

BRITISH MUSIC INFORMATION CENTRE.

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fire dressed in black

Silvina Milstein

a setting of 'Noche oscura' by St. John of the Cross

for female voice, cello and piano

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Silvina Milstein

'fire dressed in black ...' (2001)

low female voice, cello & piano

first performance: Vanitas (Loré Lixemberg, Zoë Martlew, Dominic Saunders),
bmic Cutting Edge Tour, Nottingham Lakeside Centre, 5 May 2002

duration 14 minutes

'You are fire ... you are clothed in fire./ You are fire ... you are clothed in black.'
sings Sayat Nova, the Armenian 18th century troubadour eventually turned into Christian monk and martyred by the Persian invaders of Georgia, whose life is portrayed in Paradjanov's film 'The Colour of Pomegranates'. Paradjanov's masterpiece is closer to visual choreography than to conventional cinematographic narrative.

Two centuries earlier, St John of the Cross - a Spanish Discalced Carmelite monk - writes: *'Oh night that joined the lover/ To the beloved bride/ Transfiguring them each into the other'*. His poetry is remarkable not only for its visual and tactile erotic imagery but by its conveyance of visionary ecstasy by the very sound of its words, as in 'the chain of deep vowels' that culminates in this depiction of the rapturous union of soul (the bride) and God (the bridegroom): *'Amado con amada, amada en el Amado transformada'*.

When setting St John's *Noche oscura*, I observed the flow and quality of my breathing as I reflected on each verse, and allowed it to dictate lines and harmonies. Thus this piece, like Paradjanov's sensuous visual poetry, is a kind of formalised journey through meditative states.

S.M.

Noche oscura
San Juan de la Cruz (1542-1591)

Songs of the soul

in rapture at having arrived at the height of perfection, which is union with God by the road of spiritual negation

En una noche oscura
con ansias en amores inflamada,
¡oh dichosa ventura!
salí sin ser notada
estando ya mi casa sosegada.

Ascuras, y segura
por la secreta escala disfrazada,
¡oh dichosa ventura!
a oscuras y encelada,
estando ya mi casa sosegada.

En la noche dichosa,
en secreto que naide me veía
ni yo miraba cosa,
sin otra luz y guía
sino la que en el corazón ardía.

Aquesta me guiaba
más cierto que la luz del mediodía,
adonde me esperaba
quien yo bien me sabía
en parte donde nadie parecía.

¡Oh noche, que guiaste,
oh noche amable más que la alborada,
oh noche, que juntaste
Amado con amada,
Amada en el Amado transformada!

En mi pecho florido
que entero para él solo se guardaba,
allí quedó dormido
y yo le regalaba
y el ventalle de cedros aire daba.

El aire del almena
cuando yo sus cabellos esparcía,
con su mano serena
en mi cuello hería
y todos mis sentidos suspendía.

Quedéme y olvidéme
el rostro recliné sobre el Amado;
cesó todo y dejéme
dejando mi cuidado
entre las azucenas olvidado.

Upon a gloomy night,
With all my cares to loving ardours flushed,
(O venture of delight!)
With nobody in sight
I went abroad when all my house was hushed.

In safety, in disguise,
In darkness up the secret stair I crept,
(O happy enterprise)
Concealed from other eyes
When all my house at length in silence slept.

Upon that lucky night
In secrecy, inscrutable to sight,
I went without discerning
And with no other light
Except for that which in my heart was burning.

It lit and led me through
More certain than the light of noonday clear
To where One waited near
Whose presence well I knew,
There where no other presence might appear.

Oh night that was my guide!
Oh darkness dearer than the morning's pride,
Oh night that joined the lover
To the beloved bride
Transfiguring them each into the other.

Within my flowering breast
Which only for himself entire I save
He sank into his rest
And all my gifts I gave
Lulled by the airs with which the cedars wave.

Over the ramparts fanned
While the fresh wind was fluttering his tresses,
With his serenest hand
My neck he wounded, and
Suspended every sense with its caresses.

Lost to myself I stayed
My face upon my lover having laid
From all endeavour ceasing:
And all my cares releasing
Threw them amongst the lilies there to fade.

(translated by Roy Campbell)

fire dressed in black

Silvina Milstein (2001)

$\text{♩} = 76$

pp mp subito agitato mf sf

voice

En u - na no - - -

con anima

p mf sfz p

sussurrando

piano

breathy tone, turning into a whisper intimate

mp dolce pp

f p ppp

3 (o) (o)

sul pont. ord. sul pont.

f p pp sotto voce mf p

f (pp) mf p

piano

2

mp

ppp (like an echo)

poco f mp

Musical score for measures 2-9. The system includes a vocal line, a guitar line, and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line starts with a slur and dynamic markings *mp*, *ppp (like an echo)*, and *poco f mp*. The guitar line includes markings for *ord.* and *sul post.*. The piano accompaniment features *PP sussurrando* and various fingerings (7, 5, 5, 7).

10

niente

ppp (like an echo)

Musical score for measures 10-14. The system includes a vocal line, a guitar line, and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line starts with a slur and dynamic markings *ppp (like an echo)*. The guitar line includes markings for *ord.* and various dynamic markings (*p*, *mf*, *p*, *sfz*, *p*, *ppp*). The piano accompaniment features *loco* and various fingerings (7, 3, 3).

15

dolce

mp

pp

p

Musical score for measures 15-18. The system includes a vocal line, a guitar line, and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line starts with a slur and dynamic markings *dolce*, *mp*, *pp*, and *p*. The guitar line includes markings for *ord.*, *pizz.*, and *arco*. The piano accompaniment features *PP* and various fingerings (3, 3).

19 *ppp* *p* *poco sfz* *mp*

grazioso

p

22 *mf* *p* *mf* *p* *mf*

L. H. pizz.

ppp *p* *ppp*

25 *p* *f* *sfz p* *sfz p*

A *subito intenso*

(non measured)

pp *ritmico mp* *sfz* *sfz*

loco

p

4 *subito dolce*

28 *pp* *mf* *PPP* like an echo

che OS

sfz (mp) *mf* *p* *mp*

31 *mf* *PPP* like an echo *p*

cu

mp *p* *mp* *pp* *Red.*

34 *mf* *p* *cantabile* *p* *mf*

ra, con an - sias

p *mf* *s* *pp* *mp* *pp* *mp* *pp*

37 *f* *p* *mf* *sfz*

en a - mo - - res in - fla - - ma - -

pp *p* dolce e intimo

40 (a)

42 *pp* *p*

da,

intenso

B

45

mp *mf*

3

oh

pp *p* *pp*

6 3

47

sfz *p* *mf* *p*

(o)

sfz *sul pont.*

3 6 6 6 6

pp

49

mf sfz *p* *dolce pp*

(o)

mf *ppp*

3 6 6 6 6

ord. b.g.

p ————— *mf* ————— 7

52

di - - - -

sul pont. ord.

PPP

55

cho - - - - sa ven - - - -

flautando

(ppp)

intenso ————— *mf sf* ————— *p* ————— *mf sf*

57

- tu - ra!

sul pont.

(ppp)

8

59 *pp*

Musical score for measures 59-60. The system includes three staves: vocal line, piano accompaniment, and a lower piano part. The vocal line starts with a *pp* dynamic and includes a first ending marked (a). The piano accompaniment features a *con brio* instruction and dynamic markings of *f*, *p*, *mf*, *sfz*, *p*, and *f*. The lower piano part includes a *pp* dynamic and a *poco sf* marking.

61

mp

Musical score for measures 61-62. The system includes three staves. The vocal line has a *mp* dynamic. The piano accompaniment includes instructions like *sul pont.*, *ord.*, and *scorrevole*, with dynamics *f*, *mp*, and *pp sotto voce*. The lower piano part includes *scorrevole* and *sfz sempre pp* markings.

63

mp

Musical score for measures 63-64. The system includes three staves. The vocal line has a *mp* dynamic and includes a first ending marked (a). The piano accompaniment includes instructions like *sul pont.*, *ord.*, and *subito f*, with dynamics *f* and *p*. The lower piano part includes *sfz (sempre pp)* and *sfz* markings.

With eyes half closed gazing into her chest, the singer attends to the quality of her breath.

Musical score for measures 66-68. The system includes a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line starts with a half rest, followed by a melodic phrase with dynamics *mf* and *sfz*, and a final note with dynamic *f*. The piano accompaniment features a complex rhythmic pattern with many beamed notes and rests, with dynamics *pp* and *ppp*. Performance markings include *con anima* and *s* (sostenuto).

Musical score for measures 69-71. The system includes a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line has dynamics *sfz*, *mf*, *f*, and *p*, with a *non trem.* marking. The piano accompaniment has dynamics *pp* and *p*. Performance markings include *5* (fingerings) and *3* (fingerings).

Musical score for measures 72-74. The system includes a vocal line with lyrics, a piano accompaniment, and a basso continuo line. The vocal line has dynamics *p* and *mp*, with lyrics: "sa - li sin - ser - no - ta - da,". The piano accompaniment has dynamics *ppp* and *mp*. The basso continuo line has dynamics *ppp* and *mp*. Performance markings include *intimate*, *C* (chord symbol), *pizz.*, *arco*, and *do not pluck note in brackets*.

75 *p* *leggiere* *port.* *port.* *port.*

es - tan - do ya mi ca -

(8)

(ppp) *mp* *pp*

77 *mp* *pp* *mp*

so - se - ga -

pp *mp* *loco*

80 *pp* *cantabile* *mf* **D**

da As - cu

p **D**

(mp) *ped.*

83

ras

9

85

p *mf* *3*

y se gu

con anima *3*

L.H. pizz.

p muffled, imitating a Double Bass

8^{va}

87

mf *3* *3*

(u) ra,

loco *5* *5*

89 *scorrevolere (flowing)* **E** *mp*

por — la se - cre -

pizz. *mf sonore* *arco*

(p) *8^{va}*

91 *pp* *mf*

ta — ca — la

pp

93

dis- fra - za - da,

pp *dolce* *L.H. pizz.* *loco*

dolcissimo

96 **F** *p* *mf* *p* *mf* *pp* *mp* *mf* 13

loh

L.H. pizz.

98 *mp* *p*

di -

arco

101 *mf* *port.*

sul pont.

ppp

mf

103

cho - - - - sa ven

ord.

(ppp)

(mf)

esuberante (exuberant)

105

tu - - - - - ra!

con anima sul pont.

ord.

mf sf p mf

G

107

G

pp sotto voce

sub. f

p

pp sotto voce

sul pont.

ord.

110

leggiere ord.

mf *pp sotto voce* *p*

sfz (p)

p

113

cantabile *mf* **H**

a es - cu - ras

L.H. pizz. **H**

sempre p
blurred, sounding like a Double Bass

8^{va} *Ped.*

116

y en - ce - la - da,

ord. *scorrevole* *p* *pp sotto voce*

poco sfz

16
119

es - tan - do ya mi

p *mf*

port. *port.*

con anima sul pont. *ord.*

subito f *p*

sfz *sfz*

3 3 3

7 7

120

122

ca

mp

port.

scorrevole

pp sotto voce

5 5

7 7

124

sa

pp

con anima

mf sfz f sfz mf f

5 5

7 7

125

126 *mp* *pp*

SO - se - ga - da.

non trem.

p *p*

|| ♩ = 100
 ♩. = ♩

129 **I**

(a)

pp

I ♩ = 100
 ♩. = ♩

dark pp

134 **||** 2/4

pp

$\text{♩} + \text{♩}_3 = \text{♩}$

$\text{♩} = 76$

J

137 *mf* *pp* *agitated* *mf* *sf*

En la no

p *mf* *sf* *p*

pp *sussurrando*

Red.

J

$\text{♩} + \text{♩}_3 = \text{♩}$

$\text{♩} = 76$

pp *sussurrando*

Red.

||

breathy, turning into a whisper

like a sigh

139 *p* *ppp* *p* *gliss.*

(o) (o)

f *p* *pp sotto voce*

sul pont. *ord.* *scorrevole*

pp *pp*

||

intimate
mp dolce

mp *pp*

142 *gliss.* *pp* *mp* *pp*

(o) - che - di - cho - sa

pizz. *col legno batt.*

p *sf*

$\text{♩} = 100$

ben ritmico
with almost no vibrato and breathy tone

147 **K** *mp* *f* *p*

en se - cre - - to que nai - de me ve - y - a

sonore pizz. *arco* *sul pont. fl.*

$\text{♩} = 100$ **K** *sempre p* *mf* *f* *sf*

(always with almost no vibrato and breathy tone)

dolce

151 *mp* *f* *mp* *pp* *mp*

ni yo mi - ra ba co - sa sin o -

156 *pp* *p* *mf*

tra luz y gui

gliss.

pp ppp

(dolce) p

161

a si - no la que

p

167

en el co - ra - zòn ar -

pp espressivo mf

mf pp mf sf

p

saltato sul pont.

171

-di a.

f

with eyes shut
mp pp sotto voce

173

L

(a)

energico

mp

pp percussive and dark

mp

sf sempre pp

L

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The singer opens her eyes abruptly. Gazing into the distance dazzled by her vision, she responds with her facial expression to the music.

177

L.H. pizz.

f -> p

mf

arco

p

sf

pp

mf

P

sf

like a bass-drum

(b)

180

sul pont. ord.

ff *mf*

mp *pp*

p *mf*

pp

N.B.: throughout this section dynamic changes very marked

183

poco a poco sul pont. sul pont. poco a poco ord. ord.

mp *sf* *sf* *mf* *pp*

sounding like bells
subito *mf*

mp *pp*

subito *pp*

mf

pp

mf

185

ord.

mf *pp* *mf* *ff* *pp*

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

pp *mf*

pp

mf *pp*

pp

mf

pp

187 poco a poco sul pont. ————— sul pont. ord.

mp *f* *ff* *mf*

mp *mf* *ff* *mf*

mp *sub. pp* *percussive, like timpani* *sempre p*

pp

M *agitato* *p* < *mf* > *p* *mf* ————— *P* ————— echo-tone ————— *mp*

189 a - ques - ta me

sul pont. poco a poco ord. ————— ord.

mp *f* *ff* *mf*

mf ————— *pp*

(sempre *p*)
(percussive)

191 gui - a - ba

echo-tone —————

mf ————— *P* ————— *PPP*

mf ————— *mf* ————— *ff*

mp ————— *pp*

193

sub. f *p* *f* *p*

más cier - to

poco a poco sul pont. sul pont. poco a poco ord. ord.

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

mp *sub. pp* *percussive p*

195

mf *sf* *espressivo* *p*

más cier - to que la luz

poco a poco sul pont. sul pont.

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

(mp)

197

pp *mf* *p*

(uz)

ord. poco a poco sul pont. sul pont. poco a poco ord. ord.

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

(mp) *sub. pp*

199

pp *mp*

5 *part* 3

ord. poco a poco sul pont. sul pont. poco a poco ord. ord.

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

del me - dio - di -

pp

9

a,

ord.

mf *pp*

mf *percussive p*

ritmico

mf *P* *f*

7

a - a - don - de me es - pe - ra -

poco a poco sul pont. sul pont.

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

(mp)

205 *mp*

-ba *mp* quien yo.

poco a poco sul pont. sul pont. poco a poco ord. ord.

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

(mp) *mp* *sub. pp*

207 *pp* *f* *p*

bien me.

ord. poco a poco sul pont. sul pont. poco a poco sul tasto sul tasto

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

mp

209 *mf* *mp* *pp* *mf*

sa - - bí - a, en par - te do - on-

sul pont. poco a poco ord. ord.

mp *f* *sf* *mf*

mf *pp*

always percussive

211 *p* *f* *p* *mf*

de na die - (e) pa - re

213 *mp* *f* *mp*

ci a.

poco a poco sul pont. sul pont. poco a poco ord. ord.

215 *pp* *N* *mf* *pp*

p *N*

P _____

pppp

echo tone -----

218

(a) (a)

percussive

mf *pp* *mf*

pp *mp*

220

(a) *< P >*

pp *mp*

pp *mp*

222

mf *P*

dolcissimo

(a) Oh (o)

flautando (ossia harmonic)

dolce pp *mp*

pp *mp*

pp *ppp*

mf *pp* *ppp*

pp *ppp*

225

mp *pp* *mp* *pp*

(o) (o)

mf p

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228

mp *pp* *mp* *poco sf*

no - - - che - - - que me gui - as - -

espressivo mf *pp*

like timpani 6 *mp* *mf* *pp*

Red

231

mf *pp* *mp*

(as) te,

mp *pp* *simile*

ppp *mf* *pp*

ppp

P colla parte **a tempo**

incantevole (bewitchingly)

234

P *pp* *sf* *mp* *sub. p* *mf* *sub. pp* *mp*

oh

sub. mf *pp* *sub. mf* *sub. pp* *p*

P colla parte **a tempo**

238

sub. p *mp* *sf*

(o)

ppp *pp* *mp*

ppp

241

mp *pp*

no - - - che

espressivo mf

like timpani *mf* *pp*

243

mf *p* *mf* *pp*

a - ma - ble - más - que la al - (al) -

pp *mp* *p* *mp*

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246

bo - - - (o) - - - ra - - - da:

pp

like timpani

mf *pp*

simile

colla parte
incantavole

like a sigh *mp* *sf* *mp* *f* *sub. p* *mf* *sub. p*

249

oh _____ (o)

breathy

mp *pp* *sub. mf*

colla parte

ord.

Q

a tempo

253

pp *mp* *pp*

sul pont. (o) *ord.*

sub. pp *mp*

a tempo

255 *mp* *mp* *sf*

no - - - che que jun - tas -

(measured trem.)

mp *pp*

PPP

Ped.

257 *pp* *mp*

te - - - - - (a) - - -

pizz.

f

ff (ppp)

259 *pp* *mf* *p*

- - - - - (a) - - - - -

sonore

p

ff (ppp) *ff (ppp)* *ff* *ff*

261 *mf* *pp* *p*

ma - do con a - - - ma - -

arco

mp

like timpani *mf*

p

263 *mf* *p* *f* *mf*

- - - (a) - - - da trans - - -

espressivo

pp

265

sotto voce

$\text{♩} = 50$
R $\text{♩} = \text{♩}$

for ma da!

pp *mp* *f*

misterioso sul pont.

$\text{♩} = 50$
 $\text{♩} = \text{♩}$

pp *mp* *f*

intimo e grazioso

S (*intimate and graceful*)

268

mp

En mi pe -

(*sul pont.*)

pp

mp

ord.

grazioso

S

pp

mp

sempre pp

mf

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273 *mf* *pp*

cho flo - ri - do

pp *mp*

pp *mp*

277 *mf* *pp* *mf* *p* *dolce*

que en - te - ro pa - ra él

L.H. pizz. arco *pp* *p* *sul post.*

pp

280 *pp* *mf* *p* *mf* *sotto voce*

el so - lo

pp *p* *sul pont.*

283 *intenso*
mf *sff* *ff*

él

ord. *mf* *con fuoco* *ff* *ord.* *mp*

mf *f*

Ped.

285 *p* *mf* *pp* *f* *sub. p* *pp*

(e)

sul pont. *pp* *mf*

p *mf* *p*

like timpani *mf*

Ped.

289 *mf* *f* *sff*

(e)

f *p* *pizz.* *arco* *mp*

mp *like an anvil* *mf* *mp*

Ped.

292 *sf f* *p* *sotto voce* *mp*

SO sul pont. *pizz.* *sereno arco*

ringing sf *f* *mf* *ringing like an anvil* *ppp sempre sotto voce*

ringing like a bell

296 *poco sf* *pp* *dolce* *mf* *p*

(o) *(o)* *(o)*

intimo e grazioso
(intimate and graceful)

301 *mf* *p* *mp* *mf*

lo *se guar -*

mp ppp

305 *pp* *mf*

da - - - ba, a -

308 *P* *mf*

- - - lli que - dó - - - dor -

312 *P* *sotto voce* *p*

- - - (o) - - - mi - - - (i) - - -

317

do

ppp

mp

ped

like a sigh

319

y yo le re - ga - la -

mp

ppp

322

ba y el ven - ta -

pp

dolcissimo

mp

325

lle de ce - dros ai - - - re

pp (like an echo)

scorrevole (flowing)

p

329

da - - ba. el

pp

loco p

U ♩ = 50

accelerando -----

331

ai - re del al me - na cuan - do yo sus ca - be - llos

scorrevole

p

U ♩ = 50

accelerando -----

pp loco

42 tempo primo, ♩ = 76

333 *mf*

es - par - ci - - a, con su ma - no se -

mf pp f P pp

sul pont.

tempo primo, ♩ = 76

p mf f P

336

-re na mi cue - - -

con anima sul pont. ord. scorrevole

subito f p sfz sfz

339

llo he - - - ri - a

f P f P PP

sul pont. ord. pizz. arco

subito f mp p mp

sfz (p)

The singer calmly looks in all directions at her surroundings in amazement

344 *mp* (*poco*)

y to- dos mis sen

pizz. *arco*

mp *f*

(p)

the singer slowly walks towards the piano carrying the score, and discretely, reclines towards the soundboard so that the strings ring in sympathy with her voice

349

ti - - - dos sus

p

353

pen - di - a.

ppp like an echo *p* *mf* *p*

mp *pp* *mp*

mp

357

(a)

gliss.

gliss.

ppppp

pp

3 3 3

Ped.

359

(8)

gliss.

mf

p

sotto voce

gliss.

gliss.

ppppp

3 3

362

mf sf pp mf sf p sf

Que - dé me y ol - vi - de - me el ros - - - tro

pizz. arco pizz. arco

loco

p

367 *P* *mp* *f* *P* *mf* 45

re - cli - né_ so - bre_ el_ A -

flautando
ppp

371 *P* *ppp* *mf* *f*

ma -

377 The singer stops singing into the piano *mp* *pp*

de - jan - do_ mi

387

poco staccato

p

cui - da - - - do en - tre las a - zu - ce -

ppp *p*

mp

ppp *p*

Preview File Only

385

dolce

sotto voce

mp

p

niente

- nas ol - - - - vi da - do.

ppp *p*

pppp