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Coalescence

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COALESCENCE

For mixed choir and string quartet
(2018)

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ABOUT THE WORK

I often find myself focusing on the subtle sounds that accompany the music-making process. The discrete breaths of a singer between phrases, the noise of the bow on the string: I consider these sounds to be as much a part of the piece as the “music” itself. In *Coalescence*, I explore this duality between noise and pitch by shifting the structural roles that these elements play.

My text setting contrasts phonetics with words, which I use in correspondence to the noise-pitch spectrum. The text is comprised of excerpts from Charles Baudelaire’s *Ciel Brouillé*. The poem’s symbolism addresses notions of memory, hope, and trepidation, to exemplify the depth and beauty in the ordinary.

Ciel brouillé

On dirait ton regard d'une vapeur couvert;
Ton oeil mystérieux (est-il bleu, gris ou vert?)
Alternativement tendre, rêveur, cruel,
Réfléchit l'indolence et la pâleur du ciel.

One would say that your gaze was veiled with mist;
Your mysterious eyes (are they blue, gray or green ?)
Alternately tender, dreamy, cruel
Reflect the indolence and pallor of the sky

Tu rappelles ces jours blancs, tièdes et voilés,
Qui font se fondre en pleurs les coeurs ensorcelés,
Quand, agités d'un mal inconnu qui les tord,
Les nerfs trop éveillés raillent l'esprit qui dort.

You call to mind those days, white, soft, and mild
That make enchanted hearts bust into tears,
When, shaken by a mysterious, wracking pain
The nerves, too wide-awake, jeer at the sleeping mind.

Tu ressembles parfois à ces beaux horizons
Qu'allument les soleils des brumeuses saisons...
Comme tu resplendis, paysage mouillé
Qu'enflamment les rayons tombant d'un ciel brouillé!

You resemble at times those gorgeous horizons
That the sun sets ablaze in the seasons of mist
How resplendent you are, landscape drenched with rain,
Aflame with rays that fall from a cloudy sky!

Ô femme dangereuse, ô séduisants climats!
Adorerai-je aussi ta neige et vos frimas,
Et saurai-je tirer de l'implacable hiver
Des plaisirs plus aigus que la glace et le fer?

O dangerous woman, O alluring climates!
Will I also adore your snow and your hoar-frost,
And can I draw from your implacable winter
Pleasures keener than iron or ice ?

— Charles Baudelaire

Coalescence was commissioned by Ensemble Edge and Martha Petri with support from Statens Kunstfond and the Danish Arts Foundation. The work was premiered on August 11, 2018 at Symfonisk Sal (Musikhuset Aarhus) in Aarhus, Denmark.

Performance Notes

General:



circles at edge of crescendos and diminuendos indicate that the starting/ending dynamic is niente.

Voices:



air noise - audible exhale (inhale is sometimes indicated).



register of air -high, medium, or low (relative to singer's range).



vocal fry

Strings:

SP

sul ponticello -close to bridge

ST

sul tasto - near fingerboard

Ord.

ordinario - return to normal style of playing

Flaut.

flautando - flute-like

Multiphonic

A harmonic that produces multiple pitches. I only specify approximate placement of node, the sounding results will vary between performers and instruments.



gradual change from one sound or style of playing to another.



Apply bow pressure to distort pitch. Contour of the shape dictates the amount of bow pressure to apply.



Diamond noteheads refer to harmonics; indicating where the fingers are placed. The sounding pitches will be indicated in parenthesis. Roman numerals refer to which string the harmonic is being played on.



Harmonic glissando



Dampen strings with hand to produce a pitchless sound.



Bow the body of the instrument, preferably on the waist of the instrument

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9

S

A

T

B

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

s e a o

s e a o

a e a o

a e a o

sounding from afar

III. ST

SP

to harm

ST

ppp

p

mf

sounding from afar

IV. ST

SP

to harm

ST

ppp

mp

ppp

sounding from afar

IV. ST

SP

to harm

ST

ppp

mp

ppp

sounding from afar

ST

SP

to harm

ST

ppp

mp

ppp

16

S

ppp *f*

e a o s

S (div.)

mf *mf* *f*

s s s

A

mf *mf* *f*

s s s

T

mf *ppp* Inhale *mf* *ppp* *mf*

8 e a o o a e a o

B

mf *ppp* Inhale *mf* *ppp* *mf*

e a o o a e a o

Vln. I

16 *p* *ppp* *p* *mf* *ppp* *mf*

III. molto flaut. very light bow

II. SP multiphonic

II. SP very light bow

Vln. II

mf *ppp* *mf* *ppp* *mf*

pitchless sound on body of instrument

Vla.

mf *ppp* *mf* *ppp*

pitchless sound on body of instrument

Vc.

mf *ppp* *mf* *ppp* *mf*

pitchless sound on body of instrument

II. SP multiphonic

8va - 1

25

[illegible]

29

S *mf* *p* *ff*
s e a

A *non vib.*
ppp
Tu

T *mp* *p* *ff*
a o e a

B *f* *p* *ff*
o a o e

Vln. I *p* ST IV. *to harm* *SP*
ff

Vln. II *f* ST *to harm* *SP*
f

Vla. *ppp* *p* ST *SP*
f

Vc. ST *SP*
f

COALESCENCE

34

S

a o o

mf *ff*

A

Tu

p

T

8

Tu

ppp non vib. *p* *ppp*

B

a o e

mf *ff*

Vln. I

34 →ST →SP

ppp *f* *p* *mf*

Vln. II

→ST →SP

ppp *p* *ffp* *mf*

multiphonic

Vla.

→ST →SP

ppp *f* *p* *mf*

Vc.

→ST →SP

ppp *f* *p* *mf*

Detailed description: This page of a musical score, titled 'COALESCENCE', contains measures 34 through 37. It features five vocal staves (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and four instrumental staves (Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Violoncello). The vocal parts have lyrics: Soprano ('a o o'), Alto ('Tu'), Tenor ('Tu'), and Bass ('a o e'). The instrumental parts are marked with dynamic changes and articulation. Violin I and Cello follow a pattern of *ppp* to *f* to *p* to *mf*. Violin II has a *ppp* to *p* to *ffp* to *mf* pattern, with a 'multiphonic' section in measure 36. Viola follows the *ppp* to *f* to *p* to *mf* pattern. The vocal parts have various dynamics: Soprano (*mf*, *ff*), Alto (*p*), Tenor (*ppp*, *p*, *ppp*), and Bass (*mf*, *ff*). The Tenor part includes the instruction 'non vib.'.

39

S *mf* *ppp* *p* non vib.
a o Tu

A *ppp* *p*
Tu

T *p*
8 Tu

B *mf* *ppp* *p* Inhale
a o a o

Vln. I *molto flaut. very light/fast bow, as much noise as pitch* *SP* (as close to bridge as possible)* *sim. (molto flaut.)* *SP**
(IV.) *ff* *p* *ff*

Vln. II *molto flaut. very light/fast bow, as much noise as pitch* *SP* (as close to bridge as possible)* *sim. (molto flaut.)* *SP**
ff *p* *ff*

Vla. *molto flaut. very light/fast bow, as much noise as pitch* *SP* (as close to bridge as possible)* *sim. (molto flaut.)* *SP**
(IV.) *ff* *p* *ff*

Vc. *molto flaut. very light/fast bow, as much noise as pitch* *SP* (as close to bridge as possible)* *sim. (molto flaut.)* *SP**
ff *p* *ff*

44 Serenely

S
ppp *p* *ppp* *p*
 Tu _____ Tu _____ ra - pelles ces jours blancs, et voi - les

A
p *p*
 Tu _____ Tu _____ ra - pelles _____ ces jours blancs, tiè - des et voi - les _____

T
p *p* Div.
 Tu _____ Tu ra - pelles ces jours blancs, tiè - des et voi - les

B
p *p*
 Tu _____ Tu ra - pelles ces jours blancs, et voi - les

Vln. I
 44 like an aura around the choir
ppp *p* *ppp* *p*

Vln. II
 like an aura around the choir
p *p*

Vla.
 like an aura around the choir
p *p*

Vc.
 like an aura around the choir
p *p*

rit. -----

S *p* 52 Qui font se fon - dre en pleurs les coeurs en - sor - ce - *mp* *mf* *p*

A *p* Qui font se fon - dre en pleurs les coeurs en - sor - ce - *mp* *mf* *p*

T *p* Unis. 8 Qui font se fon - dre en pleurs les coeurs en - sor - *mp* *mf*

B *p* Qui font se fon - dre en pleurs les coeurs en - sor - *mp* *mf*

Vln. I *p* 52 *mp* *mf*

Vln. II *p* *mf* *f*

Vla. *p* *mp* *mf*

Vc. *p* *mp* *mf*

60 *a tempo*

S
lés,

A
lés, qui les

T
8 Qua - nd a - gi - tés d'un mal mal in - con - nu qui les

B
Qua - nd a - gi - tés d'un mal mal in - con - nu qui les

B (div.)
Qua - nd a - gi - tés d'un d'un mal in - con - nu

Vln. I

Vln. II
ST and legato (like a voice)

Vla.
ST and legato (like a voice)

Vc.
ST and legato (like a voice)

68

p *mp* *p* *p_{sub}* *accel. - - - -*

slightly faster

S in - con - nu qui les tord, Les les

A qui les tord, Les Les

T 8 qui les tord, Les Les 3

B in 3 con - nu qui les tord, Les Les

Unis. *p* *p_{sub}*

68

ST and legato (like a voice)

Vln. I *mp* *ppp* *p* *ppp*

Vln. II *mp* *ppp* *p* (gentle lift)

Vla. ST and legato (like a voice) *ppp* *p* 3 *ppp*

Vc. *ppp* *p* *ppp*

----- *rit.* ----- *a tempo* ----- *accel.* -----

73

S *f* *p* *mp*
nerfs trop é - veil - lés rail - lent l'e -

A *f* *p* *mp*
nerfs trop é - veil - lés rail - lent l'e -

T *f* *p* *mp*
nerfs trop é - veil - lés rail - lent rail -

B *f* *p* *mp*
nerfs trop é - veil - lés Les nerfs trop

73

Vln. I *p* *ppp* *p*
espress. *Ord.*

Vln. II *ppp* *p* *mp* *ppp* *p*
espress. *Ord.*

Vla. *p* *ppp*

Vc. *p* *ppp* *p*

----- rit. ----- a tempo ----- accel. -----

78

S
sprit _____ qui do - rt rail - lent l'e -

A
sprit _____ qui do - rt rail - lent l'e -

T
8 - lent l'e - sprit qui do - rt rail - lent l'e -

B
_____ é - veil - lés trop é - veil - lés rail - lent l'e - sprit

78

Vln. I
pp 3 mp

Vln. II
pp 3 mp

Vla.
3 p pp mp espress.

Vc.
pp mp

84 Unbridled (♩ = c. 100)

Vocal Parts:

- Soprano (S):** sprit qui dort. *ff* *mf*
- Alto (A):** sprit qui dort. *ff* *mf*
- Tenor (T):** *espress. sprit* 3 qui dort. *ff* *mf*
- Bass (B):** qui dort. *ff* *mf*

Instrumental Parts:

- Vln. I:** *fp* *ffpp* *ffpp*
- Vln. II:** *fp* *ffpp* *ffpp*
- Vla.:** *fp* *ffpp* *ffpp*
- Vc.:** *fp* *ffpp* *ffpp*

Norm. (no longer "like a voice")

86 *ff*

S

A

T

B

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

ffpp *ffpp* *mf* *pp* *ffpp*

repeat freely: use a lot of rubato, alternate tempos

ffpp *f* *p*

repeat freely: use a lot of rubato, alternate tempos

pp *ffpp* *ffpp* *mf* *p*

repeat freely: use a lot of rubato, alternate tempos

ffpp *f* *p*

89

S

A

T

B

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

89

ffpp *ffpp* *<ffpp* *ff*

ffpp *<ffpp* *ff*

ffpp *<ffpp* *ff*

ffpp *<ffpp* *ff*

92 *p*

S ces beaux hor - i - zons _____

A *p* ces beaux hor - i - zons _____

T *p* ces beaux hor - i - zons _____

B *p* ces beaux hor - i - zons _____

92 *ffpp* *mfpp* *mfpp* SP 3

Vln. I

92 *ffpp* *mfpp* *mfpp* SP 3

Vln. II

Vla. *ffpp* *mfpp* SP 3

Vc. *ffpp* *mfpp* SP 3

95

S *mf* *p* 3 ray - ons tom - bant d'un ciel brou - illé!

A *mf* *p* 3 ray - ons tom - bant d'un ciel brou - illé!

T *mf* *p* 3 ray - ons tom - bant d'un ciel brou - illé!

B *mf* *p* 3 ray - ons tom - bant d'un ciel brou - illé!

Vln. I 95 *f* *p* *f* *p* *mfpp* *mfpp* Ord. 3

Vln. II *f* *p* *f* *p* *mfpp* *mfpp* Ord. 3

Vla. *f* *p* *f* *p* *mfpp* *mfpp* Ord. 3

Vc. *f* *p* *f* *p* *mfpp* *mfpp* Ord. 3

The musical score for measures 99-102 features a vocal quartet (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and a string ensemble (Violins I & II, Viola, and Cello). The vocal parts are in 4/4 time, with the Soprano and Alto parts starting on a whole note and the Tenor and Bass parts starting on a half note. The vocal parts are marked with *ff* (fortissimo) and *mf* (mezzo-forte) dynamics, with a crescendo leading to a final note. The string ensemble is in 4/4 time, with the Violins I and II parts starting on a half note and the Viola and Cello parts starting on a whole note. The string parts are marked with *ffpp* (fortissimissimo piano) and *mfpp* (mezzofortissimissimo piano) dynamics, with a crescendo leading to a final note. The string parts also include triplets and a *molto vib.* (molto vibrato) marking.

103

106 Vehemently *f*

S *f* 3 *ô femme*

A *f* *ô femme*

T *f* *ô femme*

B

Vln. I *ffpp* *p* *ffpp* *f* 3

Vln. II *ffpp* *f* *p* *ffpp* *fp* 3

Vla. *ffpp* *ffpp* *fp*

Vc. *ffpp* *ffpp* *fp*

107

S
dan ge reu - se ————— ô sé - dui -

A
dan ge reu - se ô sé - dui - sants cli - mats! A - dore - rai je

T
dan ge reu - se ô sé - dui - sants cli - mats! A - dore - rai je

B
f
Ô femme dan ge reu - se ô —————

Vln. I
107
mfpp

Vln. II
fpp *mfpp*

Vla.
fpp *mfpp*

Vc.
fpp *mfpp*

III

S

sants cli - mats! Et sau - rai

A

aus - si ta nei - ge et vos fri - mas, Et sau - rai

T

aus - si ta nei - ge et vos fri - mas, Et sau - rai

B

sé - dui - sants cli - mats! Et sau - rai

Vln. I

III Ord.

ppp fpp mf pp mfpp

Vln. II

III Ord.

pp fpp mf pp mfpp

Vla.

→ Ord.

ppp fpp mf pp mfpp

Vc.

→ Ord.

ppp fpp mfpp

3

118 Expansively

rit. *mf* *a tempo* *f*

S
je ti - rer de l'im - pla - cable hi - ver

A
je ti - rer de l'im - pla - cable hi - ver

T
je ti - rer de l'im - pla - cable hi - ver

B
je ti - rer de l'im - pla - cable hi - ver

Vln. I
ff *mf* *fpp* *fz*

Vln. II
ff *mf* *fpp* *fz*

Vla.
ff *mf* *fpp* *fz*

Vc.
p *ff* *mf* *fpp* *fz*

120

S

hi - ver Des plai - sirs plus ai -

A

hi - ver

T

hi - ver

B

Des plai - sirs plus ai - gus que

Vln. I

fz *fpp* *f* *pp*

Vln. II

fz *fpp* *mf* *p*

Vla.

fz *fpp* *mf* *p*

Vc.

fz *fpp* *f* *pp*

The musical score is for a piece titled 'COALESCENCE' on page 24. It features four vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and four instrumental parts (Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello). The vocal parts have lyrics in French. The instrumental parts include dynamic markings such as *fz*, *fpp*, *f*, *pp*, *mf*, and *p*. The score is divided into measures, with a 120-measure mark at the beginning of the instrumental parts. The vocal parts have lyrics: Soprano: 'hi - ver Des plai - sirs plus ai -'; Alto: 'hi - ver'; Tenor: 'hi - ver'; Bass: 'Des plai - sirs plus ai - gus que'. The instrumental parts have dynamic markings: Violin I: *fz*, *fpp*, *f*, *pp*; Violin II: *fz*, *fpp*, *mf*, *p*; Viola: *fz*, *fpp*, *mf*, *p*; Violoncello: *fz*, *fpp*, *f*, *pp*.

rit. ----- [125] Reflective (♩ = c. 76)

123

S *ppp*
gus que la glace et le Tu ra - pelles

A *p*
Tu ra - pelles Tu ra - pelles

T *p*
Tu ra - pelles Tu ra - pelles

B *p*
la glace et le fer? Tu ra - pelles

123

Vln. I *ppp*
SP* (as close to bridge as possible).
molto flaut. very light bow non vib.

Vln. II *ppp*
SP* (as close to bridge as possible).
molto flaut. very light bow non vib.

Vla. *ppp*
SP* (as close to bridge as possible).
molto flaut. very light bow non vib.

Vc. *ppp*
SP* (as close to bridge as possible).
molto flaut. very light bow non vib.

127 *mp* *p*

S ces jours blancs, tiè - des et voi - les _____

A ces jours blancs, tiè - des et voi - les _____

T ces jours blancs, tiè - des et voi - les _____

B _____ blancs, tiè - des et voi - les _____

127 *molto vib.* *p* *ppp* *o*

Vln. I

127 *molto vib.* *p* *ppp* *o*

Vln. II

127 *molto vib.* *p* *ppp* *o*

Vla.

127 *molto vib.* *p* *ppp* *o*

Vc.

131

S *p*
Tu

A *p*
Tu

T *p*
Tu

B *p*
Tu

Vln. I *ppp* *p* *ppp*
IV. non vib. *molto vib.*
3 3 5 3 3

Vln. II *ppp* *p* *ppp*
non vib. *molto vib.*
3 3 3

Vla. *ppp* *p* *ppp*
IV. non vib. *molto vib.*
3 3 5 3 3

Vc. *ppp* *p* *ppp*
III. non vib. *molto vib.*
3 3 3

136 Ethereal as before,
becoming distant

134

S
ra - pelles _____ a o _____ e a _____

A
ra - pelles _____ a o _____ e a _____

T
ra - pelles _____ a o _____ e a _____

B
ra - pelles _____ a o _____ e a _____

Vln. I
ST → SP → ST → SP
mf p ff ppp mf p

Vln. II
ST → SP → ST → SP
mf p ff ppp p mfpp

Vla.
ST → SP → ST → SP
mf p ff ppp mf p

Vc.
ST → SP → ST → SP
mf p ff ppp mf p

to air

to harm

139

S *ff* *ff*

A *ff* *ff*

T *ff* *ff*

B *ff* *ff*

Vln. I *f* *ff*

Vln. II *ppp* *mf* *ff*

Vla. *f* *ff*

Vc. *f* *ff*

molto flaut.
very light/fast bow,
as much noise as pitch

SP* (as close to
bridge as possible).

molto flaut

multiphonic

144

S

A

T

B

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

mf *ppp* *p* Inhale

mf *ppp* *p* Inhale

mf *ppp* *p* Inhale

mf *ppp* *p* Inhale

sim. (molto flaut.) → SP* (as close to bridge as possible). → molto flaut → SP* (as close to bridge as possible).

sim. (molto flaut.) → SP* (as close to bridge as possible). → molto flaut → SP* (as close to bridge as possible).

sim. (molto flaut.) → SP* (as close to bridge as possible). → molto flaut → SP* (as close to bridge as possible).

sim. (molto flaut.) → SP* (as close to bridge as possible). → molto flaut → SP* (as close to bridge as possible).

ff *p* *ff*

ff *p* *ff*

ff *p* *ff*

ff *p* *ff*

149

S *mp* *ppp* Inhale

A *mp* *ppp* Inhale

T *mp* *ppp* Inhale

B *mp* *ppp* Inhale

Vln. I *molto flaut* *mf* *molto flaut*

Vln. II *molto flaut* *mf* *molto flaut*

Vla. *molto flaut* *mf* *molto flaut*

Vc. *molto flaut* *mf* *molto flaut*

pitchless sound on dampened strings

I. SP* (as close to bridge as possible).

II. SP* (as close to bridge as possible).

III. SP* (as close to bridge as possible).

IV. SP* (as close to bridge as possible).