

Simon Broucke

Whether we spoke

For Soprano Voice and Contrabass

Full Score

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Composer's Note

This piece is made of extremely soft, nearly-silent material. The delicacy of the material serves to create a constant feeling of vulnerability, at once austere and intimate. The sounds resulting from this delicacy will often feel and sound very unstable, hovering between purity and disintegration, at the very edge of audibility. That unstable vulnerability should be embraced. An unstable, breaking sound is always preferable to a stable, stronger one.

This piece was inspired by a series of collage poems by Susan Howe, from her collection "Tom Tit Tot." Though not a setting of the poetry, Howe's use of superimposition, obfuscation, and erasure influenced the process of writing the piece and its final aesthetic.

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For Soprano and Contrabass

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Slow, Vulnerable, Extremely Delicate

The musical score is written for Soprano (S.) and Contrabass (Cb.). It consists of two systems of music. The first system covers measures 1 through 8, and the second system covers measures 9 through 16. The score is characterized by complex, irregular time signatures and dynamic markings.

System 1 (Measures 1-8):

- Measure 1:** Soprano: *ppppp* (3:2), lyrics: "Tan - gi - ble thing - s". Contrabass: *ppppp*.
- Measure 2:** Soprano: *pp*. Contrabass: *ppppp*.
- Measure 3:** Soprano: *ppp* (5:4), lyrics: "m t t t". Contrabass: *ppppp*.
- Measure 4:** Soprano: *ppppp* (3:2), lyrics: "th f n sc t". Contrabass: *ppppp*.
- Measure 5:** Soprano: *ppppp* (7:4). Contrabass: *ppppp*.
- Measure 6:** Soprano: *ppppp* (3:2). Contrabass: *ppppp*.
- Measure 7:** Soprano: *ppppp* (7:4). Contrabass: *ppppp*.
- Measure 8:** Soprano: *ppppp* (7:8). Contrabass: *ppppp*.

System 2 (Measures 9-16):

- Measure 9:** Soprano: *ppppp* (5), lyrics: "sh". Contrabass: *ppppp*.
- Measure 10:** Soprano: *mf* (5:4), lyrics: "d f shn f strm". Contrabass: *ppppp*.
- Measure 11:** Soprano: *ppppp* (3:2), lyrics: "tm t t t". Contrabass: *ppppp*.
- Measure 12:** Soprano: *ppppp* (3:2), lyrics: "out of a stark o - bli - vi - on di - sent - er". Contrabass: *ppppp*.
- Measure 13:** Soprano: *ppppp* (3:2). Contrabass: *ppppp*.
- Measure 14:** Soprano: *ppppp* (3:2). Contrabass: *ppppp*.
- Measure 15:** Soprano: *ppppp* (3:2). Contrabass: *ppppp*.
- Measure 16:** Soprano: *ppppp* (5:4). Contrabass: *ppppp*.

Dynamic Markings: *ppppp* (pianississimo), *pp* (piano), *ppp* (pianissimo), *mf* (mezzo-forte), *sfz* (sforzando), *f* (forte).

Other Markings: *c.l.t. sil L* (crescendo to fortissimo, then subito piano), *mf* (mezzo-forte), *f* (forte).

2

S. *pp* *ppp* *pp* *pppp* *poco sfz* *ppp*

h[Λ] m t t s n n n t n

ε æ

Cb. *mf* *ppp*sub. *pp* *pppp* *sfz poco* *pp* *sfz* *arco* *ppp* *pp* *ppp* *ppppp*

c.l.b. 3:2 arco III arco sul IV



S. *ppppp*

th th th b th f v w v o' - er the hills with

Cb. *pp* *ppp* *p* *ppp* *ord. I.* *c.l.b. II.* *arco*

pizz. l.v. arco jété IV sfz

19

S. *ppppp* sh $\frac{4}{4}$

Cb. $\frac{4}{4}$ *ppp*

20

S. $\frac{4}{4}$ th th th th th $\frac{3:2}{}$ w r $\frac{2}{4}$ *pppp* *ppp* < *pp* > *pppp* *ppp* $\frac{7}{8}$ k r br h c n d ng $\frac{2}{4}$ *pppp* *pppp* *ppp* > *pppp* *pppp* *pppp* ou - er Λ \rightarrow ϵ ϵ ι

Cb. $\frac{4}{4}$ *ppppp* $\frac{3:2}{}$ $\frac{3:2}{}$ $\frac{3:2}{}$ $\frac{2}{4}$ *mf* *c.l.b.* *pp* $\frac{7}{8}$ *pizz.* *pp* *arco* *ppp* *p* $\frac{3:2}{}$ $\frac{2}{4}$

4

S. *mf* *pp* *pppp* *poco sfz* *ppp*

d f shn f strm tm t t t t t s n n n t n

24 5/4 3/4 3/4 5/8 3/4 5/8 3/4

a a

Cb. *arco* *pp* *c.l.b.* *arco sul IV* *ppp* *pp* *ppp* *pppp*

7 5/4 3/8 3/4 5/8 3/4

ppp pp ppp pppp



S. *ppp* *pppp* *pppp* *pp* *sfz* *ppp < p > pppp*

th th th b th f sh h - u - sh

29 5/3 3/2 3/4 3/4 3/4 3/4 7/8 3/2 3/2 4/4

ε i æ

Cb. *c.l.b. l.v.* *pizz. l.v.* *arco* *pizz.* *arco* *pizz. arco* *ord*

3/4 7/8 5/8 3/4 7/8 4/4

pp ppp < p > ppp pppp pp p sfz p ppp pppp

140

S. *d* *w n h n n* [blow]

u and æ a o ε ε I I o:u o:u u Λ æ

Cb. *pizz.* *arco* *3:2* *I.* *c.l.b.* *3:2* *c.l.b. jété*

pp *pppp* *pp* *ppp* *p* *pp* *pppp* *pp* *ppppp* *ppp* *pp*

143

S. *ru - shed I have rush - d*

Cb. *c.l.t.* *arco* *p* *arco* *ppp* *sfz* *ppp* *p* *pppp*