

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.

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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*

Ped.

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

f *mp*

f *mp*

f *mp*

f *mp*

pp

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.

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*

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 to 22. It features a woodwind section (Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Bassoon, Horn) and a string section (Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, Contrabasso). The percussion part includes a F. Cym. (F. Cymbal). The score is divided into four measures. Measure 19 (4/4) shows the Oboe and Bassoon starting with a half note, while the Horn and F. Cym. play a quarter note. Measure 20 (5/4) continues the woodwind entries with a half note, and the strings play a half note. Measure 21 (3/4) features a half note from the woodwinds and a quarter note from the strings. Measure 22 (4/4) concludes with a half note from the woodwinds and a quarter note from the strings. Dynamics range from *mf* to *pp*. Performance instructions include 'senza sord.' for the Horn and 'damp.' for the F. Cym. A rehearsal mark 'C' is present at the beginning and end of the page.

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.

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.

pp — *mf* — *pp*

f — *pp*

pp — *mf* — *pp*

f — *pp*

f

E

faster, chattering (c. ♩ = 120)

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

(on the string)

p — *mf* — *p*

(off string)

p — *mf* — *p*

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*

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 Clarinet playing a melodic line starting with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The Bassoon and Horns have rests. The strings play a rhythmic accompaniment. Measure 45 shows the Flute, Clarinet, Bassoon, and Violin I playing a melodic line starting with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. The Oboe and Horns have rests. The strings continue their accompaniment. Measure 46 shows the Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Bassoon, and Violin I playing a melodic line starting with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. The Horns and Violin II also play. The strings continue their accompaniment. Dynamics are indicated by *f*, *mf*, *mp*, *p*, and *pp*. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

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

Fl. *mp*

Vib. *p*

50

52

3

Detailed description: This system contains measures 50 and 52. The Flute part (Fl.) is in 4/4 time, starting with a melodic line marked *mp*. The Vibraphone part (Vib.) is also in 4/4 time, playing a rhythmic accompaniment marked *p*. Measure 52 features a triplet of eighth notes in the Vibraphone part.



Fl. *p* *mf*

Vib.

Vln. I *p*

Vln. II *p*

53

57

Detailed description: This system contains measures 53 through 57. The Flute part (Fl.) is in 3/8 time, marked *p*, and changes to 4/4 time at measure 55, marked *mf*. The Vibraphone part (Vib.) is in 3/8 time, marked *p*. Violin I (Vln. I) and Violin II (Vln. II) parts are in 3/8 time, both marked *p*. Measure 57 shows a change in time signature to 4/4.



Fl.

Vib.

Vln. I

Vln. II

58

61

sul pont.

Detailed description: This system contains measures 58 through 61. The Flute part (Fl.) is in 4/4 time. The Vibraphone part (Vib.) is in 4/4 time. Violin I (Vln. I) and Violin II (Vln. II) parts are in 4/4 time. Measure 61 features a change in time signature to 2/4 and the instruction "sul pont." (sul ponticello).

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 variety of instruments including Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Bassoon, Horn, French Cymbal, Vibraphone, Violin I and II, Viola, Violoncello, and Contrabass. The score includes dynamic markings such as *ff*, *mf*, *p*, *pp*, and *mp*, as well as performance instructions like *legato*. A first ending bracket labeled 'I' spans measures 74 and 75. The time signature is 3/4.

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

Detailed description: This is a page of a musical score for a symphony orchestra. It features ten staves: Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Clarinet (Cl.), Bassoon (Bsn.), Horn (Hn.), French Cymbal (F. Cym.), Vibraphone (Vib.), Violin I (Vln. I), Violin II (Vln. II), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Contrabass (Cb.). The score is divided into two systems. The first system starts at measure 80. The Flute part has a dynamic of *f*. The Oboe, Clarinet, and Bassoon parts have dynamics of *mf* and *ff* respectively. The Horn part starts with *mf* and ends with *< ff =*. The French Cymbal part is marked with rests. The Vibraphone part has dynamics of *f* and *mp*. The second system continues from measure 80. The Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Violoncello parts all have dynamics of *pp* and end with *< ff =*. The Contrabass part has a dynamic of *ff*. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, slurs, and dynamic markings. The time signature changes from 4/4 to 3/4 and back to 4/4. The key signature has one sharp (F#).

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

86

Fl. *mp*

Ob. *p*

Cl. *pp*

Bsn.

Hn.

F. Cym.

Vib. *mf*

K

l'istesso tempo

Vln. I *p* *mf*

Vln. II *p* *mf*

Vla. *p* *mf*

Vc. *p* *mf*

Cb.

Detailed description: This page of a musical score covers measures 86 to 89. It features a woodwind section with Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Clarinet (Cl.), Bassoon (Bsn.), and Horn (Hn.), a Percussion section with F. Cym. and Vib., and a string section with Violin I (Vln. I), Violin II (Vln. II), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Contrabass (Cb.). The score is marked with a box containing the letter 'K' and the tempo instruction 'l'istesso tempo'. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature changes from 3/4 to 4/4 to 5/4 and back to 4/4. Dynamics include *mp*, *p*, *pp*, and *mf*. The woodwinds play melodic lines, while the strings provide harmonic support with sustained notes and moving lines.

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*

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*