

Richard Barrett

Omaggio a Chirico

2005-2011
ensemble and electronics

performing score

Omaggio a Chirico

(2005-2011) for ensemble - 3 vocalists, violin, viola, cello, contrabass and electronics

Commissioned by the City of Liverpool as part of CONSTRUCTION

duration: approximately 6 minutes

Omaggio a Chirico is intended to function principally as the seventh section of CONSTRUCTION. In other contexts the instrumentation may vary, apart from the electronic sound materials. These consist of 8 mono tracks to be assigned to speakers thus:

1	2
3	4
5	6
7	8

Live electronic sounds/processing may be added *ad lib*. Apart from these, the "score" consists of the text below. The parts in italics are quoted from Italo Calvino's novel *Invisible Cities*. The following section, *Andromakhe*, begins after a silence of several seconds.

Elsewhere is a negative mirror. The traveller recognises the little that is his, discovering the much he has not had and will never have.

... imagine that the cityscape paintings of Giorgio de Chirico depicted different views of a single city...

... imagine a music to accompany this place as actual sounds accompany actual places,
such sounds as could not be heard in actual places...

... sounds with a particular kind of presence, with a particular kind of absence...

... which attracts the attention and then changes or turns a corner and disappears
as soon as the attention falls upon it...

... imagine a stillness pregnant with sound, or a sound infused with silence...

... objects, perspectives, causalities become unfamiliar...

... or imagine that you dreamed such places and imagine a music to invoke memories of them...

*Perhaps all that is left of the world is a wasteland covered with rubbish heaps,
and the hanging garden of the Great Khan's palace. It is our eyelids that separate them,
but we cannot know which is inside and which outside.*

... if voices are heard they cannot be understood, being perhaps only shadows of voices...

...

... if the music begins to cohere, be silent...

... or imagine being alone and that the sounds you hear are those of a surreal environment
to which the music you make is a response...

... imagine sounds as connections between silences...

"Sire, now I have told you about all the cities I know."

"There is still one of which you never speak."

Marco Polo bowed his head.

"Venice", the Khan said.

Marco smiled. *"What else do you believe I have been talking to you about?"*

The emperor did not turn a hair. *"And yet I have never heard you mention that name."*

And Polo said: *"Every time I describe a city I am saying something about Venice."*

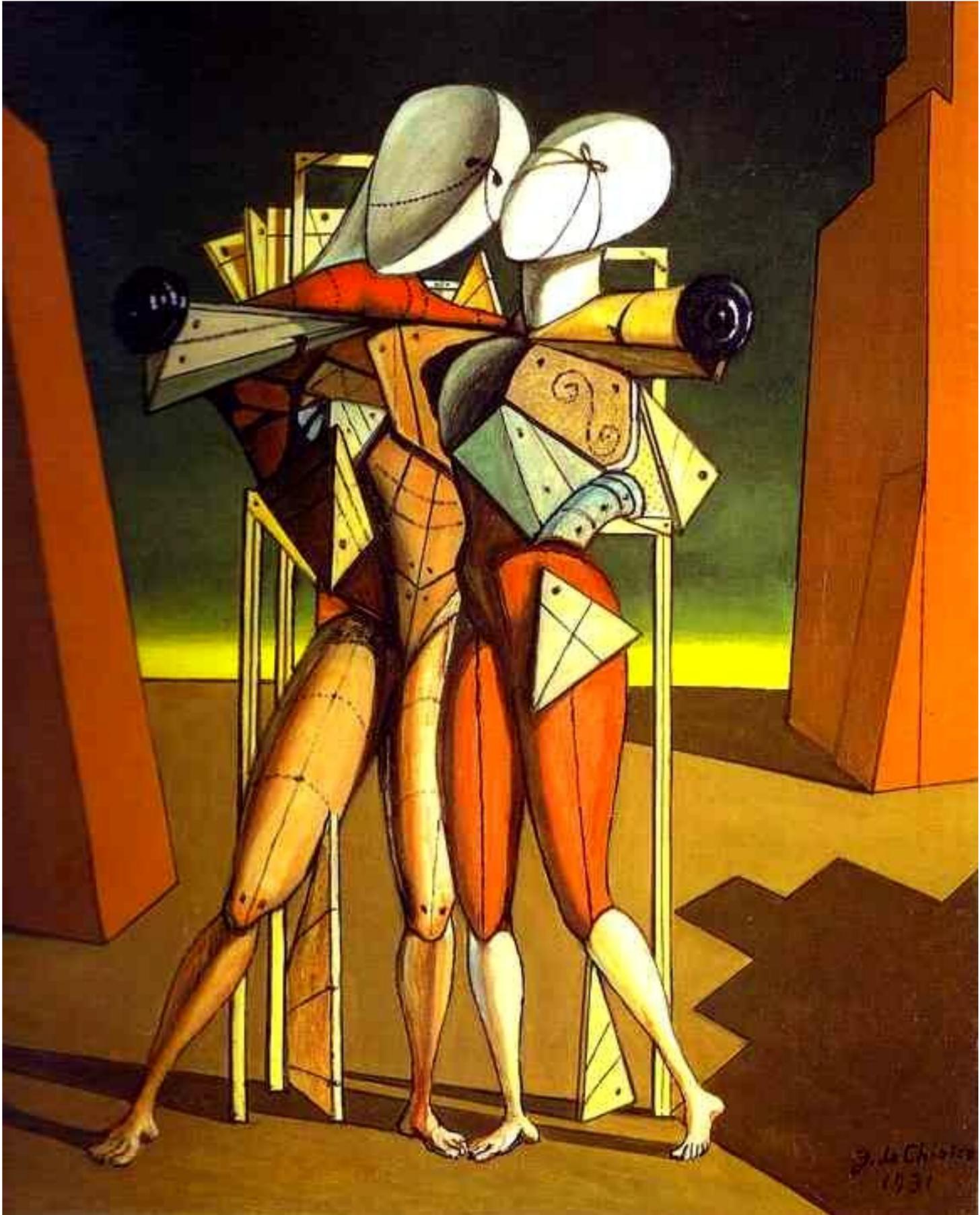
"When I ask you about other cities, I want to hear about them. And about Venice, when I ask you about Venice."

"To distinguish the other cities' qualities, I must speak of a first city that remains implicit. For me it is Venice."

"You should then begin each tale of your travels from the departure, describing Venice as it is, all of it, not omitting anything you remember of it.

The lake's surface was barely wrinkled; the copper reflection of the ancient palace of the Sung was shattered into sparkling glints like floating leaves.

"Memory's images, once they are fixed in words, are erased," Polo said. "Perhaps I am afraid of losing Venice all at once, if I speak of it. Or perhaps, speaking of other cities, I have already lost it, little by little."



Giorgio de Chirico, *Hector and Andromache*