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Unreal City

Alexander Kolassa

(2011)

‘Fourmillante cité, cité pleine de rêves,
Où le spectre en plein jour raccroche le passant!’
Les Sept vieillards, Baudelaire

The name of this piece is lifted from a recurring phrase in T.S. Eliot’s landmark poem, *the Waste Land* (1922): ‘Unreal City/Under the brown fog of a winter dawn’ and later ‘Unreal City/Under the brown fog of a winter noon’.

In the extensive analysis he published along with the poem Eliot refers the reader to Baudelaire’s *Les Sept vieillards*, specifically the two lines in the epigraph above. Both poems share in a similar mystification of the urban landscape, exploring the mixture of alienation and awe the individual feels as they are eclipsed by their respective modernities. In light of the Lowry exhibition soon to be opened here at the University of Nottingham, consideration of the above could inspire a reinterpretation of Lowry’s supposed naive celebration of the northern industrial cityscape. The austere and imposing industrial structures, juxtaposed against the busy optimism in the streets below poses an interesting flipside to the bleaker post-war image of Eliot’s *The Waste Land*; it is the space somewhere between these two images that I have set out to explore in music.

The piece can be divided into three parts; a slow-paced opening which deals with large structures and combinations of instruments, often overlapping. The harmony here is intentionally static – like the monolithic factories of the industrial landscape – built primarily upon a pitch-class set which emphasises both a major and a minor 3rd, and a more dissonant 2nd. However, the security of the Unreal City is undermined and eventually gives way to a fast section; here we have the individual movement of instruments and a spiralling kaleidoscope and widening harmony that is characterised by fifths. Elements of the static harmony are maintained and following a final build up the piece collapses back into a recapitulation of the initial slow section.

(programme note: October 2011)

flute
oboe
clarinet in Bb
bassoon

horn in F

percussion (one or two players optional)

vibraphone
finger cymbals (*)

strings (quintet, vln I and II, vla, vc, cb)

* The finger cymbals referred to here are small (about 2-3 inches in diameter) and when struck against each other (lightly and on the side) emit a particularly resonant high pitched 'ping', Held at the base, a vibrato effect can be achieved by subtly 'wobbling' the cymbals.

Unreal City

Alexander Kolassa (2011)

grand and spacious, at a slow walk (c. ♩ = 63)

Flute

Oboe

Clarinet in B \flat

Bassoon

Horn in F

Finger Cymbals

Vibraphone

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Violoncello

Contrabass

motor off

p *f* *p*

f *mp*

f *mp*

f *mp*

pp

grand and spacious, at a slow walk (c. ♩ = 63)

A

poco rit. very slow, impeded (c. ♩ = 50)

4

Fl. *p* *mf* *pp*

Ob. *p* *mf* *pp*

Cl. *p* *mf* *pp*

Bsn. *p* *mf* *pp*

Hn. *p* *mf* *pp*

F. Cym. vibrato.

Vib. *mf* *mp*

A

poco rit. very slow, impeded (c. ♩ = 50)

Vln. I *mf* *pp* *mf* *pp*

Vln. II *mf* *pp* *mf* *pp*

Vla. *mf* *pp* *mf* *pp*

Vc. *mf* *pp* *ff*

Cb. *f* *pp*

8

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn.

Hn.

F. Cym.

Vib.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

ff *pp*

f

f *p*

ff *pp*

con sord. senza sord.

< f > *pp* *ff* *pp*

damp. damp. damp.

mf

f *pp* *f*

pp *< ff >* *f* *pp* *f*

ff *pp* *ff* *pp*

12

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

Ob. *p* *mf* *pp*

Cl. *mf* *pp*

Bsn. *ff* *pp* *ff* *mp*

Hn.

F. Cym.

Vib. *f* *p* *mp*

Vln. I *pp* *mf*

Vln. II *pp* *mf* sul tasto.

Vla. *pp* *ff* *ff* *pp*

Vc. *pp* *ff* *ff* *pp*

Cb. *ff* *pp* *ff* *pp*

16 **B**

Fl. *p* *mp*

Ob. *p* *mp*

Cl.

Bsn. *pp* *ff* *pp*

Hn. con sord. *ff* *pp*

F. Cym. damp

Vib.

B

Vln. I *p*

Vln. II *pp* norm. *ff* *f* *pp*

Vla. sul pont. norm. *ff* *f* *pp*

Vc. sul pont. norm. *ff* *f* *pp*

Cb. *ff* *pp*

Detailed description: This page of a musical score covers measures 16, 17, and 18. It features a woodwind section (Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Bassoon, Horn) and a string section (Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, Contrabass). A F. Cym. (F. Cymbal) is also present. The score is divided into two systems. The first system (measures 16-18) includes dynamics like *p*, *mp*, *pp*, *ff*, and *pp*, along with performance instructions such as 'con sord.' and 'damp'. The second system (measures 19-21) includes dynamics like *p*, *pp*, *norm.*, *ff*, *f*, and *pp*, along with performance instructions like 'sul pont.' and 'norm.'. A section marker 'B' is placed above measure 16 and below measure 19. The time signature changes from 4/4 to 5/4 in measure 17 and returns to 4/4 in measure 18.

19 C

Fl. C

Ob. *mf* *f*

Cl.

Bsn. *ff* *pp*

Hn. senza sord. *ff* *pp*

F. Cym. damp. *f*

Vib.

Vln. I *pp*<

Vln. II *ff* *f* *pp*

Vla. *ff* *f* *pp*

Vc. *ff* *f* *pp*

Cb. *ff* *pp*

Detailed description: This page of a musical score covers measures 19 through 22. It features a variety of instruments including woodwinds (Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Bassoon, Horn), strings (Violin I and II, Viola, Violoncello, Contrabass), and percussion (F. Cym.). The score is divided into four measures by vertical bar lines. Measure 19 starts with a 4/4 time signature. Measure 20 changes to 5/4. Measure 21 changes to 3/8. Measure 22 returns to 4/4. A rehearsal mark 'C' is placed at the beginning of measure 19 and the end of measure 21. Dynamics include *mf*, *f*, *ff*, *pp*, and *f*. Performance instructions include 'senza sord.' for the Horn and 'damp.' for the F. Cym. The woodwinds and strings play melodic lines, while the percussion provides rhythmic accompaniment.

poco accel.

poco rit.

22

Fl. *f* *ff* *mf* *ff* *mp* *ff*

Ob. *f* *mp* *ff*

Cl. *ff* *mp* *ff*

Bsn. *pp*

Hn.

F. Cym. *pp*

Vib.

poco accel.

poco rit.

Vln. I *mf* *pp*

Vln. II *mf* *pp*

Vla. *mf* *pp*

Vc. *mf* *pp*

Cb. *pp*

D

a tempo (c. ♩ = 50)

25

Fl. *pp* *mf* *pp*

Ob. *pp* *mf* *pp*

Cl. *pp* *mf* *pp*

Bsn. *ff* *pp* *ff* *pp*

Hn. *pp*

F. Cym.

Vib.

D

a tempo (c. ♩ = 50)

Vln. I *pp* *mf* *pp*

Vln. II *pp* sul pont. *mf*

Vla. *pp* *mf*

Vc. *pp* *mf*

Cb. *ff* *pp* *ff* *pp*

28

Fl. *pp* — *mf* — *pp*

Ob. *pp* — *mf* — *pp*

Cl. *pp* — *ff* — *pp*

Bsn. *mf* — *p*

Hn. *f* — *p*

F. Cym.

Vib.

Vln. I *mp*

Vln. II *p* — *pp* — *mf* — *pp*

Vla. *p* — *pp* — *mf* — *pp*

Vc. *p* — *pp* — *mf* — *pp*

Cb. *pp* — *mf* — *pp* — *ff* — *mf*

E

faster, chattering (c. ♩ = 120)

33

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn.

Hn.

F. Cym.

Vib.

E

faster, chattering (c. ♩ = 120)

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

(on the string)

(off string)

36

Fl. *mp*

Ob. *ff* — *pp*

Cl. *p* — *mf* — *p* — *mf* — *p*

Bsn. *ff* — *pp* — *ff* — *pp*

Hn. *ff* — *pp* — *f* — *pp* — *f* — *p*

F. Cym.

Vib.

Vln. I (on the string) *mp sempre*

Vln. II *p*

Vla. (off string) *mf* — *p*

Vc.

Cb. *mf* — *p*

Detailed description: This page of a musical score covers measures 36, 37, and 38. The music is written for a full orchestra. The woodwind section includes Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Clarinet (Cl.), Bassoon (Bsn.), and Horn (Hn.). The string section includes Violin I (Vln. I), Violin II (Vln. II), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Contrabass (Cb.). The percussion section includes F. Cym. (F. Cymbal) and Vib. (Vibraphone). The score features various dynamics such as *mp*, *ff*, *pp*, *p*, *mf*, *f*, and *sempre*. The time signature changes from 4/4 to 2/4 and back to 4/4. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The woodwinds and strings play rhythmic patterns, while the horns play melodic lines. The percussion is mostly silent.

39

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn.

Hn.

F. Cym.

Vib.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

mp — *mf* — *mp*

p — *f* — *mp*

mf

mf — *ff*

mf
Ped.

pp

f

(on the string)
pp

(on the string)
ff

p — *f* *p* — *ff*

F

42

Fl. *ff* *p* *f*

Ob. *f*

Cl. *f*

Bsn. *f* *mp* *f*

Hn. *f*

F. Cym.

Vib.

F

Vln. I *f*

Vln. II

Vla. *f*

Vc.

Cb.

44

Fl. *mf*

Ob. *f* *mp* *f* *mf*

Cl. *mf* *f*

Bsn. *p* *f*

Hn. open (o) *p* *f* *pp* *f* *pp*

F. Cym.

Vib. *mp*

Vln. I *p* *mf* *p*

Vln. II *mf*

Vla. *mf*

Vc. *mp* *mf*

Cb. *mf* *mf*

Detailed description: This page of a musical score covers measures 44, 45, and 46. The score is for a woodwind and string ensemble. The woodwinds include Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Clarinet (Cl.), Bassoon (Bsn.), and Horn (Hn.). The strings include Violin I (Vln. I), Violin II (Vln. II), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Contrabass (Cb.). The percussion part includes a F. Cym. (F. Cymbal) and Vib. (Vibraphone). The score is written in 2/4 time, with a key signature of one sharp (F#). Measure 44 shows the Oboe and Horn playing a melodic line, while the Flute, Clarinet, Bassoon, and Violins I and II play a rhythmic accompaniment. Measure 45 continues the accompaniment, with the Oboe and Horn playing a melodic line. Measure 46 features a change in the woodwind parts, with the Flute, Clarinet, Bassoon, and Horn playing a melodic line, and the Violins I and II playing a rhythmic accompaniment. Dynamics include *f* (forte), *mf* (mezzo-forte), *mp* (mezzo-piano), *p* (piano), and *pp* (pianissimo). The score also includes performance instructions such as 'open (o)' for the Horn and various articulation marks like accents and slurs.

47

Fl. *f* *p* *ff*

Ob.

Cl. *ff*

Bsn. *mf* *ff*

Hn. *f* *pp* *f*

F. Cym.

Vib. *ff*
Ped.

Vln. I *f* *pp* *f*

Vln. II *f* *f* *pp* *f*

Vla. *f* *pp* *f*

Vc. *f* *pp* *f*

Cb. *ff*

G

un poco meno mosso

50

Fl. *mp*

Vib. *p*



53

Fl. *p* *mf*

Vib.

Vln. I *p*

Vln. II *p*



58

Fl.

Vib.

Vln. I

Vln. II *sul pont.*

61

Fl. *f*

Ob. *pp* — *f*

Cl. *mp* *p*

Bsn. *mp* — *f* — *mp* *pp* — *f*

Hn. *p*

F. Cym.

Vib.

Vln. I *f* — *p* *mf*

Vln. II (sul pont.) *mf*

Vla. con legno *pp* — *mf* — *pp*

65

Fl. *pp*

Cl. *f* — *p* — *ff* — *p*

H

energetic chattering (again) (c. ♩ = 120)

68

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn.

Hn.

F. Cym.

Vib.

H

energetic chattering (again) (c. ♩ = 120)

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

71

Fl. *p* *f* *p*

Ob. *pp* *mf* *p* *f* *pp*

Cl. *p* *f* *p* *mf* *p* *mf*

Bsn. *pp* *mf* *p* *ff* *pp* *ff* *pp*

Hn. *p* *f* *p*

F. Cym. ||

Vib. *ff* *pp*

Vln. I *f*

Vln. II *mf*

Vla. *f*

Vc.

Cb.

74 **I**

Fl. *ff*

Ob. *mf*

Cl. *p* *ff* *p* *mf*

Bsn. *ff* *pp* *ff* *pp* *mf* *mp*

Hn. *pp* *ff*

F. Cym.

Vib. *mf*

I

Vln. I *mf*

Vln. II *f*

Vla. *mf*

Vc. *legato* *f* *mp*

Cb.

3/4

Detailed description: This page of a musical score covers measures 74, 75, and 76. It features a woodwind section (Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Bassoon), Horns, Percussion (F. Cym., Vib.), and a string section (Violins I & II, Viola, Violoncello, Contrabass). The woodwinds and strings play complex rhythmic patterns, often with slurs and accents. Dynamic markings range from *pp* (pianissimo) to *ff* (fortissimo). The Flute part starts with a rest in measure 74 and enters in measure 75 with a *ff* dynamic. The Oboe, Clarinet, and Bassoon have various dynamics throughout. The Horns play a melodic line with *pp* and *ff* dynamics. The Percussion section includes a F. Cym. and Vib. part. The string section consists of Vln. I, Vln. II, Vla., Vc., and Cb., with Vln. I and Vln. II playing a rhythmic pattern, Vla. playing a similar pattern, and Vc. and Cb. playing a more melodic line. The score is in 3/4 time and includes a first ending bracket labeled 'I' at the beginning of measure 74.

J

77

Fl. *pp* *mf*

Ob. *f* *p* *ff*

Cl. *f* *f*

Bsn. *f* *p* *ff*

Hn. *mp* *mf*

F. Cym.

Vib.

Vln. I *f*

Vln. II *f*

Vla. *f*

Vc. *mf* *f*

Cb.

3

pp

molto meno mosso (c. ♩ = 92)

80

Fl. *f*

Ob. *mf*

Cl. *ff*

Bsn. *mf*

Hn. *mf* open *< ff =*

F. Cym.

Vib. *f* *mp*

molto meno mosso (c. ♩ = 92)

Vln. I *pp* *< ff =*

Vln. II *pp* *< ff =*

Vla. *pp* *< ff =*

Vc. *pp* *< ff =*

Cb. *ff*

3 6 6

83

Fl. *pp* *ff* *sfz* *f* *pp*

Ob. *f* *pp* *mp*

Cl. *f* *pp*

Bsn. *f* *pp* *mf* *pp*

Hn. *pp*

F. Cym.

Vib.

Vln. I *pp*

Vln. II *pp*

Vla. *pp*

Vc. *pp*

Cb. *pp* *mf* *pp*

K

l'istesso tempo

Musical score for Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Clarinet (Cl.), Bassoon (Bsn.), Horn (Hn.), and Cymbal (F. Cym.). The score is in 4/4 time and marked *l'istesso tempo*. The Flute part begins at measure 86 with a melodic line marked *mp*. The Oboe part has a melodic line marked *p*. The Clarinet part has a melodic line marked *pp*. The Bassoon, Horn, and Cymbal parts are mostly silent, with the Cymbal playing a single note in measures 87, 88, and 89. The Vibraphone (Vib.) part is silent in measures 86-88 and enters in measure 89 with a melodic line marked *mf*.

K

l'istesso tempo

Musical score for Violin I (Vln. I), Violin II (Vln. II), Viola (Vla.), and Cello (Vc.). The score is in 4/4 time and marked *l'istesso tempo*. The Violin I part has a melodic line marked *p* in measure 87 and *mf* in measure 89. The Violin II part has a melodic line marked *p* in measure 87 and *mf* in measure 89. The Viola part has a melodic line marked *p* in measure 87 and *mf* in measure 89. The Cello part has a melodic line marked *p* in measure 87 and *mf* in measure 89. The parts are in 3/4, 4/4, and 5/4 time signatures respectively.

L very slow, impeded (c. ♩ = 50)

90

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn.

Hn.

F. Cym.

Vib.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

pp *ff* *pp*

p *mp*

f

mp

sul tasto. **L** very slow, impeded (c. ♩ = 50) norm.

pp *mf* *pp*

sul pont. *pp*

pp *mf* *pp*

pp *mf* *pp*

pp *mf* *pp*

pp *mf* *pp*

95

Fl. *pp* *f* *mp* *p* *mp* *pp*

Ob. *mf* *mp* *mf* *mp* *p*

Cl. *mp* *mf* *mp* *p*

Bsn. *ff* *pp*

Hn. *f* *pp* *mf* *con sord.* *mp*

F. Cym.

Vib. *mf* *p* *mp*
Ped.

Vln. I *pp* *mf* *pp*

Vln. II *pp* *norm.* *pp* *mf* *pp*

Vla. *ff* *pp* *pp* *mf* *pp*

Vc. *ff* *pp* *mf* *pp*

Cb. *ff* *pp*