

Richard Barrett

heard shadows & watched voices

(natural causes XV)

2021-22

solo performer (violin, voice, movement) and electronic sounds

performance score

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(2021-22) for solo performer (violin, voice, movement) and electronic sounds

commissioned by Diaphonique
to Winnie Huang

duration: approximately 16 minutes

note for performers:

On 1 September 2013 I received a sequence of interconnected texts from Simon Howard, an English poet who over the previous eight years or so had become a close friend although we never actually met face to face. I had been interested for some time in working with his writing, which had (and still has) for me the quality of powerfully evoking possible sound-forms and a compulsion to realise them. I had asked Simon for a new text as a collaboration between us, suggesting only that it be structured around the number 16 (the number of instruments in the ensemble I had in mind), and indeed it consists of 16 short texts each divided into 16 lines or phrases. Simon had written in an email a few weeks previously: "Somehow I felt that entitling the work was what you'd like to do. I'll let you have the full revised text next week & from there it's material for your composition: I have no 'control' or sense of the words 'belonging' to me." (He actually ended up giving the sequence the title *ADDICTION*.) Simon died suddenly in early December 2013 at the age of 53. *Natural causes* is intended when complete to consist of four "acts" each containing four interlocking compositions. The third act, for sixteen musicians and fixed media electronics, was commissioned by Musikfabrik and first performed by them in 2017. Musikfabrik also commissioned the first component of act 4, *catastrophe* for horn and percussion, in 2018, and Carl Rosman commissioned *the world long ago ceased to exist* for solo bass horn, which is the second component of act 4. *heard shadows & watched voices* forms part of act 2, commissioned by Diaphonique for the ensemble soundinitiative.

So we said goodnight
as bad dreams hid themselves
from us; the greatest hits
of anyone's youth
& from under the door
we heard shadows
& watched voices
& knew we would never learn to speak
our mouths gagged with songbirds
so we sang good morning
but there was no one here
only rain pattering on leaves
"we can't stay there"
we thought
polyphonically
& we are gone. variously

heard shadows & watched voices consists of 4 parts which play continuously when the composition is performed on its own. For performance within the larger context of *natural causes* act 2, see the preface to the score of that work.

notations for violin:

psp, msp = poco and molto sul ponticello respectively, the former already being noticeably different in timbre from *nat.*, the latter being as extreme as possible consistent with the fundamental pitch remaining audible.

pst, mst = poco and molto sul tasto (similarly) *clb* = col legno battuto, *clt* = col legno tratto



]= *gettato*] = audible bow-stop at the end of a sound. A *legato* slur before a notehead indicates that the sound is to be played with no discernible attack.

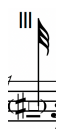
∨ ∨ ∨ ∨ = ascending degrees of bow pressure: flautando; "normal"; exaggerated and distorted (pitch only just discernible); completely pitchless scraping.

♣ = high bow pressure, twist the hair of the bow on the string ∩ = bow on bridge ⊕ = bow behind bridge

-----> = a smooth gradual transition between two states (for example bow position and/or pressure)


● = normal left-hand fingerpressure ◇ = "harmonic" fingerpressure


+ = left-hand pizzicato 12343432123... = rapid exchange of fingers on a single pitch or glissando

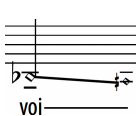



= string damped lightly at indicated pitch (which isn't at a harmonic node) – actual pitch is absent or unstable # = vibrato (otherwise no vibrato!)

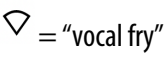
notations for voice:

 dreams = spoken voice

 we said = voiceless ([s] and similar phonemes, or whispering)

 = half-whispered – breathy with some pitch

 we = lowest pitch possible

 = "vocal fry"

Below is a summary of the various aspects of the performance. The stage should be empty except for one piece of furniture – probably a table although it could be an armchair or any other object suitable for placing the violin and bow on, and placing a folded music stand behind where it can't be seen. (A traditional music stand and music printed on paper should be used!) The soloist should be amplified using two radio microphones, one for the voice and the other for the violin, to enable the balance between them to be controlled. The four tracks of the electronic material are distributed thus: track 1 = front left, track 2 = front right, track 3 = rear left, track 4 = rear right. The sound of voice and violin should be projected so as to sound from the position of the soloist.

1

In the first part, the violin is taken and played only at the very end, there is one (spoken) vocal event, and the rest of the first part alternates between miming to short recorded fragments from what the violin is to play in part 4, and movements described verbally which take place alongside diverse (often violin-derived) sounds coming from the loudspeakers. To aid coordination, the recorded sounds are divided into 13 cues (numbered 1-13) to be triggered by the sound projectionist synchronously with (most of) the mimed violin events.

For rehearsal purposes the cues are available as a single continuous stereo soundfile.

2

The second part involves violin playing, voice, movement and electronic sounds. The violin plays an extended melody, some of whose elements also feature the voice, whose phonetic material is derived from the vowels and sustained consonants of the text. The diphthongs should be sung as very gradual transitions between the starting and ending vowel positions. The phonemes were chosen to give 24 different sounds distributed through part II rather than for any reason connected with the meaning of the words, which are shown in brackets below the phonetic symbols only as an additional guide to pronunciation.

The electronic sounds form a single continuous soundfile, triggered at cue 14, which consists mostly of another "realisation" of this same melody, and so is not notated in the score. Alongside the 4-channel and stereo versions of the electronic sounds is a clicktrack for practising the synchronisation.

The movements in part II consist of two "layers". The first involves the soloist rotating slowly to face in different directions as shown in the score. She begins facing the audience and turning gradually 90° to her left (bars 1-9), then turning 180° to face right (bars 10-18), then 270° to the left so as to face away from the audience (bars 19-26) and finally through 360° to the right so as to end facing away once more (bars 27-35). During the rest bars the soloist continues the movement. The second layer of movement takes place in the bars marked A (for "action"), in which the performer generally makes no sound, but instead performs a silent action (which may or may not involve the violin and/or bow) synchronised with all or part of the electronic sound material in that bar. While these movements are not specified, they should be conceived to as to form a clear association with the sound(s). This doesn't necessarily mean that they should involve miming the action assumed to have originally given rise to the sound (as for example the sound of a door closing in bar 4) although neither is this strategy excluded. In any case not all the sounds have such "concrete" implications.

For rehearsal purposes, the electronic materials for part II are available in 1-, 2- and 4-channel versions with an extra channel containing a clicktrack. The notated material should be played from memory.

3

In part 3, apart from a continuous layer of sound (continuation of cue 14) which plays back throughout and which can be used as orientation by the performers (because a different sound material begins each minute), the sound projectionist and soloist may play (back) their events in any order, separated by silences, within the overall duration of 4 minutes, apart from the final event in the violin part which involves setting up a music stand for part 4. The violin part consists of various combinations of movement, voice and violin. The soloist makes the first sound of part 4 as the continuous sound comes to an end. The electronic events are numbered as cues 15-46.

4

The final part is played from the music on the music stand, apart from the two final bars (16 and 17), which are played as the soloist turns away from the music stand and leaves the performance space so as no longer to be seen by the audience by the time of the last sound. There should be a gradual blackout during these two final bars, ending at the last sound, after which the amplification level should be rapidly reduced to zero.

heard shadows and watched voices

1

cue 1

The violin is not actually touched until bar 29. The notated music (all taken from part 4) is mimed as precisely as possible to the recorded material. Between the notated fragments, the specified actions should be synchronised as necessary to the sounds from the loudspeakers.

Begin by walking on stage and standing still for a few seconds, not taking up "playing position" until just before the first sound/action.

At the beginning and at subsequent numbered cues, coordinate with the sound projectionist so that sounds and actions are as simultaneous as possible.

Any visual signals should of course only be made by the sound projectionist. Each numbered cue is a separate soundfile to be triggered at the appropriate moment.

♩=80

arco
msp -----> pst
sul IV

20"

(silence)
after "playing" the sound, look slowly around as if listening for a response to it to come from somewhere in the space

2

♩=71

msp
IV III

20:26

17"

(the two sounds repeat irregularly, changing timbre, pitch content and dynamic)
continue to "play" the sounds, as if the violin is constantly changing size and shape

3

♩=71

psp

19:13

9:10

234321...

11"

(the sounds accelerate "out of control", with crescendo)
accelerate along with the sounds to "impossible" speed

brief pause
- intake of breath!

4

♩=108

psp

nat -----> msp

7:9

15"

(the sound "freezes" and sustains)
after "playing" bar 7, remain absolutely motionless for the duration of this bar

5

♩=56

msp

6"

(the sound becomes pulsated and noisier)
while continuing to "play", the violin gradually becomes heavier,
this process is interrupted by bar 11 and then continues

♩=50

psp

3:2 4:5 3:2 3:2 9:8

12

15"

vn

(bar 11 repeats, beginning slower and becoming even slower and increasingly distorted) by the end of the bar the violin and bow have become so heavy it becomes almost impossible to stand holding them

suddenly it becomes light again!

6

♩=71

msp

10:8

tr

p

14

5"

vn

... slips out of your hands and shatters on the ground. Stare briefly at the broken fragments before continuing with bar 15 as if nothing had happened

7

♩=40

nat

8:10

4:3

3:2

12343212...

p

18"

the violin transforms into an insect and flies away, follow it with your eye as it gets lost in distance and darkness then once more begin bar 17 as if nothing had happened

17

8

♩=116

msp

psp

4"

4:3

3:2

6:5

(the violin continues and blurs into indistinctness) while continuing to "play", the violin loses its solidity, becoming indistinct, out of focus, liquefying

clt

mst

3:2

mp

20

18"

vn

(the resonance continues) after "playing" bar 19, again look around as if listening for a response to it, using exactly the same movements/gestures as in bar 2

9

♩=45

psp

19:20

pp

mp

22

6"

vn

(silence) speak these words, slowly and distinctly, without emotion "our mouths / gagged / with songbirds"

10

♩=123

arco (senza vibr)

1/2 clt

molto vibr

11:13

7:5

pp

14"

24

vn

(suddenly the violin explodes into a cloud of fragments which fly off in all directions) slowly shrug and then *veryslowly* lower the head, then remain still for a few seconds, then raise it, again slowly, and take up "playing position", remaining still in this position until the beginning of bar 25

11

♩=36

mst

16:12
ppp

14"

26

vn

(looping) continue to "play" the loop, each time facing in a different direction

12

♩=128

mst-----mst

---mst---nat

4:5
9:11
tr
ppp p ppp

21"

28

vn

(multiple violin texture) after "playing" bar 27, turn around and pick up the violin and bow (and wireless microphone transmitter), as if it's a completely unfamiliar object, then "play" bar 29, with the violin, but still silently

5"

29

vn

(silence) remain still in playing position then begin "playing" bar 31 silently, "fading in" from nothing with the actual violin on the sustained G# with vibrato

13

♩=32

arco mst-----mst

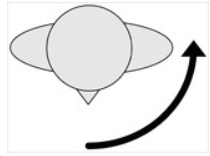
6"

♩=60

(silence) play this, as transition to the beginning of part 2 which begins without a break

21:18
6:4
3:2
7:6
9:7
ppp ppp fff

31
16



14

$\text{♩} = 64$

mst → nat

nat → msp

31
16

4

5:4

3 2 1

3:2

4321234...

7
16

9
16

etc. sim.

p *mp* *pp* *ppp*

voice: *p* *mp*

SO → U

electr: The electronic part is audible almost throughout as a heterophonic shadow of the violin, and is only shown in the score where it involves sounds that cue movements in the bars marked (A)

3

9
16

mst sul IV

4
8 (A)

9
8

nat

III/IV

IV

3
8

msp

mf *p* *mf* *f*

voice: *p* *mf*

a → I

(goodnight)

r

(dreams)

o

(from)

electr: door closes

6

3
8 (A)

15
16

msp

nat

3:2

II sub.

9
16

mp *ppp* *pp*

voice: *pp*

electr: ε

8

9
16 (A)

25
16

nat

psp

nat

3:2

8
8

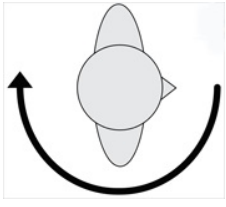
pp *f* *p*

voice: *p*

i → u

(youth)

electr



nat → psp → msp

♩=72

10 8 8 II 5 8 (A) 43 16

vn *mf f*

voice 3 (under)

electr

on bridge → msp → nat → msp → mst

12 43 16 4 8

vn *p mp pp*

voice *mfp inhale f*

electr *pp p ppp*

(shadows) (shadows) (voices)

psp → on bridge

13 4 8 5 8 6 8 (A) 13 16 5 16

vn *mp ppp f*

voice *pp mf pp*

electr *5:6*

(would)

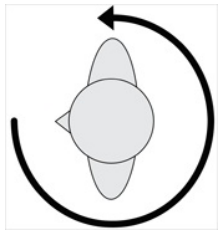
nat → msp

17 5 16 (A) 27 16 3:2 6:5 11 16

vn *p f mp*

voice *5:4*

electr *u (to)*



♩=56

19 11 16 nat mst 13 16 (A)

7 8 msp nat (sub) 1 14 (A) 8

voice: *mf*, *ppp*, *mf*

electr: (mouths) U (conversations) 10:7 low strummed piano strings I (with) m (morning) 7:8

23 14 8 nat msp 5 15 (A) 8

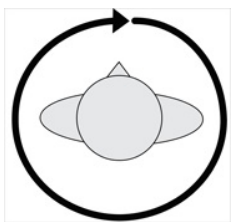
voice: *ppp*, *f*, *f*

electr: (but) (here) bee 4:3

25 15 8 mst → nat psp 9 18 (A) 8

voice: *mp*, *mf*, *p*, *f*, *pp*

electr: (keeping same distance between LH fingers) "trill" with randomly varying fingers using light finger-pressure, with the open G decreasingly audible until at the end of the bar it's no longer present gradual loss of pitch... ("vocal fry") e (rain) I



♩=80

27 18 8 nat 1 13 (A) 8

voice: *ppp*, *mp/pp*

electr: 3:2

nat ----- psp ----- msp

29 13 8 $\flat \bar{a}$ 37 16

vn p mf pp f

voice pp mf f mp

(can't) (stay)

IV 1 II 3 III 4 IV 2

4:3

30 37 16 (A)

vn

voice (mp) (continue to end of breath)

(s)

electr (insects) pencil on paper

nat ----- psp

31 13 16 6:5 13 16

vn f pp mf

voice ppp p pp mf

e → a (there) i (polyphonically)

32 13 16 1 8 mst ----- 2 8 (A) 3 16 mst ----- msp

vn f mp

voice n (gone) (variously)

electr creak 11:8

The electronic sounds continue into part 3 and become a continuous background against which the soloist and the sound projectionist play (back) their sound/action-fragments in any order

Turn rapidly to face the audience. The violin and electronic parts each consist of 32 fragments which can be played in any spontaneously decided order, except for the violin's event 32 which must come last. Events 1-32 in the violin part are arranged in four groups of eight events each, in order of increasing duration within each group - it would be preferable to take consecutive events from different groups. (The first group consists of material derived from part 4, the second from part 2, and the third from part 1, while the fourth involves material that isn't so closely related to what happens in the other parts.) The electronic fragments may overlap with one another *ad lib.* but in general both parts will involve silence/inactivity for a significant proportion of the 4-minute duration of part 3. (The total duration of both the violin material and the electronic material is 2'40".) Between events, preserve a sense of attentiveness rather than relaxation. The continuous electronic sounds continue through part 3 and can serve as a guide for progress through the fragments, since each minute is occupied by a distinct sound material, although the continuous level should be mixed into the background (dynamic = pp/ppp) so that it doesn't interfere with the "live" events.

123

4 8

msp

4:5 4:3

pp

rai n

108

4 8

nat

3:2 3:2 6:5

mp

99

4 8

pizz mst arco nat

III

ne - ver

p

40

3 16

psp

p

116

5 8

psp

ppp

32

3 16

msp

ppp

71

7 16

msp mst

3:2 5:4

p

ba ba ba ba

128

13 16

mst psp pizz mst arco psp mst pizz mst arco psp mst pizz mst

6:5 3:2 7:5

[k] (!) (!) [k] [k]

ppp pp

80

5 16

nat psp

mp

64

3 8

nat (molto vibr. sul III)

mf

r (dreams)

72

4 8

psp mst

f

64

nat use the notated fingerings! (with glissandi as necessary)

1 2 3 4 3 4 3 4 3 2 3 2 1 2

4 8

4:5 4:3

pp

80

5 8

mst v (sub)

4:5 6:5

f ppp f ppp f

mp

s

56

9 16

nat psp

6:5 3:2

ppp p

11 nat → mst

15 vn

16 *f* → *p*

voice

m gradual loss of pitch...

♩=72

15 psp → msp

16 1232343232123234....

mp

u

17 vn

2" "play" (and "sing") any suitable duration from part 4 without making any sound except accidentally

3" speak clearly and unemotionally with slight pauses between words: "we heard shadows"

4" wait for the next electronic sound and react to it with visible horror and panic (whatever sound it is!) for this duration, before returning to the neutral position or continuing with another event

20 vn

5" wait for the next electronic sound and react to it with visible relief and pleasure (whatever sound it is!) for this duration, before returning to the neutral position or continuing with another event

6" "play" (and "sing") any suitable duration from part 4 without making any sound except accidentally

8" whisper slowly, clearly and unemotionally with long pauses between words: "& watched voices"

23 vn

9" very slowly draw a large circle in the air in front of you with the bow

10" rotate slowly through 360° in either direction

25 vn

2" clb mst → msp

mf

voice

3" bow on tailpiece

5" bow on side of bridge, parallel with strings

pp

rapid incomprehensible whispering

28 vn

voice

mp

x

f

wait until next electronic sound ends and then make this sustained vocal sound, continuing through inhalation and exhalation as necessary, stop as soon as the following electronic event begins

arco nat

ppp

wait until next electronic sound ends and then play this sustained sound, play through following electronic event, stop as soon as the next one begins

10"

30

vn

voice

arco
msp sul I

$\text{♩} = 56-80$

irregular repetitions, each slightly different

f

each time simultaneously with one of these phonemes in random order
[s t ts θ ʃ sp k f]

12"

arco
mst sul III

move bow so slowly that the sound breaks up into irregular clicks

p

intersperse these phonemes in random order between the clicks so that they form a single irregular sequence
[s t ts θ ʃ sp k f]

13"

32

vn

THIS MUST BE THE LAST EVENT FOR VIOLIN IN PART 3!

put down violin and bow, take music stand and set it up, place music of part 4 on stand, take violin and bow again, stand in playing position read to play/sing the first sounds of part 4 as soon as the continuous electronic sound has stopped

♩=80 (12.00")

Begin playing/singing as soon as the continuous electronic sound layer of part 3 has come to an end.

Here the voice is intended to sound symbiotic with the violin, expanding its range in terms of pitch, timbre and articulation while at the same time clearly projecting its semantic dimension.

Where only one dynamic value is shown, it applies to both violin and voice. Most dynamic changes are abrupt alternations between values, in the range *ppp-mp*.

Since the metronomic tempo changes at each bar (some bars are split over two systems) independently of the durations within the bar, the theoretical duration in seconds of each bar is shown.

1

vn
voice

arco msp → pst
sul IV
mp
mp
11:8
7:8
10:8
9:8
11:8
5:4

we said
goo-d
nigh-t

ppp
pp
mp
ppp

♩=71 (13.52")

2

vn
voice

mst → nat
nat → msp
sub mst → nat
msp
nat → msp
10:7
3:2
3:2
8:6
8:10
4:3
20:26
7:8
5:4

as
ba
d
dreams
hi-d
them
s-elves

pp
p
pp
mp

♩=89 (10.79")

3

vn
voice

mst → nat
nat
nat
arco msp → nat
10:8
5:4
12:9

from
the
grea-t
e-st
hi-ts

p
mp
p
mp

♩=63 (15.24")

4

vn
voice

psp
sub
sub
(psp)
mst
pst
nat
19:13
9:10
7:8
23:18
12:9

o-f a
ny
one's
you-th

mp
mp

♩=108 (8.89")

5

vn
voice

psp
nat
msp
mst
msp
nat
pizz msp
dt
mst
arco psp
psp
7:9
3:2
5:4
3:2
8:9
8:7
5:4

a-and
fro-m-u-n
der
the
door

pp
mp
p
ppp

12 ♩=56 (17.14")

6

vn

voice

nat

psp

mst

(mst)

msp

nat

sub

11:8

17:18

11:14

sub

ppp

p

ppp

mp

ppp

mp

ppp

we—

mp

hear—d

p

(msp)

nat

psp

sub

sub

6:4

12:14

ppp

sh— a

p

dow— s

♩=50 (19.20")

7

vn

voice

(psp)

msp

nat

mst

nat

msp

3:2

4:5

9:8

7:8

4:3

3:2

21:15

4:3

ppp

p

p

ppp

p

ppp

p

a—nd watched

ppp

voi— ce—s

ppp

p

(slide page here!)

♩=99 (9.70")

8

vn

voice

nat

psp

msp

mst

pizz mst

arco nat

12343212...

234321...

tr

5:4

12:15

4:3

(inhale)

during glissando, "trill" with randomly varying fingers using light finger-pressure

pp

p

ppp

p

ppp

p

a—nd knew

p

we—

woul—d

ne

ver— learn to

spea—k

♩=40 (24.00")

9

vn

voice

nat

msp

mst

msp

nat

psp

pst

msp

8:10

4:3

3:2

10:12

20:18

12343212...

pp

p

ppp

pp

our—

mp

mou— ths

ga— gged

[g] [d]

with

pp

mst

msp

mst

msp

nat

msp

psp

pst

msp

4:3

8:7

22:18

ppp

p

song

birds

♩=116 (8.28")

10

vn

voice

msp nat

4:3 3:2 6:5

III4 2 IV1

pst

4:3 13:14

msp

mst 3:2

9:6

clt mst msp

s 0

we sang

goo d mor ning

mp pp ppp mp

♩=45 (21.33")

11

vn

voice

msp

10:7

mst

20:18

psp

(psp) sub

(nat)

pp

but

there wa s

mp

12

vn

voice

nat

19:18

psp

8:10

mst

5:6

19:20

psp

mp

no

one

here

mp pp

♩=123 (7.80")

12

vn

voice

nat

6:7

4:5

mst

9:11

clb nat

pst

mst

11:13

arco (senza vibr.)

7:5

1/2clt molto vibr.

on ly

rai n

pa tter ing

o n

lea ves

pp

♩=36 (26.67")

13

vn

voice

clt msp mst

8:10

cb

pizz arco pizz

9:7

arco msp

nat

28:22

psp

nat

4:3

III4 3 2 1

(slide page here!)

we

ca n't

pp mp

14

vn

voice

msp

16:12

nat

msp

8:10

nat

19:18

3:2

pst

mst

ppp

stay

there

pp ppp mp

$\text{♩}=128$ (7.50")

(7.50")

$\text{♩}=32$ (30.00") turn away from the music stand and begin to leave the performance space either at the beginning of bar 16 or later, so as no longer to be seen by the audience by the time of the last sound - gradual blackout during this movement ending at the last sound, after which the amplification level should be rapidly reduced to zero