

cloud chamber music

a song cycle on words from Harry Partch's *Eleven Intrusions*

Benjamin Gait (Summer 2011/Winter-Spring 2012)

Introduction	c.3'	(full ensemble)
<i>The Rose</i>	c.2'30"	(full ensemble)
<i>The Crane</i>	c.1'15"	(guitar, clarinet and cello)
<i>The Waterfall</i>	c.1'15"	(guitar and violin)
<i>Lover</i>	c.2'	(guitar, violin and flute)
<i>The Wind</i>	c.1'30"	(guitar, flute and clarinet)
<i>Soldiers/War/Another War</i>	c.1'	(guitar and cello)
<i>Vanity</i>	c.1'15"	(full ensemble)
Epilogue	c.2'	(full ensemble)

Total duration c.16-17' (including short gaps)

Instrumentation

Soprano
 Alto Flute in G
 Clarinet in Bb
 Guitar (acoustic)
 Violin
 'Cello

Programme Note

cloud chamber music is a short song cycle for soprano, guitar and small ensemble, setting the same words as an early piece by the American composer Harry Partch, *Eleven Intrusions*. These words are drawn from a variety of sources, from ancient Chinese and Japanese poetry to contemporaries of Partch, but all share a similar sense of melancholy. The cycle is written sparingly, with many freedoms and decisions given to the performers. The first and last songs (and the introduction and epilogue) are for the full ensemble; the five songs in between involve different subsets of the ensemble with the guitar.

Performance notes

Score in C. Guitar sounds one octave lower than written.

Accidentals are **always** stated, even on repeated notes.

This cycle is to be performed without a conductor. All musicians play from the score*. The guitarist and soprano should be the focus, with the ensemble a little further back in an arc. The guitarist and other musicians may give each other subtle cues where appropriate.

Though loose tempos are occasionally provided or implied, this work is to be performed with a strong sense of freedom. Rhythm is fairly flexible at all times, aside from the brief metred sections in *Lover* and *Soldiers...* Vertical dotted lines are sometimes used to indicate co-ordination of gestures; these indicate a particularly controlled co-ordination, distinct from notes that are aligned vertically but without a dotted line. Usually, when the soprano is singing or reciting, the players should co-ordinate their parts to her. Despite the metre-less notation, rhythm still exists in almost everything that is played, and therefore rhythms such as triplet crotchets are still used to indicate the way a melody should be played.

The soprano part should be clear above the ensemble at all times, and treated slightly more metrically than the instrumental parts (but still with freedom - mostly in a way that reflects natural speech rhythm, albeit somewhat slower and exaggerated). The words should always be clearly heard.

At some points during the piece, different musicians may have to make choices in relation to what they play - these should always be considered carefully, and never decided in an arbitrary way (although they may vary from one performance to another).

The guitarist and soprano should work to make the piece visually exciting also; performing from memory would be desirable, but not necessary as long as the sheet music is fairly unobtrusive. The soprano is free to move around the stage if desired. Ideally the audience should be as close to the musicians as possible; an intimate performance setting (not necessarily a concert hall) is desirable.

Allow short periods of silence between each song.

*transposed scores are available, as are scores with all but one part in a smaller font

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a song cycle on harry partch's eleven intrusions

Introduction

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Tempo: free, spacious but not too slow.

A. Fl. *pp* *p* *pp* *mp*

Cl. clarinet: choose ONE of the four notes shown and hold throughout. the note may vary from one performance to another but should NOT be determined by chance. breathe ad. lib. as necessary.

Vln. *ppppp* *pp* *p* *pp* *mp*

Vc. *pp* *p* *pp* *mp*

A. Fl. *ppp* *pp*

Cl. *mp*

Gtr. *mf* *mp* *mf* *f*

Vln. *ppp* *pp*

Vc. *ppp* *pp*

Cl. *mp*

Gtr. *p*

A. Fl. *mf*

A. Fl. *mp* *f*

Gtr. *pp* senza vib.

Vln. *ppp*

c. 3'

With slightly more momentum, but still hesitant.

(soprano sets the tempo which the ensemble must follow)

Sop. *the rose that blooms in pa - ra - dise*

Cl. *p mf p*

Gtr. *mp p mf mp*



Sop. *burns with an ec - sta - sy too sweet for mor - tal eyes -*

A. Fl. *pp*

Cl. *pp*

Gtr. *pp*



Sop. *but some-times down the jas - per walls, a pe - tal falls*

A. Fl. *mp*

Gtr. *mp mf*

Vln. *p*

Vc. *sul pont. pp p*

poco accel.

A tempo

Sop. *to-ward earth and night* *accel and rit ad. lib.*

A. Fl. *mf*

Cl. *f* *mf*

Gtr. *mf*

Vln. *pizz.* *f* *arco sul pont.* *pp with vc. arco sul pont.* *f*

Vc. *pizz.* *f* *pp with vln.* *p* *f*



Sop. *to lose is to lose de-light be-yond com-pare-*
ad. lib., gradual accelerando

A. Fl. *tr*

Cl. *tr*

Gtr. *mf* *gradual accelerando*

Vln. *ad. lib., gradual accelerando* *change bow where necessary*

Vc. *(sul pont.)* *pp*



c. 2'30"

Sop. *to have is to have de-spair*

A. Fl. *p*

Cl. *pp*

Gtr. *mp* *p* *pp*

Pressing further

Sop. *its*

Cl. *mp* *mp* *mf* *p*

Gtr. *pp* gradual rit.

Vc. *pp* sul pont.



Sop. *cry is mourn-ful in the reed plane as though it had called to mind*

Cl. *mp* *mp*

Gtr. *mf* *mp* *mf*

Vc. *mp* *mf* *mp* (sempre pizz.)
all pizz. resonant, with vibrato



c. 1'15"

Sop. *some - thing which it wan - ted to for - get*

Cl. *pp* *p*

Gtr. *mp* *mf* *pp*

Vc. *mf* *mp* *mf* *p*

The Waterfall

♩ = 80 With momentum, pulling back and forth

Sop. *o shou-ting mul-ti-tudes* *lea-ping from crag to crag*

Gtr. *mf* *f* *mp* *f* *mf* *f*

Vln. *mf* *p* *mf* *mp*

con sord.



Sop. *ges-ti-cu-la-ting* *wrest-ling with limbs in-ter-twined* *fluent; in dialogue with the guitar* *why are you so ea-ger to leave the*

Gtr. *mf* *mp* *mf* *p* *mp* *p*

Vln. *p* *pp*



Sop. *sun - light* *so ea - ger* *for the pool of ob - li-vi-on* *slower*

Gtr. *mf* *pp* *p*

Vln. *mp* *ppp*

c. 1'15"

Freely; following soprano

Sop. *so now lost and turn blood in-to night in-to dark it*

A. Fl. *f mf mp p*

Gtr. *mp mf mp p mf mp*

Vln. *senza sord. ppp*

Sop. *means the dear-est and most burned is a-lone in the night in the black tarn if you see*

A. Fl. *mp (with sop.) mp*

Gtr. *mf mp f mf mp sul pont. mp*

Vln. *pp*

$\frac{4}{4}$ = 100 (homage to Partch)

Sop. *the mad horse and he shows a year - ning fear black stamp cudd-le close*

A. Fl. *f pp floating, distant, breathy*

Gtr. *ff mf ff ppp cold, uninvolved*
tap any part of guitar (two areas; one pitched higher than the other)
(let bottom E ring as long as possible)

Vln. *pp half col legno, sul pont.*

3/4

2/4

4/4

Sop. *it is al - most time to shout it is al - most time to scream it is dark blood*

A. Fl. *pp*

Gtr.

Vln. *mf*



Sop. *boils lost dark blood boils lost dark blood boils lost beau-ty*

A. Fl.

Gtr.

Vln. *mf*

free, floating

free, with pauses between each phrase

Sop. she is the slender blos-somed thorn she is the heart-beat

breathe ad. lib., varying speed and pattern (but not notes)

A. Fl. *pp*

Cl. breathe ad. lib. fairly steady, not too fast *pp*

Gtr. vary up/down ad. lib. avoid pulse. *ppp*

Sop. of the spring the faint sweet mu-sic be-fore morn she the light swa-llow

A. Fl.

Cl.

Gtr.

Sop. on the wing maid moon she is so young and white shy in the hea-ven's lord-ly dome

A. Fl.

Cl.

Gtr.

clearly spoken

Sop. I am the lone-ly wind of night I am the spent seas bit-ter foam I am drifted a bout as on the

breathier; less pitch

A. Fl. *ppp*

Cl. *ppp* sim.

Gtr. *pp*

Sop. sea I am car-ried by the wind as if I had no-where to go

A. Fl.

Cl. (seamlessly)

Gtr.

c. 1'30"

4/4 ♩ = 80 *ritualistic*

2/4

stark and surprisingly rhythmic
pizz.

Gtr. *mp* *f*

Sop. (recit.)
we re-main like leaves on the trees in au-tumn

Vc. *mf* *pp* arco sul tasto sul pont.



4/4

2/4

more distant

Gtr. *mf* *mp*

Sop. *far a-way like a blind man they have led me by the hand*

Vc. *mp* *f* *mp* *pp* arco sul tasto sul pont.



4/4

c. I'

desolate, as quiet as is audible (but not whispered)

Gtr. *p* *pp*

Sop. *in this dark-ness with my fro-zen hands i can make out my face i feel my-self a-ban-doned*

Vc. *p* unpitched, bowing on bridge allow tiny amount of sul pont on C with crescendo

Vanity

4
4

With energy

Sop. *sud-den-ly tall on the ruins is the clear stu-por of im-men - si - ty and the*

A. Fl. *fpp* *fpp*

Cl. *fpp*

Gtr. *f* *mf* *mp* *f*



4
4 = 92 lilting

Sop. *man bent o-ver the wa - ter sur-prised by the sun makes him-self out as a*

A. Fl. *ff*

Cl. *pp* *ff*

Gtr. *mp*

Vln. *pp* *mp* *p* *con sord.*

Vc. *pp* *p* *sul pont.* *ff*



c. l'15"

Sop. *sha-dow rocked by the wa-ter and slow-ly shat-tered.*

Gtr. *f* *mf* *mp*

Vln. *mf* *mp* *mp* *pp*

With a similar feel to the Introduction

Musical score for the first system. It features three staves: Gtr. (Guitar), Vc. (Violoncello), and Cl. (Clarinete). The Gtr. part consists of a series of chords, starting with a *pp* dynamic. The Vc. part features a melodic line with a *ppp* dynamic. The Cl. part enters with a melodic line and a *pp* dynamic.



Musical score for the second system. It features four staves: Cl. (Clarinete), Gtr. (Guitar), Vln. (Violino), and Vc. (Violoncello). The Cl. part has two entries, with dynamics *mp* and *pp*. The Gtr. part features a melodic line with dynamics *mf*, *mp*, *mf*, and *f*. The Vln. and Vc. parts feature melodic lines with *pp* dynamics.



c. 2'

Musical score for the third system. It features five staves: A. Fl. (Alto Flute), Cl. (Clarinete), Vln. (Violino), Vc. (Violoncello), and Gtr. (Guitar). The A. Fl., Cl., Vln., and Vc. parts feature melodic lines with *pp* and *ppp* dynamics. The Gtr. part features a melodic line with *pp* and *ppp* dynamics.