

Books That Will Be Read

Written for and with David Bevan
Commissioned by the CMV series of concerts

Horn (F), tape and piano resonance

Duration c. 4'

A. Keegan-Bole

01.02.16

Visiting Hour

The hospital smell
combs my nostrils
as they go bobbing along
green and yellow corridors

What seems a corpse
is trundled into a lift and vanishes
heavenward.

I will not feel, I will not
feel, until
I have to.

Nurses walk lightly, swiftly,
here and up and down and there,
their slender waists miraculously
carrying their burden
of so much pain, so
many deaths, their eyes
still clear after
so many farewells.

Ward 7. She lies
in a white cave of forgetfulness.
A withered hand
trembles on its stalk. Eyes move
behind eyelids too heavy
to raise. Into an arm wasted
of colour a glass fang is fixed,
not guzzling but giving.
And between her and me
distance shrinks till there is none left
but the distance of pain that neither she nor I
can cross.

She smiles a little at this
black figure in her white cave
who clumsily rises
in the round swimming waves of a bell
and dizzily goes off, growing fainter,
not smaller, leaving behind only
books that will not be read
and fruitless fruits.

- Norman MacCaig

Programme note:

The title of this music reverses a line from Norman MacCaig's poem *Visiting Hour*. The piece features solo horn statements that are contrasted with initially disconnected, poorly remembered responses from the piano resonance. Over the course of the piece the piano part becomes more coherent as a partner for the horn melody.

I am extremely grateful to David Bevan who helped put the piece together through workshop and whose performance includes much of the recorded material.

AKB

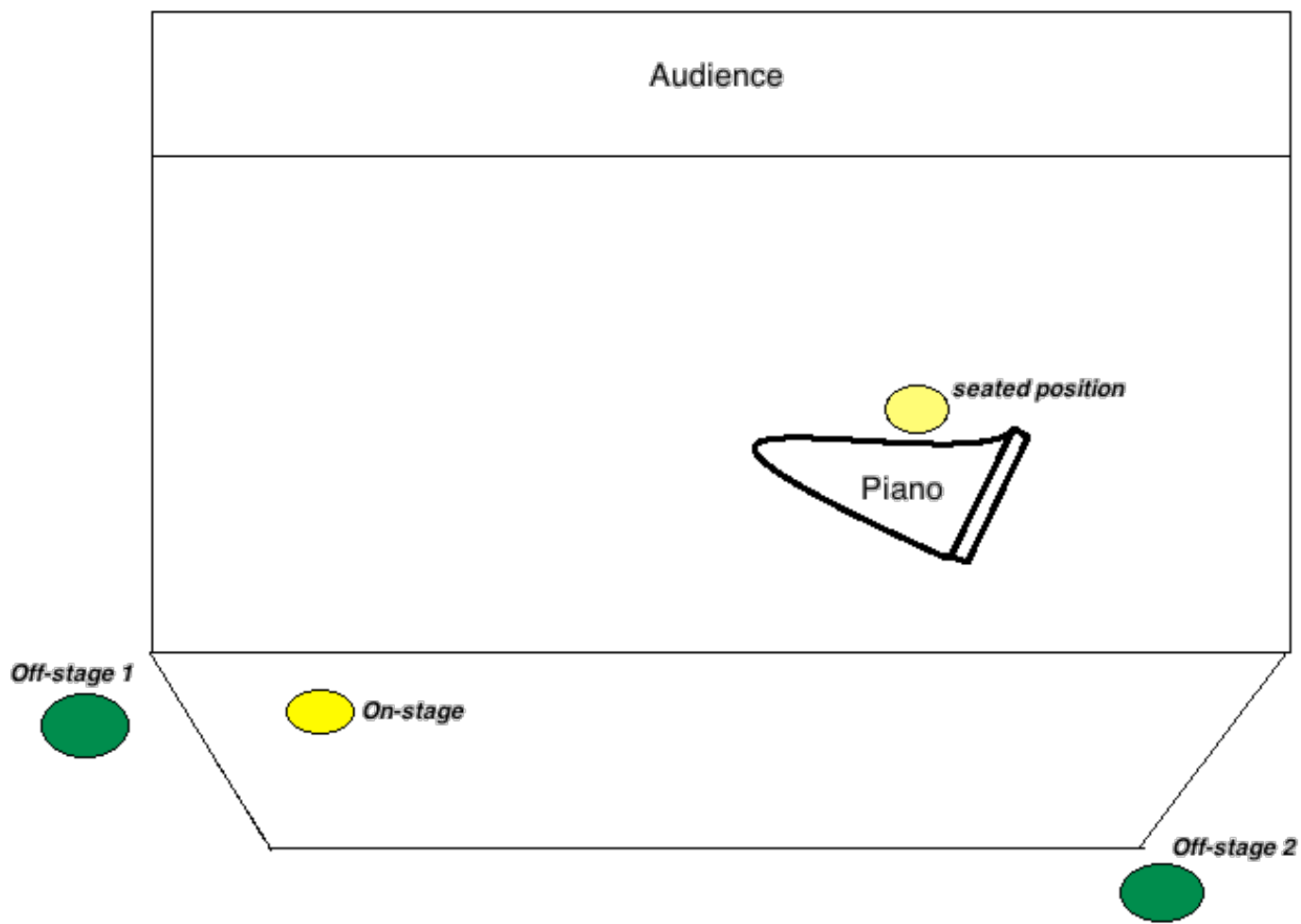
Stage directions for solo horn:

[these instructions should be adapted to each concert hall with common sense]

There are instructions to **[exit]** and **[enter]** in the score as well as the indications **on-stage**, (bar 1, 9 & 22) **off-stage 1**, (bar 2) **off-stage 2** (bar 14) and **[to seated position (horn projects into the piano)]** (bar 25). **On-stage** should be a prominent stage position near an exit point (for example down-stage left, by a wing). The **off-stage 1** should be near the **on-stage** position so that bar 2 can begin quickly after bar 1. **Off-stage 2** should be in an audibly different position to **off-stage 1** (for example, if 1 was stage left, 2 should be stage right or rear) but near a stage entrance so that after playing from off-stage 2 they can immediately enter and walk to the **on-stage** position. The final position is in the crook of the piano into which the horn projects and is walked to from **on-stage** position during bar 25. These considerations will, of course vary venue to venue but for clarity positions from the premier performance are shown below.

Version for three players:

As an alternative, other players positioned more radically around the performance space can take the off-stage parts. In this version the on-stage player still exits the stage and moves from the **on-stage position** to the **seated position** but the other players perform the sections marked **off-stage 1** and **2**.



Performer Notes:

Whilst the performance uses an operator to perform the electronics the software allows a pedal (USB or MIDI) to be used by the horn player for convenient rehearsal. Straightforward instructions are built into the software.

Software:

This piece requires bespoke software created in the MaxMSP environment. The up-to-date software package and details of how to run it can be found and downloaded at www.arthurkeeganbole.com (follow links to the download page).

To access the software you will need to provide the following code in a form at the webpage above:

BNmM110216

Within five days (normally within 24 hours) you will receive an automated e-mail with instructions – because it is automated it may be directed to your junk folder.

Technical Notes:

Operator – electronic cues are activated by an off-stage operator following the horn line and in-score instructions. The right arrow keyboard key activates cues and instructions on how to set up the software are provided with the download.

Piano preparation – The sustain pedal should be held down with a doorstop or weight in advance of the performance.

Speaker placement – Two small but full range speakers should be placed inside the piano in a visually discrete manner. Placing them on towels or other material (that do not damp the strings) should safeguard against damage to the instrument and avoid any buzzing. If this is forbidden or the venue has a small piano or inappropriately sized speakers then positioning them on chairs behind/under the instrument may work – but the electronic sound must activate the strings of the piano.

Books That Will Be Read

Written for David Devan

transposing score

A. Keegan-Bole

$\text{♩} = \text{c. } 96$
on-stage

$\text{♩} = \text{c. } 63$
 $\text{♩} = \text{♩}$

[exit] *off-stage 1*

Horn in F

f *poco* *mp* *express.* *light rubato*

Tape

1 *low rumbling* *2* *purser tone* *sim.*

[* allow space for resonance]

5

Hn.

light 'waltzy' *pesante darker* *f* *p* *clean*

Tape

3 *sim.*

$\text{♩} = \text{c. } 96$

[enter] *on-stage* *non vib.* [exit]

8

Hn.

f > p *poco* *f* *bright* *poco* *mp* *poco* *mp* *cold*

Tape

4 5

♩ = c. 63

senza misura c.1" - 4"

14 *off-stage 2*

Hn. *p* *f* *pp*

Tape *trill and piano sounds* *more diffuse sound* *with pulsing bass*

6 7 8 9 10 11

15" - 18"

Hn. *v. fast* *getting slower* toward ♩ = c. 58 *ff* *p*

Tape *stronger pulsing bass* *piano more and more chaotic* *more clarity* *poco*

12 13 14

(♩ = c. 63)

♩ = c. 96

Hn. *mf* *p* [enter] *on-stage*

Tape

15

12" - 16"

Hn. 5 [to seated position by piano (horn projects into piano)]

Tape *piano ideas, high register, chaotic* *bass synthetic swell*

16

NB. bass synthetic swell will continue to crescendo until cue 17 is triggered

♩ = c. 58

27

Hn.

p

Tape

6/4 5/4 4/4

17 **18** **19**



32

Hn.

Tape

3/4 2/4 2/4 2/4

20 **21** **22** **23**

