

# **UCLA**

## **Contemporary Music Score Collection**

### **Title**

Before We Are Folded In Sleep

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**before we are folded in sleep  
for string quartet**

**by ollie hawker  
march 2020**

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### **Composer's note**

We were born and we will die, and between those two points a lot of stuff will happen to us. Some of these events and changes in our lives will be sudden, but most of them will occur over a period of months or years or decades and we will not notice them until they have already happened. I find my experience of life is much more comparable to a collection of different-but-similar gradual processes than it is to a single, classically teleological hero-narrative. If I took two years of it at random they would look very different to each other, but if you were to ask me to point to where the change between them took place I would be unable to.

What I'm trying to say here is that the musical technique of gradual process has a human aspect to it that is often ignored. When I read Reich and others' writings on the subject, in which they marvel at its austere constructions, I am left feeling cold. But I really think it has the potential to connect with people in a different way, through its ability to accurately depict the confusing experience of a whole lifetime within the confines of a single piece. The dancer Lucinda Childs put it best when she said, 'It is an emotional experience to find you are in different places, but you don't know how you got there'.

I am writing all of this not because I think it accurately explains what my piece 'as a work' means in any aesthetic sense, but to perhaps colour your experience of it. Hopefully you will feel a connection with the idea of listening to a gradual process as a depiction of life, but if not that's ok.

This piece was written for a collaboration between the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and the Stirling University Art Collection. It is a response to Ally Wallace's *Hanging Mobile*, a sculpture held in the collection which provides a good visual example of what I'm talking about above. The title of the piece comes from an Alisdair Gray poem, which is also part of the collection.

I'd like to thank Fergus Hall, Harry Gorski-Brown, Rufus Elliot and Simone Seales for workshopping some drafts of the piece with me.

### **Performance notes**

Each musician will play repeated notes consisting of one long glissando and one long ritardando over seven minutes.

Each musician will have a headphone track in their ear consisting of a continuous tone that follows their glissando, and a percussive click that follows their ritardando. The click track is at quaver speed (with a slightly quieter click for the off-beat), and the musicians are to play at crotchet speed. The click tracks are at double the speed of the played (and notated) tempi so as to make the tempi easier to hear, especially for the slower tempi towards the end.

The count-in consists of a percussive click that gives 32 quavers count-in.

The score consists of markers every 15 seconds that indicate the precise pitch and tempo each player should be at by that point, and are indicated in the headphone track a high-pitched chime sounds. There is one chime at 0'15", two chimes at 0'30", three at 0'45", and four at 1'00". This pattern repeats for the whole piece, and is indicated on the score by the number of dots above the time marker. The final chime of the two, three or four indicates that the time marker has been reached.

I have personally found that it is easier to rely more on the headphone track than the score for guidance i.e. if I think I am lost, I try to get back to my note/tempo by listening in detail to the headphone track, rather than thinking 'I need to be at G -11 cents in 6 seconds time'. However, this is entirely up to personal preference, and some people have found it easier to have the headphone track barely audible and rely mostly on the score. Because the headphone track is split into the click, tone and chimes for each player, they can also adjust the levels of these individually to get the mix they prefer e.g. they might want more click than most people but less tone. It is also possible to have different sections of the piece have different levels either

through automating the volume on the DAW or manual control e.g. one violinist wanted no tone until they reached the E string, at which point I faded in the tone for them to a predetermined level.

String changes are indicated in the score between the two 15 second markers where they will need to occur. The exact time and place of this string change is left to the musicians.

Once you reach the final note at 6'30", stay on that note and gradually diminuendo to silence over 30 seconds.

The music should be played consistently and evenly on the string, playing for the whole duration of the note.

B.P. refers to bow pressure, where B.P. = 5 is the hardest pressure (over-pressured scratch tone with the actual tone sometimes breaking through), and B.P. = 1 is the lightest pressure (placing the bow on the string as lightly as possible while still being audible). B.P. = 3 can be considered a 'regular' playing pressure (think mezzoforte) with B.P. = 2 and B.P. = 4 being the levels of pressure in between. Players are to stay on B.P. = 5 until 1'00", gradually shift to B.P. = 4 between 1'00" and 1'30", stay on B.P. = 4 until 2'30", gradually shift to B.P. = 3 between 2'30" and 3'00" etc.

### **Technical setup**

This piece requires nine different tracks (four click tracks, four tone tracks, one chime track) to be sent to four different headphones. The recommended set-up requires:

1x Computer with Digital Audio Workstation (DAW) installed (Logic, Protools etc.)  
1x 4-output audio interface  
4x headphone amplifiers  
4x headphones

The recommended set-up is as follows:

1. Load each click and tone track into a DAW, along with four copies of the chime track.
2. Line them up so the files all start at the same time. Because of the different tempi, the first violin count-in will start fractionally before the second violin's, which will start just before the viola's, which will start just before the cello's. This is accounted for in the amount of silence before each count-in, as long as the beginning of the files are lined up correctly.
3. On the DAW, send the first violin's click and tone, along with one of the chime tracks, to Output 1. Similarly, send the second violin, viola and cello to Outputs 2, 3 and 4 respectively, along with a chime track each.
4. Connect the computer to the audio interface, and connect Outputs 1-4 to four different headphone amplifiers.
5. Connect the headphone amps to the headphones, and give each musician the correct pair.
6. Conduct several individual and group tests to check levels, giving each musician their desired balance of tone, click and chime. Automate any levels they want to change throughout the piece, or make a note of specific manual adjustments to do instead.

Email me at [ollie@thehawkers.net](mailto:ollie@thehawkers.net) if you're wanting to get hold of the headphone tracks.

before we are folded in sleep

ollie hawker

0'00" ----- 0'15" ----- 0'30" ----- 0'45" ----- 1'00" ----- 1'15" -----

B.P. = 5 (B.P. = 5) →

Violin I  
 III  
 ♪ = 170 (166, 162, 158, 154, 151)  
 (+0c) (-15c) (+23c) (+0c) (III → II) (+0c) (+0c)

Violin II  
 III  
 ♪ = 180 (176, 170, 166, 161, 157)  
 (+0c) (+20c) (-7c) (+15c) (-11c) (+12c) (III → II)

Viola  
 III  
 ♪ = 190 (185, 179, 174, 168, 163)  
 (+0c) (+6c) (+10c) (+14c) (+17c) (+21c)

Violoncello  
 I  
 ♪ = 200 (194, 187, 182, 175, 170)  
 (+0c) (-3c) (-11c) (-17c) (+24c) (+16c)

oo ooo oooo o ooo  
 ----- 1'30" ----- 1'45" ----- 2'00" ----- 2'15" ----- 2'30" ----- 2'45" -----

→ B.P. = 4 (B.P. = 4) →

Violin I  
 ♪ = 147 (143, 139, 136, 131, 128)  
 (+2c) (+16c) (+4c) (-7c) (-20c) (+19c) (II → I)

Violin II  
 ♪ = 152 (148, 143, 139, 134, 129)  
 (-15c) (+9c) (-18c) (+5c) (+2c) (+0c)

Viola  
 ♪ = 157 (151, 147, 142, 136, 131)  
 (+25c) (-21) (+8c) (-14c) (-9c) (-5c)

Violoncello  
 ♪ = 163 (157, 151, 145, 138, 133)  
 (+9c) (+1c) (+18c) (+10c) (-21c) (+20c) (I → II)

0000	0	00	000	0000	0
----- 3'00"	----- 3'15"	----- 3'30"	----- 3'45"	----- 4'00"	----- 4'15"

→ B.P. = 3 (B.P. = 3) →

♩ = 123 (+8c)	120 (-4c)	116 (+10c)	112 (+23c)	108 (+11c)	105 (+1c)
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♩ = 124 (+24c)	120 (-3c)	115 (+20c) (II → I)	111 (-7c)	106 (+15c)	102 (-10c)
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♩ = 125 (-2c)	120 (+2c)	114 (+6c)	109 (+10c)	104 (+14c)	99 (+17c)
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♩ = 126 (+12c)	120 (+4c)	114 (-3c)	108 (-11c)	101 (-17c)	96 (+23c) (II → III)
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00	000	0000	0	00	000
----- 4'30"	----- 4'45"	----- 5'00"	----- 5'15"	----- 5'30"	----- 5'45"

→ B.P. = 4 (B.P. = 4) →

♩ = 100 (-11c)	97 (-23c)	93 (+16c)	89 (+5c)	85 (-6c)	82 (-19c)
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♩ = 97 (+12c)	93 (-15c)	87 (+9c)	83 (-18c)	78 (+5c)	74 (-22c)
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♩ = 93 (+21c)	88 (+25c)	82 (-21c)	77 (-18)	71 (-14c)	66 (-9c)
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♩ = 89 (+16c)	83 (+8c)	77 (+0c)	71 (-7c)	64 (+9c)	59 (-22c)
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0000                    0                    00                    000                    0000  
---6'00"-----6'15"-----6'30"-----6'45"-----7'00"

→ B.P. = 1

♩ = 77 (+19c)	74 (+9c)	70 (+0c)

♩ = 69 (+0c)	65 (+23c)	60 (+0c)

♩ = 61 (-6c)	56 (-2c)	50 (+0c)

♩ = 52 (-21c)	(III → IV) 46 (+12c)	40 (+0c)