

Conversation

for soprano and 11 instruments

text by Eleonore Schönmaier
music by Emily Doolittle

2017

Conversation

based on poetry by Eleonore Schönmaier

for the St Andrews New Music Ensemble, conducted by Bede Williams
written with support from the Royal Society of Edinburgh and the Culture and Animals Foundation

Instrumentation: soprano, flute, oboe, clarinet in Bb, bassoon, horn, percussion (ocean drum), 2 violins, viola, cello, and bass
Duration: approx. 12'00"

Conversation

Are my thoughts so noisy they murmur
outside my body?—keening like distant

voices, like wind through buoys.
Each moment carries its own frame.

On the shoals I count fifty seals,
their grey pod-bodies entwined.

Is it their thoughts or mine
that I hear?—a longing

so ardent and spacious. The past
and its regret talks

back to me: panting, insistent, it holds
my hand. I eavesdrop in the lapse

between one wake-up call and the next.
What language emanates from the seals

as they pleasure in the sun? A vibration
shuddered in the air that lures

me back to or away from myself,
a conversation fetched home.

Performance Instructions

Accidentals apply within a measure, box, or beamed group.

Wedge shapes (in grey or black) and **diamond-shaped noteheads** = unpitched wind/wave sound (produced with an unpitched "sss" sound in the voice part, by blowing into the instruments in the wind parts, and by the ocean drum in the percussion part).

Boxed figures are notated proportionally/graphically rather than metrically. The note values within the boxed figures should be followed approximately but not metronomically. **Thick horizontal lines** after the boxed figures means repeat the boxed figure fairly continuously. **Thick dashed horizontal lines** mean repeat the boxed figure intermittently. **Thin diagonal dashed lines** between boxes mean play the boxed figures sequentially.

Once you've started on a boxed figure, always complete it. There's never a need to stop partway through.

|||||| in bass represents a crunchy/splintery sounds (like walking on sand), which is created by completely loosening the bow, placing bowhair on the wood on the side of the bass, and rolling the bow stick across the bow hair. For a visual and audio example, see:

For a visual and audio example of the **grace note to glissando figure** in the strings (eg. m. 4), see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VoKu7-AApo>

Over each unmetered measure, **MEASURE = X** gives the timing for entire measure. (This does not have to be exact.) **approx. x"** over a **dotted bracket** gives the timing for a silence or a figure or group of figures (which may occur within a measure or crossing over measures). A **rest before a boxed figure** indicates the amount of time to wait before coming in with that figure. **Dashed barlines** indicate that one or more parts are metered within a larger measure.

If you have an **questions**, feel free to contact the composer at emilydoolittle@gmail.com

Conversation

for the St Andrews New Music Ensemble
written with support from the Royal Society of Edinburgh
and the Culture and Animals Foundation

Eleonore Schönmaier

Emily Doolittle

Accidentals apply throughout a measure, a beamed group, or a box.

MEASURE = 12"

Blow into flute to make unpitched air sound
wait approx. 4' before entering

Flute

p

p

pp

Oboe

Blow into clarinet to make unpitched air sound
wait approx. 3' before entering

Clarinet in B♭

p

p

pp

Bassoon

Invert mouthpiece and blow into horn to create white noise air sound

wait approx. 2' before entering

Horn in F

pp

p

pp

Mezzo-soprano

p

Percussion
(Ocean Drum)

pp

p

pp

Violin I

p

Violin 2

p

Viola

p

Violoncello

p

"Crunch" sound, with approx. 5-6 crunches (fading in at beginning and out at end), at a fairly steady (but not metronomic) walking pace.

approx. 5-6

Contrabass

ppp

Music © Emily Doolittle, 2017
Poetry © Eleonore Schönmaier, 2017

MEASURE = 8"

approx. 2"
2

MEASURE = 14"

approx. 4"
1

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn.

Hn.

M.-S.

Perc.

Vln. I

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

ppp pp ppp

pp pp p pp

approx. 1.5"

approx. 3"

approx. 1"

approx. 1"

ppp pp ppp

pp pp p pp

approx. 8

approx. 8

approx. 8-10

approx. 8-10

ppp pp

ppp

MEASURE = 16"

4 approx. 4"

Fl. *pp* *mp* *pp*

Ob. approx. 3"

Cl.

Bsn. approx. 2"

Hn. *pp* *mp* *pp*

M.-S. $\text{♩} = \text{approx. 96}/\text{♩} = \text{approx. 64}$

"Sss" sounds of "thoughts," "so," "noisy," etc. blend with percussion and wind sounds.

Perc. *p* *mp* *p*

Vln. I

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

Cb. approx. 8-10 *ppp*

Wait up to 2" before beginning to play (don't try to enter exactly together). play 8-12 times. Pitches can vary a little (within a semitone or so). Gliss. interval is appox. a perfect 4th, also variable. Duration of figure can vary a little too. Instruments should not try to align.

approx. 10"

pp *mp*

pp *mp*

pp *mp*

pp *mp*

MEASURE = 35" (to end of m. 5)

approx. 8"
Fl.

approx. 6"
Ob.

Cl.

Bsn.

approx. 3"
Hn.

(♩ = approx. 96) ♩ p
M.-S.

Perc.

Vln. I

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

Continue weaving in and out of texture ad. lib., sometimes coming to prominence, often receding into the background or disappearing

pp

pp

pp

Are my thoughtssss so nois-y, so nois-y,

are my thoughtssss so nois-y

Are my thoughtssss so nois-y, so nois-y, are my thoughtssss so nois-y they

pp

pp

pp

pp

5

Fl. *mf* *p* *airly* *pp*

Ob.

Cl. *mf* *p* *airly* *pp*

Bsn.

Hn. *mf* *pp*
mf *mp*
 $\text{♩} = \text{approx. } 144 \text{ (old } \text{♩} = \text{new } \text{♩} = 96)$

M.S. *mur-mur out - side, out-side, out-side my bod - y*

Perc. *mf* *p*

Vln. I *pp* *mp*
 Play 10-14 times (entering a bit irregularly as before). *approx. 12"*

Vln. 2 *pp* *mp*

Vla. *pp* *mp*

Vc. *pp* *mp*

Cb.

MEASURE = 25" (to end of m. 6)

Fast trill (up a semitone), ending with lip-gliss down approx. a semitone. Starting pitch can vary a little (within a semitone). Enter at close to the same time, but not exactly together.

approx. 12"

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn.

Hn.

M.-S.

Perc.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

tr. gliss.

p mf

tr. gliss.

p mf

tr. gliss.

p mf

tr. gliss.

p mf

pp

pp

pp

pp

6 Continue playing figure occasionally, gradually becoming less frequent.

Fl. *pp*

Ob. *pp*

Cl. *pp*

Bsn. *pp*

Hn. *mf* *pp*

M.-S.

Perc. *mf* *p*

Play 10-14 times (entering a bit irregularly as before). approx. 12"

Vln. I *pp* *mp*

Vln. 2 *pp* *mp*

Vla. *pp* *mp*

Vc. *pp* *mp*

Cb.

MEASURE = 28" (to end of m. 7)

7

This musical score page shows the arrangement for a symphony orchestra and a choir. The instruments listed on the left are Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Clarinet (Cl.), Bassoon (Bsn.), Horn (Hn.), Mezzo-Soprano (M.-S.), Percussion (Perc.), Violin I (Vln. 1), Violin II (Vln. 2), Cello (C. cello), and Double Bass (Cb.). The vocal parts are for Mezzo-Soprano (M.-S.) and Tenor/Bass (T.). The score includes dynamic markings such as *mp*, *pp*, *mf*, and tempo indications like $\text{♩} = \text{approx. } 96$ and $\text{♩} = \text{approx. } 144 (\text{♩} = 96)$. The vocal parts have lyrics written below their staves. A dashed vertical line indicates a section change.

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn.

Hn.

M.-S.

Perc.

Vln. I

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

MEASURE = 28" (to end of m. 7)

(♩ = approx. 96)
mp

Are my thoughtssss so nois - y, so nois - y,

(♩ = approx. 144 (♩ = 96))
mf

are my thoughtssss so nois - y they mur-mur out - side my bo - dy,

pp

pp

pp

pp

mf

7 (♩ = approx. 144)

♩ = 144

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn.

Hn.

M.S.

Perc.

Vln. I

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

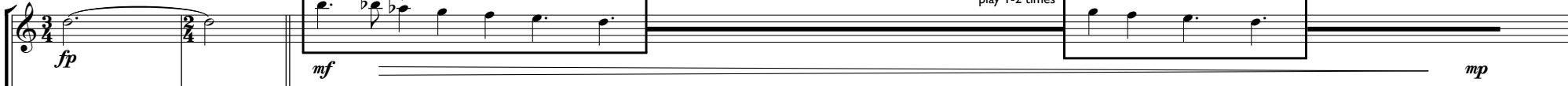
out-side my bod - y,
out-side my bod - y,
out-side my bod - y,
out-side my bod - y, out-side, out-side,
out-side my bod - y

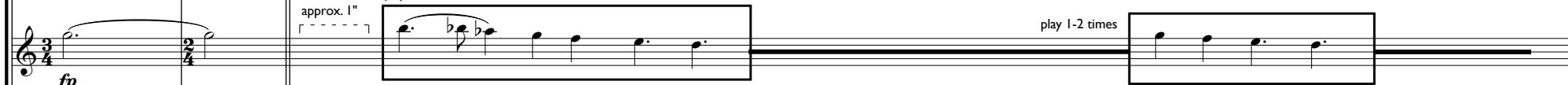
$\text{♩} = 72$ (old ♩ = new ♩) $\text{♩} = \text{♩}$ $(\text{♩} = 108)$

MEASURE = 12"

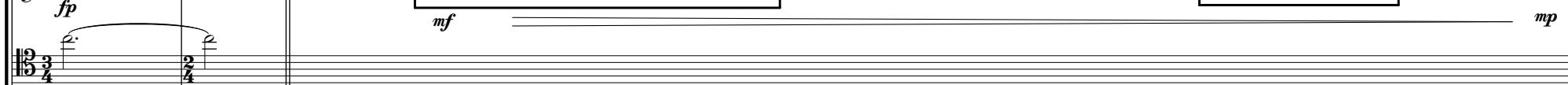
Vary tempo and rhythm slightly as desired.
Leave a little space between each repetition.

play 2-3 times

Fl. fp 

Ob. fp 

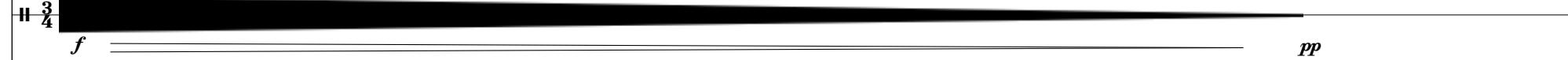
Cl. fp 

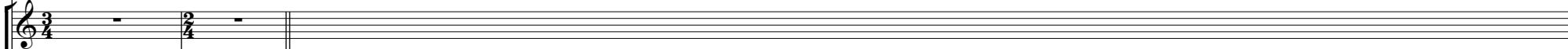
Bsn. fp 

Hn. f 

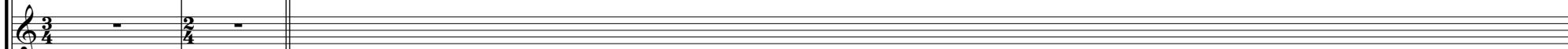
M.-S. f 

keen - ing like dis - tant voice - es,
approx. 1-2" mf dis - tant voic - es,

Perc. $\text{H } \frac{3}{4}$ f 

Vln. I $\frac{3}{4}$ - $\frac{2}{4}$ - 

Vln. 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ - $\frac{2}{4}$ - 

Vla. $\frac{3}{4}$ - $\frac{2}{4}$ - 

Vc. $\frac{3}{4}$ - $\frac{2}{4}$ - 

Cb. $\frac{3}{4}$ - $\frac{2}{4}$ - 

17 MEASURE = 14"

11

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn.

Hn.

M.-S. *mf* ————— *p*
 keen - ing like dis - tant voic - es,
mp sing 2-3 times
 dis - tant voic - es.

Vln. I approx. 1" play 2 or 3 times
mp

Vln. 2 approx. 2" play 2-3 times
mp play 1-2 times

Vla. approx. 3" play 2-3 times
mp play 1-2 times

Vc. approx. 4" play 2-3 times
mp play 1-2 times

Cb.

Vary tempo and rhythm slightly as desired.
 Leave a little space between each repetition.

MEASURE = 30" (to end of m. 18)

12

18 approx. 1" play 1-2 times Vary tempo and rhythm slightly as desired. Leave a little space between each repetition.

Fl. approx. 2" **mp** play 1-2 times

Ob. approx. 3" play 1-2 times **mp**

Cl. approx. 4" play 1-2 times **mp**

Bsn. approx. 2-3" sing 2-3 times

Hn. keen - ing like dis - tant voic - es,

M.-S. dis - tant voic - es,

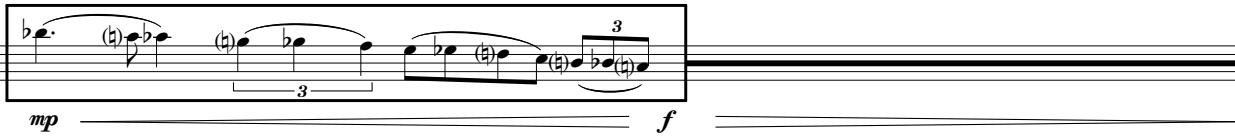
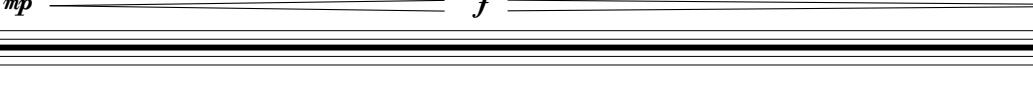
Vln. I approx. 6" play 1-2 times **p**

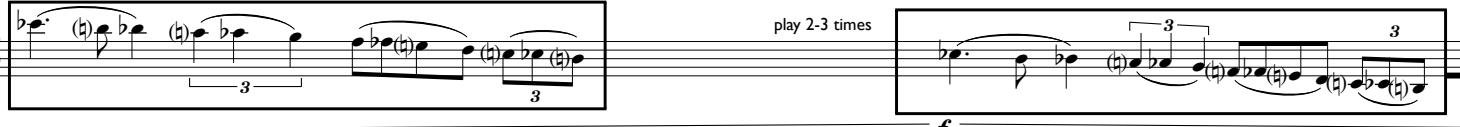
Vln. 2 approx. 7" play 1-2 times **p**

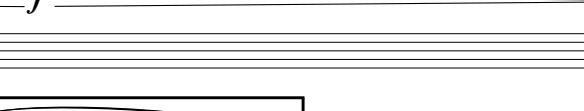
Vla. approx. 8" play 1-2 times **p**

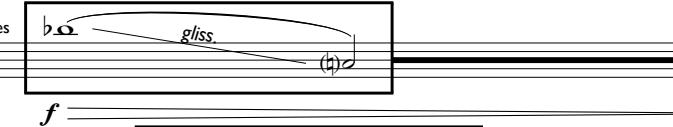
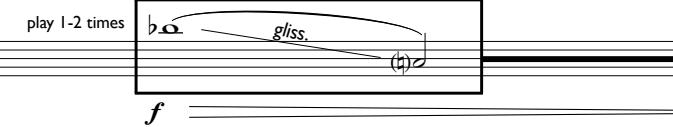
Vc. approx. 9" play 1-2 times **p**

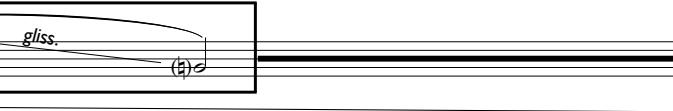
Cb.

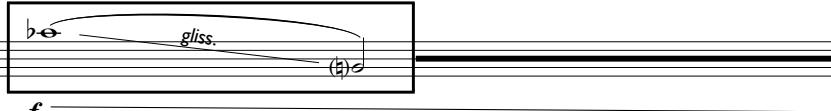
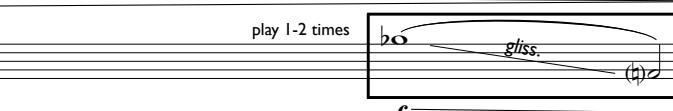
18 play 1-2 times   

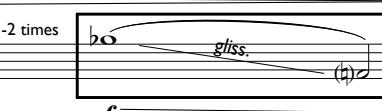
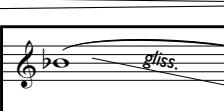
Bsn. play 1-2 times   

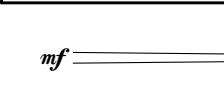
Hn. play 2-3 times  

Vln. I play 1-2 times  

Vln. 2 == pp 

Vla. play 2-3 times  

Vc. play 1-2 times  

Cb. 

MEASURE = 4"

MEASURE = 6"

Boxed figures: Vary tempo, rhythm, and pattern slightly as desired. Leave a little space between each repetition.

MEASURE = 7"

22 $\text{♩} = 96$

Fl. moving to an unpitched air sound mp mf play 3-4 times p pp

Ob. moving to an unpitched air sound p mp p

Cl. moving to an unpitched air sound p pp

Bsn. moving to an unpitched air sound play 3-4 times p pp mp p

Hn. $\text{H}\frac{3}{2}$ pp mf pp

M.S. p mf pp moving to an unpitched "sss" sound p pp

Perc. Like wind through bu - oy - s - sss - - - - sss mf pp

Vln. I play 3-4 times p pp mp p

Vln. 2 play 3-4 times p pp mp p

Vla. play 3-4 times p pp mp p

Vc. play 3-4 times p pp mp p

Cb. play 3-4 times p pp mp p

MEASURE = 4"

24

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn.

Hn.

M.-S.

Perc.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

$\text{♩} = 96$

moving to an unpitched air sound

MEASURE = 8"

play 4-5 times

some figures a little faster

mf f pp mp mf mp

mp play 4-5 times

mf p mp mf mf mp

pp f pp mf f pp mf moving to unpitched "sss" sound pp

Like wind through bu-oy - s - sss

play 4-5 times

mp mf mp

MEASURE = 10"

some figures a little faster

27 play 5-6 times

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn.

Hn.

Vln. I

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

MEASURE = 12" fastest, a bit agitated

play 5-6 times

fl.

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn.

Hn.

Vln. I

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

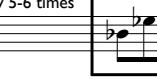
Cb.

MEASURE = 14" easing up a little

play 5-6 times

Fl.  *mf* — *f* — *mf*

Ob.  *mf* — *f* — *mf*

Cl.  *mf* — *f* — *mf*

Bsn.  *mf* — *f* — *mf*

Vln. I  *mf* — *f* — *mf*

Vln. 2  *mf* — *f* — *mf*

Vla.  *mf* — *f* — *mf*

Vc.  *mf* — *f* — *mf*

MEASURE= 16" slowing (to slower than original tempo)

play 5-6 times

Fl.  *mp* — *mf* — *pp*

Ob.  *mp* — *mf* — *pp*

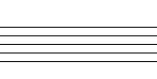
Cl.  *mp* — *mf* — *pp*

Bsn.  *mp* — *mf* — *pp*

Vln. I  *mp* — *mf* — *pp*

Vln. 2  *mp* — *mf* — *pp*

Vla.  *mp* — *mf* — *pp*

Vc.  *mp* — *mf* — *pp*

coming to a standstill

MEASURE = 3"

19

31 $\text{♩} = 72$

Fl. Cl. M.-S. Vln. 1 Vln. 2 Vla.

On the shoals I count fif - ty seals, *On the shoals I count fif - ty seals,*

39 $(\text{♩} = 144/\text{♩} = 96)$

Fl. Cl. M.-S. Vln. 1 Vln. 2 Vla.

On the shoals I count fif - ty seals, *Their grey pod - bod - ies en - twined,*

47

Ob.
Cl.
M.-S.
Vln. I
Vln. 2

Their grey pod - bod - ies en - twined,
Their grey pod - bod - ies en -

56

Ob.
Cl.
M.-S.
Vln. I
Vln. 2
Vla.

twined,
Their grey pod - bod - ies en - twined,
Their grey pod -

Fl. *mp*

Ob. *mf* *mp*

Cl. *mp*

Bsn. *mp* *fp*

Hn. *fp*

M.-S. *mp*
bod - ies en - twined,

Vln. I

Vln. 2

Vla. *mp* *fp*

Vc. *mp* *fp*

Cb. *mp* *fp*

76

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn.

Hn.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

MEASURE = 6"

(♩ = approx. 96)

23

Fl. 86 *f* 3 - ff

Ob. *fp* ff

Cl. ff

Bsn. ff

Hn. ff

M.-S. ff

Vln. I *f* 3 - ff

Vln. 2 *fp* ff

Vla. *fp* ff

Vc. ff

Cb. ff

Boxed figures: play both of these figures repeatedly, with very short silences between. Staccatos not too short. q. = approx. 96 or a bit faster (don't align with other instruments).

Is it their thoughts or mine _____ that I hear?

MEASURE = 10"

91 poco rit.

 $\text{♩} = \text{approx. 80}$

MEASURE = 6"

poco rit.

a tempo ($\text{♩} = \text{approx. 80}$)

Fl. Repeat figure, gradually broadening to triplets and slowing down.

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn.

Hn.

M.-S. Repeat figure, gradually broadening to triplets and slowing down.

Vln. I

Vln. 2

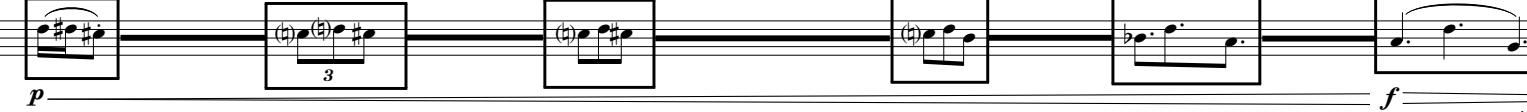
Vla.

Vc.

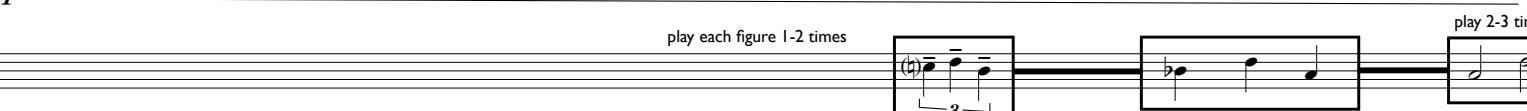
MEASURE = 20"

25

play each figure 1-2 times

Fl.  6
p play 2-3 times continuing to slow down

Ob.  6
p play each figure 1-2 times

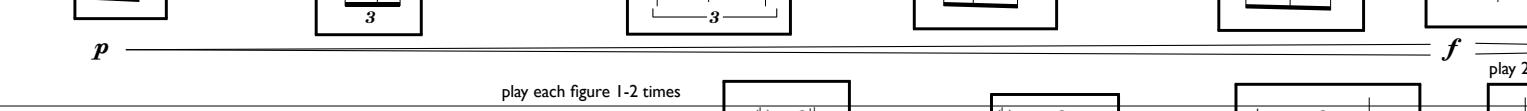
Cl.  6
mp play 2-3 times

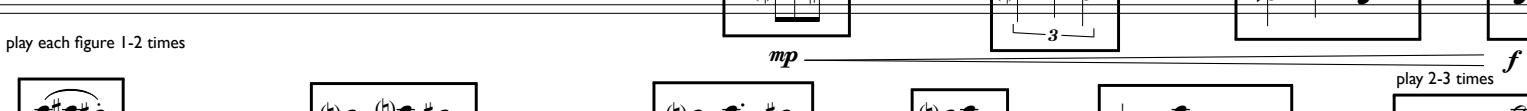
Bsn.  6
f play 2-3 times p

Sing each figure once, gradually broadening

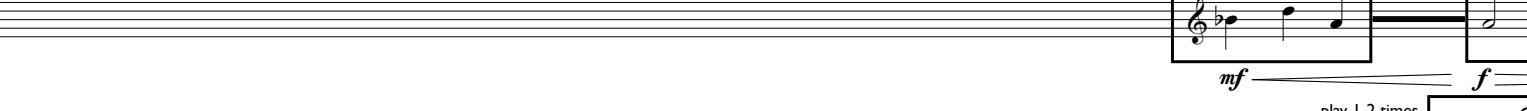
M.-S.  6
hear a long - ing so ard - ent, so ar dent and spa - cious play 2-3 times

Vln. I  6
p f play 2-3 times p

Vln. 2  6
play each figure 1-2 times mp f play 2-3 times p

Vla.  6
p f play 2-3 times p

Vc.  6
mf f play 2-3 times p

Cb.  6
mf p

96 $\text{♩} = 72$

M.S. *p* short
the past and its re - grets short talks back to me.

Vln. I *p* gliss.
p gliss.

Vln. 2

Vla.

$\text{♩} = 136$
a little breathy

104

Fl. *pp*
Ob. *pp*
Cl. *pp*
Bsn. *pp*
Hn. *pp*
M.S. *pp*

Pant-ing, pant-ing, pant-ing, pant-ing,

116 accel.

Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
M.S.

p
pp
p
pp
p
pp

pant-ing, pant-ing, in - sist-ent, in - sist-ent, pant-ing,

126

Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
M.S.

mp
mp
mp
mp
replace mouthpiece
mp

in - sist-ent, nois - y, so nois - y, nois - y, so nois - y,

135

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn.

Hn.

M.-S.

Vln. I

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

their thoughts,
my thoughts,
so nois - y,
so nois - y,
so nois - y,

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn.

Hn.

M.-S.

nois - y,
so nois - y,
pant - ing,
in - sist - ent,
nois - y,
in - sist - ent,
in - sist - ent,
in - sist - ent,

Vln. I

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

(approx. $\text{♩} = 136$) rit. - - - - $\text{♩} = 112$

30

155

Fl. Ob. Cl. Bsn. Hn. M.-S.

it holds my hand. I eaves-drop eaves-drop in - to

In. I In. 2 Vla. Vc. Cb.

MEASURE = 10"

169

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn.

Hn.

M.-S.

Vln. I

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vcl.

Cb.

in - to in - to the lapse

approx. 0.5" play 1-2 times
gliss.

approx. 1.5" play 1-2 times
gliss.

approx. 2.5" play 1-2 times
gliss.

approx. 3.5" play 1-2 times
gliss.

approx. 4.5" play 1-2 times
gliss.

approx. 1" play 1-2 times
gliss.

approx. 2" play 1-2 times
gliss.

approx. 3" play 1-2 times
gliss.

approx. 4" play 1-2 times
gliss.

mf p

mf p

mp p

mp p

mp p

mf p

mf p

mp p

mf p

mf p

mp p

mf p

f mf

f

mf

p

MEASURE = 8"

brilliant

32

176

MEASURE = 8"

brilliant

Fl. *mp* *mf*

Ob. *mp* *mf*

Cl. *mp* *mf*

Bsn. *mp* *mf*

Hn. *mp* *mf*

M.-S. *mp* *mf*

be - tween be - tween be - tween one wake-up call _____

Vln. I *mp* *mf*

Vln. II *mp* *mf*

Vla. *mp* *mf*

Vc. *mp* *mf*

Cb. *mp* *mf*

mp < mf > mp

mp < mf > mp

mp < mf > mp

and the

mp < mf > mp

< mf > mp

mp < mf > mp

mp < mf > mp

MEASURE = 4"

185

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

M.-S.

Perc.

Vln. I

Vln. 2

Vla.

MEASURE = 4"

MEASURE = 10"

p < mp > p

mp

p

pp

next

be-tween

one wake-up call,

one wake-up call,

one wake- up...

play 2-3 times (with a little space in between)

p

p

n

play 2-3 times (with a little space in between)

p

n

play 2-3 times (with a little space in between)

p

n

188 $\text{♩} = 90$

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn.

Hn.

M.-S. p
What lan-guage e - ma-nates from the seals, as they plea-sure in the sun? A vi -

Vln. I

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

$$\text{J} = \text{J} (\text{J} = 180, \text{J} = 120)$$

35

Musical score for orchestra and choir, page 198. The score includes parts for Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Clarinet (Cl.), Bassoon (Bsn.), Horn (Hn.), Mixed Singers (M.S.), Percussion (Perc.), Violin I (Vln. I), Violin II (Vln. 2), Cello (C. b.), Double Bass (Cb.), and Trombone (Trom.). The vocal parts include lyrics: "bra- tion", "shud dered", "in the air", and "that lures me". The score features complex rhythmic patterns, dynamic markings like *fp*, *p*, *mf*, and *pp*, and performance instructions such as *gliss.* and *mf*. Measure numbers 198, 199, and 200 are indicated at the top.

MEASURE = 30"

36

Woodwinds: descending chromatic gliss.ad lib.

rit.

208 (F) *gliss.*

Fl. f

Ob. f approx. 4"

Cl. approx. 10" f

Bsn. p

Hn. ff p

M.-S. back

Perc.

Vln. I f play each 1-2 times *gliss.* f

Vln. 2 f play each 1-2 times *gliss.* p

Vla. approx. 8 f *gliss.* mf

Vc. approx. 12" *gliss.* mp

Cb. approx. 14" *gliss.* mp pp

MEASURE = 5" ($\text{♩} = \text{approx. } 96$)

209 $\text{♩} = 72$

Fl. play 2-3 times

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn.

Hn. invert mouthpiece

M.-S.

Perc.

Vln. I play 2-3 times

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc. play 2-3 times

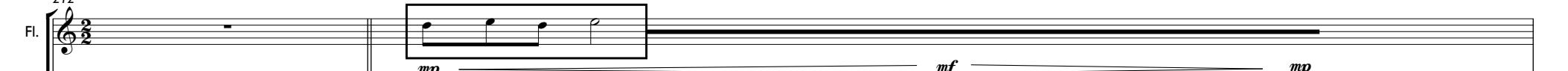
Cb. play 2-3 times

MEASURE = 8"

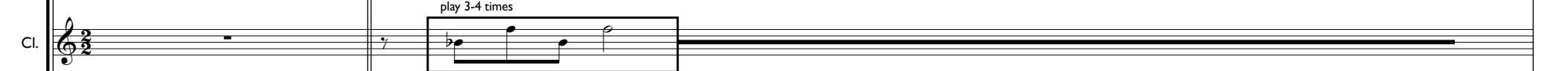
(♩ = approx. 96)

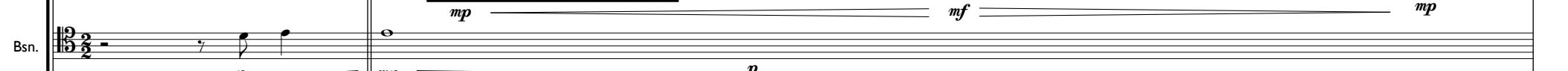
play 3-4 times

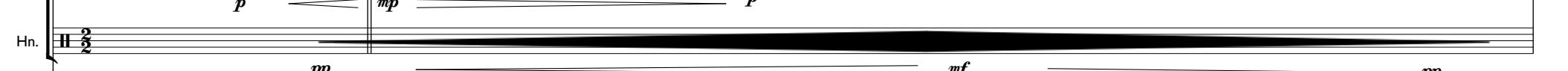
212 $\text{♩} = 72$

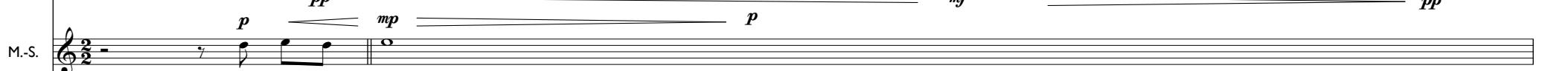
Fl. 

Ob. 

Cl. 

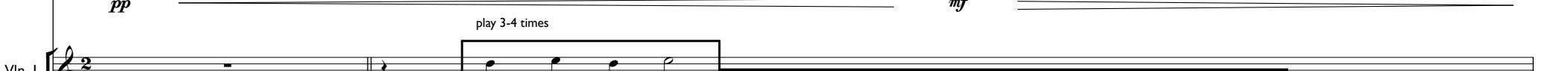
Bsn. 

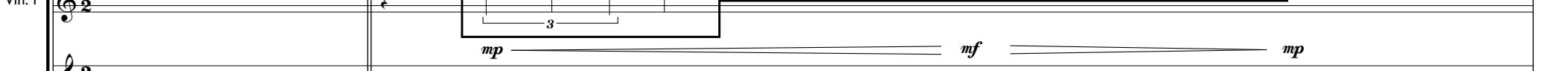
Hn. 

M.-S. 

Perc. 

That lures me back

Vln. I 

Vln. 2 

Vla. 

Vc. 

Cb. 

MEASURE = 6"

214

$\text{♩} = 72$

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn.

Hn.

M.S.

Perc.

Vln. I

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

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

That lures me back to _____ or a - way from my-self.

pp ————— *f* ————— *pp*

MEASURE = 12" (♩ = approx. 96)

218 play 5-6 times

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn.

Hn.

M.-S.

Perc.

Vln. I play 5-6 times

Vln. 2 play 5-6 times

Vla. play 5-6 times

Vc. play 5-6 times

Cb. play 5-6 times

slowing (to slower than original tempo)

coming to a standstill

♩ = 72

a con - ver - sa - tion fetched

MEASURE = 40" (to end of m. 221)

221

approx. 12"

41

approx. 12"

p mf

p mf

p mf

p mf

pp

home.

approx. 12"

pp

pp mp pp

pp mp pp

pp mp pp

pp mp pp

weaving in and out of audibility

