar 51, the harp descends to portray the coal underground, whereas in bar 63, it ascends, reflecting Susan's line, "dragged us up from poverty". The falling major second motif returns in the vocal part in bar 56 and is further developed through call and response, in addition to some harmonisation from bars 79 – 82.

My ambition for the closing section was to give the impression of a congregation hymn, without conforming to strict four-part homorhythmic writing. Instead of doubling the vocal line as an organ part would usually, the brass band has a much more elaborate and decorative accompaniment. Like *London Portraits,* there are moments of free tempi. It is first introduced in bars 100 – 102, where the soloists freely add decorations to the held note. This concept is expanded when the chorus join, who do so one by one in a gradual crescendo building up to the final verse where the whole congregation sing together. The vocal parts all sing in rhythmic unison as one would expect for a hymn; however, the metre and rhythm themselves are much more progressive than a usual hymn, resulting in a more unique and expressive passage.

Ted's Passing Conclusion

Unlike the poetic nature of the previously discussed works, *Ted's Passing* presents a narrative rooted in realism with dialogue presented as recitative. Furthermore, the instrumental opening and closing hymn also situate the music-making as part of the drama, wherein the instrumentalists and singers are seen to perform in the funeral service for Ted. Consequently, *Ted's Passing* lifts the instrumentalists from the orchestra pit, and places them as characters onstage. Thus, as well as singers and dancers, instrumentalists are also active in the storytelling. *Sideshows* was the first work that I wrote which called for a multifaceted company of 'players', totalling one singer, two dancers, four instrumentalists and a conductor. *Ted's Passing*, on the other hand, calls for a much greater company, acting as a rehearsal for my major work *The Orchestras of Auschwitz* which also calls for a greater number of 'players' than *Sideshows.* Unlike the clowning instrumentalists in *Sideshows*, *Ted's Passing* has also been an exploration in advance of *The Orchestras of Auschwitz* where instrumentalists are also integral in a drama that deals with death.

Commentary on *The Orchestras of Auschwitz*

The Orchestras of Auschwitz is a full-scale opera-ballet that engages with my third strand of composition – the creative engagement with 'found' music. Depending on the nature of the original music, my creative response to found music can result in a variety of different forms. At one end of the spectrum, I have rescored music for different forces such as the opera reductions for Baseless Fabric's promenade productions, scaling down the full orchestra scoring to violin, accordion, and bassoon. At the opposite end, I have radically reimagined the music altogether, which includes my composition for wind quintet which uses motific ideas from Schubert's *Winterreise* to create an entirely new musically aesthetic. In the case of *The Orchestras of Auschwitz*, I have taken a variety of different approaches to reconsider the music reflecting the demands of the source material.

The journey for this composition began eight years ago when I was commissioned to write a composition in memory of the historian Sir Martin Gilbert, who wrote extensively on World War II and the Holocaust. As part of the research and development, I went on a trip to the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum to understand the gravity of his work. I had a conversation with one of the archivists who mentioned in a somewhat offhand way, that there were music manuscripts in the archive, but he assumed that I would not be interested due to their poor state. Naturally, I immediately conveyed my considerable interest in seeing the manuscripts and returned a month later to visit the archive. It soon became clear why the manuscripts had been overlooked. Most of the instruments and manuscripts had been destroyed when the camp was liquidated by the Nazis, so what remains is two hundred and ten manuscripts of varying levels of completion.[103] This includes incomplete collections of parts without scores, manuscripts with fire damage, and sketches written in faded pencil.[104]

Restoring this music accurately is not only complex due to the incomplete manuscripts but is greatly furthered by the makeshift nature of the ensembles in Auschwitz. The orchestras were formed by prisoners as instructed by the Nazis, principally to perform marching music.[105] Despite the commission for orchestras, the soldiers provided very little infrastructure for music-making and so prisoners had to make do with instruments and players available to them.[106] Consequently, the so-called 'orchestras' were missing many of the instruments we would expect such as double reeds and a full string section. Instead, these parts were filled by saxophones, mandolins, and accordions with only a handful of strings. Due to the continual loss of life amongst members of the orchestras, the personnel changed frequently.[107]

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[103] Hubert Szczęśniak, *Musical Sources Survived in the Collection of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum,* Kwartalnik Młodych Muzykologów, Jagiellonian University, No.32 (1/2017), pp.127 – 177.
[104] Ibid.
[105] Shirli Gilbert, *Music in the Holocaust,* Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2005, p. 145.
[106] Ibid. p. 178.
[107] Ibid. p. 180.

As a result, each orchestra employed several copyists to write and compose for these ever-changing and unconventional ensembles.[108] Consequently, accurately restoring the music exactly as it was, requires sensitive re-composition of missing parts informed by cross-referencing the remaining manuscripts with testimonies to work out which players were available at what time. Specifically, I have studied written and recorded testimonies as well as discussing music-making with the sole survivor from the orchestras, Anita Lasker-Wallfisch. Following eight years of study and multiple trips to the Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum, I presented some of the restored compositions at Sadler's Wells Theatre, London on November 27th, 2023. This was part of the research and development for the opera-ballet, workshopping the restorations and to understand the public response for this work. The performance resulted in worldwide interest with television, radio and newspaper coverage from media outlets including the BBC, The Times, CNN (US) Washington Post (US), CBC Radio (Canada), Mediaset (Italy), NRK (Norway), amongst others. This prompted Holocaust survivors and relatives to contact me, providing further information about music-making in Auschwitz, and more importantly, inspired me to continue with my project. For example, I received this message from Doris Borenstein:

> I am a semi-professional violinist playing in NYC. When a child, my mother *made me* play violin, rather than any other instrument. I balked but consented. 65 years later, I find that my mother, an Auschwitz [and] Bergen-Belsen survivor wanted to insure my survival in case of another Holocaust… Playing this newly found manuscript would honor both my mother and aunt.[109]

[108] Shirli Gilbert, *Music in the Holocaust,* p. 183.
[109] Doris Borenstein, "Violinist", received by Leo Geyer, 30 Nov. 2023.

I also received a message from Heidi Spiegel in the United States, who I sent a recording of the performance so that she could share it with her mother, aged one hundred and a survivor of Auschwitz: "Thank you for doing this time-consuming important work of giving us back a piece of these creative people to leave the world."[110]

My aspiration when I first set eyes on these manuscripts was to restore the music as authentically as possible and perform it to enable the public to hear the music for the first time in eighty years, and open new possibilities in Holocaust awareness and scholarship. This is not a straightforward task as some of this music was written by prisoners in the midst of profound crisis, whereas other manuscripts evidence the weaponisation of music created and performed at the behest of the Nazis, which has led Shirli Gilbert to argue that the "orchestras played a valuable role in the extermination process, helping the operations to run smoothly and assisting in the maintenance of discipline and order".[111] There is an argument to simply present a performance of this music within an academic context, so as to understand how music was used for good and evil at Auschwitz. However, I wanted to create a work that would engage the public and support Holocaust learning. Specifically, I felt that the medium of opera-ballet would be a powerful and emotive vehicle to contextualise the music through a combination of song, dance, music, and poetry. Critically, I feel that opera-ballet provides the environment for artistic impression, rather than dramatised reenactment. Clearly, there is a delicate balance to be struck. I feel that to perform the music accurately with performers dressed in full costumes with literal actions to portray the horrors of Auschwitz is too explicit. I believe with minimalistic stage designs and a more artistic choreographic approach; it is possible to *suggest* the context in which the music was played.

[110] Heidi Spiegel, "Auschwitz Music", received by Leo Geyer, 24 Nov. 2023.
[111] Shirli Gilbert, *Music in the Holocaust,* p. 145.

The balance that must be sought is that whilst the choreography should be impressionistic, it must still be clear as to what it is conveying.

Before embarking on the opera-ballet, I spent many hours wrangling with the question, "Who am I to do this work?". The majority of artists who have created works about the Holocaust are Jewish, or of Jewish descent. Consequently, many people, including journalists, have assumed that I too am Jewish, and that I am connected to this history. My answer "no", is often greeted with some initial surprise. Not only does my lack of faith, or family history, set me apart from others, it raises the question of authenticity. In recent years, there has been, quite rightly, a growing focus on inclusivity, diversity and equality. This has resulted in increasing awareness of representation. For instance, I was very conscious of the 2019 production of the *Falsettos* at The Other Palace in London, which prominently features themes of Jewish identity. The production opened in scandal due to the lack of Jewish representation in the cast and creatives.[112] This would seem to suggest that as artists, we can only write or play about our own lived experiences, otherwise you will be accused of cultural appropriation. For example, the film *Maestro* faced accusations of "Jewface" for Bradley Cooper's portrayal of Leonard Bernstein where he donned a large prosthetic nose.[113] In the music world, debates on cultural appropriation are less prevalent in the media. This is perhaps due to the long history of composers using the music of others, such as collecting folk tunes or popular music artists sampling. In the literary world, discussions around authenticity, appropriation and representation are much more present and has helped me to find my path. For example, authenticity was a key subject of debate in the 2022 Hay Festival of Literacy

[112] Lanre Bakare, "'Jewface' row: West End musical accused of cultural appropriation", The Guardian, https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2019/aug/23/jewface-row-west-end-musical-falsettos-decried-for-cultural-appropriation. Accessed 1 Jan. 2025.
[113] Nicole Vassell, "Bradley Cooper sparks 'Jewface' row with prosthetic nose in Leonard Bernstein biopic Maestro" https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/films/news/bradley-cooper-nose-maestro-jewish-leonard-bernstein-b2393886.html Accessed 1 Jan. 2025.

and Art. Lucy Knight of the Guardian, opened her article on the festival by stating, "Some authors have indeed come under fire for writing about experiences outside their own."[114] Knight highlights writers like Rose Tremain, who has always written about characters she is curious about rather than those she has lived experience of.[115] Whilst Ayanna Lloyd Banwo, said at the festival "what allows you to do something well" is "authenticity, or belonging, or intimate access to the community". I felt most attune with Kate Mosse, who argued that a well-informed understanding is acceptable, referencing the ten years of research for her novel *The City of Tears.*[116] Indeed, she went on to say that an outsider view made her better placed to explore Franschhoek in South Africa which the book explores. Knight concludes her article by stating:

> Perhaps, then, the question for fiction writers is not 'Is this your story to tell?' but, as Mosse suggests, 'Do you know this well enough to write it?' Or more crucially, 'Do you know this well enough to write it *well*?'

With this view in mind, I do feel confident that I have done the research to formulate an in-depth understanding of the orchestras of Auschwitz to produce a creative work about it, and to do it well. Whilst I am not Jewish, Polish, Romani or descended from any other group or person who perished in Auschwitz, I am human, and the Holocaust was the greatest tragedy that humanity unleashed upon itself. I do not want to live in a world where such evil can rise again. My hope is that, although I am not directly related to the victims of the Holocaust, I

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[114] Lucy Knight, "Authors at Hay festival weigh the meaning of authenticity" https://www.theguardian.com/books/2022/jun/06/authors-weigh-the-meaning-of-authenticity-at-the-hay-festival Accessed 1 Jan. 2025.
[115] Ibid.
[116] Ibid.

can demonstrate that this history should be commemorated and engaged with by all and not left to specific communities to bear the sole responsibility of remembrance and learning. We all need to remember what happened and safeguard the future from repetition.

Creating an opera-ballet based upon restored manuscripts presents an artistic challenge when determining the degree in which to creatively engage with the music in the archives. There is considerable emotive and expressive power to present the restored music as accurately as possible. Indeed, in some cases, I felt that the music was most compelling in its raw and truthful form, providing a disturbing and harrowing portrayal of Auschwitz. In other cases, I thought that a more creative approach would be more impactful. But this provokes the question: "Why and for what purpose should I tamper with the music?". Although I reconciled with myself that I can undertake the project, altering the music for the sake of my own creativity is another question altogether. Having spoken with Anita Lasker-Wallfisch, the remaining survivor of the orchestras of Auschwitz, she told me that the motivation behind her book, *Inherit the Truth: A Memoir of Survival and the Holocaust* (1996), was to right the wrongs of misrepresentation from the fictionalised book by fellow survivor Fenia Fénelon's book, *Sursis pour l'orchestre* [Reprieve for the Orchestra] (1975), which was later made into the film *Playing with Time* (1980).[117] As is evident from Lasker-Wallfisch's book title, she is deeply concerned about historically accuracy. Lasker-Wallfisch was in fact saddened that these manuscripts had only just come to light, and disappointed that she could not share or discuss it with other survivors. She did help me to understand the importance of a truthful portrayal of the music. However, to be completely true to the original manuscripts is not feasible in a staged production, or even a concert, because of the differences in orchestration. Some works suggest much larger forces than others, encompassing unusual line-ups such as

[117] Anita Lasker-Wallfisch. Interview. Conducted by Leo Geyer. 27th June 2023.

multiple accordions and mandolins, brass band instruments and differing combinations of strings and woodwinds. To present multiple restorations of the manuscripts in a performance, over one hundred performers would need to be called to ensure the nuanced orchestration differences between works. There is also the question of whether to be authentic with the gender of performers to discern between the male and female ensembles in Auschwitz. For the purposes of creating a work that would be financially viable to stage, I made the decision to settle on a small ensemble comprising of instruments common to most of the ensembles in Auschwitz to capture the essence of the timbre across all the ensembles across the camp complex.

As well as being truthful, Lasker-Wallfisch expressed her concern that the public were not listening and learning from the Holocaust. It was for this reason, that she was supportive of my efforts as a young, non-Jewish musician to carry the history forward. She agreed that there needed to be new ways to engage with the public, and that she was tired of doing interviews for radio and television, having done so many over the years, and felt that this was not making enough of an impact on public discourse. Lasker-Wallfisch has been supportive of my ambition to present the restored manuscripts in a way that will engage the public. For the premiere of my composition for Sir Martin Gilbert, in which I reimagined some of the music in the archive by adding a vocal line to contextualise the source material, Lasker-Wallfisch attended and introduced my composition by giving a talk about her time in Auschwitz. She was complimentary about my work, as was her son Raphael Wallfisch, the concert cellist, and Simon Wallfisch, grandson of Lasker-Wallfisch who sang the vocal solo in the composition. This gave me the confidence that it is possible to creatively engage with the manuscripts, if it is done sensitively and for the purpose of making the music engaging for the public. To assist in finding this balance, I spent time studying the work of other

composers who have engaged with found music. There are of course examples of relatively straightforward reorchestration, such as Stravinsky's *Pulcinella* which incorporates the music of Giovanni Pergolesi amongst others. A productive approach taken by many is that of theme and variations, such as *The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra* (1945) by Benjamin Britten which begins with an orchestrated presentation of Rondeau from the *Abdelazer Suite* (1695) by Henry Purcell and is followed by increasingly flamboyant and creative variations. Purcell also inspired a series of compositions, entitled *A Purcell Garland* by three contemporary British composers. This includes *Fantazia No.7* (1995) by George Benjamin which, aside from a transposition - "not a note is altered", and yet a completely new quality of sound is achieved through the contemporary instrumentation comprising clarinet, violin, cello and celeste.[118] Also in this series is *Fantazia Upon One Note* (1995) by Oliver Knussen which "distort[s] the rhythms and pitches", so as to create a new compositional language based upon Purcell's.[119] In my opera-ballet, I drew on all of these approaches to composing with 'found' music, utilising lesser or greater creative engagement depending on the dramatic need of the music.

The manuscripts in the archive comprise a wide variety of musical styles, so to create a sense of musical cohesion, I sought to create an evocative and flexible soundworld through which the restorations are heard. I was inspired by Pascal Dusapin in his opera-ballet *Passion* (2011) where he creates a soundworld that evokes baroque music. Importantly, Dusapin is not writing baroque music, but rather incorporates stylistic conventions and utilises instruments such as the harpsichord to evoke the baroque, whilst still composing music that is true to Dusapin's language. The result is a dramatic score that shifts between Baroque-like

[118] Faber Music. "Fantasia 7 (After Henry Purcell)." Faber Music, https://www.fabermusic.com/shop/fantasia-7-after-henry-purcell-p1139 Accessed 13 Feb. 2024.
[119] Faber Music. "Upon One Note." Faber Music https://www.fabermusic.com/music/--upon-one-note-3244 Accessed 13 Feb. 2024.

sounds and electronic soundscapes, personifying the exchanges between life and death. In the *Orchestras of Auschwitz,* I created a language based on the mode known in Klezmar as the Freygish scale, which can also be understood as the Phrygian dominant.

Ex.3.4 Leo Geyer**,** The Freygish scale in C.

More specifically, the language I used to create continuity throughout the opera-ballet is focused on the intervallic relationship of the first tetrachord in the Freygish scale, comprising a minor second, augmented second followed by another minor second. Melodically, this tetrachord presents some unusual voice leading opportunities. Firstly, the flattened supertonic is suggestive of a downward resolution, affirming C as the tonic. However, as the first four pitches of C Phrygian dominant are also the same as the last four pitches in F melodic minor, it implies F as the tonic. Further interest can be found from the "tonic" triad, which in this case is C major. This is unlike the other Gregorian Modes, specifically the Phrygian and Hypophrygian which both have minor seconds at the start of the scales and have minor tonic triads. Consequently, in a melodic sequence, the Phrygian dominant sounds minor, however the major tonic chord suggests otherwise. I found this harmonic ambiguity constructive and expressive, enabling the representation of Klezmar music, and due to the inherent chromatism, provides the opportunity for atonal language.

Note on performance

The video recording submitted is the workshop performance following five days of research and development with students from Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance. This includes choreography by Keith Corprew, a student on the Masters Choreography Programme. Given that it is a workshop presentation, there are some inaccuracies in the performance, and the staging and choreography should be seen as a functional draft of what would be refined if budget were available for professional performers, several weeks of rehearsals, costumes, set, lighting and so forth.

Synopsis

My ambition with this work was to tell the complete story of the orchestras by highlighting particular histories and music. Consequently, the instrumentation for the opera-ballet conforms to a similar ensemble to that of the Auschwitz orchestras. Instead of weaving together various testimonies in a fictional narrative, I chose to create a series of vignettes that are in themselves historically accurate. The order in which the scenes occur is designed to create an arching structure which relates to many prisoners' experiences, thus creating a sense of a longer form narrative, despite the nature of the standalone scenes. In a professional production, I would envisage that the scenes would be divided by photos and text projected onto the backcloth that contextualises and informs the drama that is or has been witnessed by audiences. The need to present the truth, and to make the public aware of exactly what happened, is both critical to me, and what was relayed to me numerous times by Holocaust survivors and archivists at the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum. For ease of contextualisation, a synopsis summary has been included as part of the discussion for each scene.

The further advantage of the vignette structure from an opera-ballet perspective is that the narrative delivery can convincingly be changed from scene to scene. For instance, some vignettes are told exclusively through song, whereas other moments are led by dance, and some with song and dance in tandem. Consequently, the performers change characters from scene to scene, which in a professional production would be made clear by minimalistic costume alterations, such as the addition of a hat or striped jacket.

Scene 1 – Life

To open the work, I wanted audiences to appreciate the stark contrast of Jewish life before and after *Kristallnacht* (Night of Broken Glass), which is often considered the start of the Holocaust. I wanted to begin the opera-ballet with dramatic ambiguity hence why the audience is greeted with a dancer moving joyously across the stage. In time, it becomes clear as dancers and musicians flood the stage in a giant crescendo, that this is a wedding, a celebration of life. The opening and ending of this scene is a reimagining of the traditional Hebrew celebratory song *Hava Nagila*. I chose to use this music because of its worldwide popularity, so that audiences can relate to the characters and action thus making the demise more intense. A standard interpretation of the song is provided below.

Ex.3.5 Leo Geyer, *A traditional interpretation of Hava Nagila*

In the scene's opening, I wrote a cadenza for violin which is based on the phrases from *Hava Nagila*. This segues into a second phrase with the accordion, which develops the harmony as outlined in the original. The longer middle section comprises my own composition with a musical language that is designed to feel coherent with *Hava Nagila*, and thus accessible, enjoyable, and uplifting for audiences. The section also showcases a leitmotif to represent the Jewish people. The motif comprises a conjunct rising sequence based on the Freygish scale in D, indicating strength, and hopefulness. I set this to the shortened iteration of the opening phrase for the Hebrew Blessing of the Wine, which is the first of the *Sheva Brachot* (The Seven Blessings) in a Jewish wedding. The closing section comprises a return of *Hava Nagila*. I chose to retain the essence of the original music to provide a sharp contrast with the more dissonant and emotionally charged music later in the opera-ballet. My engagement with *Hava Nagila* at the end of the scene includes the addition of harmonisations in the vocal lines

and moments of developed accompaniment by the inclusion of chromatic appoggiaturas suggestive of the chromaticism that occurs in the Freygish Scale.

Scene 2 – Train

For this scene, I chose to express the narrative through dance alone, with no musical accompaniment. I felt that following the joyful energy from the wedding, the silence in this scene is deafening, and reflects the real experience of prisoners whose journeys were of course entirely without music. Unlike other scenes, the narrative is simple – a sense of pained journey, which is perfectly possible to express without the need for words, thus lending itself very well for dance. I was pleased with Corprew's choreographic sketch and felt that the simplicity of the dancers walking hand in hand, painfully slowly, delivered a potent sense of feeling.

Scene 3 – Bunalied

Bunalied is a camp anthem that was sung by prisoners en masse in Auschwitz, and a notated iteration of the score is in the Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum. The manuscript states that the author of the text is the Austrian Jewish writer Fritz Löhner–Bede who was an acclaimed librettist in his lifetime. After writing the anthem in November 1942, Löhner–Bede became ill, was accused of poor labour and beaten to death.[120] The composer is listed as Anton Geppert, about whom there is no information; Francesco Lotoro, the renowned Holocaust musicologist has surmised that Anton Geppert is a pseudonym but does not indicate who the actual composer may be.[121] Little is known about how *Bunalied* was performed, however by comparing it to other camp anthems, it is possible to deduce its function. The SS

[120] Francesco Lotoro, "Le Note della Sopravvivenza" Moked, 5 Aug. 2020 https://moked.it/blog/2020/08/05/le-note-della-sopravvivenza/ Accessed 13 Feb. 2024.
[121] Lotoro, "Le Note della Sopravvivenza"

commissioned the creation of camp songs in most concentration camps and prisoners were required to sing them. This is well documented in Buchenwald, where Arthur Rödl, Detention Camp Leader, announced over loudspeakers that - referring to the anthem *Bunchwaldleid* (also written by Löhner–Bede) - "In twenty-four hours all of you must know it! Tomorrow sing the whole song!".[122] When attempting to imagine *Bunalied* sung by starved and tormented prisoners on parole in Auschwitz, the music and lyrics are greatly disturbing. Assuming that the key of the notated song is the same as was performed, the bright D major tonality paired with march-like rhythms is a shocking juxtaposition to the environment in which it was performed, particularly when married with the lyrics. Despite being written by a Jewish prisoner, the lyrics conform to the Nazi's ideology of life in concentration camps, most notably the lyric *Nur die Arbeit macht uns frei* (only work makes you free), which were the same words inscribed on every concentration camp gate. Given the intensity of this original material and that the fact that it would have been performed acapella, I decided to retain the music in its original form sung by the three singers. In the workshop performance, the singers are seen to march forward before singing. During the limited rehearsal time, we explored some choreography reflecting the exercises that prisoners were required to do on parole. Our collective decision was that this crossed the line from artistic impression to re-enactment and the addition of the choreography felt too much. With more time to explore and reflect during a professional production, I think that the right balance would be found, that makes the context of *Bunalied* clear.

[122] Ort, World ORT, "Camp Anthems", Holocaust Music, Ort, https://holocaustmusic.ort.org/places/camps/camp-anthems/ Accessed 13 Feb. 2024.

Scene 4 – Performance

This scene tells the story of Jakub Segar, a Roma violinist.[123] Paweł Stolecki, Polish prisoner of Auschwitz, provided this astonishing account of Segar's arrival:

> A Gypsy fiddler whose name I do not remember came from Wrocław. He played the fiddle beautifully even though he could not read music at all. I remember him from the time of being in Auschwitz I and from the moment when he was brought to the camp. As a member of the Beklei- dungskammer ["clothing chamber," the labour detail that dealt with the civilian clothing in which prisoners arrived] I was present when his transport was received. When he was stripped naked, he wept and begged to be allowed to keep his fiddle. He didn't want to part with it for the world. He gave an unusual demonstration of his abilities: stark naked, he played as if he were in a trance and coaxed sobbing tones out of the fiddle. That was enough to determine that he was immediately accepted in the camp orchestra. He was the best fiddler there despite not reading music. All he needed was for someone to play a passage from some work for him once and he repeated it flawlessly.[124]

To convey Jakub's story in the opera-ballet, several characters are seen to part with prized possessions. The musician representing Jakub begins to leave their violin, before giving an emotive performance. At the conclusion, the conductor touches them on the shoulder and leads them off indicating that they have been granted a place in the orchestra. In the workshop performance, the player reads from a music stand, however in a professional production, I would envisage this to be performed off-copy in a dramatic manner.

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[123] Paweł Stolecki, Statements, vol. 76, Archives of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, p. 22.
[124] Ibid.

There is no record of what music Jakub performed, so instead I drew my inspiration from the "sobbing tones" as described in the testimony. My approach was to draw on Romani violin traditions where open strings are used to generate both possibilities for louder sounds and harmony through double-stopping and broken chords. The pitched content draws on permutations of the first tetrachord of the Freygish scale. To convey the character's anguish, I used false relation with stopped notes against the open strings. The structure follows that of the cumulative spiral as explored in *Blink* from *London Portraits.* Therefore, the initial phrase from bars 2 to 6, is followed by the extended variation from bars 7 to 13, and so on. The beginning of variation four from bars 28 to 56, includes a presentation of the leitmotif as heard in scene one, to show the strength and courage the character has. In this instance, the motif is heard in a longer form, building on its sequential nature. To heighten the drama, a crescendo and accelerando are employed in tandem.

Scene 5 – Marching

This scene combines three stories of music-making, showcasing the orchestras playing marching music and rebelling with musical cryptograms. The scene opens with musicians setting up to play marching music as testimonies describe.[125] The marching music was performed to enable prisoners to step in time to the beat in an orderly fashion as they were marched to and from fields and factories. The return journey was particularly macabre, with prisoners carrying the dead.[126]

[125] Simon Laks, *Music of Another World,* Northwestern University Press Jewish Lives, 1979. p.37
[126] Jacek Lachendro, *The Orchestras in KL Auschwitz*, Auschwitz Studies 27, Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, p.37.

The scene begins with the orchestra playing *Arbeitslager Marsch* (1941) by Henryk Król who was a Polish prisoner.[127] The Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum is the copyright holder of Król's march and granted me permission to use the work. *Arbeitslager Marsch* is written for a full symphony orchestra, which is far removed from the orchestral forces available in Auschwitz, which is confirmed in numerous testimonies and pictures. For instance, Simon Laks lists the instrumentation of the Men's Birkenau Men's Orchestra in his testimony:

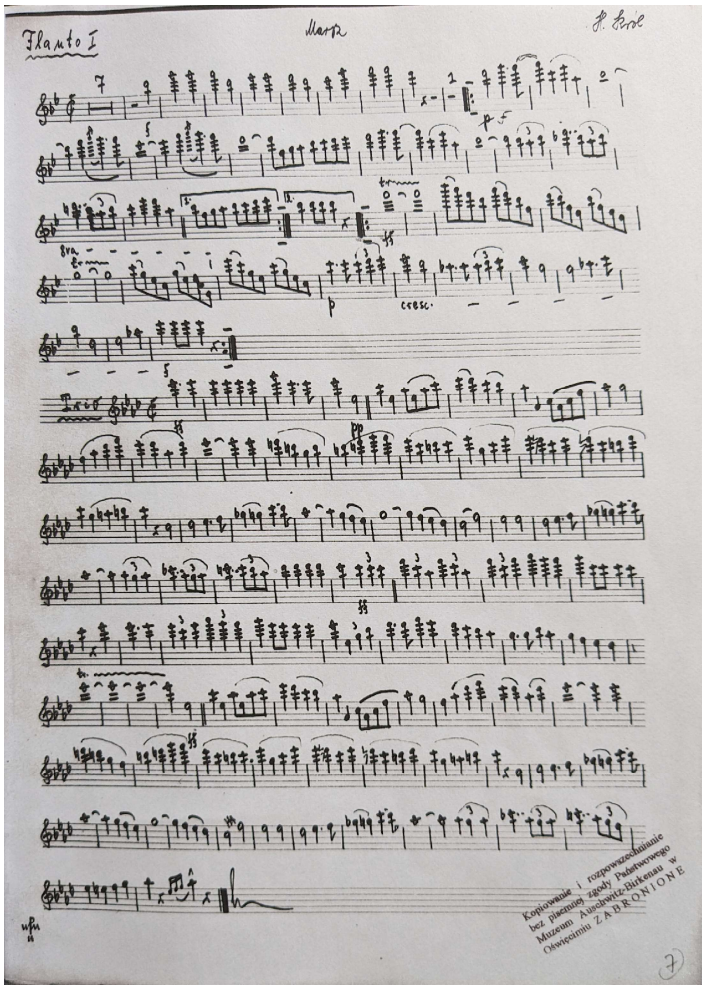
…the official conductor, took his position at the very rear with the helicon on his back. I saw a few trumpeters, behind them tenor, alto and baritone horns, accordions, clarinets, a saxophone, a snare drum and a bass drum with cymbals.[128]

The score for *Arbeitslager Marsch* was smuggled out of Auschwitz and later returned to Król.[129] The Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum own the collection of parts written by Król, however Hubert Szczęśniak has made clear that these are not the originals because the manuscript paper does not conform with what was available in Auschwitz. Given that the orchestras in Auschwitz rarely resembled full orchestras, I have conjectured that Król re-scored the original for symphony orchestra, perhaps with the hope that a more usual instrumentation would enable more performances. Consequently, my desire was to rescore *Arbeitslager Marsch* to what may have been the original instrumentation. Król was a member of the Auschwitz I Men's orchestra, so the instrumentation was not the same as the Birkenau Men's Orchestra.[130] Król wrote *Arbeitslager Marsch* during the inception of Auschwitz I Men's Orchestra and testimonies confirm that the instrumentation at this time comprised

[127] Birth date confirmed https://collections.arolsen-archives.org/en/search/person/79377657 Accessed 13 Feb. 2024. Date of death not known.
[128] Laks, *Music of Another World*, p.37.
[129] Lachendro, *The Orchestras in KL Auschwitz*, p. 50.
[130] Ibid, pp. 49 – 50.

clarinets, trumpets, trombone, guitar, accordions, percussion, violins and a double bass.[131] Therefore, my interest was to return the orchestration to a small scale ensemble as per the forces for the opera-ballet.

Whilst Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum have Król's parts and the cover page of the score, the score itself is missing. An example of the surviving manuscripts is provided below.



Ex. 3.6 Henryk Król, *Arbeitslager Marsch*, Flute 1, PMO-II-4-198, Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum.

[131] Ibid, p. 31.

To rescore *Arbeitslager Marsch* for an ensemble more like the one it was likely conceived for, I had to restore the full score from the individual parts. From the full score, I was then able to compress the counterpoint and harmony to function with this much smaller ensemble, including writing a new accordion part. Otherwise, the music is as per Król's original, which is where I feel the emotive power comes from, particularly considering that there are no records of a public performance of this work.

Ex.3.7 Henryk Król, *Arbeitslager Marsch,* restored score, Leo Geyer, bars 1-13.

In the opera-ballet, I incorporated just the opening section and without repeats. Following the performance of *Arbeitslager Marsch,* there is a recitative where one member of the orchestra (played by the tenor) conveys their frustration and anguish at playing marching music. Hence why the character's vocal line contains sighing chromatic lines drawn from the Freygish

mode. In response to the outburst, another orchestral member (played by the baritone) gives strength to the other by stating the repertoire for the next march. The baritone's vocal line draws on the leitmotif, showing the character's strength of will and character. The leitmotif is heard in a rising sequence, indicating hopefulness in contrast to the despair of the sinking lines sung by the tenor.

There are numerous examples in testimonies which describe both individual musicians and the orchestras collectively taking great risks by performing music with secret messages. In some cases, these feats were in fact quite brazen and brave acts of revolt which I wanted to bring to light. Specifically, when optimistic news of the war reached the orchestras, they played marches by the American composer John Philip Sousa such as *The Stars and Stripes Forever* (1896).[132] Witold Filkus-Szuszczyński noted in his memoir that "The Germans didn't say anything. They clearly didn't get it."[133] The score and parts of *Stars and Stripes* are missing from the museum's archive, so it is not known whether the orchestras acquired a printed edition or if one the prisoners transcribed *Stars and Stripes* from memory, as was the case for much of the music.[134] If it was transcribed, it seems likely that the copyist may have added or altered the music in some way. I decided to include the second part of the march, rescored for a smaller ensemble than the original, and took the liberty to compose a clarinet countermelody, drawing on Klezmer musical ideas.

In the second half of *Stars and Stripes*, *Hejnał mariacki* (St Mary's Trumpet Call) is heard woven into the march. This is the bugle melody that was played every hour from Saint Mary's Basilica in Krakow, a tradition that is still ongoing. Various testimonies attest to

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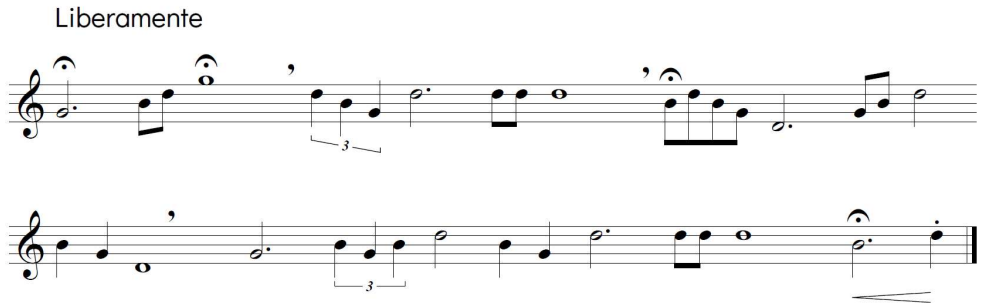
[132] Lachendro, *The Orchestras in KL Auschwitz*, 39.
[133] APMA-B, Memoirs Collection vol. 152, p47 as quoted in Lachendro, *The Orchestras in KL Auschwitz*, 39.
[134] Anita Lasker-Wallfisch, *Inherit the Truth: 1939-1945,* Giles de la Mare Publishers Limited, London, 1996, p.84.

performances where musicians subtly incorporated Polish music unbeknownst to the Nazis.[135] To all who knew the melodies, understood this as a powerful and brave proclamation of Polish culture.[136] Although there is no specific mention of St Mary's Trumpet Call included as part of the marching music, testimonies do describe *Hejnał* being performed as the orchestral musicians were moved from Auschwitz to Sachsenhausen.[137] It would appear unlikely that this was the first time that this melody was performed so I felt that this scene was the best place to incorporate this musical story. The original trumpet call is in F major (see musical example below written for trumpet in Bb), so I transposed the melody and made some small adjustments to the pitch and rhythm to enable the melody to fit with *Stars and Stripes.*



Ex. 3.8 Leo Geyer, *Hejnał mariacki* (St Mary's Trumpet Call**)**

To make it clear to audiences as to what the melody is and its significance, I added a vocal line sung by the soprano who plays the role of one of the marching prisoners.

[135] Lachendro, *The Orchestras in KL Auschwitz*, p. 45.
[136] Ibid.
[137] Ibid, p. 51.

Scene 6 – Polonaises

This scene tells the remarkable story of how Szymon Laks, conductor of the Birkenau Men's Orchestra, found, orchestrated and performed a collection of Polish polonaises. Specifically, Laks wrote in his testimony:

> I found lying on the ground a crumpled and greasy piece of paper covered with writing that attracted my attention. I picked it up and, after returning to the barracks, unfolded it carefully so as not to tear it. It smelled of herring and God only knows what else. But it was music! Only the melody, written by hand but very legibly, without harmonisation, without accompaniment. The title at the top read "Three Warsaw Polonaises of the 18th Century, author: Anonymous.[138]

Laks describes in his testimony that he orchestrated the polonaises for a "small chamber ensemble" and performed them secretly as such an act of Polish defiance would have received fierce punishment. Consequently, I felt that it would be emotive and powerful to illustrate how this composition came to be and perform the first polonaise authentically. Sadly, the original sketch and Laks orchestration, including the version he later wrote for the Birkenau Men's Orchestra were destroyed. However, following the war, Laks rewrote the Polonaises from memory in a version for piano, which was later published with his testimony.

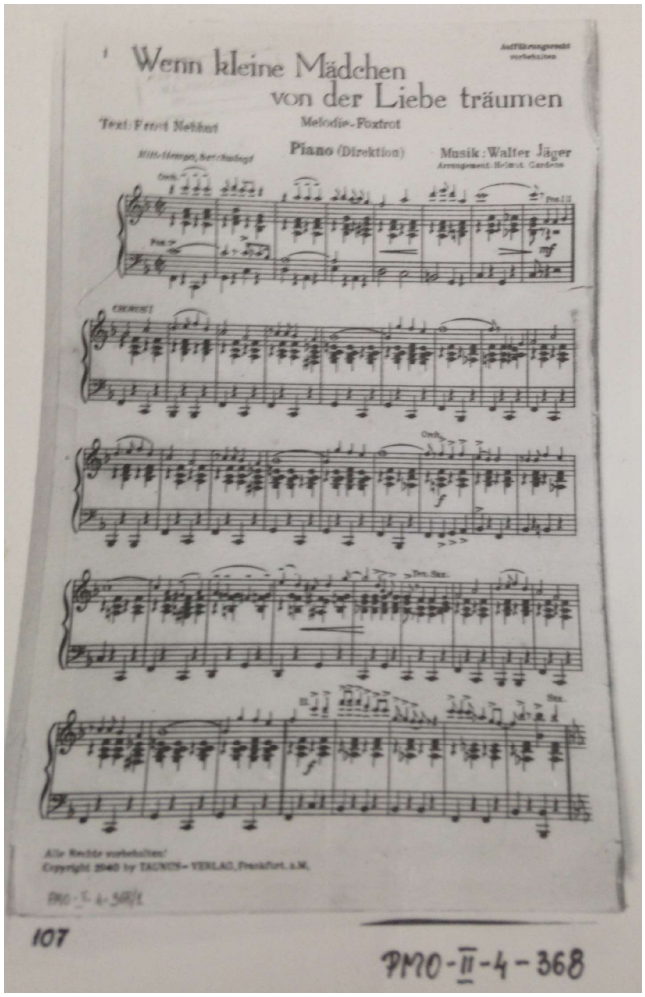
[138] Laks, *Music of Another World*, p.65.

Ex. 3.9 Szymon Laks, *Trzech polonezach warszawskich (Three Warsaw Polonaises),* Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, Kraków, 1950.

I was particularly taken with the sequence from bars 17 to 20 where Dmaj7 resolves to Gmaj 2nd inversion. I took this sequence and developed it in the opera-ballet to create an ostinato in the accordion to mark the beginning of the dream sequence, whereby imaginary dancers perform the polonaise whilst the musicians enter a dream-like state, as if lost, hoping for a better world than the one they find themselves in. On top of the ostinato, is a canon that draws on the Freygish mode. I also drew on glissandi which are often prevalent in Klezmer music and Romani traditions. The instrumental canon comprises two transpositions, with minor alterations so that the phrases resolve to D and A respectively. The vocal lines are also canonical but are slightly different to reflect the harmony in the 4-bar ostinato.

Scene 7 – Party

One of the responsibilities of the orchestras was to play for the *Schutzstaffel* (SS - Protection Squadron) parties at Auschwitz. In stark contrast to the provision for the prisoners, there was a wealth of food and alcohol to fuel the soldiers' festivities. Here, the musicians were required to perform light music that was popular in Nazi Germany. This includes *Wenn Kleine Mädchen von der Liebe Träumen, (When Little Girls Dream of Love)*, evidenced by the piano score that remains in the Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum.



Ex. 3.10 Walter Jäger, arr. Helmut Gardens, *Wenn Kleine Mädchen von der Liebe Träumen,* piano score*,* PMO-II-4-368, Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum.

The music is by Walter Jäger and the arranger is Helmut Gardens, about whom there is very little information available in either case. It is possible that they were associated or complicit with the Nazi regime. This is certainly likely, as the writer for *Wenn Kleine Mädchen* was Ernst Nebhut (a longstanding collaborator of Jäger), who was listed on the *Gottbegnadeten liste* (God Given List) which comprised of German artists who were given special protection and liberties by the Nazis.[139] The Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum granted me permission to restore this composition as it was played in the camp. The challenge is that all that remains is the piano reduction. From the parts of other light German music in the archive, it is possible to deduce that the scoring for *Wenn Kleine Mädchen* was for a small ensemble, similar to the instrumental forces I have called for in my opera-ballet.

To discover further clues as to how this composition might have been played in Auschwitz, I uncovered the recording made by Erhard Bauschke Tanz-Orchestra.[140] His band was operational from 1935 – 1940 and he created numerous recordings for Deutsche Grammophon.[141] It is likely therefore that Bauschke's recording was well-known to SS soldiers stationed at Auschwitz and so the musicians may have been required to emulate the recording. Notably, the recording deviates considerably from the piano score comprising a different structure and accompaniment, and notably the inclusion of a singer. So, in my interpretation I amalgamated both sources by dictating musical material and the lyrics from the recording to hopefully create an iteration as close as possible to that which would have been performed in Auschwitz. For dramatic purposes, I wanted to create discord between the prisoner musicians and the frivolousness of the SS guards who are seen dancing intoxicated.

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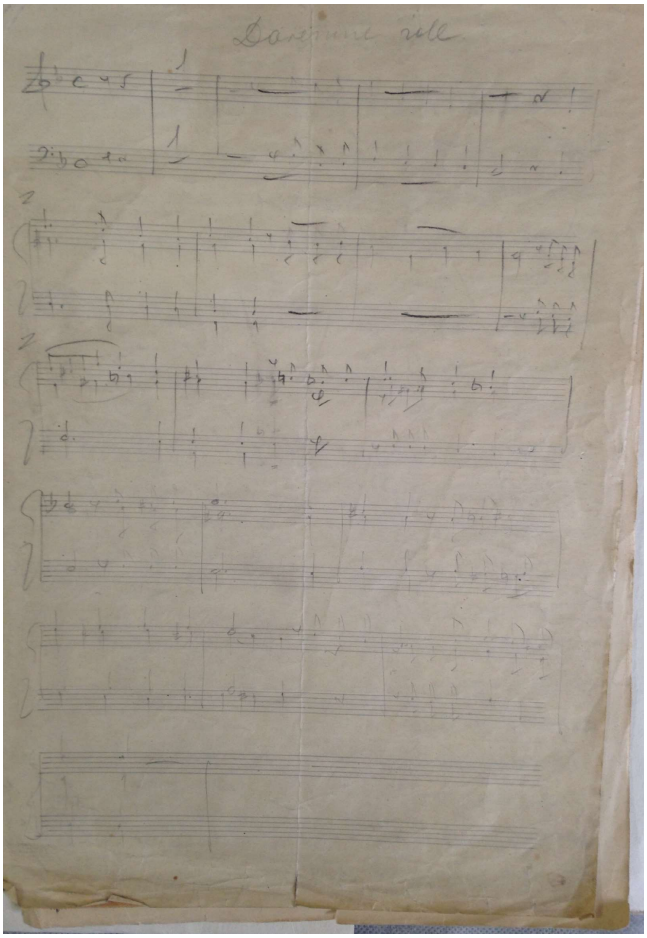
[139] Joseph Goebbels, *Gottbegnadeten liste, Reichsministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda* https://invenio.bundesarchiv.de/invenio/main.xhtml (click "Show digital copy") Accessed 13 Feb. 2024.
[140] Erhard Bauschke Tanz-Orchestra, *Wenn Kleine Mädchen von der Liebe Träumen* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6encpSVBv4U Accessed 13 Feb. 2024.
[141] Rainer E. Lotz, "Erhard Bauschke". *The New Grove Dictionary of Jazz*. 2nd edition, ed. Barry Kernfeld.

In the middle section, the music modulates to Eb major, however when the soldier joins in, they continue in F major, resulting in uncomfortable bitonality.

Scene 8 – Futile Regrets

The starting point for this scene is the unsigned and unfinished composition sketch which appears to read *Darmne żäle* ("Futile Regrets" in Polish) and has remained overlooked in the Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum, who have granted me permission to restore the composition. There is no information as to the author and the manuscript has remained a mystery to the museum, and is assumed to have never been performed.[142]



Ex. 3.11 Unknown author, *Darmne żäle,* PMO-II-4-306, Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum.

[142] Hubert Szczęśniak, *Musical Sources Survived in the Collection of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum,* Kwartalnik Młodych Muzykologów, Jagiellonian University, No.32 (1/2017), p.172.

Clearly, it is a sketch due to the writing in pencil and rubbings out, totally unlike most of the other manuscripts which are written in pen and ink. Although it is written on two staves akin to piano music, the use of upward and downward stems indicates at least a four-part ensemble. The range of the parts is well suited to SATB and *Darmne żäle* (1877) is a well-known poem by the Polish poet Adam Asnyk.[143] However, the poem does not fit the music. It is possible that the composer was inspired by Asnky's poem – certainly the grief in the music reflects that of the poem. Given the florid and faded nature of the title, it is also not conclusive that the text reads *Darmne żäle*. Unfortunately, it is not clear what the composer intended, but I can only hope that they would approve of my realisation.

The scene opens with a dancer acting as the Unknown Composer writing the composition wracked with grief. Consequently, the music itself is heard offstage. To begin with, I stayed relatively true to the original, except for adding additional lines of counterpoint to thicken the texture and add extra harmonic tension and richness through appoggiaturas and passing notes. From figures C to D, I developed upon the original, incorporating the vocal parts in the only passage where Asnky's poem appears to align with the music. In part, the section opens with a recapitulation of the first section before segueing into a recomposition of bars 9 to 18 from the original. In this section, the writing becomes increasingly dissonant and chromatic whilst still retaining the essence of the musical style of the original sketch. This concludes with an unexpected and ironic E major chord on the sung word "life". This is the point when the Unknown Composer sees or senses their fate, and the music fizzles out. The final section is entirely my music but drawing on the language of the original sketch. The music becomes fraught and tense and through a crescendo in volume, orchestration and dissonance. The scene concludes with the singers repeating "curses", whilst the instruments play a two-octave

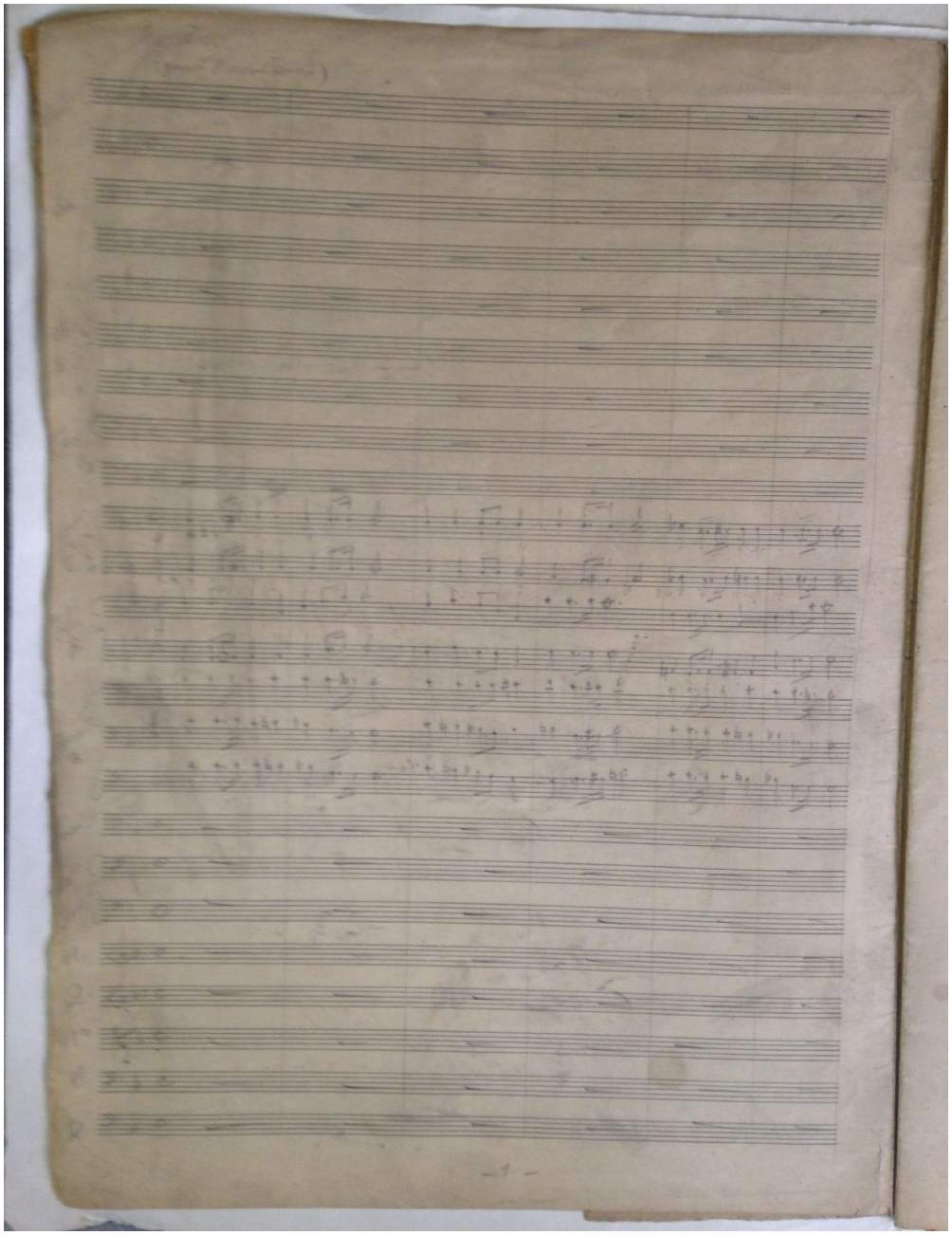
[143] Adam Asnyk, *Darmne żäle,* https://wolnelektury.pl/katalog/lektura/daremne-zale.html, Accessed 25th March 2024.

ascending scale drawn from the Freygish mode. As the section reaches its climax, the ensemble slowly processes on stage as ghosts.

Scene 9 – Postlude

This postlude beings with the destruction of the manuscripts and instruments. It is unclear who undertook this vandalisation, it may have been prisoners taking revenge on the orchestra for the marching music but more likely to have been the Nazis who liquidated the camp complexes to hide their crimes.[144] The drama that unfolds subsequently is set in the present day and is, in essence, autobiographical, following my research work uncovering the music. When I first studied the manuscripts which are stored within the camp complex itself, I was overwhelmed and artistically paralysed; unable to find a compositional response to the unimaginable horrors in which this music came to be. One of the most notable features of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum today is the silence. Visitors must experience the site in groups, where guides whisper, and despite the many thousands who visit daily, the vastness of the camp complex always feels empty. During my visit, I was very moved by the mournful sight of a blackbird, who stuttered a call, before it appeared to find its courage and sing. So, the final scene begins with a stuttering birdsong, whilst a present-day character explores Auschwitz (please note that the baritone in the workshop recording was unable to sing the part exclusively, hence why it is performed by all three singers in this instance). The recitative style takes influence from the Jewish cantor tradition which again draws on the Freygish mode. The off-stage instrumental accompaniment from figure D to F is designed to create a sense of warmth as the character begins to engage with the damaged manuscripts. The section from bars F to G is a reimagining of one of the manuscripts in the archive, as shown in the illustration below.

[144] Lachendro, *The Orchestras in KL Auschwitz*, 29.



Ex. 3.12 Karol Kurpiński's *Leśniczy z Kozienieckiej Puszczy (The Foresters of Kozienice),* PMO-II-4-306, Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum.

It is not entirely clear what this manuscript is and has also remained enigmatic to the archivists at Auschwitz. It appears to be an attempt to rewrite the overture for Karol Kurpiński's *Leśniczy z Kozienieckiej Puszczy (The Foresters of Kozienice)* (1821). The

composer of the manuscript and its purpose remains unclear.[145] The manuscript is written for brass which I rescored for clarinet, accordion, and strings. I chose to alter the rhythms and develop the harmony, but importantly, I wanted to retain the character and style of the original so that it contrasts with the musical language in the rest of the scene. The re-imagined excerpt fades and merges back into the warm instrumental soundscape. The scene concludes with a duet between the character and the Blackbird, followed by some spoken phrases to enable direct communication with the audience, which are taken from the last words of the previously sung phrases. To close, the character summarises the motivation behind the opera-ballet: "Auschwitz, never again."

The Orchestras of Auschwitz Conclusion

This opera-ballet is the culmination of many years of study, investigating music during the time humanity unleashed its greatest tragedy upon itself. My motivation to undertake this work is to tell the full story of the orchestras of Auschwitz to promote Holocaust learning and understanding. The challenge of this research and the opera-ballet lies in achieving historical accuracy despite limited and damaged sources. The facts tell of how music was used to give strength to prisoners and to escape or express the horrors the musicians found themselves in. However, the facts do also illustrate how music functioned as part of the infrastructure in the largest concentration camp that murdered 1.1 million people.[146] Whilst the latter music is both disturbing and distressing to say the least, I feel it is vital that it is presented to the public so that the Holocaust can be truly understood by the public at large and consequently prevent history from repeating itself.

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[145] Szczęśniak, *Musical Sources in Auschwitz*, p.172.
[146]Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, *The Number of Victims,* https://www.auschwitz.org/en/history/auschwitz-and-shoah/the-number-of-victims/ Accessed 25th March 2024.

From an opera-ballet perspective, *The Orchestras of Auschwitz* is a consolidation of my research, presented in a large-scale work. Whilst it can be said that overall, the narrative is shared equally between song and dance, the approach in each vignette is different. For example, in the *Futile Regrets* scene the narrative is delivered by the dance, with the musicians as figments of their imagination, whereas in the *Life* scene, the portrayal of a wedding is depicted by the collective of singing, dancing and playing artists. Consequently, within one work, I wanted to explore and develop multiple variations of how song and dance can operate in contemporary opera-ballet.

Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis and accompanying composition portfolio is to articulate and expand upon contemporary opera-ballet. My aspiration is to show that there is a line of inquiry that begins with baroque opera-ballet, reemerges at the twentieth century provoking the Ballets Russes to create their own opera-ballet practice, and continues through to the present day where artists have expanded and diversified the possibilities of opera-ballet. There does appear to be compelling evidence to show that the Ballets Russes did engage with the opera-ballet revival, and their legacy has remained exceptionally present throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries to the extent that some overzealous theorists have argued that European art can be divided into periods before and after the Ballets Russes.[147] The company performed throughout Europe and America, nurturing and showcasing some of the greatest modernists in music, dance, art and literature, who in turn took their practice onward to major stages across the world. More specifically, as Jennifer Holmans writes in her expansive book on the history of ballet, "a new generation…would fan out and – with the Russians – build whole new national dance traditions in the image of the Ballets Russes".[148] Consequently, it is not unreasonable to make a connection between the Ballets Russes and contemporary opera-ballet artists, who at the very least, would be aware of their work, if not taking direct influence from them.

The act of pigeonholing works and productions as contemporary opera-ballet or not, is always going to provoke debate, particularly in a period of music history where there is such

[147] Sergei Lifar, "The Russian Ballet in Russia and the West." *The Russian Review*, vol. 28, no. 4, 1969, pp. 396 – 402.
[148] Jennifer Homans, *Apollo's Angels: A History of Ballet*. London, Granta, 2010, p. 339.

plurality and diversity of form. Furthermore, the defining feature of contemporary opera-ballet is the equal weighting of song and dance in the narrative delivery, which can be difficult to judge and is most likely to be different from one production to the next. Rather than propose contemporary opera-ballet as a distinct form, I feel it is productive to apply the label as a trend within music theatre to identify and discuss works with similar qualities. This has enabled me to make connections between much more recent works which have applied song and dance equally and employed classically trained artists, despite contrasting aesthetics, such as Kinch's hip-hop *Legend of Mike Smith* and Dusapin's neo-baroque *Passion.* My hope is that the contemporary opera-ballet trend can be used for further discussions on the twentieth and twentieth-century stage.

From my perspective as a composer, it has been greatly beneficial to identify the contemporary opera-ballet trend, because it has enabled me to understand how my practice relates to the musical world and where there is opportunity for innovation and development. The purpose of *London Portraits* and *Ted's Passing* was to push at the boundaries of the 'classical' nature of opera-ballet through the engagement with jazz. In contrast, *Sea Garden* and *Water Hymn* which are examples of my nature-inspired compositional strand, set out to further dance's narrative potential in more poetic contexts. These pieces provided the foundation for a full-length opera-ballet, employing a vignette structure that allows for different ways of combining song and dance. *The Orchestras of Auschwitz* explores a very difficult subject matter, but I feel the abstracted realism of classical song and dance enables artistic impression and emotively charged performance to engage the public in Holocaust commemoration. Some may argue that certain pieces of music I have restored should remain forgotten. However, I feel that there is no value in the manuscripts remaining locked in

archives. The truth is difficult, and as survivor Anita Lasker-Wallfisch said, it is down to you all to inherit it.[149]

[149] Anita Lasker-Wallfisch. Interview. Conducted by Leo Geyer. 27th June 2023.

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Links to Recordings

Leo Geyer, DPhil Submission

Sea Garden (Spirit of Cornwall) - https://youtu.be/upvUU_n4ImM?si=CMQGXqcnjn-SFCfg

Water Hymn - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8fyXYcgFWSI

London Portraits - https://youtu.be/m5HmXJ8fGuk

Ted's Passing – N/A

Orchestras of Auschwitz - https://youtu.be/p94Xg-_zdlA

Leo Geyer

Published by
Constella Music

Sea Garden

for

mezzo-soprano & ensemble

FULL SCORE

Sea Garden

for

mezzo-soprano & ensemble

Commissioned as part of *Spirit of Cornwall,* a multi-sensory show garden that was awarded a silver-gilt medal at the Chelsea Flower Show 2018. Constella Music gave the first performance of *Sea Garden* in the garden conducted by Leo Geyer, with choreography by Sarah-Louise Kristiansen.

Duration
12mins

Scoring
mezzo-soprano
violin
viola
cello (C string detuned to B)
harp doubling wind machine

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To find out more about Leo Geyer including a full list of works and performance dates, please visit www.constella.org.uk.

Programme Note

Sea Garden was performed as part of *Spirit of Cornwall*, the multi-sensory show garden which was awarded a silver-gilt medal at the Chelsea Flower Show 2018. The garden's design was inspired by Geyer's composition *The Bronze Garden* which was in turn, inspired by Barbara Hepworth's sculpture garden in St. Ives, Cornwall. For the opening of the show garden, Geyer was commissioned to create a reimagining of *The Bronze Garden* to incorporate a mezzo-soprano and dancer. The performance was televised by the BBC, and an audio recording of the work was also broadcast on BBC Radio 3.

The text, and indeed the music, both created by Geyer, describe the sanctuary-like environment of Hepworth's sculpture garden in the Cornish seaside town of St. Ives. Surrounded by high walls, the sub-tropical garden houses numerous weathered bronze sculptures that feel very much at home amongst the greenery.

Text

Poem by Leo Geyer.

I float on a flowing green sea
and bask in the warmth from the Stream.
I see the seamless pearl blue sky
and watch distant gulls glide the zephyr.
I hear the babble beyond the grey cliffs,
listen to its distant song sail the breeze.
I feel rays of yellow sun
and blush like coral in Spring.

Sculpted sea-rocks painted lime by rain
emerge from rippling olive waters,
sparkling with blooming flowers.

Giant cliffs carved of walled seashell stone
make waves reach for white clouds
and explode in fountains of shamrock spray,
glistening with flowering blossom.

I escape in a flowering green sea
and hide in the garden cove.
I hear the stillness of thought
and echo of tide and breath.
I see the towering weathered casts of jade
and watch them become nature's treasure.
I honour the green sea of Summer.

Score

Sea Garden

Leo Geyer
b.1992

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Sea Garden

10
S.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
on a flow - ing
green sea

A
14
S.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
and bask in the warmth
con vib.
con vib.
con vib.
always l.v. unless otherwise stated
HARP
WIND MACHINE

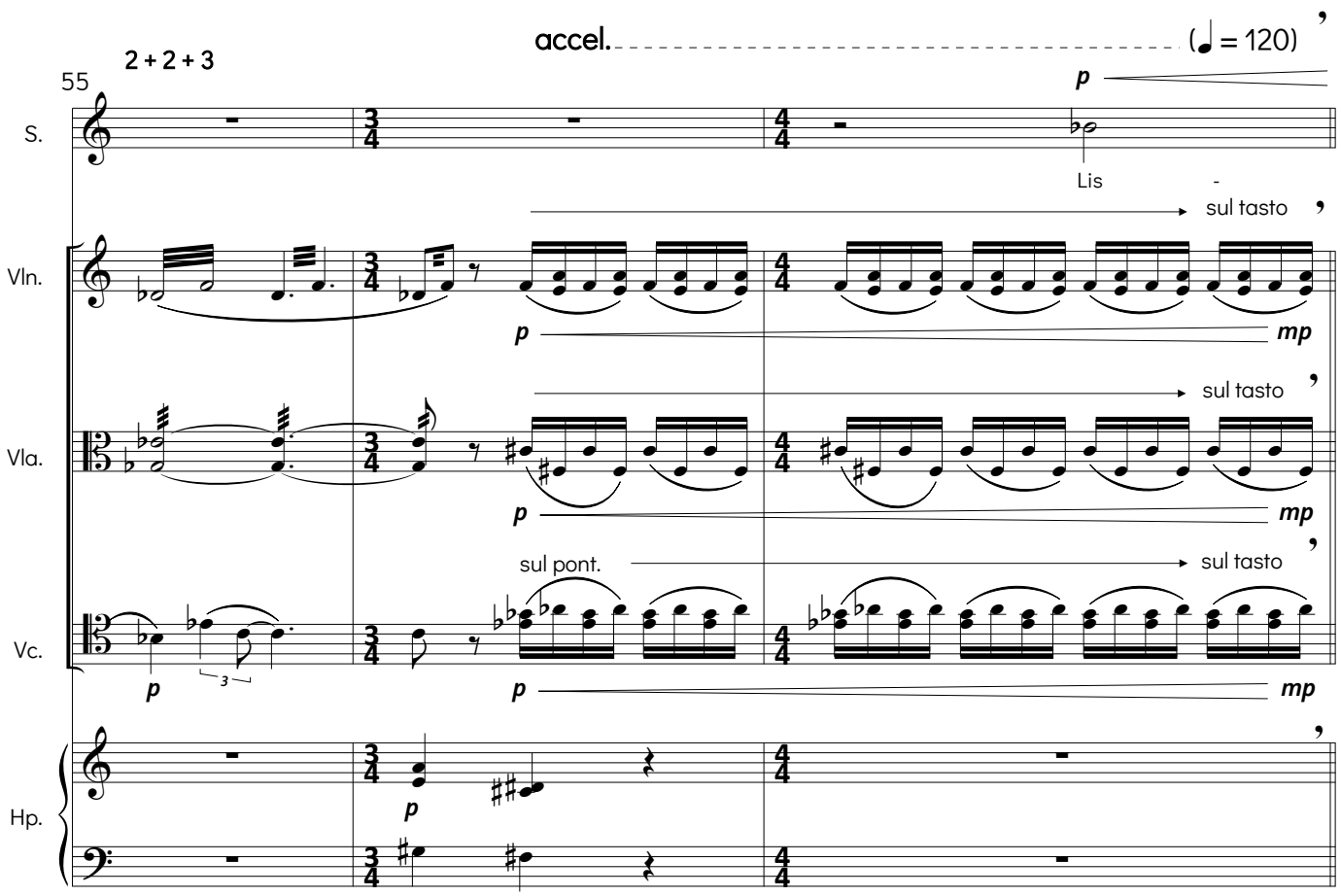
2 + 2 + 3
3 + 2 + 2
19
S.
Bask in the warmth from the from the stream
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
W. Mchn.
pp p ppp pp p pp

B
23
S.
I see the seam - less blue pearl blue sky
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
HARP
sim. l.v.
Hp.
p mp p mp p

27
2 + 2 + 3
3 + 2
S.
And watch the dis - tant gulls glide the zeph - yr I see the
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
sul tasto norm.
gradually change
"seagull harmonic gliss" - keep interval in hand the same throughout gliss. thus restarting gliss. from top
Hp.
33
C
seam - less pearl blue sky I float
senza vib.

37
S.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Hp.
ppp
ppp
pp
ppp
on a
flow - ing
green
sea
pp
p
pp
p
pp
pp
p
pp
p
pp
p
pp
p
pp
p
pp
42
= 120
rit.
p
pp
I
hear
the
con vib.
sul pont.
sul tasto
p sub.
pp
mp

D
Tempo poco piu mosso dolce e agitato ♩ = 60
2 + 2 + 3
3 + 2 + 2
accel.
47
whisper
'mf'
'ff'
S.
bab - ble be - yond grey cliffs sh lis - ten
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
(sul tasto)
Hp.
(♩ = 120)
E
Tempo II
51
to it's dis - tant song sail the breeze
sul pont.
norm.
gradually slow down trill and tremolo


accel.
(♩ = 120)
2 + 2 + 3
55
S.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Hp.
p
Lis
-
sul tasto
mp
sul pont.

F
Tempo II
58
S.
ten
I feel
rays of
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Hp.
norm.
pizz.
arco
p
mp
pp
f
mf

G Tempo I, like raindrops *lontano* ♩ = 52

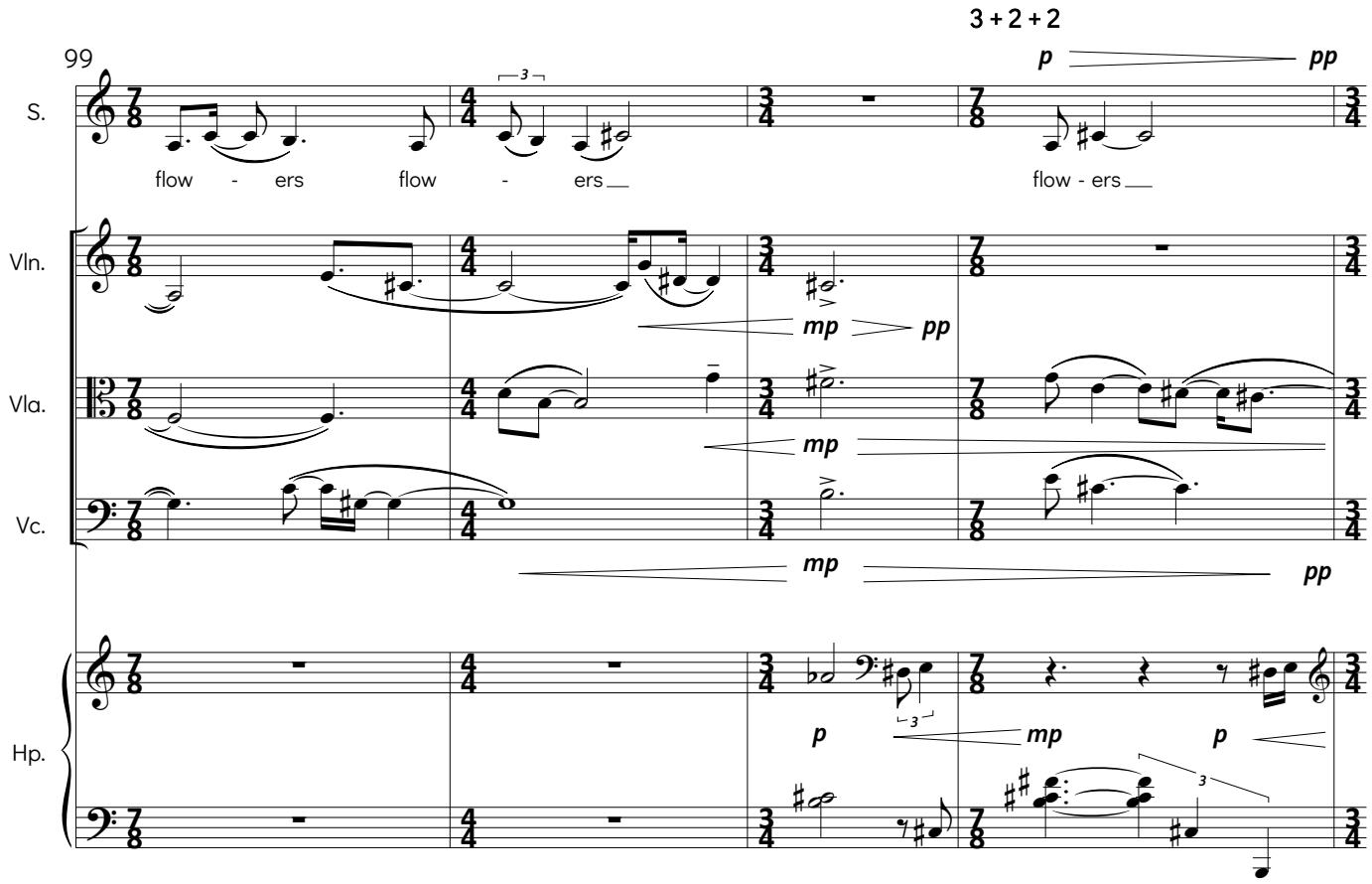
72
S.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Hp.
p pp ppp pp p mp
- ed sea rocks paint - ed lime by rain
p.d.l.t
ff
p sempre
f

rit. a tempo 2 + 2 + 3
H
76
S.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Hp.
pp
p
sea - rocks
narrow vib
senza vib.
p.d.l.t
ff
p sempre

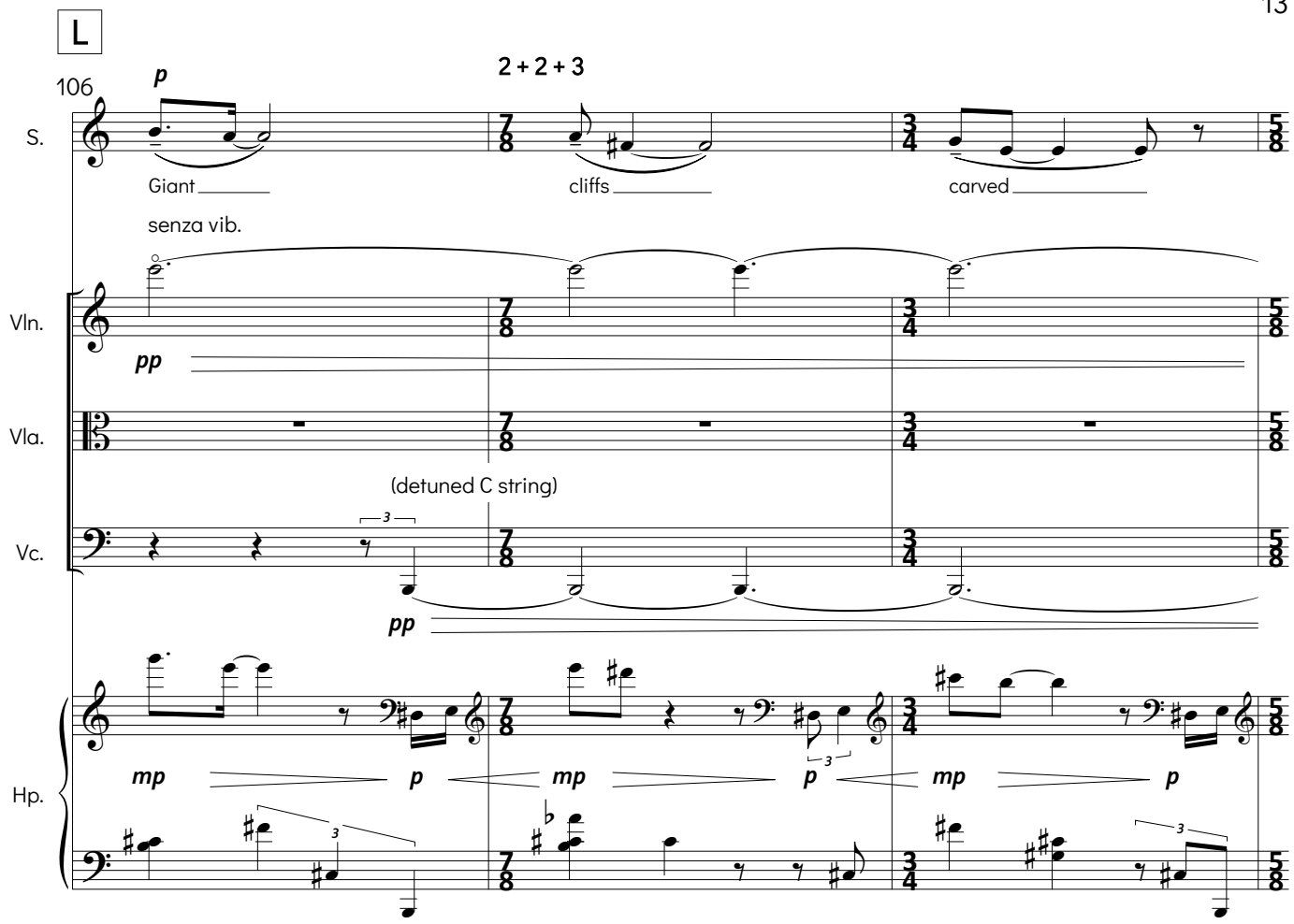
80
rall.
S.
paint - ed lime e - merge e - merge from rip - pling wa - ters
narrow vib
senza vib.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Hp.
I a tempo
85
ol - ive wa - ters

J dolcissimo
90
S.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Hp.
mf f p
spar - kling with bloom - ing flow - ers flow -
con vib.
pp
con vib.
pp
con vib.
p
f
mf

94
2 + 2 + 3
S.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Hp.
ers
flow - ers flow - ers
flow - wers
p
p


poco animando
K
like stone bricks *ritmico* ♩ = 60
3 + 2 + 2
99
S.
flow - ers flow - ers
flow - ers
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Hp.
p
pp
mp

3 + 2 + 2
103
S.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Hp.
pp
mp
p


L
106
2 + 2 + 3
S.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Hp.
p
Giant
cliffs
carved
senza vib.
pp
(detuned C string)
mp
p
mp
p
mp
p

109
2 + 3
S.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Hp.
pp sempre
half-whisper
of walled
sea shell stone
sea shell stone
n
pizz.
mp
p
n
mp
pp

M like tide (quasi harp cadenza) *becoming flamboyant*

3 + 3 + 3
119
f
S.
waves
reach
for
white
clouds
Vln.
shoo
ss
sh
shoo
ss
Vla.
shoo
ss
sh
shoo
ss
Vc.
shoo
ss
sh
shoo
ss
Hp.
mf
f

2 + 3
122
S.
and
ex - - -
Vln.
sh
shoo
ss
sh
Vla.
sh
shoo
ss
sh
Vc.
sh
shoo
ss
sh
Hp.
ff

125
S.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Hp.
ff
p
plode in foun-tains of sham-rock spray
'ff'
'p'
shoo ss sh shoo ss sh shoo
fff
8va

N dolcissimo
128
S.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Hp.
pp
glis - ten - ing with flow - ering blos - som blos -
con vib.
p

132
p
S.
som
blos - som
blos - som
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Hp.
mp
p
mp
p
pp

137
pp
ppp
S.
blos - som
senza vib.
Vln.
pp
senza vib.
Vla.
pp
Vc.
pp
Hp.
mp
pp

O
Flowing like tide soave ♩ = 52
2 + 2 + 3
2 + 2 + 3
141
S.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Hp.
n
I
es - cape
senza vib.
P
145
in a flow - ering green sea
con vib.
8va

149
2 + 2 + 3
3 + 2 + 2
ppp
pp
p
ppp
S.
and hide in the gar - den
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Hp.
mp
152
2 + 2 + 3
Q
hide in in the gar - den cove
I hear the still -
8va

156
2 + 2 + 3
2 + 3
S.
ness of thought
And e - cho of tide and breath
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Hp.

162
S.
I see the
tow - ering
weath - ered
casts
of
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
rit. gliss at top but land on Db in time
Hp.

R dolce perdendosi
166
S.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Hp.
ppp
pp
2 + 3
p
jade and watch them be - come na - ture's treas -
con sord.
171
ure
I hon-
sempre

2 + 2 + 3
176
pp
n
S.
our the green sea of sum - - - mer
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Hp.
pp
ppp

Leo Geyer

composer | conductor

www.constella.org.uk

Leo Geyer

Published by
Constella Music

Water Hymn

for

a cappella choir

CHOIR SCORE

Water Hymn

for

a cappella choir

Commissioned as part of *Spin A Tale* produced by Constella Music in collaboration with Beam, supporting Darley Abbey Day 2021 for the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site Great Place Scheme, funded by National Lottery Heritage Fund and Arts Council England. Water Hymn was first performed as an opera-ballet scene released online on the 8th May 2021 with choreography by Sarah-Louise Kristiansen and music direction by the composer

Duration
7mins

Scoring
SATB Choir

A piano reduction score is available for rehearsal purposes only.

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To find out more about Leo Geyer including a full list of works and performance dates, please visit **www.leogeyer.co.uk**

Text

Water Hymn is a poem by Leo Geyer and due to the musical structure incorporating invertible counterpoint, the text can be read in two ways:

Water Hymn

Above,
subtle clouds dance
across a rippling stage
watched by aged willows bent.

Below,
ancient power writhes
over a winding valley
unchecked by all that be.

Ahead,
rushing water tamed
through a turning wheel
unfurled by memories.

Behind,
the everlasting mill
beyond trading end
unturned by water that is past.

Water Hymn

Above
Below
Ahead
Behind

subtle clouds dance,
ancient power writhes,
rushing water tamed,
the everlasting mill.

across a rippling stage,
over a winding valley,
through a turning wheel,
beyond trading end,

watched by aged willows bent,
unchecked by all that be,
unfurled by memories,
unturned by water that is past.

Notes on Score

In *Water Hymn,* the pitched content derives from transformations of the whole-tone and lydian scales. The score seeks to avoid awkward intervals within vocal lines wherever possible by using enharmonic spellings. To achieve this, false relation occurs frequently, with some parts operating in sharps, whilst others in flats. In other words, linear spelling is prioritised over vertical.

In the piano reduction (for rehearsal purposes only), vertical spelling is prioritised over linear for ease of playing.

Singers may wish to employ staggered breathing to achieve best results.

Water Hymn

Score

Leo Geyer
b.1992

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12
S
A
T
B
p f
a - bove
a head a-head a - head a-head a
be be-hind be-hind be-hind be-hind
be - low
17
mp p
mf
A
22
3
A - bove
Subt - le clouds
head a - head
be-hind be - hind
be - - - - low

27
S
A
T
B
ff
f
Subt - le clouds dance a - bove - a -
head a - head a head a - head a - head a - head
be - hind be - hind be - hind be - hind be - hind be - hind be - hind be - hind
low be low An - cient
32
bove - a - bove a - bove - a - bove a - bove - a - bove a - bove a bove - a - bove a -
Rush - ing wat - er head a - head a -
be - hind be - hind be - hind be - hind be - hind be - hind be the ev - er - last - ing
po - wer writhes be - low be - low be - low be - low be low be - low be - low
B
37
p
bove - a - bove a a - cross a - cross a - cross a - cross a - cross a - cross a -
head a - head a
mill
be - low be - low
o - ver o - ver

43
S
cross a - cross a - cross a - cross a - cross a - cross a - cross a - cross a - cross a -
A
p
through through through through through through through through through
T
p
be yond be-yond be - yond be -
B
o - ver o - ver o - ver o - ver o - ver
48
S
f
cross a - cross a - cross a - cross a - cross a rip-ping stage
A
f
through through through through
T
f
yond be-yond be - yond be - yond be-yond
B
f
f
o - ver o - ver o - ver o - ver a wind-ing
C
53
S
ff
A
f
ff
through a turn-ing whee - l
T
f
ff
f
be - yond the trad-ing end. oo
B
ff
val - ey

60
S
A
T
B
f
watched
oo
mf
f
67
by aged wil-lows bent. wil-lows bent
D
ff
74
oo ah ah ah
un - furled by mem-or - ies
un - checked by all that be. ah

81
fff
f
p
S
A
T
B
ah
oo
Un - turned by wa - ter that is past.
p sempre
A - head a-head a - head a-head a -
E
87
no breath
f sub.
Be - low be -
Be-hind be-hind be-hind be-hind be Be-hind be-hind be-hind be-hind be
head a-head a - head a-head a a head a-head a - head a-head a - a
A - bove a -
93
low be - low
Be-hind be-hind Be-hind be-hind be be-hind be-hind be-hind be-hind
head a-head a - head a-head a a head a-head a - head a-head a
bove a - bove

98
S
be - low
be - low
A
be
be-hind be-hind be-hind be-hind be-hind be-hind be be
T
a head a-head a - head a-head a head a-head a a a -
B
a - bove
a - bove
F
103
S
be - low
be -
A
be-hind be-hind be-hind be-hind be-hind be-hind
be-hind be-hind
T
head a-head a - head a-head a - head a - head
head a-head a-
B
A - bove
Subt - le
108
S
- - low
be - low
be
low
A
be-hind be-hind be be - be-hind be-hind be-hind be-hind be-hind be - hind
T
head a-head a a a head a-head a head a-head a - head a - head
B
clouds
Subt - le
clouds
dance

114
S
A
T
B
f
An - cient po - wer writhes be - low be - low be - low be - low be low
be-hind be-hind be-hind be-hind be-hind be-hind be-hind be-hind be the
ff
Rush - ing wat - er
a - bove - a - bove - a - bove a - bove - a - bove a - bove - a - bove a - bove a
119
ff
G
p
be - low be - low be - low be - low o - ver
ev - er - last - ing mill
head a - head a - head a - head a
bove - a - bove a - bove - a - bove a a - cross a - cross a - cross a - cross a - cross a -
125
o - ver o - ver o - ver o - ver o - ver
be yond beyond be -
through through through through through through
cross a - cross a - cross a - cross a - cross a - cross a -

130
S
o - ver o - ver o - ver o - ver
A
yond be - yond be-yond be - yond be - yond be-yond
T
through through through through through through
B
cross a-cross a - cross a - cross a-cross a - cross a-cross a rip-ping
135
S
o - ver a wind-ing val - ey
A
be - yond the trad-ing
T
through a turn-ing whee - l
B
stage
H
140
S
oo
A
end. oo oo
T
oo oo
B

147
S
A
T
B
oo
oo
oo
f
watched by aged
I
153
ff
un - checked by
oo
oo ah
wil - lows bent. wil-lows bent
oo ah
160
fff
all that be. ah
ah ah Un - turned by wa - ter
ah ah un - furled by mem-or - ies ah
ah ah

166
p sempre
S
A - head a - head a - head a - head a - head a - head a - head a - head a
A
f
p
no breath
that is past. ah oo
T
f
p
no breath
ah oo
B
f
p
p sempre
ah oo Be-hind be-hind be-hind be-hind
J
172
S
p
a head a - head a - head a - head a a head a - head a -
A
f sub.
p
A - bove a - bove
T
f sub.
p
Be - low be - low
B
p
be Be-hind be-hind be-hind be-hind be Be-hind be-hind
177
S
p
head a - head a - a head a - head a - head a - head a a
A
p
f
p
a - bove a - bove
T
p
f
p
be - low be - low
B
Be-hind be-hind be be-hind be-hind be-hind be-hind be

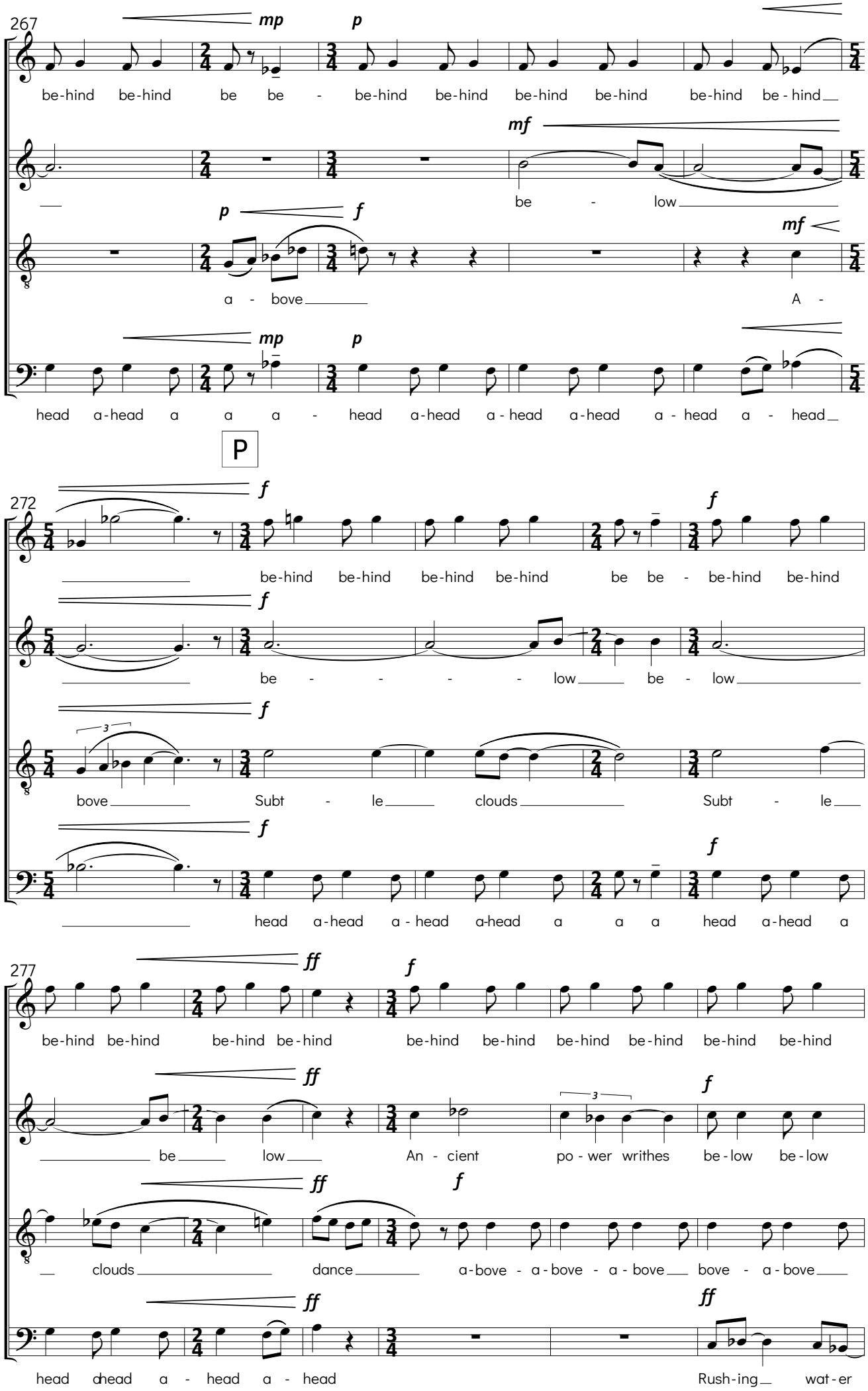
182
S
A
T
B
head a-head a- head a-head a head a-head a a a - head a-head a-
a - bove
be - low
be-hind be-hind be-hind be-hind be-hind be-hind be be - be-hind be-hind
187
head a-head a - head a - head head a-head a-head a-head a
A - bove Subt - le clouds
be - low be - - - low
be-hind be-hind be-hind be-hind be-hind be-hind be-hind be-hind
192
K
a a head a-head a head a-head a - head a - head
Subt - le clouds dance a-bove - a-
be - low be low An - cient
be be - be-hind be-hind be-hind be-hind be-hind be - hind be-hind be-hind

198
ff
f
S
Rush - ing wat - er
head a - head a -
A
bove - a - bove bove - a - bove bove - a - bove a - bove a bove - a - bove
f
T
po - wer writhes be - low be - low be - low be - low be low be - low be - low
ff
B
be - hind be - hind be - hind be - hind be - hind be - hind be the ev - er - last - ing
203
ff
L
S
head a - head a
ff p
A
bove - a - bove a cross a - cross a - cross a - cross a - cross a - cross a -
ff
p
T
be - low be - low o - ver o - ver
B
mill
209
p
S
through through through through through through through through
A
cross a - cross a - cross a - cross a - cross a - cross a - cross a -
T
o - ver o - ver o - ver o - ver o - ver
p
B
be yond be - yond be - yond be -

214
S
A
T
B
f
through through through through
cross a - cross a-cross a - cross a-cross a rip-ping stage
o - ver o - ver o - ver o-ver a wind-ing
yond be-yond be - yond be - yond be-yond
219
M
ff
through a turn-ing whee-l
val - ey
be - yond the trad-ing end.
oo
226
mf
oo

232
S
A
T
B
f
watched by aged wil - lows bent.
oo
N
238
ff
oo oo ah ah
wil-lows bent oo ah ah
un - checked by all that
244
fff
un - furled by mem-or - ies ah
ah
be. ah
ah Un - turned by wa - ter that is past.

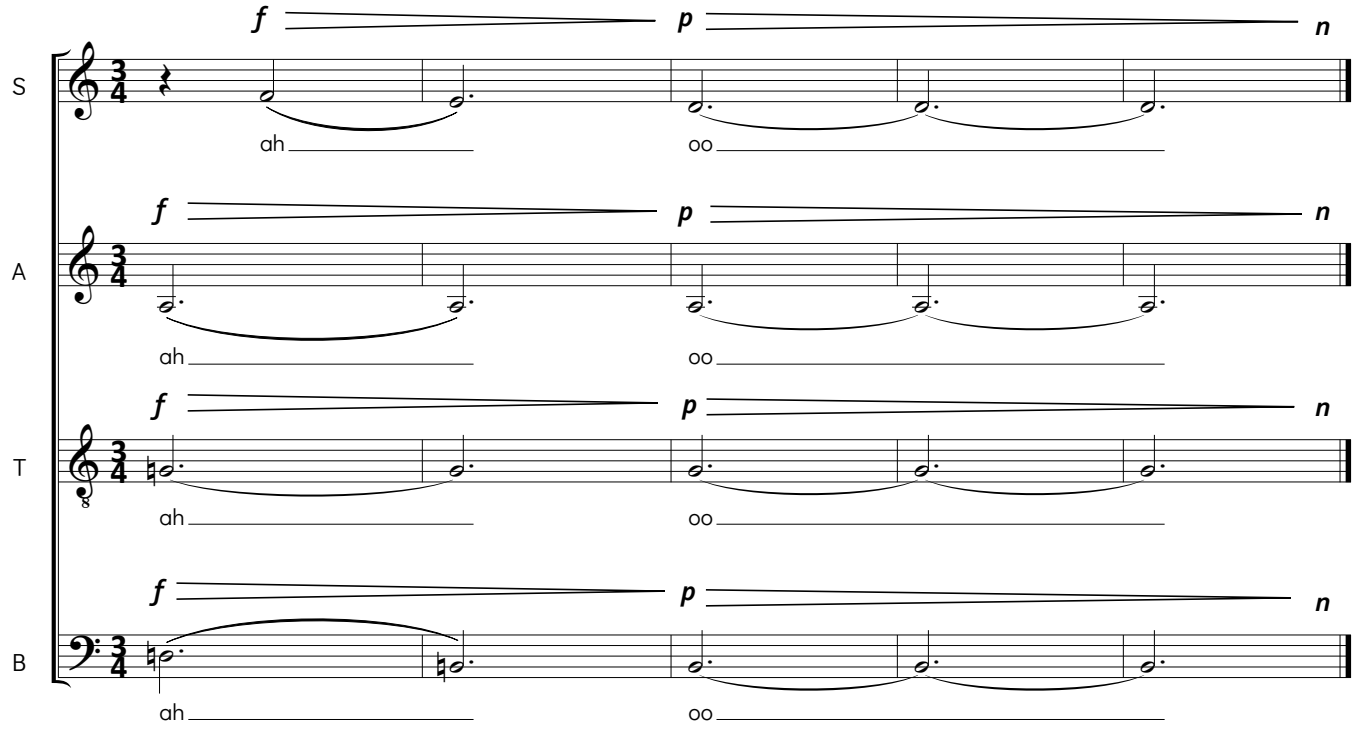
250
S
A
T
B
f
p
p sempre
ah
oo
Be-hind be-hind be-hind be-hind be
no breath
f sub.
Be -
A -
A - head a-head a - head a-head a - head a-head a - head a-head a a
O
256
Be-hind be-hind be-hind be-hind be Be-hind be-hind Be-hind be-hind be
low be - low be - low
bove a - bove a - bove
head a-head a-head a-head a - a head a-head a-head a-head a - a
262
be-hind be-hind be-hind be-hind be be-hind be-hind be-hind be-hind
mp
be - low be - low
a - bove
head a-head a - head a-head a a head a-head a - head a-head a


267
S
A
T
B
mp
p
mf
f
be-hind be-hind be be - be-hind be-hind be-hind be-hind be-hind be - hind
be - low
a - bove
A -
head a-head a a a - head a-head a - head a-head a - head a - head
P
272
be-hind be-hind be-hind be-hind be be - be-hind be-hind
be - - - - low be - low
bove Subt - le clouds Subt - le
head a-head a - head a-head a a a head a-head a
277
ff
be-hind be-hind be-hind be - hind be-hind be-hind be-hind be-hind be-hind be-hind
be low An - cient po - wer writhes be - low be - low
clouds dance a-bove - a-bove - a - bove bove - a-bove
head ahead a - head a - head
Rush - ing wat - er

283
S
A
T
B
ff
be-hind be-hind be the ev - er - last - ing mill
ff
be - low be - low be low be-low be-low be-low be - low
ff p
bove - a-bove a - bove a bove - a - bove bove - a-bove a a - cross a-cross a-
f ff
head a-head a - head a-head a
289
p
be
p
o - ver o-ver o - ver o-ver o - ver
cross a - cross a-cross a - cross a - cross a-cross a - cross a - cross a-cross a -
p
through through through through through
295
f
yond be-yond be - yond be - yond be-yond be - yond be - yond be-yond
f
o - ver o - ver o - ver o - ver o - ver
f
cross a - cross a-cross a - cross a - cross a-cross a - cross a -
f
through through through through through through through

300
S
A
T
B
f
be-
o - ver a wind-ing val - ey
cross a rip-ping stage
through a turn-ing whee - l
R
ff
yond the trad-ing end.
oo
mf
watched by

S
A
T
B
oo
aged wil - lows bent. wil-lows
S
ff
oo ah ah
un - checked by all that be.
bent oo ah ah
oo ah ah ah un -
fff
ah Un - turned by wa - ter that is past.
ah
ah
furled by mem - or - ies ah


S
A
T
B
f
p
n
ah
oo

Leo Geyer

composer | conductor

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Leo Geyer

Published by
Constella Music

London Portraits

opera-ballet

PIANO SCORE

London Portraits

opera-ballet

London Portraits was initially commissioned by the Lancaster Jazz Festival and completed for Constella Music. It was premiered by Constella Music with choreography by Tiara Foo at Lillian Baylis Studio, Sadler's Wells on the 27th November 2023.

Duration
15mins

Scoring
mezzo-soprano, piano and dance.

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To find out more about Leo Geyer including a full list of works and performance dates, please visit www.leogeyer.co.uk

Synopsis

London Portraits tells of two couples seeking romance in a city which does not always seem to lend itself to such pursuits. One couple appears more open to fall in love, whereas the other is more uncertain. Across four scenes; the sleepless night, the busy commute, the sunset and the underground kiss, the couples are tested. Throughout, the uncertain couple gradually find their confidence and seal their love in a kiss, whilst the other couple find themselves drifting further apart and become separated.

Staging

The musicians should be placed onstage but do not play an active role in the drama and should be considered as poetic narrators. The narrative should be articulated by the choreography.

Text

Poems by Leo Geyer.

1. Blink

Quiet.
The stillness between.
The quiet stillness between night and light.
The quiet, still half-tide between ebbing wine and surging coffee.
The still emptiness between blurry last orders and focused first sprint.
The quiet, still emptiness where Depravity and Purity squint in the grey light.
In the quiet stillness before dawn, the city that never sleeps, blinks in the half-light.

2. The Stream

Morn.
At dawn,
grey trains
sidle into Waterloo.
Bankers in sharp blue suits
trickle one by one into filling streets.
Like droplets feeding a mountain stream, the flow hurries,
racing ever onwards, charging through every space,
in swift, unforgiving currents,
pouring,
whilst the city's restless guests
flood winding streets, surging over smooth worn pebbles,
Like chattery rapids, they twist and turn, crash head-on with incoming tides,
merging in great gushing waterfalls cascading
down into the Underground depths.
Whilst the Londoner,
soars,
sailing across the
turbulent flows of rushing feet,
cutting through the roaring waves,
navigating the familiar waters
with the speed and grace
of bygone clippers
filled with tea.

3. Sunset in Grey

Rose, lilac and marigold
shade the clouds
with the light of the dying sun.
Like a giant lake the sky is reflected
in a mass of rippling grey coats
with black umbrella lilies.
Iris, violet and lavender
paint the raincoats
with the last of the summer frocks.

4. Underground Kiss

Can love exist in a place where everything is “to go”?
The swarm ant-like with coffee-fuelled energy.
The clock ticking and seconds counting.
No time, no time, for heart beating.
Swarms of commuters flow,
the rest as stubborn rocks.
On falling flight of steps,
eyes meet eyes,
lips on lips.
Two in
love.

Score

London Portraits

1. Blink

Leo Geyer
b.1992

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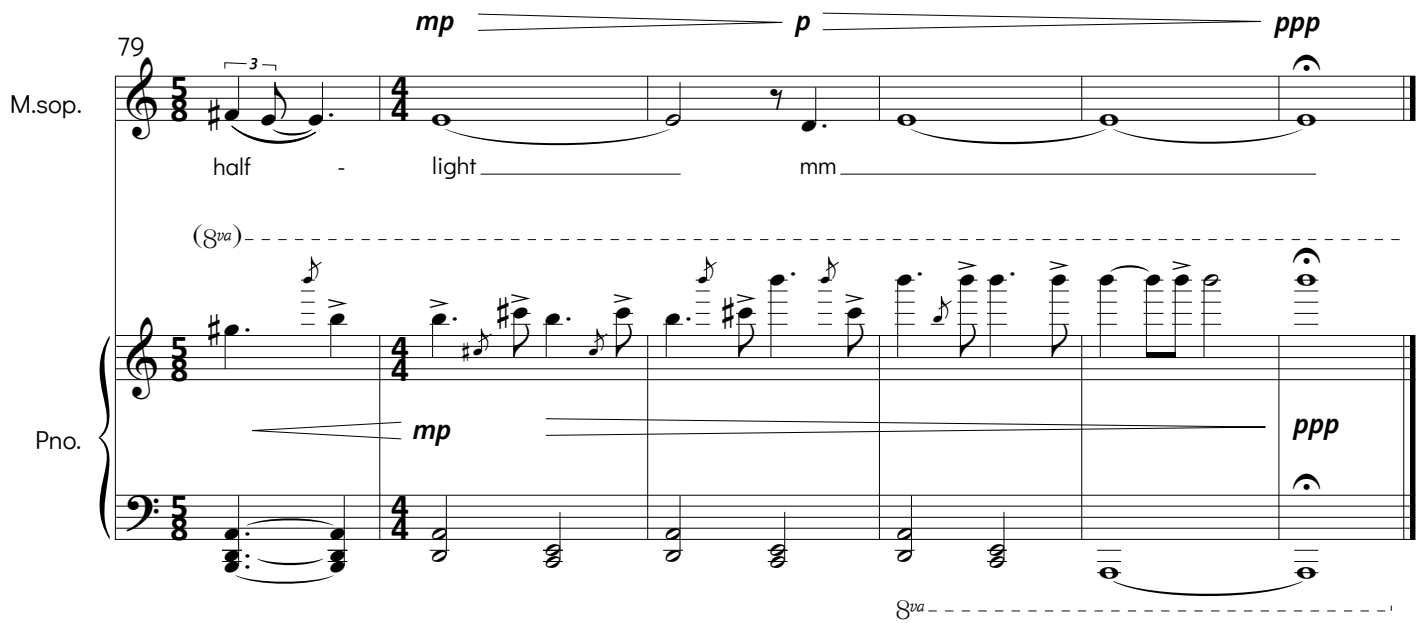
18
M.sop.
Pno.
ppp
pp
p
The quiet still half - tide
23
be - tween eb - bing wine. and sur - ging cof -
f
fee
27
The
mf
f
p sub.
32
still emp - ti - ness be - tween
ppp

38
M.sop.
Pno.
p
f
blur - ry
last
or - ders
(8va)
p
mf
42
mf f
mf
f
and fo-cused
first
sprint.
8va
mf
f
mf
mp
f
p
46
ppp
The
quiet,
still.
(8va)
8va
p
pp
p
pp

52
M.sop.
Pno.
p
f
emp - ti - ness where De -
8va
mp
(8va)
56
M.sop.
Pno.
pra-vi-ty and Pur - it - y
f
8va
mf
f
8va
59
M.sop.
Pno.
mp
p
squint in the grey light.
(8va)
mf
p
pp
Sost.

Reflective lontano ♩ = 69
63
M.sop.
Pno.
pp
In the qui-et
ppp
p
pp
8va
Ped.
69
still - ness
be-fore
dawn,
the
mp
74
ci - ty
that ne-ver
sleeps
blinks in the
p sempre


79
M.sop.
Pno.
mp
p
ppp
half - light mm
(8va)
mp
ppp
8va

2. The Stream

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inquieto ♩ = 112
10
M.sop.
f mf p
tri - ckle one by one
(8va)
Pno.
f p f
8va
14
fp mf f
in - to fill-ing streets. Like drop-lets
RH p p f p pp f
LH mp
19
pp cresc.
feed-ing a moun - tain stream, the stream, the flow
8va
pp p pp mp p

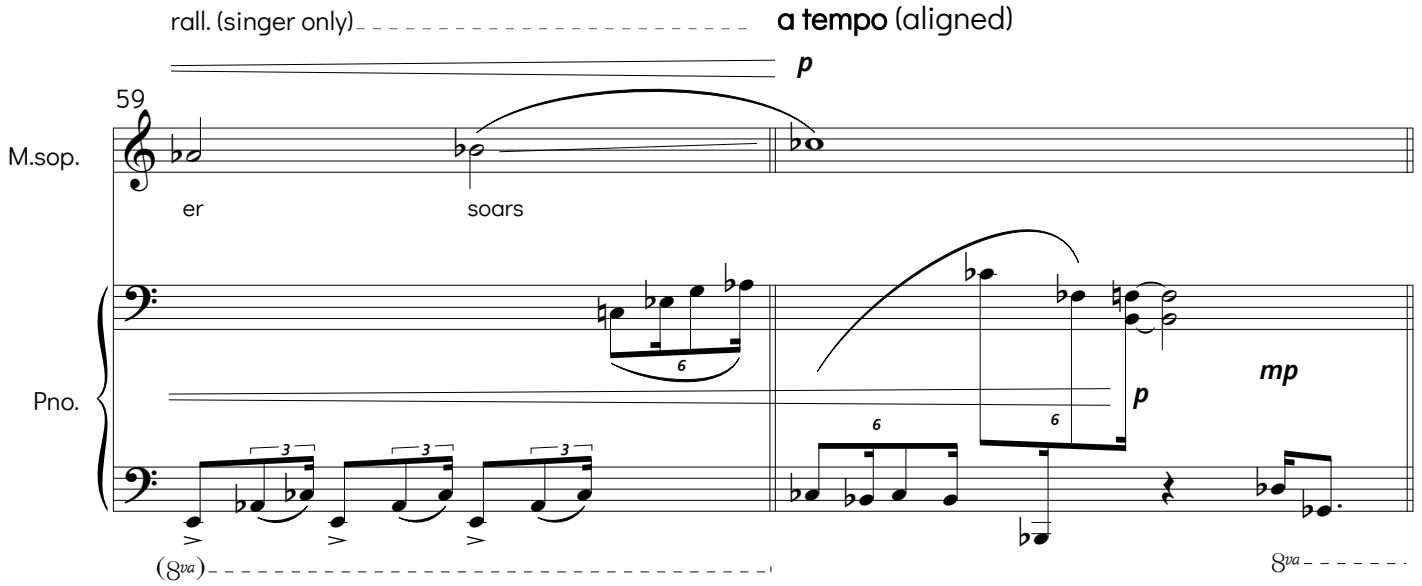
21
M.sop.
f
hur-ries, rac - ing ev - er on - wards, charg - ing through eve-ry space, in
8va
Pno.
mp pp
f
8va
24
M.sop.
ff
p
accel.
swift, un - for - giv - ing, un - for - giv - ing,
(8va)
Pno.
ff
p sub.
(8va)
26
M.sop.
un - for - giv - ing, un - for - giv - ing,
(8va)
Pno.
(8va)

allargando
meno mosso ♩ = 108
28
M.sop.
fff
un - for - giv - ing cur - rents pour,
(8va)
Pno.
fff
pp poco rubato
31
mp
p
f
mf
whilst the ci - ty's rest - less guests flood
f
pp
poco accel.
34
f
p
wind - ing streets,
surg - ing surg -
pp

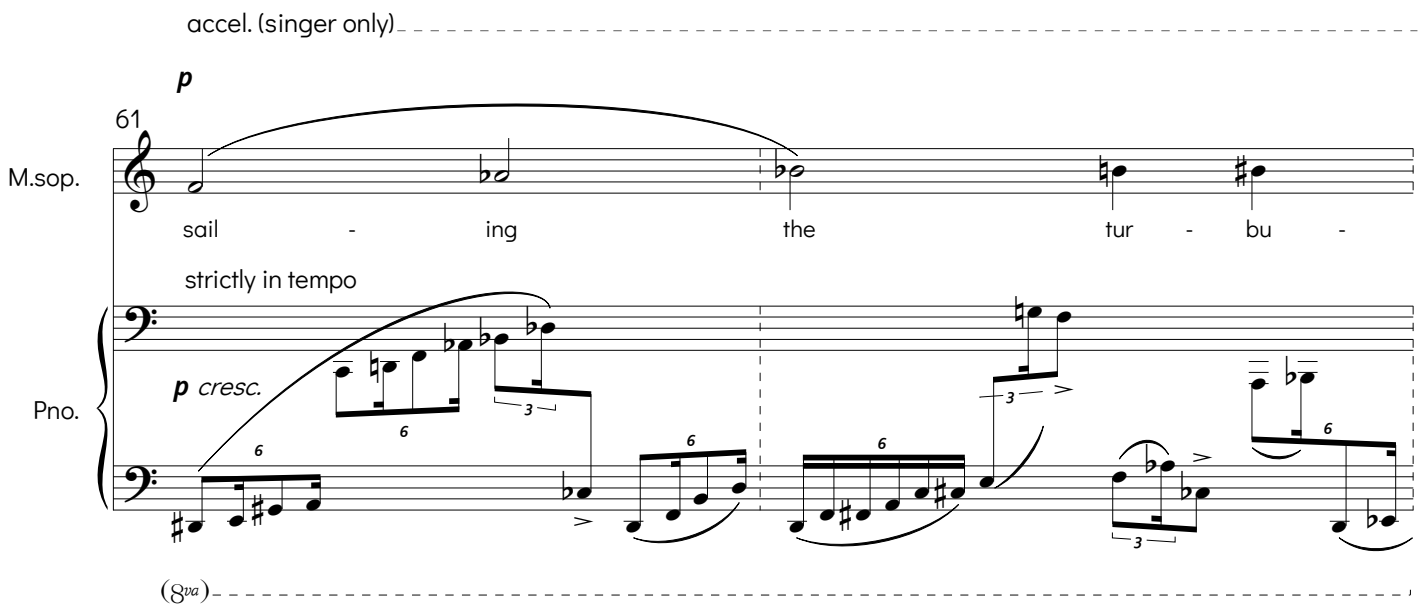
37
M.sop.
ing, surg - ing, surg - ing, surg -
Pno.
a tempo
ff
39
M.sop.
- - - ing surg - ing surg - ing
Pno.
f ff f
ff p f
41
M.sop.
surg - ing over smooth worn peb-bles,
Pno.
f p mp f p
Ped.

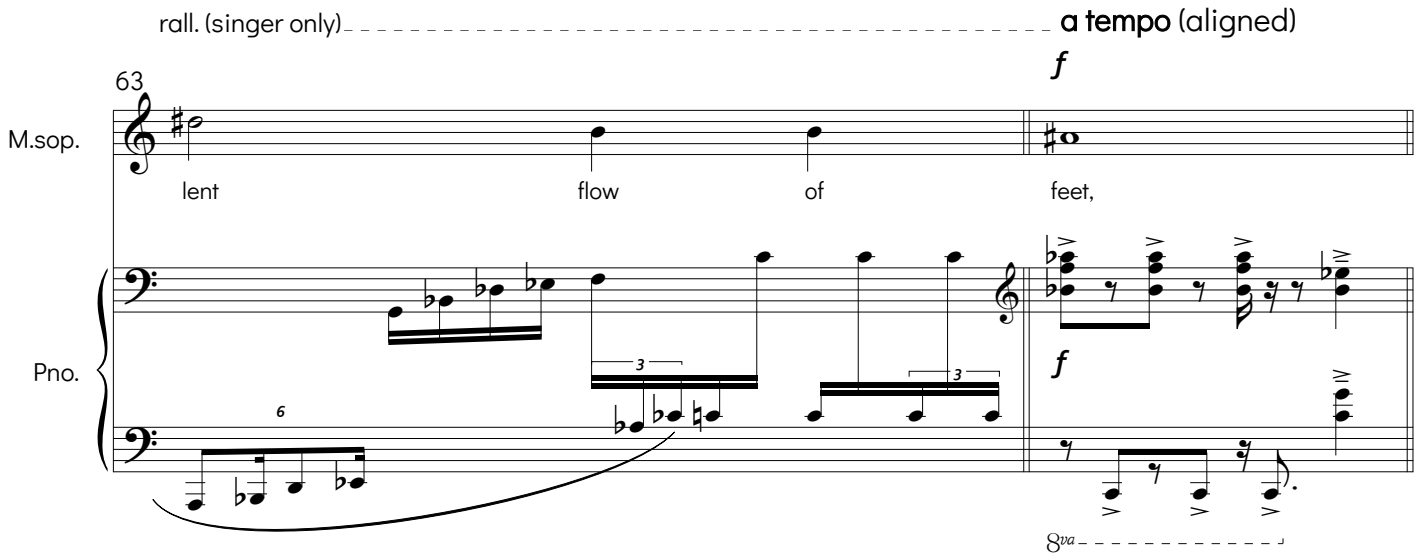
44
M.sop.
like
chat-ter - y rap-ids they twist and turn,
accel. to trem.
Pno.
46
twist and turn the chat-ter - y rap - ids
crash head - on with
48
in - com - ing tides
merg-ing in great gush-ing wat - er - falls

poco meno mosso accel.
50
p cresc.
M.sop.
cas - cad - ing down, cas - cad - ing down,
Pno.
p cresc.
allargando
52
M.sop.
cas - cad - ing down, in - to the un - der - ground
Pno.
8va
agitato ♩ = 120
54
fff
M.sop.
depths,
Pno.
fff
pp
(8va)
Multi tempi
accel. (singer only)
57
ppp
M.sop.
whilst the Lon - - - don -
strictly in tempo
Pno.
(8va)
8va


rall. (singer only)
a tempo (aligned)
p
59
M.sop.
er
soars
Pno.
p
mp
(8va)
8va

Multi tempi


accel. (singer only)
p
61
M.sop.
sail - ing the tur - bu -
strictly in tempo
p cresc.
Pno.
(8va)


rall. (singer only)
a tempo (aligned)
f
63
M.sop.
lent flow of feet,
Pno.
f
8va

Multi tempi
accel. (singer only)
65
mf cresc.
M.sop.
cut - - ting through the
strictly in tempo
mf cresc.
Pno.
rall. (singer only)
poco meno mosso (aligned) flowing
67
f legato dolce
M.sop.
roar - - - ing waves, with the
Pno.
f
8va
69
ff
f
M.sop.
speed and grace with the
Pno.
ff
f

71
ff
f
M.sop.
speed and grace of by - gone
Pno.
ff
f
8va
73
fff
f
M.sop.
clip - pers filled with
Pno.
fff
f sub.
76
mf
p
M.sop.
tea. filled with
Pno.
mf
mp
80
ppp
M.sop.
tea. filled with tea.
Pno.
p
ppp

3. Sunset in Grey

14
mf
f
M.sop.
Rose li - lac
Pno.
f
18
p
mf
M.sop.
mm li - lac mm
Pno.
p
22
f
f
M.sop.
li - lac li(lac) li - lac li - lac
Pno.
mf
f
25
mp
p
p
mp
M.sop.
li - lac Rose li lac
Pno.
p
mp
p
mp

rall.
Poco meno mosso
30
M.sop.
Pno.
mar - i - gold
Rose
34
li - lac and mar - i - gold shade the clouds in the
8va
38
light of the dy - ing sun. mm ah
use scat sounds
piu mosso lilting ♩ = 84
43
scat improvisation

46
M.sop.
Pno.
f
p
rall.
a tempo
49
M.sop.
Pno.
p
Like a
f
mp
p
53
M.sop.
Pno.
f
p
mp
gi - ant lake the sky is re - flect-ed re -
f
mf
f
58
M.sop.
Pno.
mf
f
ff
p
flect-ed in a mass of rip-pling grey coats. with black um-
ff
f
p

63
mp
pp
scat improvisation
M.sop.
bre - lla
li - lies
Pno.
mp
p
pp
68
f
p
M.sop.
mm
ah
Pno.
p
f
rall.
poco meno mosso
73
mp
p
p
mp
M.sop.
use scat sounds
I - ris
8va
Pno.
pp
p
77
p
mp
M.sop.
vio - let and la - ven - der
paint the rain - coats with the
(8va)
Pno.
mp
p
mp

rit.
Tempo primo ♩ = 76
81
M.sop.
Pno.
last of the sum-mer frocks lav-en-der vio-let and i-ris
86
vio - let i -
91
ris i - ris mm lav-en -
Ped.
Rubato
96
der mm mm

4. Underground Kiss

14
M.sop.
clock tick-ing se - conds count-ing No time
Pno.
Sost. Ped.
19
No time for heart beat - ing
23
swarms and swarms of com - mu - ters flow swarms and swarms
26
flow
swarms and swarms the rest as stub - born rocks.

30
M.sop.
Pno.
p
pp
On fall - ing flight of steps
pp
p > pp
8va
8va

calando
pp
34
M.sop.
Pno.
eyes meet eyes, lips on lips, two in love.
ppp
pp
8va
8va

Leo Geyer

composer | conductor

www.constella.org.uk

Leo Geyer

Published by
Constella Music

Ted's Passing

opera-ballet scene from *The Canary Boys*

Libretto by Luke Barnes

FULL SCORE

Ted's Passing

opera-ballet scene from *The Canary Boys*

Libretto by Luke Barnes

Written for Constella Music and first performed by Constella and the Carlton Main Frickley Colliery Band conducted by Leo Geyer at the National Coal Mining Museum for England on the 2nd July 2017.

Duration

7mins

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Roles

SUSAN Mezzo-soprano
HOWARD Baritone

—

TOM Dancer
PRIEST Conductor

—

MINING COMMUNITY Chorus

—

COLLIERY BAND on-stage brass band, comprising:

Soprano Cornet
Solo Cornet (4/5 players)
Repiano Cornet (1 player)
2nd Cornet (2 players)
3rd Cornet (1/2 players)
Flugelhorn
Solo Tenor Horn
1st Tenor Horn
2nd Tenor Horn
1st Baritone
2nd Baritone
1st Tenor Trombone
2nd Tenor Trombone
Bass Trombone
Euphonium (2 players)
Eb Bass (2 players)
Bb Bas (2 players)

Timpani
Percussion I
(vibraphone, bass drum)

Percussion II
(crash cymbals, drum kit)

Percussion III
(tubular bells, tam-tam)

—

CONTINUO on-stage harpist

Synopsis

Based on real stories, *The Canary Boys* follows the struggle for acceptance of a family who have walked from Scotland to the South of England to work in the coal mines. Upon their arrival, the local community rejects the miners, treating them as lower-class citizens. The father, Ted, and sons, Howard and Tom, work in the mines, and both boys fall in love with Sarah, leading them to fight, and driving Tom out of the community. Time passes and Tom returns to the mining community, having lived in isolation and poverty. Howard on the other hand has been working hard to support the community and helped to establish schools and the welfare club. Tom arrives too late to reconcile with his father who has died. However, at his funeral, the two brothers make peace.

In this scene, the whole community gather in a funeral service to morn the passing of Ted. After years living apart from the community, Tom returns and is deeply distraught to discover his father has died. As the band perform a sorrowfully as part of the service, Tom expresses his grief. In the last few moments of the band's performance, Tom turns to his brother, and they embrace, resolving years of fraught estrangement. Together, the two brothers say farewell to their father, and the priest leads the congregation in a hymn.

Transposed Score

Ted's Passing

Luke Barnes
b. 1988

Leo Geyer
b. 1992

Jazz Ballad Feel (conducted) ♩ = 66

Tom enters and expresses grief at his father's coffin

3+2+2

Soprano Cornet in Eb
Solo Cornet in Bb
Repiano Cornet in Bb
2nd Cornet in Bb
3rd Cornet in Bb
Flugelhorn
Solo Tenor Horn
1st Tenor Horn
2nd Tenor Horn
1st Baritone
2nd Baritone
1st Trombone
2nd Trombone
Bass Trombone
Euphonium
Bass in Eb
Bass in Bb
Timpani
Percussion 1 (Vibraphone)
Percussion 2 (Tubular Bells, Tam-Tam)
Drum Set
Harp
Susan (Mezzo-soprano)
Howard (Baritone)
Tom (Dancer)
Chorus

con sord - harmon mute without stem
solo

mp

p

p *mp* *p*

pp

p sempre

p sempre

Jazz Ballad Feel (conducted) ♩ = 66

very soft mallets

pp

Rotas on - medium fast

TUBULAR BELLS
with soft hammer, sempre l.v.

pp lontano

with bamboo sticks

mp p

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9

2+2+3

A

Sop. Cnt.

con sord - harmon mute without stem

Solo Cnt.

con sord - bucket mute
(solo switches mute and returns to tutti as soon as possible)

Rep. Cnt.

con sord - bucket mute

2nd Cnt.

con sord - bucket mute

3rd Cnt.

con sord - bucket mute

Flugel Hn.

Solo Hn.

1st Hn.

2nd Hn.

1st Bar.

2nd Bar.

1st Tbn.

2nd Tbn.

Bass Tbn.

Euph.

Eb Bass

Bb Bass

9

A

Timp.

Vib.

Tub. B.

TAM-TAM

D. S.

15 3+2+2 | 3+2+2 | B 3+2+2

Sop. Cnt.
Solo Cnt.
Rep. Cnt.
2nd Cnt.
3rd Cnt.
Flugel Hn.
Solo Hn.
1st Hn.
2nd Hn.
1st Bar.
2nd Bar.
1st Tbn.
2nd Tbn.
Bass Tbn.
Euph.
Eb Bass
Bb Bass
Timp.
Vib.
T.-t.
D. S.

21

3+2+2

C

3+2+2

Sop. Cnt.

Solo Cnt.

Rep. Cnt.

2nd Cnt.

3rd Cnt.

con sord - harmon mute without stem

solo

Flugel Hn.

Solo Hn.

1st Hn.

2nd Hn.

1st Bar.

2nd Bar.

1st Tbn.

2nd Tbn.

Bass Tbn.

Euph.

Eb Bass

Bb Bass

21

C

Timp.

Vib.

T.-t.

D. S.

D Tom, exhausted by his grief, turns to his brother Howard and they embrace, resolving years of fraught estrangement

29

Sop. Cnt.
Solo Cnt.
Rep. Cnt.
2nd Cnt.
3rd Cnt.
Flugel Hn.
Solo Hn.
1st Hn.
2nd Hn.
1st Bar.
2nd Bar.
1st Tbn.
2nd Tbn.
Bass Tbn.
Euph.
Eb Bass
Bb Bass
Timp.
Vib.
T.-t.
D. S.

2+3 3+2 3+2 3+2 3+2

con sord - harmon mute without stem

con sord

con sord

with very soft sticks

with soft headed mallets

E **Recitative** (unconducted) ♩ = 66

38 always let strings vibrate and senza arpa throughout

Hp.

Howard

This is our fath-er He gave us life

Tom

p spoken in rhythm

This is our fath-er He gave us life

F

46

Timp.

Hp.

choke

Howard

He gave us a fu ture two hun-dred years of coal here. e - nough to last for us. our

G

54

T.-t.

Hp.

Susan

This is my hus-band He

Howard

chil - dren our chil-dren's child-ren and theirs.

62

Hp.

Susan

dragged us up from pov-er - ty From slag heaps in the gar - den From baths in the front room From

H

68

Hp.

Susan

rats From Mice From Cold win-ters bite You

75

Timp.

T.-t.

Hp.

Susan

brought us here and we made hea - ven Hea-ven Hea - ven

Howard

hea - ven Hea - ven Hea - ven

I

83

Hp.

Howard

Thank you Dad. We prom-ise we will de - fend this life and

Tom

SPOKEN FREELY:
"For us, our children, and for all of us who live here."

Thank you Dad.

Hp.

Howard

this mine will pro-vide for eve-ry one We will de-fend it for ev - er

Tom

We will de-fend it for - ev - er

SPOKEN FREELY:
"And now we say our final prayer for our friend Ted Jones,
Father to Tom and Howard, Husband to Susan,
Friend to everyone in Miners Town, friend to everyone in the pit.
Who today stand together in the church of our Lord.
Ted has asked for all donations to be made to the welfare club.
And for this to be the final verse."

94

Cond.

95

J **Hymn** (conducted) ♩ = 63

2+2+3

K

Sop. Cnt.

Solo Cnt.

Rep. Cnt.

2nd Cnt.

3rd Cnt.

Flugel Hn.

Solo Hn.

1st Hn.

2nd Hn.

1st Bar.

2nd Bar.

1st Tbn.

2nd Tbn.

Bass Tbn.

Euph.

Eb Bass

Bb Bass

J **Hymn** (conducted) ♩ = 63

95

K

Susan

ad lib. rhythm and frequency of inflections

Where there is dis - cord may we bring har - mon - y Where there is er - ror

Howard

ad lib. rhythm and frequency of inflections

Where there is dis - cord may we bring har - mon - y Where there is er - ror

105

2+3

Sop. Cnt.

Solo Cnt.

Rep. Cnt.

2nd Cnt.

3rd Cnt.

Flugel Hn.

Solo Hn.

1st Hn.

2nd Hn.

1st Bar.

2nd Bar.

1st Tbn.

2nd Tbn.

Bass Tbn.

Euph.

Eb Bass

Bb Bass

105

Timp.

Susan

may we bring truth Where there is doubt may we bring faith

Howard

may we bring truth When there is doubt may we bring faith

Tom sings with the congregation

L free time

M norm. time

10"

5"

3+2

Sop. Cnt.

Solo Cnt.

Rep. Cnt.

2nd Cnt.

3rd Cnt.

Flugel Hn.

Solo Hn.

1st Hn.

2nd Hn.

1st Bar.

2nd Bar.

dim. to niente as quickly as poss.

1st Tbn.

dim. to niente as quickly as poss.

2nd Tbn.

dim. to niente as quickly as poss.

Bass Tbn.

Euph.

Eb Bass

Bb Bass

L free time

M norm. time

10"

5"

TAM-TAM

T.-t.

Tub. B.

Enter individually at will with a free tempo
and hold until conductor indicates to next bar.
Take breaths subtly if required.

Sing 'bring' at will and hold until
conductor indicates the next bar.

Chorus

may we bring, bring you faith

may we bring, bring you

may we bring, you faith

may we bring, bring you faith

Tom sings with the congregation

119

2+3

Sop. Cnt.

Solo Cnt.

Rep. Cnt.

2nd Cnt.

3rd Cnt.

Flugel Hn.

Solo Hn.

1st Hn.

2nd Hn.

1st Bar.

2nd Bar.

1st Tbn.

2nd Tbn.

Bass Tbn.

Euph.

Eb Bass

Bb Bass

119

Timp.

T.-t.

Tub. B.

D. S.

Susan

Howard

Chorus

ad lib. rhythm and frequency of inflections

quick gliss.

sim.

Where there is des - pair may we bring love and hope. love and

hope

126

N rall. a tempo

2+2+3

Sop. Cnt.
Solo Cnt.
Rep. Cnt.
2nd Cnt.
3rd Cnt.
Flugel Hn.
Solo Hn.
1st Hn.
2nd Hn.
1st Bar.
2nd Bar.
1st Tbn.
2nd Tbn.
Bass Tbn.
Euph.
Eb Bass
Bb Bass
Timp.
B. D.
Tub. B.
Susan
Howard
Chorus

BASS DRUM

hope love and

ad lib. rhythm and frequency of inflections

unis.

hope love and hope.

Leo Geyer

composer | conductor

www.constella.org.uk

Leo Geyer

Published by
Constella Music

The Orchestras of Auschwitz

opera-ballet

FULL SCORE

The Orchestras of Auschwitz

opera-ballet

Written for Constella Music.

Duration
45mins

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Synopsis

This opera-ballet presents the truth about music-making in the Auschwitz-Birkenau camp complexes. To tell the complete story and to avoid any fictionalisation, this piece comprises distinct vignettes, each portraying a particular moment as told in testimonies and supported by evidence found in the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum. Consequently, this is not a through-composed drama, but a series of specific events and experiences, that together, tell the story of the Orchestras of Auschwitz.

The score is by Leo Geyer, which encompasses reimaginings and restorations of music written and performed in Auschwitz. The libretto has also been written by the composer.

1. Life
   This is a representation of a Jewish wedding, and the fullness of life. Everyone is seen singing and dancing to the Jewish folk tune *Hāvā Nāgīlā* (Let us rejoice) which is abruptly and violently brought to end by the sound of smashing glass, representing *Kristallnacht* (the Night of Broken Glass), 9th November 1938.

2. Train
   A group of prisoners are seen in their pained journey from a ghetto to Auschwitz.

3. Bunalied
   Auschwitz prisoners stand on parole and practise removing their caps and standing to attention. Following the exercises, the prisoners are required to sing the camp anthem Bunalied.

4. Performance
   Newly arrived prisoners are required to part with precious clothes and items. One prisoner (Jakub Segar) becomes increasingly distressed and cannot be separated from his violin. To illustrate the significance this instrument has to him, he gives a deeply moving "sobbing" performance from the Romani music tradition. The conductor of the orchestra witnesses the performance, and the violinist joins the orchestra.

5. Marching
   Carrying their music stands and music, the orchestra players take their place onstage and begin playing a relentless march melody. Once a commando passes, an orchestral member conveys their frustration and anguish at playing marching music. In response to the outburst, another orchestral member gives strength to the other by stating the repertoire for the next march. The music is an American march which also includes St. Marks Call from Krakow, giving strength to the march prisoners.

6. Polonaises
   Simon Laks is seen to discover a crumpled piece of paper with Polish polonaises. He orchestrates the music and the ensemble play it. This musical escapism leads to a dream sequence with imaginary dancers performing polonaises whilst the musicians loose themselves in memories of better times.

7. Party
   A prisoner ensemble is formed for a SS party. One soldier becomes particularly inebriated and drunkenly joins the performance.

8. Futile Regrets
   The Unknown Composer is seen to write a composition entitled *Darmne żäle.* They are wracked with grief as they write the music, which is heard in the wings. He soon becomes overcome by his impending death and is unable to complete the music. The musicians enter the stage as ghosts in the mind of the tormented composer.

9. Postlude
   Soldiers destroy the camp including instruments and music manuscripts to hide their crimes. Time elapses until the present day where a man is seen exploring the ruins and the artefacts that remain. He discovers unheard music and is given strength by a blackbird's song.

Note on Characterisation

All performers including the instrumentalists should be on-stage, in costume and in character. Due to the vignette structure, performers will take on different roles in each narrative.

Cast

Clarinet in Bb
Trumpet in Bb
Percussion (tambourine, suspended cymbal, snare and bass drums)
Accordion
Violin
Cello
-
Soprano
Tenor
Baritone
-
2 Male Dancers
1 Female

Score in C

The Orchestras of Auschwitz

Leo Geyer
b.1992

SCENE 1 - LIFE

The stage is empty with all performers behind the gauze.

One dancer moves into the space and begins dancing joyously in silence, shortly followed by another dancer.

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C With soloistic freedom ♩ = 160
Player enters and performs from memory.
18
Bb Cl
f
Player reaches music stand
ricochet
Acc.
ff f
Player reaches music stand
18
Vln
f sonoro con port.
23
Bb Cl
3
Acc.
3
3
23
Vln
f
rall.
29
Bb Cl
f
mf
Acc.
3
3
mf
29
Vln
ff
f

D a tempo
35
Bb Cl
ff sub.
Acc.
ff sub.
ff : f
f cresc.
B
Blessed are You, Ad - on - ai
35
Vln
f cresc.
40
Acc.
ff f
B
Our God, Creat - or of the vine.
40
Vln
ff f
Player reaches music stand
rall.
E a tempo
45
Bb Cl
f
mf
Trumpeter enters and performs from memory.
Bb Tpt
f
mf
Acc.
mf
f
p cresc.
S
Blessed are

50
Acc.
ff
S
You, Ad - on - ai Our God, Creat-or of the vine.
f
T
p cresc.
Blessed are You, Ad - on - ai Our God, Creat-or of
B
p cresc.
Blessed are You, Ad - on - ai Our God,
56
Bb Cl
f
ff
Bb Tpt
f
ff
Acc.
mf
f
ff
3
S
T
f
the vine.
B
f
Creat-or of the vine.

rall.
F
a tempo
62
Bb Cl
Bb Tpt
Acc.
p
f
Percussionist and cellist enter stage and take performance positions.
67
Bb Cl
Acc.
Vln
73
Bb Tpt
Player enters and performs from memory.
Tbn.
Acc.

G
Tempo I ♩ = 112
77
Bb Cl
Bb Tpt
Tbn.
TAMBOURINE
Tamb.
Acc.
B
Ha - va na - gi - la, ha - va na - gi - la, ha - va, na - gi - la,
77
Vln
Vc.

82
Bb Cl
Acc.
full length quavers
B
ve - e nis' - me-cha
Ha-va ne-ra-ne-na,
ha-va ne-ra-ne-na,
ha - va ne-ra-ne-na
82
Vln
sempre on the string
Vc.
86
Bb Cl
f
Bb Tpt
f
Acc.
B
ve - e nis'-me-cha
Ha - va na-gi - la,
ha - va na-gi - la,
ha - va, na-gi - la,
86
Vln
Vc.

allargando
H
♩ = 140
90
Bb Cl
Bb Tpt
Tbn.
Tamb.
Acc.
S
T
B
Vln
Vc.
ff
fff
f
U - ru, r - ru a - chim, uru a - chim b' lev sa - me - ach
ve - e nis' - me-cha U - ru, r - ru a - chim, uru a - chim b' lev sa - me - ach

94
Bb Cl
Bb Tpt
Tbn.
Tamb.
Acc.
S
uru a - chim b' lev sa - me - ach uru a - chim b' lev sa - me - ach uru a - chim b' lev sa - me - ach
T
uru a - chim b' lev sa - me - ach uru a - chim b' lev sa - me - ach uru a - chim b' lev sa - me - ach
B
uru a - chim b' lev sa - me - ach uru a - chim b' lev sa - me - ach uru a - chim b' lev sa - me - ach
94
Vln
Vc.

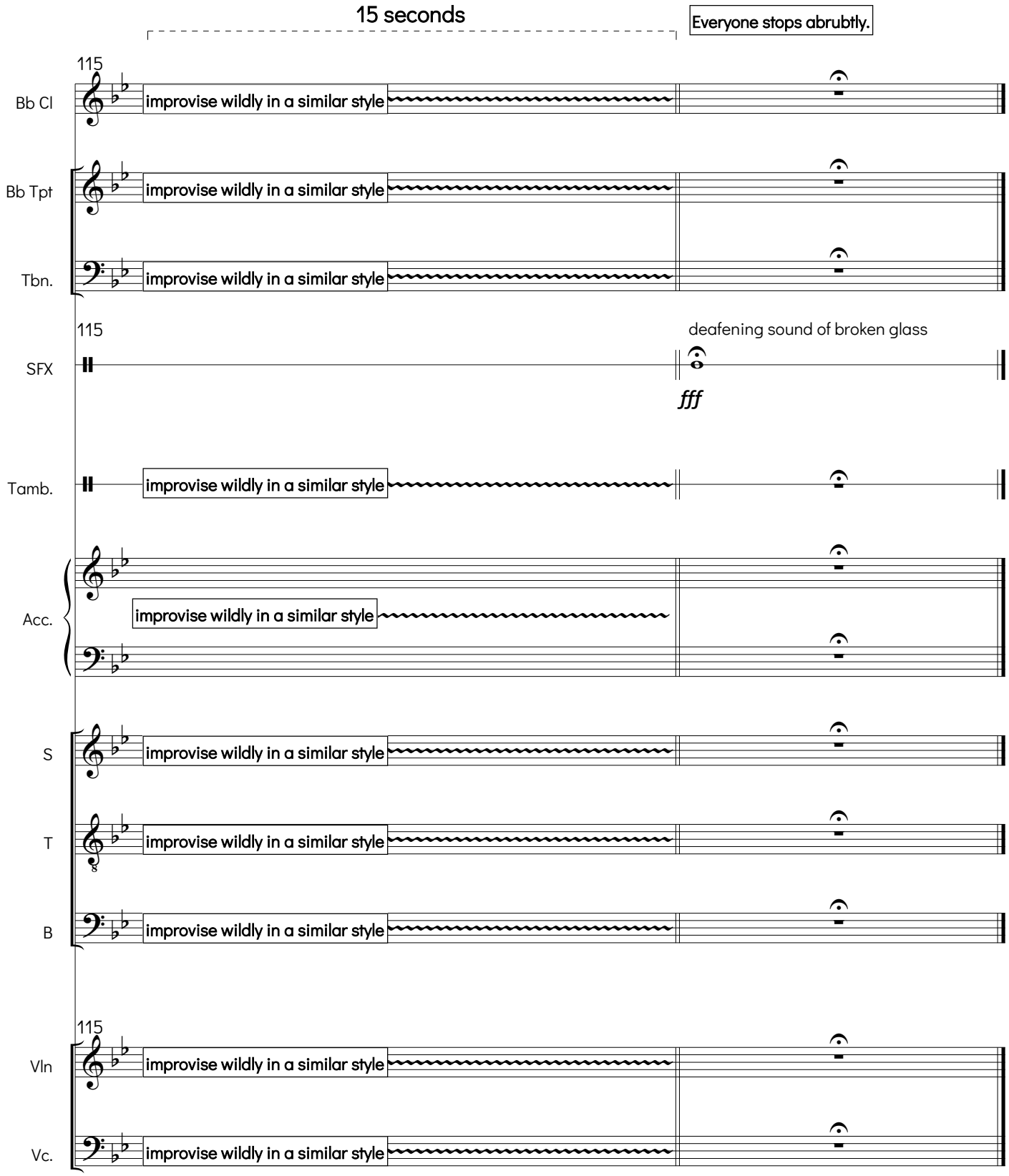
97
Bb Cl
Bb Tpt
Tbn.
Tamb.
Acc.
S
uru a-chim uru a-chim b' lev sa me - ach Ha - va na-gi-la,
T
uru a-chim uru a-chim me-e-e-e-ach Ha - va na-gi-la,
B
uru a-chim uru a-chim b' lev sa me - ach Ha - va na-gi-la,
97
Vln
Vc.

101
Bb Cl
f
Bb Tpt
Tbn.
Tamb.
Acc.
S
ha - va na-gi-la, ha - va, na-gi-la, ve - nis'-me-cha Ha-va ne-ra-ne-na,
T
ha - va na-gi-la, ha - va, na-gi-la, ve - nis'-me-cha Ha-va ne-ra-ne-na,
B
ha - va na-gi-la, ha - va, na-gi-la, ve - nis'-me-cha Ha-va ne-ra-ne-na,
101
Vln
Vc.

105
Bb Cl
Bb Tpt
Tbn.
Tamb.
Acc.
S
ha-va ne-ra-ne-na, ha - va ne-ra-ne-na ve - nis'-me-cha Ha - va na-gi-la,
T
ha-va ne-ra-ne-na, ha - va ne-ra-ne-na ve - nis'-me - cha na-gi-la,
B
ha-va ne-ra-ne-na, ha - va ne-ra-ne-na ve - nis'-me-cha Ha - va na-gi-la,
105
Vln
Vc.

109
rall.
Bb Cl
Bb Tpt
Tbn.
Tamb.
Acc.
S
ha - va na - gi - la, ha - va, na - gi - la, ve - nis'-me - cha
T
ha - va na - gi - la, ha - va, na - gi - la, ve - nis'-me - cha
B
ha - va na - gi - la, ha - va, na - gi - la, ve - nis'-me - cha
109
Vln
Vc.

I
Piu mosso ♩ = 156
112
Bb Cl
fff
Bb Tpt
Tbn.
Tamb.
Acc.
S
uru a - chim b' lev sa - me - ach uru a - chim b' lev sa - me - ach uru a - chim b' lev sa - me - ach
T
uru a - chim b' lev sa - me - ach uru a - chim b' lev sa - me - ach uru a - chim b' lev sa - me - ach
B
uru a - chim b' lev sa - me - ach uru a - chim b' lev sa - me - ach uru a - chim b' lev sa - me - ach
112
Vln
Vc.


15 seconds
Everyone stops abrubtly.
115
Bb Cl
improvise wildly in a similar style
Bb Tpt
improvise wildly in a similar style
Tbn.
improvise wildly in a similar style
115
deafening sound of broken glass
SFX
fff
Tamb.
improvise wildly in a similar style
Acc.
improvise wildly in a similar style
S
improvise wildly in a similar style
T
improvise wildly in a similar style
B
improvise wildly in a similar style
115
Vln
improvise wildly in a similar style
Vc.
improvise wildly in a similar style

SCENE 2 - TRAIN

SCENE 3 - BUNALIED

Prisoners (singers and dancers) stand on parole and practise removing their caps and standing to attention.
To conclude, the prisoners are required to sing the camp anthem Bunalied.

68
Voices
macht uns frei, an ihr geh'n die Sor - gen vor - bei nur die
75
Voices
Ar - beit läßt uns ver - ges - sen al - les das, was wir einst be - ses - sen Nur die Ar - beit
84
Voices
macht uns hart, wenn uns das Schnick - sal ge - narrt und die Zeit ver -
92
Voices
geht und das Leid ver - weht, nur das Werk uns - rer Hän - de be - steht. kur die Ar - beit
101
Voices
macht uns frei, Ar - beit macht frei. Ar - beit macht frei.

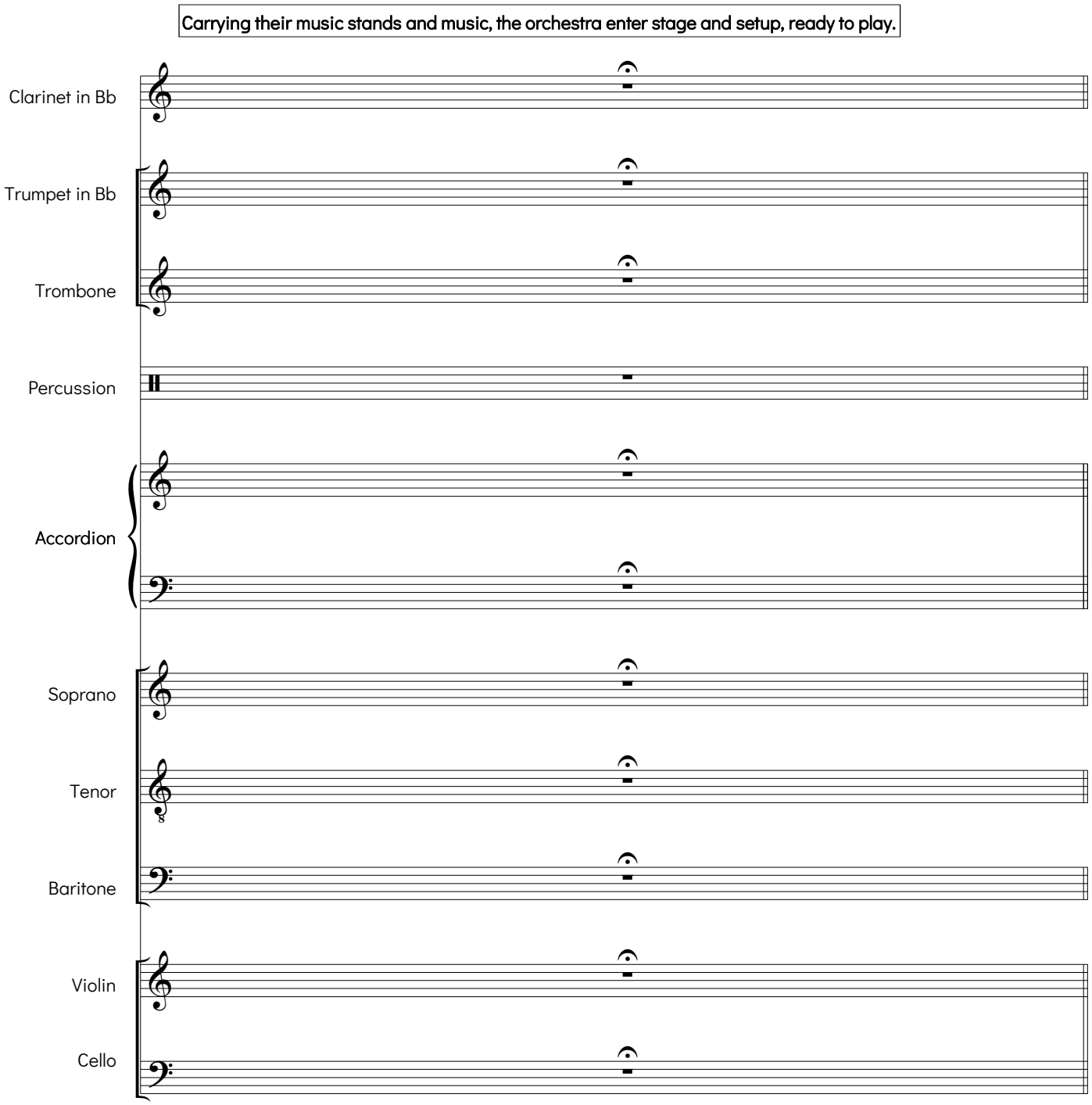
SCENE 4 - PERFORMANCE

An SS Soldier demands that the prisoners remove their clothes and are separated with their belongings.
One prisoner (Jakub Segar) becomes increasingly distressed and cannot be separated from his violin.
To illustrate the significance this instrument has to him, he gives a performance.

39
Vln
ff
f
44
Vln
p
50
Vln
56
Vln
accel.
pp
63
Vln
a tempo
ff
f
ff
69
Vln
mf
f
sfp
73
Vln
allargando
f
ff
79
Vln
a tempo
fff
ff
f
84
Vln
rall.
Sink to knees
p

a tempo
88
sul tasto
Vln
p
93
Vln
98
Vln
pp
102
Vln
pppp

SCENE 5 - MARCHING



March with double dotted rhythms ♩ = 100
2
Bb Cl
Bb Tpt
Tbn.
SNARE & BASS DRUMS
Perc.
Acc.
2
Vln
Vc.
J
11
Bb Cl
Bb Tpt
Tbn.
Perc.
Acc.
11
Vln
Vc.

19
Bb Cl
Bb Tpt
Tbn.
Perc.
Acc.
19
Vln
Vc.
26
Bb Cl
Bb Tpt
Tbn.
Perc.
Acc.
26
Vln
Vc.
f
ff

K
33
Bb Cl
Bb Tpt
Tbn.
Perc.
Acc.
Vln
Vc.
tr
f
ff
38

43
Bb Cl
p cresc.
Bb Tpt
Tbn.
Perc.
Acc.
Vln
Vc.
L
49
f
mf
cresc.

55
Bb Cl
Bb Tpt
Tbn.
Perc.
Acc.
Vln
Vc.
ff
61

M

81
Bb Cl
Bb Tpt
Tbn.
Perc.
Acc.
81
Vln
Vc.
87
Bb Cl
Bb Tpt
Tbn.
Perc.
Acc.
87
Vln
Vc.

93
Bb Cl
Bb Tpt
Tbn.
Perc.
Acc.
93
Vln
Vc.
99
Bb Cl
Bb Tpt
Tbn.
Perc.
Acc.
99
Vln
Vc.
ff
4/4

N Recitative ♩ = c.112
104
ff desperate
p
I can-not stand by this. We need strength.
f firm and authoritative
Hold. Hold your nerve. We will play the Am-
113
ff
p
How can you sug-gest such dan-gers! They will know.
f
mf
er-i-can March.
They will not. We have a
118
f
But what of our com-rades
f
ff
Ger-man ti-tle on the page. They will not know.
But we will and take our strength.
125
They will not know the risk we take for them.
All they will hear is an-
130
ff
f
p
other march.
Our re - lent - less beat.
They're re - sent - ful eyes.
135
f
mf
f
Hold. Hold your nerve. There is more. We play for our Po-lish friends. List - en to the trum-pet
143
ff
mf
f
sing. With mu - sic We shall fight back.
So hold your nerve.
We shall fight back.

O **March** with double dotted rhythms ♩ = 100

163
Bb Cl
Bb Tpt
Tbn.
Perc.
Acc.
Vln
Vc.
p
arco
pizz.
169

175
Bb Cl
Bb Tpt
Tbn.
Perc.
Acc.
175
Vln
Vc.
P
181
Bb Cl
ff
Bb Tpt
ff
Tbn.
ff
Perc.
Acc.
ff
181
Vln
ff
arco
sul C
Vc.
ff

187
Bb Cl
Bb Tpt
Tbn.
Perc.
Acc.
187
Vln
Vc.
194
Bb Cl
Bb Tpt
Tbn.
Perc.
Acc.
194
Vln
Vc.

201
Bb Cl
Bb Tpt
Tbn.
Perc.
Acc.
201
Vln
Vc.
Q
207
Bb Cl
p
Bb Tpt
f
Tbn.
p
Perc.
p
Acc.
p
207
Vln
p
pizz.
Vc.
p

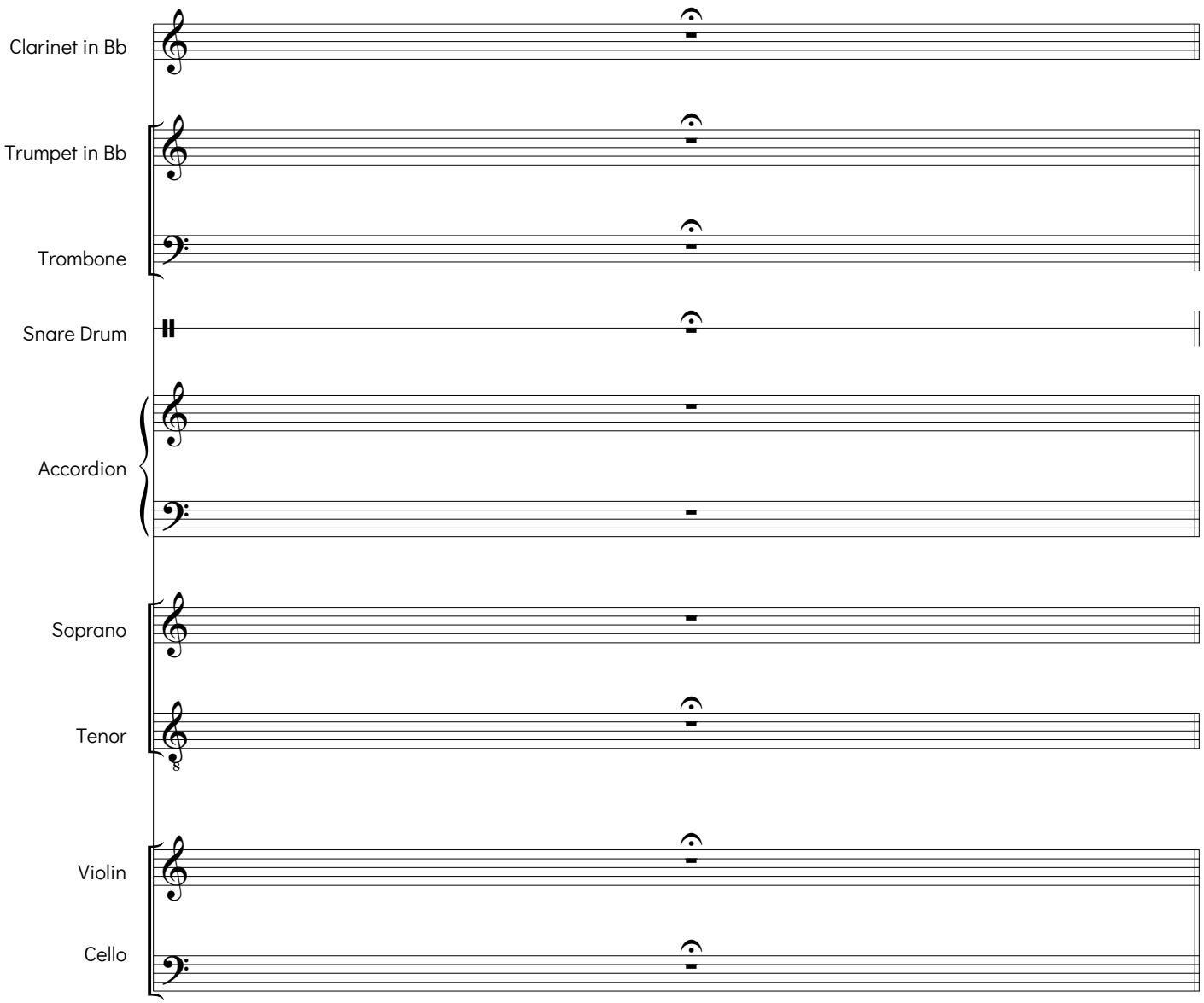
214
Bb Cl
Bb Tpt
Tbn.
Perc.
Acc.
214
Vln
Vc.
220
Bb Cl
Bb Tpt
Tbn.
Perc.
Acc.
S
Hej - nał mar - i - a - cki St. Mar - y's
220
Vln
Vc.
arco
pizz.

225
Bb Cl
Bb Tpt
Tbn.
Perc.
Acc.
S
Call. Our be - love - ed Po - land
225
Vln
Vc.
230
Bb Cl
Bb Tpt
Tbn.
Perc.
Acc.
S
230
Vln
Vc.

235
Bb Cl
Bb Tpt
fff
f
Tbn.
Perc.
Acc.
235
Vln
Vc.

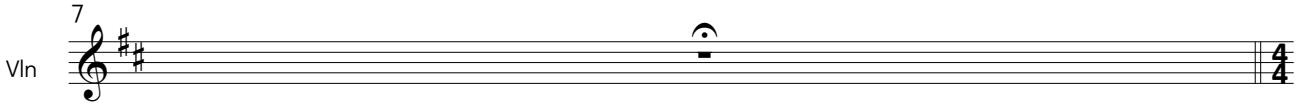
SCENE 6 - POLONAISES

Szymon Laks walks onstage and discovers a scrunched piece of paper.



He reads it and off-stage, the sound of the Polish dance is heard, and stops abrubtly as he stops reading.

The maestro hurries off to make an arrangement for the orchestra. Suggestively through dance, "copyists" who write out the arrangement which is flung onto music stands.



A Recitative ♩ = 120
B Polonaise ♩ = 120
Acc.
S
T
Vln
mf unenthused
What is it we play?
f with great enthusiasm
Our most prec-ious Pol-sh Pol-on-ai - ses
f

C
23
Bb Cl
Bb Tpt
Tbn.
S.Dr.
Acc.
Vln
Vc.
f
28

32
Bb Cl
Bb Tpt
Tbn.
S.Dr.
Acc.
Vln
Vc.
ff
D
36
f
p

E
41
Bb Cl
Bb Tpt
Tbn.
S.Dr.
Acc.
Vln
Vc.
ff
p
mf
f
45

49
Bb Cl
Bb Tpt
Tbn.
S.Dr.
Acc.
Vln
Vc.
f
ff
p
F
55
mf

59
Bb Cl
Bb Tpt
Tbn.
S.Dr.
Acc.
59
Vln
Vc.
62
Bb Cl
ff
Bb Tpt
ff
Tbn.
ff
S.Dr.
ff
Acc.
ff
62
Vln
ff
Vc.
ff

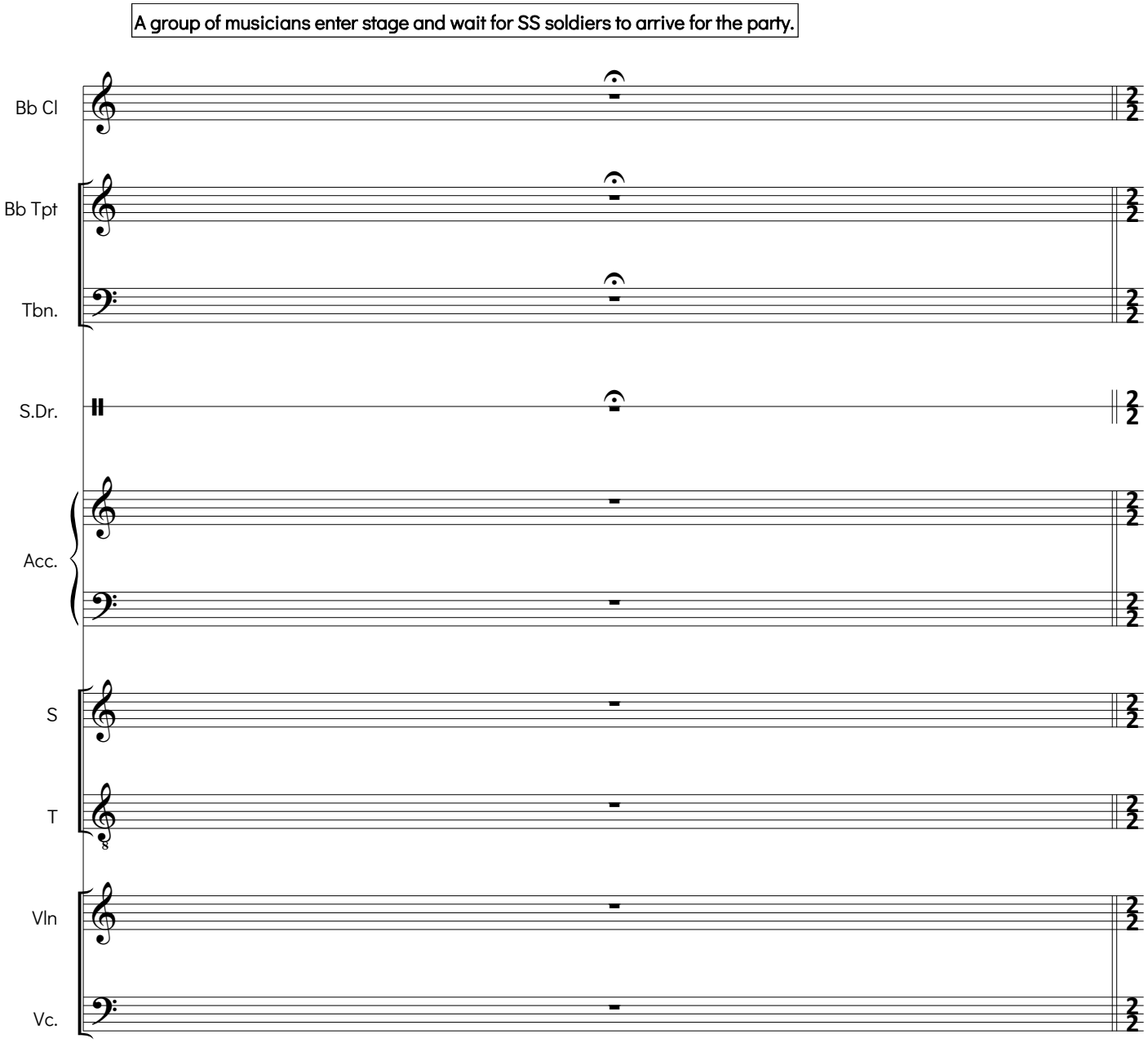
G
Dream Dance meno mosso ♩ = 108
66
Acc.
Vc.
71
Tbn.
Acc.
Vc.
76
Tbn.
Acc.
76
8va
Vln
Vc.

H
81
Bb Cl
Tbn.
Acc.
S
f
sing "oo" throughout scene
(8va)
Vln
Vc.
86
T
B
sing "oo" throughout scene

I

J
103
Bb Cl
Tbn.
S
T
B
103
(8va)
Vln
p
110
117

SCENE 7 - PARTY



Foxtrot with straight quavers ♩ = 90
2
Bb Cl
Bb Tpt
Tbn.
S.Dr.
brushed snare groove
Acc.
Vln
Vc.
pizz.
A
8
p dolce
mf
mf cantabile

14
Bb Cl
Bb Tpt
Tbn.
S.Dr.
Acc.
Vln
Vc.
p
f
arco
20
ff
mf
T
Wenn klein - en

B

26

S.Dr.

Acc.

mf

T

Mäd - chen von der Lie-be Träu - men dann träu-men sie vom groß-en Glück.

pizz.

Vc.

mf

33

Bb Cl

p

Bb Tpt

p

Tbn.

p

S.Dr.

Acc.

T

Sie träu-men al - le doch nur von dem ein - em der ein-mal kommt,

33

Vln

mf

p

Vc.

39
Bb Cl
Bb Tpt
Tbn.
S.Dr.
Acc.
T
und bringt das Glück. Denn all die Mäd-el-chen, ob blond der braun,
Vln
Vc.
45
Bb Cl
Bb Tpt
Tbn.
S.Dr.
Acc.
T
die wollen doch al - le ein-mal in den Him-mel Schau'n Wenn klein-en
Vln
Vc.
mf cantabile

C

50
Bb Cl
p dolce
Bb Tpt
Tbn.
p
p
S.Dr.
Acc.
mf
T
Mäd - chen von der Lie - be Träu - men dann träu - men sie vom groß - en
50
Vln
Vc.
mf
56
Bb Cl
f
Bb Tpt
Tbn.
f
f
S.Dr.
Acc.
f
mf
T
Glück.
56
Vln
f
mf
arco
Vc.
mf

62
Bb Cl
Bb Tpt
Tbn.
S.Dr.
Acc.
Vln
Vc.
mf
f
68

E
74
Bb Cl
f
Bb Tpt
Tbn.
f
S.Dr.
Acc.
f
mf
S
mf
Wenn klein - en Mäd - chen von der Lie - be
T
mf
Wenn klein - en Mäd - chen von der Lie - be
74
Vln
Vc.
mf

80
Bb Cl
Bb Tpt
Tbn.
S.Dr.
Acc.
S
T
80
Vln
Vc.
f
Träu - men dann träu-men sie vom groß-en Glück. Sie träu-men
pizz.

86
Bb Cl
Bb Tpt
Tbn.
S.Dr.
Acc.
S
al - le doch nur von dem ein - em der ein-mal kommt, und bringt das
T
al - le doch nur von dem ein - em der ein-mal kommt, und bringt das
86
Vln
Vc.

92
Bb Cl
Bb Tpt
Tbn.
S.Dr.
Acc.
S
Glück. Denn all die Mäd-el-chen, ob blond der braun, die wollen doch
T
Glück. Denn all die Mäd-el-chen, ob blond der braun, die wollen doch
92
Vln
Vc.

98
Bb Cl
Bb Tpt
Tbn.
S.Dr.
Acc.
S
al - le ein - mal in den Him - mel Schau'n
T
al - le ein - mal in den Him - mel Schau'n
98
Vln
Vc.
f
F
103
ff

110
Bb Cl
f
ff
Bb Tpt
ff
Tbn.
ff
S.Dr.
Acc.
ff
ff drunkenly
S
Sie träu-men al - le doch nur von dem
ff
T
Sie träu-men al - le doch nur von dem
110
Vln
ff
Vc.
ff

116
Bb Cl
Bb Tpt
Tbn.
S.Dr.
Acc.
S
T
Vln
Vc.
ff
ein - em der ein - mal kommt, und bringt das Glück.
ein - em der ein - mal kommt, und bringt das Glück.
123
mf
arco

SCENE 8 - FUTILE REGRETS

A musician (performed by a dancer) is grief wracked.
To find strength and to express their feeling they being to compose.
The music is heard off-stage as the composer writes

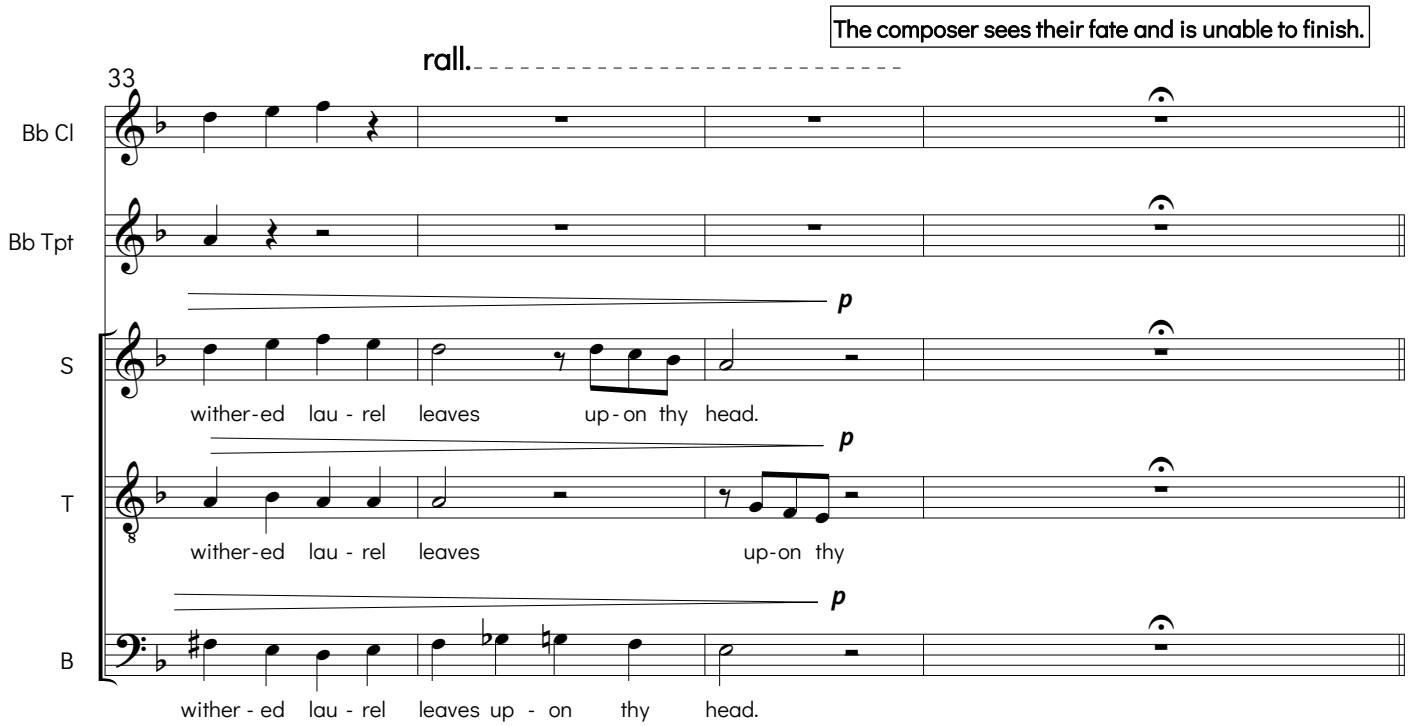
Intensely sorrowful ♩ = 60
2
Bb Cl
Bb Tpt
Tbn.
Vln
Vc.
pp
p
A
9
mp
mf
f
Perc.
Acc.

14
Bb Cl
p
Bb Tpt
pp
Tbn.
pp
Perc.
3
pp
Acc.
pp
14
Vln
p
Vc.
ff
pp

B
19
Bb Cl
Bb Tpt
Tbn.
Acc.
S
T
B
Vc.
p
pp
Bez sil - ne złor - zec -
Dar-em-ne ża - le próż - ny trud.

25
Bb Cl
Bb Tpt
Tbn.
snares off
Perc.
Acc.
S
T
B
zen - ia. There are no mir-ac-les for these ghosts. The world will not give you
zen - ia. There are no mir-ac-les for these ghosts. The world will not give you
zen - ia. There are no mir-ac-les for these ghosts. The world will not give you
25
Vln
Vc.
f
p

29
Bb Cl
Bb Tpt
Tbn.
D. S.
Acc.
S
T
B
29
Vln
Vc.
mf
f
back. No fire nor sword can stop your thoughts. Reach out for life. And not with
back. No fire no sword can stop thoughts. Reach out for life. And not with
back. No fire no sword can stop thoughts. Reach out for life. And not with


The composer sees their fate and is unable to finish.
rall.
33
Bb Cl
Bb Tpt
S
wither-ed lau - rel leaves up - on thy head.
T
wither-ed lau - rel leaves up-on thy
B
wither - ed lau - rel leaves up - on thy head.

The composer becomes overcome with grief
C a tempo
37
Bb Cl
Acc.
S
Dar-em-ne ża - le próż ny trud, Dar - em - ne
T
próż ny trud, Dar -
B
próż ny trud,
sul pont.
37
Vln
Vc.

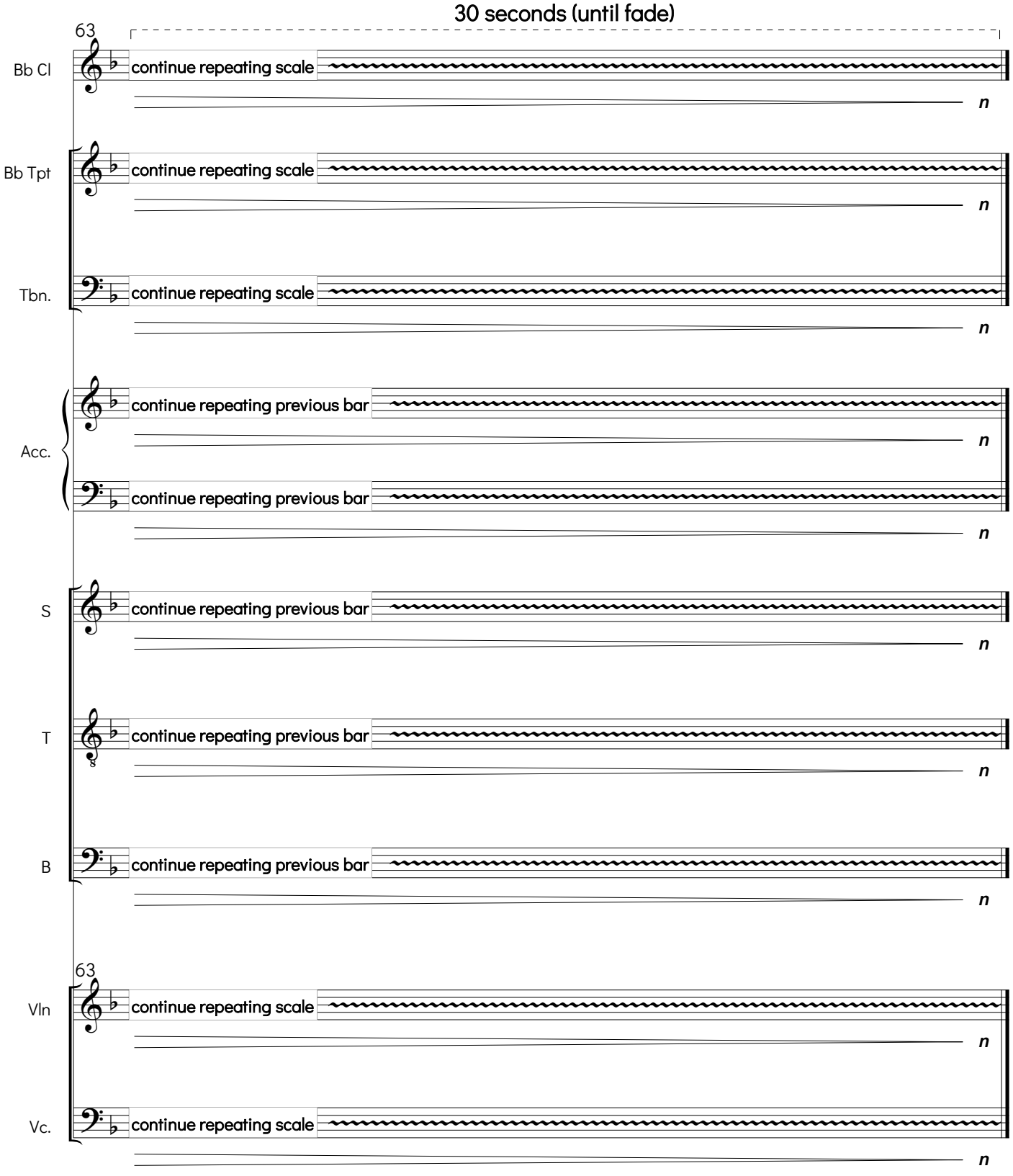
42
Bb Cl
p
pp
Bb Tpt
bucket mute
p
Acc.
S
p
ża - le
Dar-em-ne
ża - le
My fu-tile
T
p
mp
em - ne ża - le
My fu - tile re - grets
My
B
pp
Dar-em-ne ża-le
Dar-em-ne ża-le
42
Vln
p
p
Vc.

46
Bb Cl
Bb Tpt
Tbn.
Acc.
S
T
B
Vln
Vc.
mp
p
f
re - grets
My fu-tile
fu - tile re - grets
Dar-em-ne ża - le
Fu-tile re-grets
My fu-tile

D
50
Bb Cl
fff
legato
Bb Tpt
Tbn.
fff
fff
Acc.
fff
S
fff
re - grets In vain ef - fort pow - er - less cur - ses
T
fff
re - grets In vain eff - ort pow - er - less cur - ses
B
fff
re - grets In vain eff - ort pow - er - less cur - ses
50
sempre sul pont.
Vln
fff legato
Vc.

55
Bb Cl
Bb Tpt
fff legato
Tbn.
fff legato
Acc.
fff
S
In vain ef - fort cur - ses In vain
fff
T
In vain ef - fort cur - ses In vain
fff
B
In vain ef - fort cur - ses In vain
55
Vln
sempre sul pont.
Vc.
fff legato

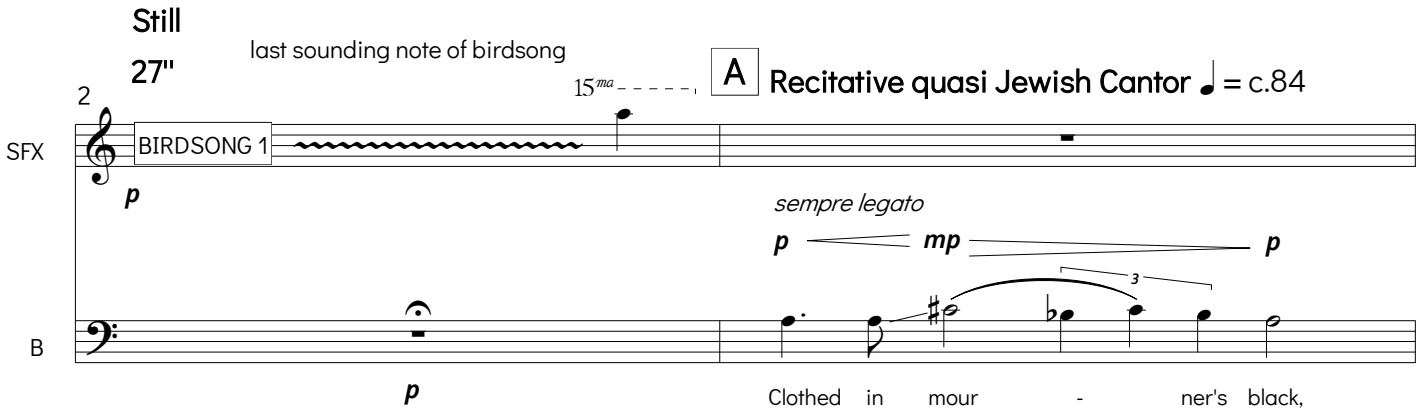
59
Bb Cl
Bb Tpt
Tbn.
Acc.
S
ef - fort cur - ses cur - ses cur - ses
T
ef - fort cur - ses cur - ses cur - ses
B
ef - fort cur - ses cur - ses cur - ses
59
Vln
Vc.

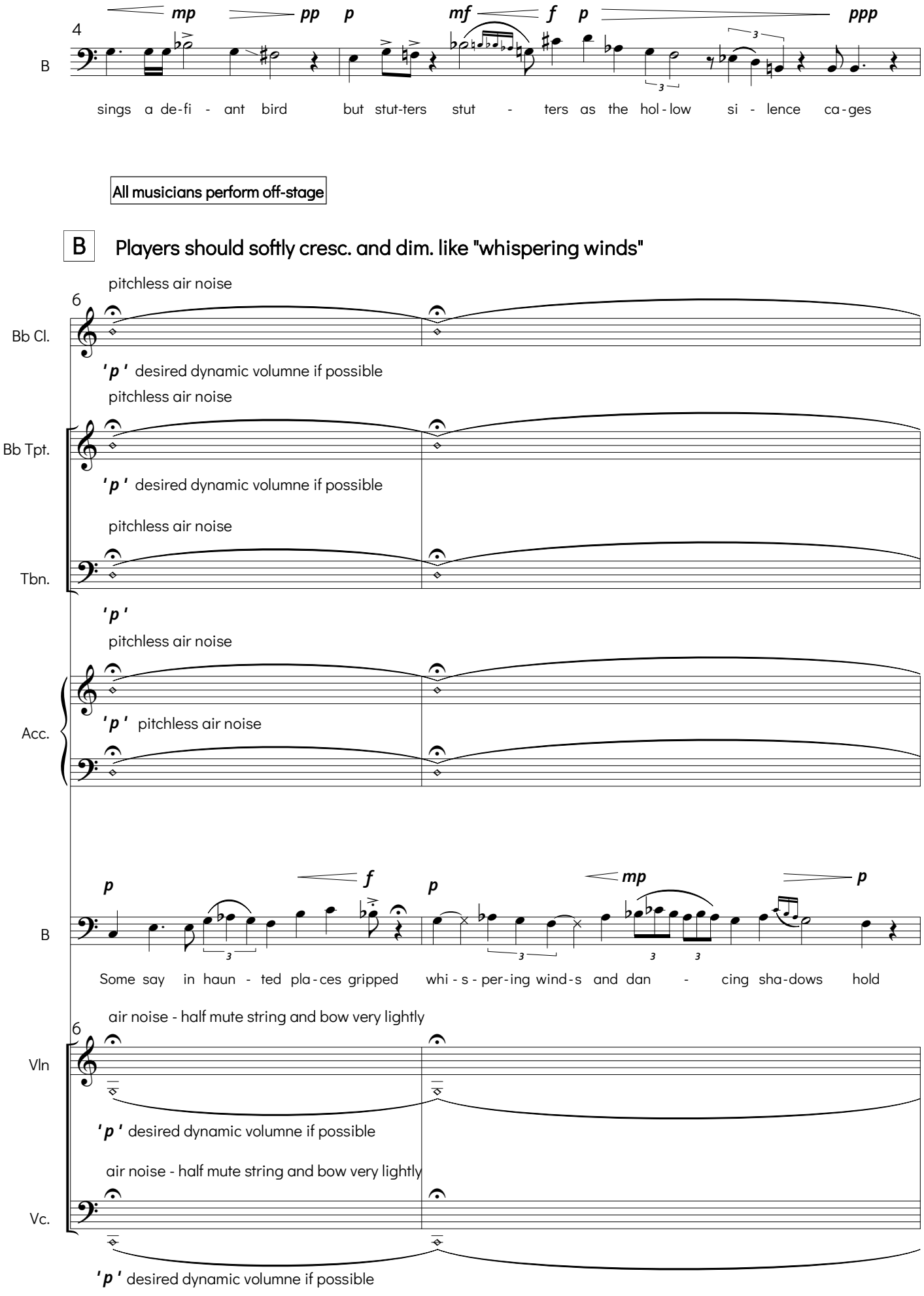

30 seconds (until fade)
63
Bb Cl
continue repeating scale
n
Bb Tpt
continue repeating scale
n
Tbn.
continue repeating scale
n
Acc.
continue repeating previous bar
n
continue repeating previous bar
n
S
continue repeating previous bar
n
T
continue repeating previous bar
n
B
continue repeating previous bar
n
63
Vln
continue repeating scale
n
Vc.
continue repeating scale
n

SCENE 9 - POSTLUDE

Dancers as soldiers destroy the music
Exit and lights fade to suggest passing of time

A dancer personifies bird whilst a modern day man studies ruins at Auschwitz.




mp
pp
p
mf
f
p
ppp
4
B
sings a de-fi - ant bird
but stut-ters stut - ters as the hol-low si - lence ca-ges
All musicians perform off-stage
B
Players should softly cresc. and dim. like "whispering winds"
pitchless air noise
6
Bb Cl.
'p' desired dynamic volumne if possible
pitchless air noise
Bb Tpt.
'p' desired dynamic volumne if possible
pitchless air noise
Tbn.
'p'
pitchless air noise
Acc.
'p' pitchless air noise
p
f
p
mp
p
B
Some say in haun - ted pla-ces gripped
whi - s - per-ing wind-s and dan - cing sha-dows hold
air noise - half mute string and bow very lightly
6
Vln
'p' desired dynamic volumne if possible
air noise - half mute string and bow very lightly
Vc.
'p' desired dynamic volumne if possible

8
Bb Cl.
Bb Tpt.
Tbn.
Acc.
n
f ff fp ff pp 'ppp'
roll 'r'
breathy tone
whisper
B
In this wretch-ed place a still-ness locks that e-ven death's a-fraid to break
8
Vln
Vc.
C
f mf f p
rall. a tempo
10
pp
B
The sun bathes the lines lines lines lines lines of brick but fal-ters at the thick walls.

12
Tbn.
fff
rimshot
Perc.
fff
Acc.
f
8va
p
ff
B
In - side the dark - ened cold a sud - den door shuts,
12
pizz.
Vln
fff
pizz.
Vc.
fff
maintain dynamic shape of note whilst decrescendoing - quasi echo
note lengths should remain the same, more or less repeats may be required.
D
Lontano ♩ = 76
13
Tbn.
p
pp
Perc.
Acc.
n
(8va)
p
p
B
it's e - cho swirl - - - ing long af - ter close.
There we find on
13
molto sul tasto
Vln
molto sul tasto
senza vib.
arco
p
Vc.
p

17
pp
B
this pa - per, un - heard mu - sic cast.
molto sul tasto
senza vib.
17
Vln
ppp
Vc.
ppp
E
23
Bb Cl.
p
Bb Tpt.
p
Tbn.
p
Acc.
p
p
B
A soul's sha-dow
23
norm. con vib.
Vln
p
norm. con vib.
Vc.
p

F
Dolce ♩ = 54
27
Bb Cl.
mf
f
Bb Tpt.
Tbn.
p
f
SUS. CYMBAL
Perc.
Acc.
B
wait-ing
o
-
pen
Vln
Vc.

34
Bb Cl.
mf
f
Acc.
f
f
34
Vln
f
f
Vc.
f
f
42
rall.
Bb Cl.
f
ff
f
Bb Tpt.
f
ff
f
Tbn.
f
ff
f
Perc.
ff
Acc.
f
ff
f
42
Vln
ff
f
Vc.
ff
f

G Lontano ♩ = 76

49

Bb Cl.

Bb Tpt.

Tbn.

Acc.

SFX

Vln

Vc.

p pp

BIRDSONG 2

senza vib., molto sul tasto

ppp pp

senza vib., molto sul tasto

56

rall.

Bb Cl.

Acc.

SFX

Vln

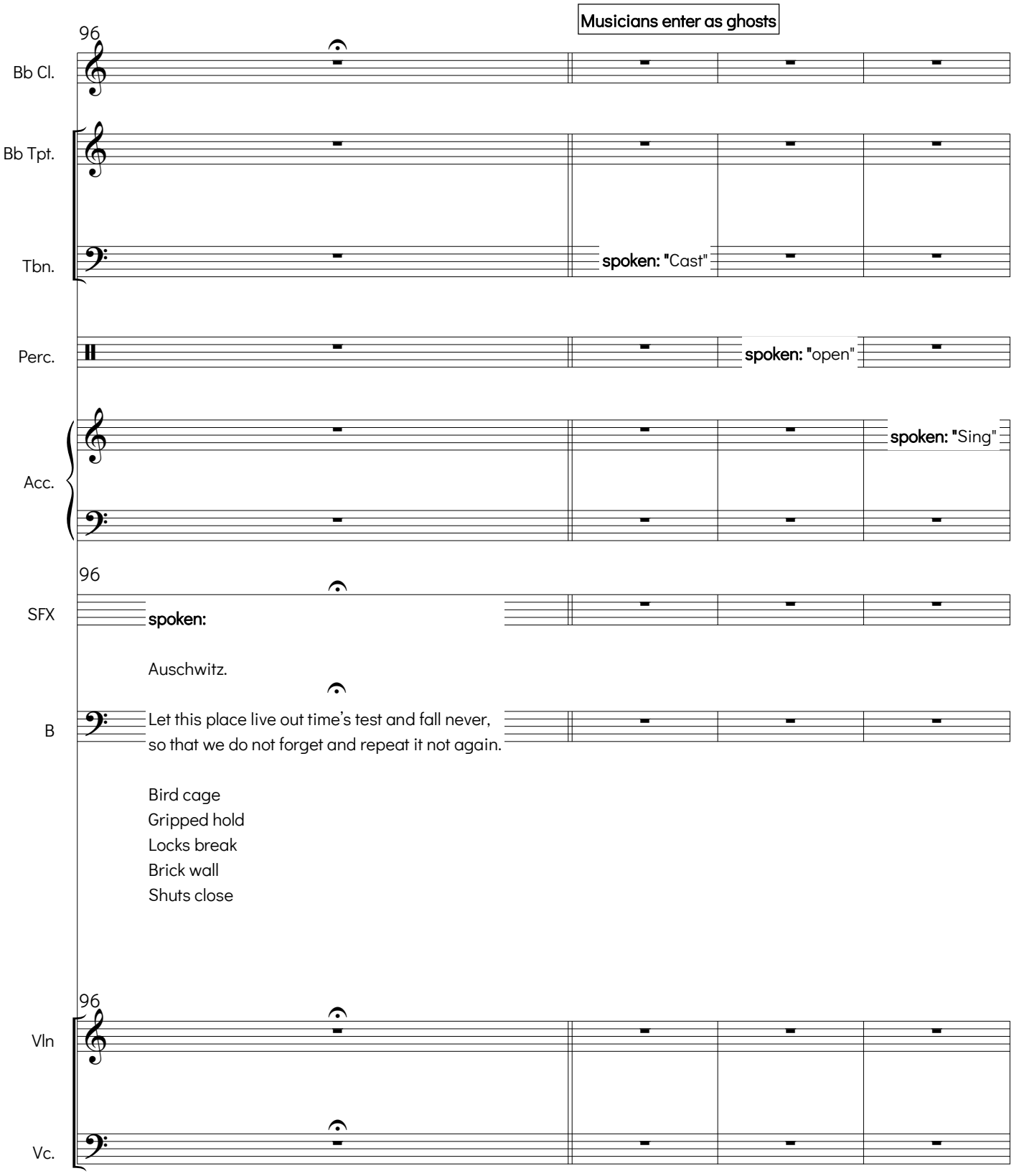
Vc.

pp

accel.
a tempo
61
Bb Cl.
Bb Tpt.
Tbn.
Perc.
Acc.
S
T
B
Vln
Vc.
ah
cou - rage
ah
ah
courage
ah
mm
Cloaked
in
the
black-bird's
cour - age
I
transition to
con vib.
transition to
con vib.

H
67
Bb Cl.
Bb Tpt.
Tbn.
Perc.
Acc.
67
S
T
B
pp
pp
sing.
Then to - geth - er, our me-lo-dy flows the
67
Vln
Vc.
sul tasto
senza vib.
senza vib.
sul tasto
pp

I
74
B
Vln
Vc.
ppp
p
mp
un - said
na na na na na na
na na na
J
80
SFX
BIRDSONG 3
pp
f
85
p sub.
mf
90
pp


Musicians enter as ghosts
96
Bb Cl.
Bb Tpt.
Tbn.
spoken: "Cast"
Perc.
spoken: "open"
Acc.
spoken: "Sing"
96
SFX
spoken:
Auschwitz.
B
Let this place live out time's test and fall never,
so that we do not forget and repeat it not again.
Bird cage
Gripped hold
Locks break
Brick wall
Shuts close
96
Vln
Vc.

100
Bb Cl.
spoken: "Auschwitz."
Bb Tpt.
Tbn.
Perc.
spoken: "again."
Acc.
100
S
spoken: "Never"
T
spoken: "unsaid"
B
100
Vln
Vc.
spoken: "souls"

Leo Geyer

composer | conductor

www.constella.org.uk