

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

Silvana Milstein
words: Denise Levertoff

4 $\text{J} = 92$

S.

CL

Bass Cl.
(doubling Cl.)

Va.

Vc.

Db.

marcato e sonoro $\Delta \Delta$ *echo tone* *ord.*

pizz. *arcò* $\Delta \Delta \Delta$ *pizz.* *arcò*

marcato e sonoro $\Delta \Delta$ *sul tasto*

5 **4**

1 **8** **4** **3** **4**

pp

pesante

pizz.

pizz.

en dehors

pesante

en dehors

(sul tasto)

ord.

marcato

sul tasto

pp *f* *fff* *mf* *p* *ppp*

9 **3**

pp

mf pp

arco *mf*

ord. *p*

2 **4**

4

12 **4**

fluttetonguing

pp *fff*

f *pp* *fff*

sul pont. *pp* *fff*

3 **4**

sul tasto

p *ff*

sul pont. *pp* *fff*

marcato

ord. marcato *A A A*

ff

15

pesante

pizz.

ff

pizz. t *arco*

> p

sul tasto

ff

pp

mp

pesante

en dehors pesante

mp

mp

ff

pp

mp

f pp

2

4

18

ff

2

4

4

2

4

arco

sul tasto

ord.

(natural harmonics are written at actual pitch)

mf

pp

pp

pp

3

21 2 4 J = 54

en dehors
dolce

mf *pp* *p* *mf*

dolce

pesante

sul tasto

ord.

pizz.

arco, sul tasto

pizz.

arco, sul tasto

mp *v*

25 2 4 J = 92

mp

p

ff

con forza

dolce

ff

con forza

ff

con forza

ff

con forza

ff

ord.

en dehors

ord.

ff

con forza

ff

con forza

ff

con forza

ff

sul pont.

ff

con forza

ff

sul pont.

ff

29 1 2 3 4

con soavita, $\text{J} = 108$

mf

Let _____

en dehors

p *f* *pp* *p*

to Bb clarinet

p *f* *pp* *p*

sul pont.

p *ff* *pp* *p*

col legno battuto *arco sul pont.* *en dehors*
ord.

col legno battuto *arco sul pont.*

ff

34 4 *p*

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

pp

at _____ *the* _____

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

poco staccato *pp*

marcato ma sempre soave, like small bells

pizz. *en dehors* *arco* *>* *>* *>* *>* *>* *sul pont.*

mf *pp* *mf* *pp* *(non harmonic)*

marcato ma sempre soave, like small bells

mf *pp* *mf* *pp*

marcato ma sempre soave, like small bells

ord. *pp*

37

3 4 4 3

place of the ce

p

pp

pp *mp*

mp

(non harm.)

pp

pp

p

41

3 4 4 3

(a) leggiero

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

leggiero

p

en dehors

echo tone

ppp

p

pp

p

p

44

Music score page 44. The score consists of six staves. The top staff has dynamic markings *f p*, *f > p*, *f pp*, *mp*, and *pp*. The second staff has a dynamic *f*. The third staff has a dynamic *p*. The fourth staff has a dynamic *ord.* and a dynamic *mp*. The fifth staff has a dynamic *p*. The bottom staff has a dynamic *p*.

48

Music score page 48. The score consists of six staves. The first staff has dynamics *mf > f* and *mf pp*. The second staff has dynamics *mf pp* and *mp*. The third staff has dynamics *pp* and *sul pont. sonoro*. The fourth staff has dynamics *pp* and *sul pont.*. The fifth staff has dynamics *mf* and *sul pont. sonoro*. The bottom staff has dynamics *pizz.* and *ff p*.

56

Preview

Musical score page 56 featuring five staves of music for string instruments. The score includes dynamic markings like **f**, **ff**, **sff**, and **mp**, and performance instructions like "molto marcato arco", "pizz.", "tapping", and "arco". The page is divided into measures by vertical bar lines.

con fuoco, J = 144

60 *f*

Let me be at the place at the

en debors

sul pont.

pizz. L.H. tapping on soundboard with knuckles *pizz.*

63 *f mf ff p*

place of the castle

col legno battuto

ord.

(pizz.) tapping on soundboard with knuckles *pizz.* arco

(pizz.) tapping on soundboard with knuckles *pizz.* arco

67 *tranquillo, J = 72* **3** *meno mosso, J = 60* **4** **3**

en dehors
mp dolce
p <
en dehors
p < p
en dehors
col legno battuto

like distant bells
pp
like distant bells
mf pp
like distant bells
mf pp

pp
mf pp

71 *sempre tranquillo, J = 92* **2** **3** *J = 184* **2**

mf ma soave
Let the ca
to Bass Cl.

sul pont. marcato
mf pp
p
ff p
ff p
en dehors
sul pont. marcato
pp mf
ff p
ff p
sul pont. marcato
ff pp
p
ff p

75

2 *3* *4*

marcato

Bass CL

mf *mf* *f* *pp*

ff p *mf*

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

mf *f* *pp*

79 $\text{J} = 92$

3 *4*

att. *with* *In* *me.*

p

p

en dehors

p

ord.

p

ord.

en dehors

p

Musical score page 82, measures 1-2. The score consists of four staves. Measure 1 (4/4 time, dynamic pp) features a treble clef on the first staff, a bass clef on the second, a bass clef on the third, and a treble clef on the fourth. Measure 2 (4/4 time, dynamic p) continues with the same clefs and dynamics. The music includes various note heads, stems, and rests, with specific markings like *mf*, *en dehors*, and dynamic markings *p*.

84 4 **marcato e pesante** $\text{J} = 184$

mp *>* *ff* *rit.*

A *A* *A*

pp

f *pp*

en dehors

sul pont.

ff

ff

sul pont. *ord.*

ff *pp*

86 

molto sereno, l'istesso tempo

89 

93 3 4 *p* *niente*

phu mage of ducks,

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

p *mf* *pizz arco* *ppp*

97 4 *p* *p* *ppp*

let the shells

mf *p* *mf* *ppp*

ppp

100 *p* *mf* — *p*

of swi - mmimg tur- tiles break

pizz. *grazioso p* *p*

p

104 *p* *mp* *3* *4* *leggiiero p* *2* *4* *mp* *4* *4*

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

mp *mf* — *to Bass CL.*

mf *ppp* *mf* *ppp* *en dehors*

mp *sul tasto* *pizz.* *sp*

ppp *sul tasto* *pizz.* *sp*

ppp

108 1

PP

depth.

con anima e marcato

mf

Let

3

hors- men

p

pp

mf

<>

mp

<>>

mf

arco

p

pp

111 3

mf

be sta - tioned

at the rim

of it,

and a dog,

al - ways a-

p

mf

mp

Bass CL

ff

mp

ff

mp

mf

pizz.

ff

ff

pesante, j = 80

117 3 pesante, *j* = 80 24

Let _____ the space _____ un - der the first sto -- rey be dark, _____

mf *f* > *p* *p*

mf *p*

mf *p*

col legno battuto *p*

col legno battuto *pizz.* *pizz.*

mf *f* *fff* *p*

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

mf *fff* *f* *p*

120

2 3 4

let the we ter tap — the stone posts,

pesante

p

(col legno battuto)

pesante *ord.*

p

(pizz.)

pizz.

arco

p

lento, $\text{J} = 52$

123

5 4 3 4

and vi vid green slime o'er them u- pon — them; Let

p *ff* *p* *p*

solo voice

p

pesante

pesante

col legno battuto
pesante

pizz.

f *mf*

col legno battuto
pesante

pizz.

f *mf*

arco

f *mf*

col legno battuto
pesante

ord.

f *mf*

col legno battuto
pesante

ord.

f *mf*

fretly

126 *p* *cello* (e) (et) a boat be kept there.

pp *ppp* *p* *mfpp* *mf pp* *pizz.*

p *p* *mp* *p* *arco* *p*

più mosso, = 72

130 *mp* < > *pp* *mp* *3* *f* *p* *gliss.* *4* *8*

Let the ca - rive tides of the se - - - cond sto - - -

pp *pp* *mf pp*

arco, sul tasto *ord.* *A* *B* *f* *mf pp*

su tasto *b2.* *pp* *pp* *mf* *ord. pont.* *ord. pont.* *ord. pont.*

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

133

rey be bears up - held on beams that are
en dehors

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

pp *mf* *f* *pp*

pp *mp*

ord. pont.

mf

ord. pont.

mf

pp

mf *f* *pp*

137

dra - - gona.

f *mp* *f* *mp* *gliss.* *f* *pp* *mf*

mp *mf* *p* *p*

p *pizz.*

pp *p* *pizz.*

pizz. *mf* *pizz.*

pp *mf* *pizz.*

140 3

con anima.

On — the — pa - ra - pet.

A. 3

ff f

arco

mf < f fp pp

arco sul pont. ord.

pizz. arco sul pont. ord.

143

f 3 3 *mp* <> port. 4 <> port. port. 4
of the cen - tral room,

f pp *f* *pp*

ff *pp*

> *ff* *pp*

pp *pp*

pp *en dehors* *ord.*

pp *port.* *p*

ord. >

pp

3 4

Preview

147 *sempre con anima*

3 2 4 1 3 2 4

let there be four archers, too - king off to the four ho - n -

pizz.

pizz.

pizz.

pizz.

arco

152 *p < > alise.*

3 4 1 2 3 4

- zone - WI - thin, let -

en dehors *p soave* *soave* *p* *ppp* *pp*

eco tone

pizz.

en dehors *arco* *p soave* *ppp* *p*

pizz.

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

3 4 3 4 3 4

the prince be at home, let him sit in deep thought like distant bells

en dehors arco en dehors like distant bells

col legno battuto like distant bells ord.

159 3 2 3 4 3 4

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

like distant bells

en dehors marcato

162 3 più mosso, $\text{J} = 92$

24

168

Let ————— the young queen ————— sit a-bove
leggiero

p

to Bb Cl.

col legno battuto

mf

sul tasto

pp

sul tasto

pp

172

in the cool — air, ————— her

mf

mp

ord.

mp

pp

pp

marcato

mp

lontano, l'istesso tempo

175

Musical score for piano and voice. The score consists of two systems of music. The first system (measures 1-4) starts with a treble clef, common time, and a dynamic of *p*. The vocal line includes lyrics: "child in her arms." The piano accompaniment features eighth-note patterns. Measure 4 ends with a repeat sign and a dynamic of *p*. The second system (measures 5-8) begins with a bass clef, common time, and a dynamic of *p*. The vocal line continues with "Let —". The piano accompaniment includes markings like "sul pont.", "sul tasto", "col legno battuto", and "sul pont.". Measure 8 ends with a dynamic of *p*.

178

Musical score for piano and voice. The score consists of three systems of music. The first system (measures 1-4) starts with a treble clef, common time, and a dynamic of *p*. The vocal line includes lyrics: "her look with joy at the great cir". The piano accompaniment features eighth-note patterns. Measure 4 ends with a repeat sign and a dynamic of *p*. The second system (measures 5-8) begins with a bass clef, common time, and a dynamic of *p*. The vocal line continues with "cle". The piano accompaniment includes markings like "pizz.", "f", "ord.", and "p". Measure 8 ends with a dynamic of *p*. The third system (measures 9-12) begins with a treble clef, common time, and a dynamic of *p*. The vocal line continues with "3 2". The piano accompaniment features eighth-note patterns.

183 2 3 4
 the pil-grim sha-dows the work of the sun — and —
 p
 p
 pizz. arco pizz.
 pp

187 3 4 3 4 2 4
 — the play of the wind. — Let her walk to and fro. —
 p p pp pizz. arco
 p p pp pizz. arco
 f ap s p
 ap

191

f

Let — the co - lumne up - hold the roof, — let the

p *mp*

p *mp*

pizz. arco

f *v*

pizz. arco

f *v* *mp*

pizz.

f *f* *mp*

195

pp *2* *pp* freely but always very rhythmical

sto - reys up - hold — the co -

f *pp*

f *pp*

mp *f*

molto sonoro
pizz. *arco*

f *PPP*

molto sonoro
pizz.

f *mp*

198 *< af > p* f *3* 4 = 92 *f*

lumne, let there be dark space be - low

f *mf*

f *mf*

f *mf*

b2. *f* *mf*

molto sonoro

pizz. *f* *ff*

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

molto sonoro

(pizz.) *ff*

202

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

pizz.

ff arco

ff

Preview

206 3

out of the most, —

2 4

let the most be a ring and the

File Only

209 5 4 3 2

wa - ter deep, *oppo* let the guar - dians

pizz. *arco*

pizz. *arco*

212

guard It. Let there be wide lands round It.

f

pizz.

arco

arco

f

col legno battuto

sempre tranquillo, J = 92

216

Let that coun

en dehors

p

echo tone

p

en dehors

p

(*col legno battuto*)

mf

221

2 port. **3**

try

2 **4**

where _____ it

echo tone

en dehors
ord. 3

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

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936

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944

945

946

94

229

wf

Let me be where

p

pp

en dehors

wf pp *wf pp*

f

en dehors

p

wf

232

meno mosso, J = 72

wf

it is.

en dehors

p *wf*

sul tasto

wf *p* *pp*

pizz.

p

col legno battuto

sonoro

wf

arco

wf

3

4

Musical score for Bass Clarinet (Bass Cl.). The score consists of two staves. The top staff shows a continuous line of notes with dynamics *p*, *en dehors*, *p*, *echo tone*, *pp*, *sul tasto*, *pp*, *pizz.*, and *p*. The bottom staff shows a line of notes with dynamics *mf*, *en dehors*, *p*, *col legno battuto*, and *mf*. Measure 3 ends with a fermata over the bass clef. Measure 4 begins with a dynamic *p* and a *ppp* dynamic at the end of the first measure's fermata. The tempo changes to 4/4 time in measure 4.

Preview File Only