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À une raison

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**JAMES BATTY**

# **À une raison**

*for Mezzo-soprano, Alto Flute, Alto Saxophone, Viola and Accordion*

**JAMES BATTY**

# **À une raison**

## **Introduction**

In creating this piece, I took inspiration from the indeterminacy processes used extensively by John Cage, as well as the cut-up poetry of William Burroughs. Burroughs created more than one cut-up version of *To a Reason*, the English translation of a poem by Arthur Rimbaud, by cutting up the words and reordering them. I wanted to approach this slightly differently, and used a carefully designed randomisation process to reorder the phonemes from the original French poem, *À une raison*, and generate three different nonsense texts. I weighted the randomisation to create distinct passages of text that were dominated by plosive (percussive) sounds (“p”, “t”, “k”, etc.), fricative (airy) sounds (“s”, “ch”, “j” etc.) and sustained (mainly nasal) sounds (“n”, “m”, “l”). I set this text to a vocal line for the mezzo-soprano soloist and built an instrumental texture around this using instrumental techniques from similar sound categories: percussive sounds, airy or “broken” sounds and sustained sounds. I also used indeterminacy processes to generate some of the pitch and rhythmic material.

I would like to thank Loré Amenabar Larrañaga, Hannah Corcoran, Océane Deweirder, Wenhan Jiang and Mina Middleton for all your invaluable help in exploring ideas and developing the piece, and for bringing it to life for its first performance.

James Batty, January 2020.

## ***À une raison, Arthur Rimbaud***

Un coup de ton doigt sur le tambour décharge tous les sons et commence la nouvelle harmonie.

Un pas de toi, c'est la levée des nouveaux hommes et leur en-marche.

Ta tête se détourne : le nouvel amour !  
Ta tête se retourne, — le nouvel amour !

Change nos lots, crible les fléaux, à commencer par le temps , te chantent ces enfants. Élève n'importe où la substance de nos fortunes et de nos vœux on t'en prie.

Arrivée de toujours, qui t'en iras partout.

### **Randomised version 1**

Le nouaise où non l'aîne a fulente. Les mois m'en le leur lerne hentai lorme. L'où non nourmanmeux nié te te narne. Et le noulé d'aise l'autan.

Vevozzou se âge au soulord. Tosse a va ne runse flevunche aussi. Qui l'en est vengeour ve ransard sans véfé. Tout choge où t'assure y sauve chetu.

Pecaux d'our, et l'art tourtite. Aibé rentourté crouer. Totte où dedar, « aipre anoit » piche tes camadés. En debstais qu'indansé le tetât de me petât. Téau de ponblat.

## **Randomised version 2**

Le nun, inont niveau de loune, la saneut le méau nompé. Ne l'art, ne lourd le durmant, nouchiné tarlait. La maitalou molle le « ourmaidé ».

Ait fort jourge avant de lesars arc en rottouche un soufflit. Sans até, raufé, n'enve ve ousse. Ve sivant s'en mougeait relle, veché sous prévécé.

L'honta en tomme te énout, chesant nocrais. Été au cudeau detourde, tourtit torte, te sourdeur papant qu'en toi, « au lard ». Ta toïte te badempe, tu blimbste técat.

## **Randomised version 3**

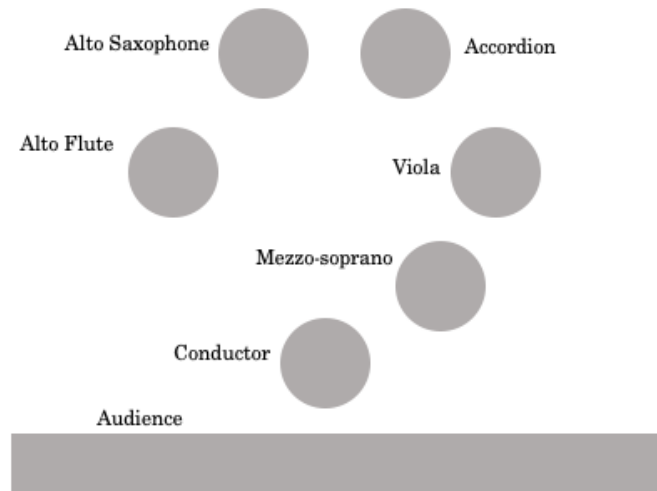
N'audez le nounouquen. Or le melounan léaune te îlort, « nard, nard, mon nantau de lan ». Le menolle aivoit lollan n'envan nous méchéstat le loura.

Bladours le zevaiché et vessurte. Fe jezaut m'eût praivagé, rensourchissait, j'avéssars. Ananche à site, vons à sire, vuns ensifflits l'oura.

Tétaque sœux. Art debstait m'édet haute tout coupe que d'ourte autan te croux faites. Non bansard tottindu, « ourpe ». Et toi, teurlé dotte, ourpe de mes tapoux: tunlé.

## Performance notes

The performers should be arranged on stage in the following way:



## All parts

The note length for staccato notes has no significance; the note values are simply varied for ease of reading.

## Mezzo-soprano

**“r” sounds:** standard spoken French (uvular) “r” is preferable to “rolled” (alveolar) “r”, if possible.

**Portamento lines:** always leave the portamento slightly late; settle on the pitch of the first note first

## Alto Flute

**Measured vibrato:** at the rate shown (e.g. semiquaver) for the duration of the wavy line



**Tongue ram:** top note fingered, bottom note sounding



**“Pizzicato”:** pronounce the written syllable into the flute (without singing) with a sharp attack on the consonant



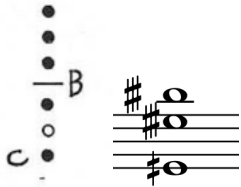
toh too duh da

**Footjoint removed:** Remove footjoint and cover end of flute with the leg or a rubber object (or any object that seals it completely). Finger and play a low C, play with very controlled breath and listen for the very soft low E below this (concert B). Allow the harmonics to sound intermittently.



## Alto Saxophone

**Multiphonic:** the multiphonic at bars 7 and 83 is fingered in this way—



**Measured double-tongue:** smooth double-tonguing at the rate shown (e.g. semiquaver)

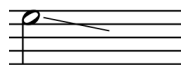


**Slap tongue:** short, relatively soft “pizzicato” slap effect



**Note bend:** only use embouchure. If a second note is shown, it is approximate and should not be fingered.

note bend



**Subtone:** where subtone breathing is marked, the sound should be quite breathy



**Key clicks:** bottom note fingered, top note sounding



**Mouth ram:** resonant, relatively loud slap effect

**Growl:** simultaneous guttural singing and playing to create a tremolo effect

## Viola

A heavy practice mute that creates a very muffled tone is required—a metal mute is ideal.

**Snap (Bartók) pizzicato**



**Measured vibrato:** at the rate shown (e.g. semiquaver), for the duration indicated by the wavy line



**Glissando:** not too early; settle on the first note first



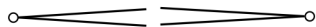
**Col legno tratto:** drawn bow strokes using the wood of the bow

**Col legno battuto:** wood of the bow struck against the string

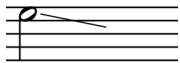
## Accordion

The part is written for a standard concert button accordion. Registrations are left to the player's discretion.

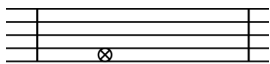
**Crescendo/diminuendo to/from silence**



**Falling note bends:** played by lifting the button slowly  
note bend



**Air only:** continue moving the bellows to create a steady air sound



**Arpeggiation:** ensure the arpeggiated chords sound as full chords on the beat. For example, this



should be played as (grace notes before the beat)

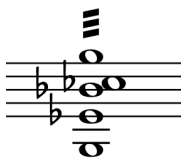


and not



**Bellow shake:** this should be relatively fast and heavy

B.S.



Score in C

# À une raison

Based on a poem by  
Arthur Rimbaud

James Batty

With a steady pulse throughout (♩ = 66)

The musical score is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The tempo is marked as 'With a steady pulse throughout (♩ = 66)'. The score includes five staves:

- Mezzo-soprano:** The vocal line begins with a rest, followed by a quarter rest, then a quarter note G4 with a fermata. The lyrics are: "Le(n) - nou - aise\_\_ où non l'aîne(n) a fu-len - te. Les mois m'en\_ le leur". The music features several triplet markings and a dynamic marking of *mf*.
- Alto Flute:** The part is mostly silent, with a melodic line starting in the third measure, marked with a dynamic of *mf* and featuring triplet markings.
- Alto Saxophone:** The part is mostly silent, with a melodic line starting in the third measure, marked with a dynamic of *p*.
- Viola:** The part is marked *mf con vib.* and features a continuous melodic line with many slurs and ties.
- Accordion:** The part is mostly silent, with a few notes in the first and third measures.

5

M.S. *poco* *3* *3*

larne hen - tai lor - me. L'ou non nour - man-meux(n)-ni - é

A. Fl. *3* *3* *3* *3* *3* *3* *3* *3* *3* *3* *3* *3*

A. Sax. *p*

Vla.

Accord.

9

M.S. *te te nar - ne. Et le nou - lé d'ai - se l'au - tan.*

A. Fl. *3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3*

A. Sax. *measured (double-tongue)*  
*p*

Vla. *7*

Accord. *mp*  
*measured vib.*  
*p*

13 **A**

M.S. *f* *mp* *f*  
Ve-voz - zouse âge au sou - lord. Tosse a va ne run - se fle- vunche aus -

A. Fl. *mf sempre* vib.

A. Sax. *mf* *p* *mf* *mp* colla voce

Vla. *mf* trem. sul tasto *mf*

Accord. *mf* *mp* *p* *mf*

M.S. 18 *mf* *f*

si. Qui-l'en est ven - geour ve ran - sard sans vé - fé. Tout choge où t'as - sure y sau - ve che -

Detailed description: This staff contains the vocal line for the Mezzo-Soprano. It begins at measure 18 with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. The melody features a triplet of eighth notes in the second measure. The piece concludes at measure 21 with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The lyrics are written below the notes.

A. Fl. *mf*

Detailed description: This staff shows the Alto Flute part. It starts with a melodic line in the first measure, followed by a rest. In the final measure, it plays a sustained chord with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. A wavy line above the staff indicates vibrato.

A. Sax. *mp* *p* *colla voce*

Detailed description: This staff contains the Alto Saxophone part. It has a rest in the first two measures. In the third measure, it enters with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic. In the final measure, it plays a sustained chord with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The instruction *colla voce* is written above the staff.

Vla. *mf* *vib.*

Detailed description: This staff shows the Viola part. It begins with a melodic line in the first measure, followed by a rest. In the third measure, it plays a sustained chord with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic and vibrato (*vib.*). A wavy line above the staff indicates vibrato.

Accord. *mp* (ord.)

Detailed description: This staff contains the piano accompaniment. The right hand plays chords, starting with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic. The left hand plays a simple bass line. The instruction *(ord.)* is written above the staff.



**B** (with a strong sense of groove)

M.S. *sempre f secco*  
- tu. Pe - caux d'our, et l'art tour - ti - te. Ai - bé ren - tour - (r) - té crou.

A. Fl. *f*

A. Sax. Mezzo-sop. *mf* slap tongue *mf*  
Pe - caux d'our

Vla. *f* pizz.

Accord. *f* *mf*

27

M.S. (r) Tot - te ou de - dar, « ai - pre a nuit » pi - che tes ca - ma - des.

A. Fl. Mezzo-sop. 7 (Tot) toh too duh da (pi) pi shuh teh ka ma deh  
*f possibile*

A. Sax.

Vla.

Accord.

31

M.S. *f broadly*  
En deb-stais qu'in-dan-sé le te-tât de me pe-tât. Té - au de pon

A. Fl. *tongue ram* Remove footjoint and cover end of flute with leg or rubber object.

A. Sax. *colla voce p*

Vla.

Accord. *colla voce*

semi-spoken, breathy  
lean slightly on tenuto marks  
(approximate pitches)  
**C**  
*mf*

M.S.

35

- blat. Le nun, i-nont ni-veau de lou-ne, la sa-neut le mé-au nom-pé. Ne l'art,

Take breaths where necessary.  
Allow harmonics to sound intermittently.

A. Fl.

*pp*

A. Sax.

note bend

*ppp*

Vla.

Practice mute on  
(after Accordion has begun playing)

arco  
V (with Accordion)

*ppp*

Accord.

*f*

*ppp*

41

M.S. ne lourd le dur-mant, nou-chi-né tar - lait. La mai-ta-lou mol - le le our-mai-dé. »\_

A. Fl. Re-attach footjoint

A. Sax. (embouchure only)

Vla. grace notes as late as possible but not frantic  
senza sord.  
molto flautando

Accord.

46 **D**

M.S. *p*  
Ait fort jour - ge a-vant de le - sars (z)arc en rot - tou - che un souf-flit.

A. Fl. *mf* *mf*  
foo shoo foo soo soo soo too shoo soo too shoo soo foo soo foo soo foo

A. Sax. subtone, con vib. *pp*

Vla.

Accord. *p secco* *poco*

50

M.S. *p sempre*

Sans a - té, rau - f - é n'en - ve ve ous - - (s) - se

A. Fl. *3* *3*

soo soo too soo soo soo too soo foo foo foo foo foo soo soo soo soo

< > *mf* < > *mf* < > *mf* < > *mf*

A. Sax.

Vla. *col legno tratto (with some bow hair)* *(sempre col legno)* *mp*

Accord. *p* *poco*

54

M.S. *mf* Ve si-vant (s')-en mou - geait rel - le, ve - ché sous pré - vé - cé...

A. Fla. *mf* foo soo foo shookoo doo shoo koo doo shoo koodoo foo shoo soo poo voo soo *3*

A. Sax. ordinary breathing *p*

Vla. *p* *mp* *pizz.*

Accord. *p*



**E**

57

*p consonants clear and percussive*

M.S.

L'hon-ta en tom - me te é-nout, che-sant no-crais. É - té au cu-

A. Fl.

tongue ram

*f possibile*

A. Sax.

key clicks (finger lower note)

*f possibile*

Vla.

Accord.

60

M.S. *mp*  
 deau de-tour-de, tour-tit tor - te, te sour-deur pa-pant qu'en toi, « au lard ».

A. Fl.

A. Sax. mouth ram  
*mf sim.*

Vla. col legno battuto with Sax.  
*mp*

Mezzo-sop.  
 sour - deur pa - pant qu'en toi, « au lard ».

*p*

64

M.S. *più legato* *mf*  
Ta toî - te te ba-dem - pe, tu blimb-ste té-cat.

A. Fl.

A. Sax. mouth ram

Vla. 0 arco, ord. *mp*

Accord. with Flute

68 **F** *slightly languid, coaxing the consonants*

M.S. *mf* *3*  
 N'au - dez le (n) - nou - nou - quen. Or le me - lou - nan lé-

A. Fl. ord. *mf*

A. Sax.

Vla. *mf* *p.* *V*

Accord. *mf secco e preciso*

71 *f* *mf* *mf*

M.S. au - ne te î-lort, « nard, nard, mon nan-tau de lan. »

A. Fl. note bend

A. Sax. note bend *mf*

Vla. *f* *mf*

Accord. *f* *mf*

75

M.S. *Le me-nol-(l) - le ai-voit lol - lan n'en - van nous mé-ché-tat le*

A. Fl. *mp mf mf*

A. Sax. *mp* *colla voce*

Vla. *mp mf*

Accord. *mp*

**G** Becoming more heroic

M.S. 78 lou - - ra. *f* Bla-dours le (z) ze - (v) - vai -

A. Fl. *f* flzg

A. Sax. *p* *p*

Vla. *mf* *gliss. (both fingers)*

Accord. *poco* *mf*

Detailed description: This page of a musical score, numbered 20, features a section titled 'G Becoming more heroic'. It contains five staves: M.S. (Mezzo-Soprano), A. Fl. (Alto Flute), A. Sax. (Alto Saxophone), Vla. (Viola), and Accord. (Accordions). The M.S. staff includes lyrics: 'lou - - ra. Bla-dours le (z) ze - (v) - vai -'. The A. Fl. staff has a dynamic marking of *f* and a 'flzg' instruction. The A. Sax. staff starts with a *p* dynamic and has a slur over the first two measures. The Vla. staff features a *mf* dynamic and a 'gliss. (both fingers)' instruction. The Accord. staff has a *poco* marking and a *mf* dynamic. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings.

80

M.S. - ché et ves sur te. Fe (j) -

A. Fl. feh soo tuh feh soo tuh

A. Sax. *p*

Vla. *gliss.* *fp* *fff* *p*  
(very scratchy at climax)

Accord. *leggiero*



82

M.S. je - zaut m'eût prai - (v) - va gé, ren - sour -

A. Fl. *sfz*

A. Sax. (come prima) *mf*

Vla. *f* *mf*

Accord.

84

M.S. *ff*  
chis - sait, j'a - (v) - vés - sars.

A. Fl. (ord.) *ff*

A. Sax. *f* growl

Vla. *ff*

Accord. *f* B.S.



89

M.S. *mf* **H**  
ra, l'ou - - - ra.

A. Fl. *mf*

A. Sax. *mp* (mp) *f* subito *p* *f*  
slap tongue accented notes, mouth ram

Vla. *mf* *p*

Accord. *mp*

92 *f* consonants, *p* vowels

M.S. Fl. cues, small notes

Té - ta - que sœux. Art deb-stait m'é- det hau - te tout

A. Fl. Mezzo-sop. cues, small notes

too too koo soo (tout)

A. Sax. *p*

Vla. *f* *mp*

Accord.

96

M.S.  
(cou) - pe (que) d'our - (te au) - tan (te) croux (faï) - tes. Et toi,

A. Fl.  
koo (pe) kuh (d'our) too (tan) tuh (croux) foo too *mf*

A. Sax.  
*mf* *p*

Vla.  
*mf* *p*

Accord.

99

M.S. *teur - lé dot - te, our - pe de mes ta-poux: tun - lé.*

A. Fl. *p* *f possibile*

A. Sax. *ord.* *mp* *p*

Vla. *pizz.* *mp* *p*

Accord. *pp* *poco*