

manifesto | for chamber symphony | eugene birman | january-february 2014

m manifesto

Manifesto
for chamber orchestra
written as part of the *Leverhulme Young Composers Program of the London Philharmonic Orchestra*

A faraway folk-song of unknown provenance; the memory of things that might not have ever been; the music one hears in the gaze of one's reflection: I have explored paradoxes in my music before but never has a piece been so obsessive, so obsessively devoted to finding the sound of the surreal, quantum world of the senses. From the external silence into a deepening inner cacophony where each motion, each blinking of an eye is an event of music, I tore out what sounded to me like a folk song. Its every gesture, motion, shape, its unfamiliarity, its faltering presence in my memory, formed the totality of this piece.

There is nothing more here but that.

To focus so singularly has been a dream of mine, to avoid all musical contact in the form of "inspiration," and instead to construct a world so impenetrable that what arises, arises *ex nihilo*. Here is a piece of non-linear time (in fact, it can be said without reservation that it is ten seconds of music, measured as ten minutes), of a tune that loses its structure and context before it is ever really sung. And then there is a moment when time really does stop, but instead of a most deafening silence, I try to create quiet and solitude in sound instead.

I have tried to write the sound of those things, to leave the cracks wide open – to listen and find the music wholly within.

18 january 2014 – Oxford, UK

Instrumentation

1 FL + 1 alto FL
2 OB
2 CL (1 doubling bass CL)
2 BSN (1 doubling contraBSN)

2 HN
2 TMPT
1 TBN + 1 bass TBN

2 PERC
(Bass drum, Marimba, Snare drum, Suspended cymbal, Temple blocks, Tom-toms, Triangle, Vibraphone)

HP, PNO

STRINGS

[2/2/2/2, 2/2/0/0, 2 perc, hp, pno, strings]


Approximate duration

10 minutes


Manifesto / Notes and Indications

Care has been taken to identify all extended techniques in the score and parts individually and consistently. In terms of effects or symbols that may not be clearly explained otherwise, a list of additional techniques/symbols/indications follows below, organized by "choir" of instruments:

Woodwinds




Upper line: played part
Lower line: sung part
Wavy line: distortion of pitch in sung part

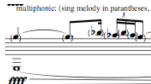


Unpitched articulated notes: "slap-tongue" technique

Brass




Unpitched articulated notes: "flap-tongue" technique

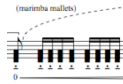


Multiphonic indications: upper line is always sung, lower line is played (reversed for purposes of easier reading)

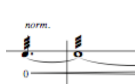
Percussion / Harp / Piano



Stamp foot on damper pedal, making a loud percussive noise with the heel of the shoe as well



Marimba mallet sections played inside the piano are notated as "clusters": pitches may be approximated



If mallets are not specified for Percussion instruments, please use most appropriate mallets at Percussionist's discretion

Strings



Wavy line: vibrato (intensity otherwise indicated)

Percussion List:

Percussion 1:
Suspended cymbal, Temple blocks, Tom-toms, Triangle, Vibraphone

Percussion 2:
Bass drum, Marimba, Snare drum

I was looking at some roses, tonight.
Those nests of naked flesh
on top of long stems.
They seemed like prayers that
the flesh, since time immemorial
beneath its thorns,
tries to lift up
towards the clear sky,
inside a small crack
surrounded by threatening clouds

fabio franzin

(transposed score)

Manifesto

chamber symphony

E. A. Birman (b. 1987)

Obsessive, jarringly violent: ♩ = 66/♩ = 132

Flute 1
sing/hummed at pitch → quickly move out of tune
0
mf

Alto Flute
sing/hummed at pitch → as if "yelled" into flute, quickly moving out of tune
0
mf

Oboe 1
sing/hummed at octave below (transposed)
0
mf

Oboe 2

Clarinet in Bb 1

Clarinet in Bb 2

Bassoon 1
gradually
multiphonic: Eb (so as a Ab)
d.c.
to CONTRABASS

Bassoon 2
mf

Horn 1
vaguely pitched, as if singing "falsetto":
cresc.
mf
vaguely pitched, as if singing "falsetto":
mf

Horn 2

Bb Trumpet 1

Bb Trumpet 2

Trombone 1

Bass Trombone

Percussion 1
CYMBAL
with the wooden ends of mallets, moderately damped:
dampen here:
mf

Percussion 2
B.D. S.D.
dampen here:
mf

Percussion 3
TRIANGLE
mf

Harp
"prepared" harp: two lower strings with clothespins attached (secco)
"thunder effect":
mf

Piano
7.d
mf

Violin I
quiet, mischievous:
col legno tratto
pp
mf

Violin II
quiet, mischievous:
col legno tratto
pp
mf

Viola
pizz.
quiet, mischievous:
pp
mf

Violoncello
Sol C, any pitch:
mf

Contrabass
Sol B, any pitch:
mf

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

Timid, with rushed motions, slightly faster: ♩ = 80 / ♪ = 160

[illegible]

[illegible]

This image shows a page from a musical score, likely for a symphony orchestra. The score is written for various instruments, including Flutes (Fl. 1, Alto Fl.), Oboes (Ob. 1, Ob. 2), Clarinets (Bb Cl. 1, Bb Cl. 2), Bassoons (Bsn. 1, Bsn. 2), Horns (Hn. 1, Hn. 2), Trumpets (Bb Tpt. 1, Bb Tpt. 2), Trombones (Tbn. 1, Bb Tbn.), Percussion (Perc. 1, Perc. 2, Perc. 3), Harp (Hp.), Piano (Pno.), Violins (Vln. I, Vln. II), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Contrabass (Cb.). The score includes dynamic markings such as *pppp*, *pp*, *mf*, and *f*, as well as performance instructions like "whisper mute" and "subito pppp". The notation is in standard musical notation with staves and notes.

72

Fl. 1

Alto Fl.

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

B♭ Cl. 1

B♭ Cl. 2

Bsn. 1

Bsn. 2

Hrn. 1

Hrn. 2

B♭ Tpt. 1

B♭ Tpt. 2

Tbn. 1

Ba Tbn.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

Hrp.

Pno.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vcl.

Cb.

less tone, more "brimble" sound

whisper mute

senza sord.

VIBRAPHONE:
senza muto
hard mallets

key
click

14

15

Tempo I: spare, tense, metallic

Tempo I: spare, tense, metallic

[illegible]

18

123

Fl. 1 *+ sung/hummed at pitch* *pp* *exhaled/"suid" into instrument* *mp* *+ sung/hummed at pitch* *pp*

Alto Fl. *mf* *sim.* *pp* *mp* *pp* *(d.)* *(blowing directly into the instrument - "trumpet" style)*

Ob. 1 *ppp* *sim.*

Ob. 2 *pppp* *sim.*

Bs. Cl. 1 *ppp* *sim.*

Bs. Cl. 2 *ppp* *pp* *to CL.*

Bsn. 1 *pp* *to BSN.*

Bsn. 2 *ppp* *pp*

Hrn. 1 *(chiuso)* *mp* *straight mute:* *ppp* *pp*

Hrn. 2 *mp* *straight mute:* *ppp* *pp*

Tpt. 1 *mp* *cup mute:* *ppp* *pp*

Tpt. 2 *mp* *cup mute:* *ppp* *pp*

Tbn. 1 *mp* *cup mute:* *ppp* *pp*

Bs. Tbn. *mp* *air:* *mp* *air:* *p* *air:*

Perc. 1 *p* *mf* *pp* *p* *TRIANGLE* *very gently, like marking time:* *pp* *(TRIANGLE)*

Perc. 2 *ff* *(B.D.)* *follow:*

Hp. *trem. with nails, metallic/percussive sound with some pitch:* *ff* *dampened at sound post "xylophone style":* *ff* *dampen here:*

Pno. *unpitched - one hand damping the piano strings completely (knocking sound):* *ppp* *ppp*

Vln. I *pizz.* *supra pont.* *arco* *con sord.* *div. a 2* *unis.* *(d.)* *mf* *ppp* *pp* *mf* *ppp*

Vln. II *pizz.* *pp* *arco* *con sord.* *div. a 2* *mf* *ppp* *pp* *mf* *ppp* *mf* *ppp* *mf* *ppp*

Vla. *(pizz.)* *ppp* *p* *mf* *ppp* *mf* *ppp* *mf* *ppp* *mf* *ppp* *mf* *ppp*

Vc. *mf* *ppp* *mf* *ppp* *mf* *ppp* *mf* *ppp* *mf* *ppp* *mf* *ppp*

Cb. *(d.)* *strong bow motion across body of instrument - unpitched:* *mp* *mf* *ppp* *mf* *ppp* *mf* *ppp* *mf* *ppp* *mf* *ppp* *mf* *ppp*

20

F

157

Fl. 1 *ppp* sung/hummed (sotto at unison (transposed) as closely as possible *ppp* 0 *ppp* 0

Alto Fl. *mp* 0 *pppp* exhaled "aid" into instrument "ah" "ah" "ah" "ah" "ah" "ah" "ah" "ah" "ah" "ah" "ah" "ah" "ah" "ah" "ah" "ah" *mf*

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

Bs. Cl. 1 *ppp* 0 *ppp* 0 *p*

Bs. Cl. 2 *ppp* 0 *p*

Bsn. 1 *ppp* 0 *mf* 0 *ppp* 0 *p*

Bsn. 2 *ppp* 0 *ppp* 0 *p*

Hn. 1 *pp* *mf* *ppp* *senza word.* *chiuso*

Hn. 2 *pp*

Tpt. 1 *pp* *mf* *ppp* *senza word.*

Tpt. 2 *pp*

Tbn. 1 *pp* *mf* *ppp*

Bs. Tbn. *pp* *mf* *ppp* *senza word.*

Perc. 1 CYMBAL bowed: *mp* TRIANGLE *pp* CYMBAL bowed: *mf* *sabito p < f* TRIANGLE *pp*

Perc. 2 unpitched, banging against the music stand: *ppp* 0 *mf* 0 *mf* 0

Hp. *ff* *senza word.* *ppp sost.*

Pno. *mf* *ppp sost.*

Vln. I *ppp* 0 *ppp sost.* *senza word.*

Vln. II *ppp* 0 *ppp* *gliss. progressively slightly lower with the same hand position and rhythm:*

Vla. *ppp* 0 *ppp* *gliss. progressively slightly lower with the same hand position and rhythm:*

Vc. *pp* *pp sost.* *div. a 2*

Cb. *pp* *pp sost.*

23

24

Motionless, in a primal state ♩ = 60

[illegible]

26

27