

Psalm Concerning the Castle

words: Denise Levertov (*The Sorrow Dance*, 1967)

music: Silvina Milstein (1996)

to Mary Wiegold and the Composers Ensemble

*for soprano,
two clarinets in Bb (one doubling bass clarinet),
viola,
cello and
double bass (with C string)*

score in C

approx. duration: 8' 30"

revised version,
correct at 26 June 96

Silvina Milstein

Psalm Concerning the Castle

high soprano, 2 clarinets, viola, cello & double bass

for Mary Wiegold's Song Book

first performance: Mary Wiegold & the Composers' Ensemble, 1996

duration 9 minutes

Psalm Concerning the Castle is a setting of a poem by Denise Levertov. The introspective lines at the beginning and end of the poem ('Let me be at the place of the castle. / Let the castle be within me ... Let that country where it stands be within me, let me be where it is.') are set as very a expansive vocalise. When the fantasy materialises into lush spaces abounding in rich and vivid details, the setting turns first into a song-like arioso and eventually into declamation. The continuous stream of symbols (the shells of swimming turtles, green plumage of ducks, a dog, horsemen, archers, the prince, the young queen and her child), steadily draws us deeper and deeper into imaginary spaces. The final section is a rapturous avalanche of the early stages of the fantasy, in which these 'spaces' reappear in quick succession, leading back to a repeat of the opening lines of the poem.

S.M.

Preview File Only

Psalm Concerning the Castle

Let me be at the place of the castle.
Let the castle be within me.
Let it rise foursquare from the moat's ring.
Let the moat's waters reflect green plumage of ducks, let
the shells of swimming turtles break the surface or be
seen through the rippling depths.
Let horsemen be stationed at the rim of it, and a dog,
always alert on the brink of sleep.
Let the space under the first storey be dark, let the water
lap the stone posts, and vivid green slime glimmer
upon them; let a boat be kept there.
Let the caryatids of the second storey be bears upheld on
beams that are dragons.
On the parapet of the central room, let there be four
archers, looking off to the four horizons. Within, let
the prince be at home, let him sit in deep thought, at
peace, all the windows open to the loggias.
Let the young queen sit above, in the cool air, her child in
her arms; let her look with joy at the great circle, the
pilgrim shadows, the work of the sun and the play of
the wind. Let her walk to and fro. Let the columns
uphold the roof, let the storeys uphold the columns, let
there be dark space below the lowest floor, let the
castle rise foursquare out of the moat, let the moat be
a ring and the water deep, let the guardians guard it,
let there be wide lands around it, let that country
where it stands be within me, let me be where it is.

Denise Levertov

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Psalm Concerning the Castle

Silvina Milstein
words: Denise Levertov

4 $\text{♩} = 92$ 3 4

S.

Cl.

Bass Cl. (doubling Cl.)

Va.

Vc.

Db.

marcato e sonoro
f

echo tone
pp

ord.
pp

marcato e sonoro
pizz.
f

arco
ff

arco
p

pizz.
f

arco

marcato e sonoro
f

ff

sul tasto
pp

5 4 1 4 3

pp

mp

pesante
mp

pizz.
p

pizz.
mp

en dehors
pesante
mp

mp

en dehors
marcato
mf

sul tasto
p

pp

f

ppp

pp

f

ppp

9 **3** **2** **4**

pp

mf pp

mf pp

ppp

arco

mf

ord.

p

f

12 **4** **3**

fluttertonguing

pp

fff

f

pp

fff

p

ff

sul pont.

f

pp

fff

ppp

f

p

sul tasto

marcato

ff

sul pont.

f

pp

fff

marcato

ord.

ff

15

2/4

Musical score for measures 15-17 in 2/4 time. The score consists of six staves. Measure 15 includes dynamics *ff* and *p*, and markings *pizz.* and *arco*. Measure 16 includes dynamics *pp*, *mp*, and *mp*, and markings *pesante*, *pizz.*, and *en dehors pesante*. Measure 17 includes dynamics *mp* and *ff*. A large blue watermark "Preview File Only" is overlaid diagonally across the score.

18

1/8

2/4

4/4

2/4

Musical score for measures 18-20. Measure 18 is in 1/8 time, measure 19 in 2/4, and measure 20 in 4/4. The score consists of six staves. Measure 18 includes dynamics *mf* and *mf*, and marking *arco*. Measure 19 includes dynamics *pp* and *mp*, and marking *sul fasto*. Measure 20 includes dynamics *mf* and *pp*, and marking *ord.*. A note at the bottom right states "(natural harmonics are written at actual pitch)". A large blue watermark "Preview File Only" is overlaid diagonally across the score.

21 $\frac{2}{4}$ ♩ = 54

en dehors
dolce

mf pp *mf p mf*

dolce pesante

pp *p* *mp >*

sul tasto ord.

p *pp* *mp >*

pizz. arco, sul tasto

p *pp*

pizz. arco, sul tasto

p *pp*

25 $\frac{2}{4}$ ♩ = 92

con forza dolce

mp *p* *ff* *p*

con forza

mf p *mf p* *ff >*

con forza sul pont.

p *pp* *ff* *pp* *ff* *f* *pp*

ord. con forza sul pont.

p *pp* *ff* *pp* *ff* *f* *pp*

en dehors ord. con forza sul pont.

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

4

29 **1** **2** **3** **4** *con soavita, ♩ = 108*

Let

en dehors

to Bb clarinet

sul pont.

col legno battuto *ff*

arco sul pont. *pp*

en dehors ord.

col legno battuto *ff*

arco, sul pont. *p*

ff

p

34 **4** **3** **4** **3**

me at the

marcato ma sempre soave, like small bells
(grace notes always before the beat)

pp

Bb clarinet *marcato ma sempre soave, like small bells*

poco staccato
pp

marcato ma sempre soave, like small bells

pizz. *mf* en dehors arco *mp* sul pont.

(non harmonic)

marcato ma sempre soave, like small bells

mf *pp* *mf* *pp*

marcato ma sempre soave, like small bells

ord. *pp*

37 **3** *mf* **4** *mp* **3** *mf*

place _____ of the ca - - - - -

pp

pp *mp*

mp

(non harm.) *pp*

pp *p*

41 *pp* *mf* **4** *pp* **4** **3**

(a)

leggiero

pp *p* **5**

leggiero

p **5**

en dehors

f pp *f pp*

echo tone

ppp

p *pp* *p*

p

p

44

f *p* *mp* *pp*

f *p* *pp*

ord.

mp *p*

48

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

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

pp *ff* *p*

mf *ff* *p*

pizz. *ff* *p*

en dehors

stie

sul pont. *sonoro*

sul pont.

sul pont. *sonoro*

7

1 3 4

52

4 3 4

leggiere
p

sonoro
f

leggiere
p

sonoro
f

ord.
p mp

molto marcato
mf

pizz.
f

pizz.
mf

arco
mf

molto marcato
mf

pizz.
f

pizz.
mf

arco
mf

L.H. tapping with knuckles
resonant deep sound

R.H. snapped pizz.

56

4 4

molto marcato
arco
f

pizz.
f

arco
mf

tapping
fff

arco
mf

mp

mp

mp

mp

mp

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con fuoco, ♩ = 144

60

4/4

Let me be at the place at the

en dehors

sul pont.

pizz.

L.H. tapping on soundboard with knuckles

pizz.

63

place of the ca - - - - - atle

col legno battuto

ord.

(pizz.) tapping on soundboard with knuckles

pizz.

arco

(pizz.) tapping on soundboard with knuckles

pizz.

arco

75 $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{2}{4}$

marcato

Bass CL

ff p *mf* *f* *pp*

pizz. *sul pont.* *sul pont.* *sul tasto*

f *pp*

79 $\text{♩} = 92$ $\frac{3}{4}$

ate with in me.

p *mf* *en dehors*

ord. *ord.* *en dehors*

p *p* *mf*

82 **4** *pp*

p *p* *p* *mf* *en dehors* *p* *p*

84 **4** *mp* *marcato e pesante* $\text{♩} = 184$ **2** **4**

mp *f* *pp* *mf* *ff* *pp* *mf* *ff* *pp* *ord.*

en dehors *sul pont.*

93 $\frac{3}{4}$ *mf* *p* niente 4

plu- mage of ducks, —————

en dehors *marcato* *mf* *p*

en dehors *marcato* *mf* *ppp*

en dehors *marcato* *mf* *ppp*

ppp *arco* *ppp*

97 $\frac{4}{4}$ *p* *ppp* $\frac{3}{4}$

let ————— the shells —————

mf *ppp*

ppp *ppp*

100

of owl - mming tur- tles break

p *mf* *p* *mf* *p*

grazioso p

pizz. *arco*

104

the sur - face or be seen through the ri - ppling

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

mf *ppp* *mf* *ppp*

to Bass CL

en dehors

sul tasto *ppp* *pizz.* *mp*

sul tasto *ppp* *pizz.* *mp*

108 *pp* *con anima e marcato* **3** **4**

depth. _____ Let horse- men _____

p *pp*

mf *mp*

mf

arco *p* *pp*

111 *mf* *p* *mf* **3**

be sta - tioned at the rim of it, and a dog, al - ways -

mp *ff*

Bass CL

mp *ff*

mp *mf*

mf *ff* *mf*

pizz. *mf* *f* *ff*

16

120 $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$

let the wa-ter lap the stone posts,

pesante

p

(col legno battuto)

p

pesante

ord.

mf

(pizz.)

p

arco

p

pizz.

p

gliss.

gliss.

lento, $\text{♩} = 52$

123 $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{5}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$

and w'ld green slime on mter u-pon them; Let

p

mf

p

pp

solto voce

pesante

pesante

col legno battuto *pesante*

pizz.

col legno battuto

pizz.

p

arco

f

mf

p

col legno battuto *pesante*

ord.

col legno battuto

ord.

f

mf

p

126 *freely*

p *coala* *7* *2* *3* *mf pp*

- (e) - - - - - (et) a boat - be kept there. - - -

pp *ppp* *p* *mfpp* *mf pp*

pp *pizz.* *mf*

p *p* *mf*

mp *p*

arco

p

più mosso, ♩ = 72

130 *mp* *mp* *f* *p* *gliss.* *8*

Let - the ca - rre - tids - of the se - - - cond sto - -

pp *pp* *mf* *pp*

arco, sul tasto *ord.* *A*

pp *pp* *f* *mf pp*

sul tasto *ord. pont.*

pp *mf*

sul tasto *ord. pont.* *ord. pont.*

pp *mf*

133

mf

roy be bears up-held on beams that are

mp

pp *mf* *f* *pp*

pp *mp*

ord. pont. *mf* ord. *f* ord. *pp*

ord. pont. *mf* ord. *f* ord. *mf pp*

gliss.

en dehors

137

f *mp* *f* *mp*

dra gone.

gliss.

mp *mf*

mp *p*

p *pizz.*

pp *p* *mf* *pizz.*

pp *mf* *pizz.*

140

3 *con anima*

On the pa-ra-pet

Violin I: *ff*, *f*, *pp*

Violin II: *mp*, *f*, *pp*

Viola: *ff*, *f*, *pp*

Cello/Bass: *f*, *ff*, *pp*, *f*, *p*

143

of the cen-tral room,

of the cen-tral room,

en dehors

Violin I: *f*, *pp*, *f*, *pp*

Violin II: *f*, *pp*

Viola: *ff*, *pp*

Cello/Bass: *pp*, *pp*, *p*, *pp*

147 *sempre con anima*

let there be four arches, looking off to the four horns

pizz.

ff p

ff p

pizz.

pizz.

pizz.

arco

ff p

152 *p* *gliss.*

zone

soave *p* *ppp* *pp*

WI thin, let

en dehors *eco tone*

P soave *ppp*

pizz.

en dehors *arco*

P soave *ppp* *p*

pizz.

156 **4** *tranquillo, l'istesso tempo*
mp dolce

the prince be at home,
 en dehors

let him sit in deep thought
 like distant bells

arco
 en dehors

col legno battuto
 like distant bells ord.

159 **3** *mp* *poco* **2** *poco* **3**

at peace
 windows o - pen to the lo - ggias.

like distant bells

en dehors *marcato*

162 *più mosso*, $\text{♩} = 92$

Musical score for measures 162-164. The score is in 3/4 time and consists of five staves. The first staff is empty. The second staff contains a melodic line with dynamics *mf* and *p*. The third staff contains a bass line with dynamics *p*. The fourth and fifth staves are marked *marcato* and contain complex rhythmic patterns with dynamics *mp*, *f*, *p*, *ff*, and *f*. Measure 163 has a 2/4 time signature. Measure 164 has a 3/4 time signature. A large blue watermark "Preview File Only" is overlaid diagonally across the score.

165

Musical score for measures 165-167. The score is in 3/4 time and consists of five staves. The first staff is marked *en dehors* and contains a melodic line with dynamics *mf* and *f*. The second staff contains a bass line with dynamics *pp* and *ppp*. The third and fourth staves are marked *pizz.* and contain complex rhythmic patterns with dynamics *mf*, *pp*, *f*, *f*, and *pp*. The fifth staff is marked *pizz.* and contains complex rhythmic patterns with dynamics *pp*, *f*, *f*, and *pp*. Measure 166 has a 2/4 time signature. Measure 167 has a 3/4 time signature. A large blue watermark "Preview File Only" is overlaid diagonally across the score.

175 *lontano, l'istesso tempo* mf **4** *p*

child in her arms. Let

mp *p*

mp *p*

sul pont. sul tasto *p*

col legno battuto *p*

sul pont. sul tasto *p*

178 *p* **3** **2** **3** **2**

her look with joy at the great cir- cle

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

pizz. *f* *mp*

ord. *p* *mp* *mp*

183 $\frac{2}{4}$ pp $\frac{3}{8}$ mp $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$

the pit-grim sha-dows the work of the sun — and —

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

pizz. arco pizz.

187 $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{2}{4}$

— the play of the wind. — Let her walk to and fro. —

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

pizz. arco

191 $\frac{2}{4}$

f Let the co- lums up- hold the roof, let the

p *mp*

pizz. *arco*

ff *f*

pizz. *arco*

ff *f* *mp*

pizz.

ff *f* *mp*

195 $\frac{3}{4}$ *colla parte*, $\text{♩} = 46-40$

pp *pp* freely but always very rhythmical

sto- reys up- hold co

f *pp*

f *pp*

mp *f*

molto sonoro
pizz.

arco

ff *PPP*

molto sonoro
pizz.

ff *mp*

198

$\langle mf \rangle$ p f $\text{♩} = 92$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{2}{4}$ f

lumns, let there be dark space be - low

f *mf* *f* *mf*

molto sonoro
pizz. δ δ δ
ff

(* hit strings with two fingers sul tasto to make a resonant whip-like sound, causing the fingerboard to ring)
molto sonoro
 (pizz.) (pizz.)
ff

202

the lo- west floor, let the ca - stle rise four square

mf *f* *mf*

mf *f* *mf*

ff *ff* *ff*

arco *pizz.* δ δ δ
ff *ff*

212

guard it. Let there be wide lands a - round it.

f *mf* *p*

pizz. arco

arco

col legno battuto

sempre tranquillo, ♩ = 92

216

Let that coun -

en dehors *mf*

echo tone *p*

en dehors *mf* *f*

(col legno battuto)

229 **5** *mf* **3** *f* **4**

Let me be where

p

pp

mf pp *mf pp* *f*

p *en dehors* *mf* *en dehors*

p *en dehors* *mf*

232 *meno mosso, J = 72* **3** **4**

is.

mf *mp* *pp*

p *col legno battuto* *sonoro* *pizz.* *arco*

en dehors *sul tasto*

The musical score consists of six staves. The first staff is labeled "Bass Cl." and contains the main melodic line. The second staff is labeled "echo tone" and contains sustained notes. The third staff is labeled "sul tasto" and contains a melodic line. The fourth staff is labeled "pizz." and contains a rhythmic line. The fifth staff is labeled "col legno battuto" and contains a rhythmic line. The sixth staff is a bass line. Performance instructions include "en dehors" (twice), "p", "pp", "PPP", "pizz.", and "col legno battuto". The score is divided into measures by vertical bar lines.

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