

## **Patrick Harrex – Passages for vocalist(s)/ actor(s)**

My *Passages* (10 so far, although some have been withdrawn, usually because they have been superseded by new pieces that have grown out of the original work, as explained below) are a series of short works for soloists or small ensembles, the earliest dating from student days in Paris.

The generic title (originally French, but which can be read as the English word) was chosen because of its variety of meanings or nuances.

A 'passage' is, among other things, a journey, a process of moving forward in time, a narrow and perhaps confined or restricted alleyway or corridor, a channel, a process of transition from one state to another, a short extract from a literary or musical work. Each of these definitions presents ideas that may be developed in a piece of music.

There is also an interesting biological definition, given that a number of my *Passages* have been developed into other works, which relates to the process of propagating cells in host organisms so as to maintain or modify those cells and allow them to multiply. *Passages I* for solo violin grew into *Conséquences* for viola and piano. *Conséquences* in turn provided material for the third movement of my *Duo for violin and piano* and for *Résonances*, for viola and four instruments. *Passages X* for cello has been developed (as *Passages X +*) into a short work for solo cello and small ensemble.

A common characteristic of my *Passages* is the use of short phrases which explore certain technical or physical aspects of the instrument(s) or voice(s). While these may be isolated, perhaps momentary, events, they connect together to take us on a journey around the subject instrument or voice – usually a small scale expedition rather than an intensive examination.

The text of this *Passages* (*Passages IV*), written in 1972 for American actress/ singer Sherry Dorn, consists largely of random words selected by the composer, but the starting point is a line from a Paul Eluard poem: "Sonnant les cloches du hasard à toute volée" ('The bells of chance are set ringing').

Patrick Harrex

Begin at



Move from one sound to another, following the arrows, slowly transforming each sound, merging it into the next. At any point the performer may choose to transform(merge) a sound into any one of the words outside the circle. Having moved outside the circle, words may be used freely, passing from one to another as the performer wishes.

After using a word or sequence of words move directly to any sound within the circle (this may or may not be related to the last word and may or may not have been used before). Note: this is the only time that a sudden change of sound or other parameter may occur.

Use any type of vocal production (move freely between speech and singing), or even non-vocal sounds if these are closely related to preceding/succeeding vocal sounds. Electronics may be used.

Movement may be used freely (or not at all).

(An extreme use of movement would be to allot all or some words/sounds to specific positions within the performing area, and only to use these sounds/words when standing at their allotted positions, thus combining aural and physical transitions.)

A performance may have any duration, but all the sounds represented by phonetic symbols must be used at least once.

End anywhere.

The basic sounds are derived from the following line:

Sonnant les cloches du hasard à toute volée  
sonã le kloʃ dy azã; a tut vole

PATRICK HARREX

PASSAGES IV

