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Title

Potters Field

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Potters Field

Four movements for
String Quartet and
Soprano

2015

Potters Field

For string quartet and soprano

Movement I- Off the shores of an asylum

Movement II- Pine Box

Movement III- Hart Island

Movement IV- A Field for Strangers

The Story-

Potter's field or common grave is a term for a place for the burial of unknown or indigent people. The expression derives from the Bible, referring to a field used for the extraction of potter's clay, which was useless for agriculture but could be used as a burial site.

This piece focus's on New York's Potters Field called Hart Island. Hart Island is a small island in New York City at the western end of Long Island Sound. At various times during its history, Hart Island has had a workhouse, a hospital, prisons, a Civil War internment camp, a reformatory, a missile base and the largest tax-funded cemetery in the world.

Burials of unknowns were in single plots and identified adults and children were buried in mass graves. In 1913, adults and children under five were buried in separate mass graves. Unknowns are mostly adults. They are frequently disinterred when families are able to locate their relatives through photographs and fingerprints kept on file at the Office of the Medical Examiner. Adults are buried in trenches with three sections of 48 individuals to make disinterment easier. Children, mostly infants, are rarely disinterred and are buried in trenches of 1,000. One third of over 280,000 buried there are infants and stillborn babies.

The dead are buried in trenches. Babies are placed in coffins of various sizes, and are stacked five coffins high and usually twenty coffins across. Adults are placed in larger pine boxes placed according to size and are stacked three coffins high and two coffins across. The potter's field is also used to dispose of amputated body parts, which are placed in boxes labeled "limbs".

Those interred on Hart Island are not necessarily homeless or indigent, as hearsay has it, but people who could either not afford the expenses of private funerals or who were unclaimed by relatives who are frequently not notified within a two-week period.

Movement I- Off the Shores of an Asylum-

Imagine being placed in an internment camp? A large detention center created for political opponents, enemy aliens, people with mental illness, members of specific ethnic or religious groups, civilian inhabitants of a critical war-zone, or other groups of people, usually during a war.

And all you hear in the distance is a foghorn, waves crashing, fog rolling in.

Please note the double stops! Each one has purposefully has an open string, right next to the string being played, should make double stops fairly easy.

Anytime a c note is played do give it a bit of emphasis, as it's the pitch of the foghorn.

Movement II-Pine Box

For: percussive breathing, voice and cello

Place effects on vocals if possible, large spacey reverb and a 5.1 delay. When the middle c note is sung, use the syllable (bum) like a bell tone

Please note all string players to make a tapping sound like nails into a coffin, could be tapping any part of instrument, stand, floor etc. Please all choose different rhythms, not necessarily in time, but not distracting.

Also if played with no vocalist, the vocal part can be played with violin, and if your feeling adventurous, violin 2, and viola play same part in a round, starting a quarter note later, do decrease the volume as if a surround delay pedal and fading.

Percussive breathing is defined in this piece with (+) for in and (o) for out. No pitch required, although interesting use of the voice is encouraged. Use a mic if possible.

Movement III- Hart Island- no special instructions

Movement IV- A Field for Strangers- violin 1 or one of the violin 1's could be electric, and connected to a delay pedal, there are marked passages when to apply the effect. This effect may be excluded for performance reason

Video- A video is available to be shown behind the Quartet, live. This is optional

Potters Field
I.
Off the Shores of an Asylum

Composer
Dom Aiken

$\text{♩} = 50$

Violin I

mf slight vib. slight vib.

Violin II

Viola

Cello

mf legato-like a fog horn

6 vln 1 slight vib. slight vib. slight vib.

6 vln 2 *mp*

6 vla

6 vc > > > > >

Potters Field

I

$\text{♩} = 100$

11

vln 1

vln 2

vla

vc

port.

Legato

port.

mf

mf

mp

mf

mf

16

vln 1

vln 2

vla

vc

port.

8va

8va

♩ = 80

Potters Field
I

21 B double stops, use open strings sul ponticello

vln 1

vln 2

vla

vc

f

26

vln 1

vln 2

vla

vc

cres. *accel* *accel*

cres. *accel* *accel*

Sul Ponticello

mp *accel* *accel*

Sul Ponticello

mp *accel*

Potters Field

I

8^{va}

31 A Tempo

vln 1 *cres.* *mp* *p* *mf* arco

vln 2 *cres.* *mp* *p* *mf* arco

vla *cres.* *mf* arco

vc *mf* *mp* *mf* arco

(8^{va})

36

vln 1

vln 2

vla

vc

Potters Field
I

41

vln 1

vln 2

vla

vc

46

vln 1

vln 2

vla

vc

rit.

p

Potters Field: II

Score

Pine Box

Dom Aiken

Soft and somber

♩ = 40

can be mic'd, in the background

percussive

perc. breathing

Legend: † = in, ○ = out

Notes: Percussive breathing with in-breath (†) and out-breath (○) markings. The notation shows a series of notes with these markings, indicating the timing of breaths.

voice use 5.1 delay effect

p

voice

Notes: Voice line with lyrics "ah ah ah" and dynamic marking *mf*.

mf bom

ah ah ah

Cello

Notes: Cello line with dynamic marking *mf* and instruction "legato-like a fog horn".

mf

4

Pr B

Notes: Percussive breathing with in-breath (†) and out-breath (○) markings.

breathy

un wan ted

voice

Notes: Voice line with lyrics "ah bom ah ah ah ah" and dynamic marking *mf*.

ah

bom

ah ah ah ah

Vlc.

Notes: Cello line with dynamic marking *mf*.

7

Pr B

Notes: Percussive breathing with in-breath (†) and out-breath (○) markings.

voice

Notes: Voice line with lyrics "ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah" and dynamic marking *f*.

ah

ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah

f

Vlc.

Notes: Cello line with dynamic marking *f*.

f

11

Pr B

voice

mf ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah

11

Vlc.

mf

13

Pr B

rit. breathy un wan ted

voice

rit. ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah

13

Vlc.

rit.

16

Pr B

a tempo breathy *rit.* un wan ted

voice

a tempo ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah un wan ted

16

Vlc.

a tempo

Potters field

III Hart Island

Dom Aiken

Score

freely-range ♩ = 60

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Cello

arco

p

legato-like a fog horn

mp

Detailed description: This block shows the first five measures of the score. The Violin I part is mostly silent, with a short phrase of eighth notes in measure 5 marked *p* and *arco*. The Violin II part is also silent. The Viola part plays a series of dotted half notes, starting at *mp*, with a slur over the first four notes and the instruction "legato-like a fog horn". The Cello part is silent.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

mf

arco

mp

mp

legato

mp

Detailed description: This block shows measures 6-10. The Violin I part has a melodic line with triplets and slurs, marked *mf*. The Violin II part plays a simple accompaniment of quarter notes, marked *arco* and *mp*. The Viola part continues with dotted half notes, marked *mp*. The Cello part plays a series of dotted half notes, marked *mp* and *legato*.

Potters field
III

Musical score for measures 11-15, featuring Vln. I, Vln. II, Vla., and Vc. The score includes dynamic markings (*mf*, *mp*) and a tempo marking of $\text{♩} = 90$. The Vln. I part includes a *mf* dynamic and a triplet of eighth notes. The Vln. II part includes a *mf* dynamic. The Vla. and Vc. parts include a *mf* dynamic. The Vln. I part includes a *mp* dynamic. The Vln. II part includes a *mp* dynamic. The Vla. and Vc. parts include a *mp* dynamic. The Vln. I part includes a *mp* dynamic. The Vln. II part includes a *mp* dynamic. The Vla. and Vc. parts include a *mp* dynamic.

Musical score for measures 16-20, featuring Vln. I, Vln. II, Vla., and Vc. The score includes dynamic markings (*mf*) and performance instructions (*port.*, *legato*). The Vln. I part includes a *mf* dynamic and a triplet of eighth notes. The Vln. II part includes a *mf* dynamic. The Vla. part includes a *mf* dynamic. The Vc. part includes a *mf* dynamic. The Vln. I part includes a *mf* dynamic. The Vln. II part includes a *mf* dynamic. The Vla. part includes a *mf* dynamic. The Vc. part includes a *mf* dynamic.

Potters field
III

21

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

port.

3

3

3

Detailed description: This system of music covers measures 21 to 25. It features four staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Violoncello. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The Violin I part consists of a series of eighth notes with a long slur. The Violin II part has a whole note followed by a triplet of eighth notes. The Viola part features a complex rhythmic pattern with triplets and slurs. The Violoncello part has a simple bass line with whole notes. A 'port.' (portamento) marking is placed above the Viola staff with a dashed line. The number '3' is used to denote triplets in the Violin II and Viola parts.

26

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

sf

sf

sf

sf

port

3

3

3

3

3

Detailed description: This system of music covers measures 26 to 30. It features the same four staves as the previous system. The key signature remains two flats. The Violin I part has a long slur over measures 26-29, ending with a double bar line and a *sf* (sforzando) marking. The Violin II part has a long slur over measures 26-29, ending with a double bar line and a *sf* marking. The Viola part has a complex rhythmic pattern with triplets and slurs, ending with a double bar line and a *sf* marking. The Violoncello part has a simple bass line with whole notes, ending with a double bar line and a *sf* marking. A 'port' (portamento) marking is placed above the Viola staff with a dashed line. The number '3' is used to denote triplets in the Violin II and Viola parts.

Potters field
III

31

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

f

f

f

f

3

Detailed description: This system of music covers measures 31 to 35. It features four staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Violoncello. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The time signature is not explicitly shown but appears to be 4/4. All instruments play at a forte (*f*) dynamic. The Violin I part begins with a treble clef and a key signature of two flats. It features a melodic line with a triplet of eighth notes in measure 34. The Violin II part has a similar melodic line. The Viola part plays a lower melodic line. The Violoncello part plays a bass line with a long note in measure 31 and a triplet of eighth notes in measure 34. A large slur encompasses the first three measures of the system.

36

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

mf

mf

mf

mf

p

p

p

p

Detailed description: This system of music covers measures 36 to 40. It features the same four staves as the previous system. The key signature remains two flats. The dynamics are marked as mezzo-forte (*mf*) for measures 36-38 and piano (*p*) for measures 39-40. The Violin I part has a melodic line with a crescendo leading to a piano dynamic. The Violin II part has a similar melodic line. The Viola part plays a lower melodic line. The Violoncello part plays a bass line with a long note in measure 36 and a crescendo leading to a piano dynamic. A large slur encompasses the first three measures of the system.

Potters Field

Score

IV- A field for Strangers

Dom Aiken

freely

soprano

mp a fi e e e e eild for stran gers you are not are not rit. wel come here

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Cello

$\text{♩} = 100$

sop.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

mp *mf* *port*

Potters Field IV

2
8

sop. *mp* ah - - - *cresc.* - - - *cresc.* - - -

Vln. I *mp*

Vln. II *mp*

Vla. *mp*

Vc. *mp*

13

sop. *ff* - *f*

Vln. I *8va* *decrec* *3* *3* *cresc* *port* *3* *ff* *f* *3*

Vln. II *decrec* *3* *3* *cresc* *port* *3* *ff* *f*

Vla. *decrec* *3* *3* *cresc* *port* *3* *ff* *f*

Vc. *decrec* *3* *3* *cresc* *port* *3* *ff* *f*

Potters Field IV

18

sop.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

3

3

3

3

delay pedal

$\text{♩} = 100$

23

sop.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

mp It's Been so long since I've seen your face

end delay

mp

mp

mp

mp

Potters Field IV

4

29

sop.
felt your breath The sun it sets a - cross the lake see you wait for death for

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

35

sop.
me our love was meant to be - close your eyes i'll be here wait - ing

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Potters Field IV

41

sop. on the oth-er side we'll be for all e-ter-ne-ty

Vln. I *mf*

Vln. II *mf*

Vla. *mf*

Vc. *mf*

47

sop. *mf* ah - - - *cresc.* *gva-* - - - *f* 3

Vln. I *cresc.* *f* 3

Vln. II *cresc.* *f* 3

Vla. *cresc.* *f* 3

Vc. *cresc.* *f* 3

Potters Field IV

6
52

sop.

sf

(8^{va})

Vln. I

sf delay pedal

Vln. II

sf

Vla.

sf

Vc.

sf

55

sop.

(8^{va})

Vln. I

cresc. *f*

Vln. II

cresc. *f*

Vla.

cresc. *f*

Vc.

cresc. *f*

Potters Field IV

60

sop. - - - - lay to rest in be with

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

66

sop. me in lay to rest in be with me in pot ters field

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

rit.

Fine