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Between Magic and Possibility

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Between Magic and Possibility

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BETWEEN MAGIC AND POSSIBILITY

for soprano and flute

Founder or finder
Under the sign
Gone
Clouds lightening feathers
So that now
Speaking to the dead
Found somewhere

Texts from *Track* by Norman Finkelstein

published by Shearsman Books, 2012

Between Magic and Possibility, for soprano and flute, sets eleven segments from Norman Finkelstein's poem *Track*, a spellbinding work that explores the darkness surrounding us. The poet and critic, Mark Scroggins, perfectly articulates the expressive characteristics that attracted me to this awe-inspiring work. "The darkness is indeed all around us here--in the vibrating, buzzing confusion of a media society, in the still jarring echoes of the Holocaust, and in the chilly 'space evacuated / by a retreating deity.' But *Track*, with its impressive array of forms, tone, and voices, excavates an exhilarating variety of paths through that darkness. . . Following them, we may not see precisely where the paths are leading, but we know we're getting somewhere."

The music reflects the magical, enigmatic quality of these texts. Each of the piece's seven songs contrasts in one form or another with those that precede or follow it. Several are mysterious, with the flute creating a hazy atmosphere through the use of extended techniques such as timbral trills and flutter tongue. Others are more anguished or even jocular; in these the flute dances around the voice with large angular leaps and sudden outbursts. The overall mood is slightly melancholy yet tinged with the hope that each of us will find that place "between magic and possibility."

My heartfelt thanks go to Norman Finkelstein for giving me permission to set these texts and to the marvelous soprano, Jackie Stevens, for asking me to write a piece for soprano and flute.

Duration: circa 13 minutes
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#

1 Founder or finder
 you among the many
 traced to the city
 you among the lost

You among the last
 voices from Paradise
 founder founder
 whispers the finder.

#

2 Under the sign of Mercury
 messages come and go

Borne through the air
 and across the water

Born under the sign
 that comes and goes

I say yes and no to my fate.

#

3 Gone
 in a single stroke
 gone into the world

Or gone into that world
 leaving me.

#

Empty house
 empty landscape

Evacuated of all meaning

Save this

Save this.

#

4 A
 (clouds
 lightening
 feathers
 eyes
 beasts
 kisses
 tears)

#

5 So that now
 all is broken
 and has been made whole

So that now
 all is whole
 and cannot be broken.

#

6 Speaking to the dead
 for the dead

Speaking of speaking
 to or for the dead

Speaking what was
 whispered in secret

Speaking the whispers
 of or in the clouds.

#

Whispered writhe
 or wraith

Whispered writhing
 wraith words

Writhing wraiths
 whispered the word

Writing wraiths
 whispered beauty.

#

7 Found somewhere between
 Magic and possibility
 Like a number or metaphor

On the border of the real

Like a number or metaphor
 Magic and possibility
 Found somewhere between.

#

Like her mirrors on the page

Her page of mirrors

On the border of sense

Reflection of the fallen

Tree of heaven

Reflection of the fallen

Fallen world of repetition.

#

And in this
 and in this

And in this
 and in that

What did she see?
 what did she reflect?

Page after page.

poco rit. A tempo

3

15 *mf* *mf* *f*

lost You a-mong the last the last voi-ces from

f *mf* *f*

19 *p*

Par-a- dise

p *f*

23 *mp* *p*

foun - der foun - der whis-pers the

trill 3rd finger left hand 1st trill key 2nd trill key

pp *p*

27 *mp* *p*

fin - der.

(tr) 2nd trill key trill 3rd finger left hand 2nd trill key get very airy

n

Under the sign

♩. = 120, light yet vibrant

f

Un-der the sign of Mer-cu-ry mess-a-ges come and go _____

4

_____ mess-a-ges come and go and go _____

7

mf *f*

un-der the sign _____ un-der the sign of Mer-cu-ry _____

11 *mp* *mf*

Borne through the air and a - cross the wa - ter

mp *mf* *f*

16 *f*

un-der the sign of Mer - cu - ry Born un-der the sign that

20

comes and goes and comes and goes un-der the sign

mp *f*

24 *mp* *mf* *rit.*

Born un-der the sign that comes and goes that comes and goes

6 **A tempo**

28 *mp*

un - der the sign un - der the sign

mp

31 *f*

un-der the sign of Mer - cu - ry I say

f *mf*

36 *mp* 2 2

yes and no to my fate.

mp

42 *p*

p

Gone

7

♩ = 66, plaintive, grieving

f *mp dolce*

Gone in a sin-gle stroke gone in-to the world Or

The first system of the musical score for 'Gone'. It consists of two staves. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 4/4 time signature. It begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic and a tempo/mood marking of '♩ = 66, plaintive, grieving'. The melody features a triplet of eighth notes and a half note. The bottom staff is in bass clef with the same key signature and time signature, providing a harmonic accompaniment. The system concludes with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) and 'dolce' marking.

4 *p*

gone in-to that world leav-ing me__ leav-ing me__

dolce mp p

The second system of the musical score. It continues from the first system. The top staff has a measure rest in 3/4 time, followed by a 4/4 measure, and then a 2/4 measure. The bottom staff features a long melodic line with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic and a 'dolce' marking, followed by a piano (*p*) dynamic. The system is marked with a '4' at the beginning.

8 *mp mf poco f*

Emp - ty house emp-ty land- scape__ Emp - ty

mp mf 5

The third system of the musical score. The top staff starts with a measure rest in 2/4 time, followed by a 4/4 measure, and then a 2/4 measure. The bottom staff continues the melodic line with mezzo-piano (*mp*) and mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamics, and a 'poco f' marking. The system is marked with an '8' at the beginning.

12 *f* *risoluto*

house_____ E - va - cu - a -

5 5 *p* *f p* *f p* *f p* *f p*

risoluto

flz. + flz. + flz. + flz.

16

- ted_____ of all mean - ing_____

f

3 3

20 *mp* *dolce*

Save this_____

mf 6 *p dolce* *mp*

3 3

24 *p*

Save this_____

p 3 *mp* *p*

Clouds lightening feathers

♩ = 184, breathless but joyful

mp

(clouds light-ening feath-ers eyes beasts kiss-es tears

f 5 *sub. p*

5

mp

clouds light-ening feath-ers

mp *f* 5 *sub. p*

9

eyes beasts kiss-es clouds light-ening feath-ers eyes

mp *f*

13 *mp*

clouds light-ening feath-ers kiss-es tears kiss-es clouds light-ening feath-ers

sub. p

18 *mf* *mp*

eyes beasts kiss-es tears eyes beasts kiss-es tears clouds light-ening feath-ers eyes

f *sub. p* *mp* <

24 *p*

clouds light-ening feath-ers eyes beasts kiss es tears

f *sub. p* *sub. f*

29 *A tempo* *mf* *mp*

clouds light-ening feath-ers eyes beast kiss-es clouds light-ening feath-ers eyes)

mf

So that now

11

♩ = 72, sorrowful

mf poco risoluto *f* *mp* dolce

So that now all is bro-ken and has been made whole

6 *mf* *f*

So that now all is whole and can-not be bro ken

11 *p* *mp* *mp*

and can-not be bro - ken. and can-not be

p dolce *p* *p* *p*

16 *p* rit. . . .

leav-ing me leav-ing me leav-ing

p *p* *p* *p*

Speaking to the dead

♩ = 84, tenderly sad

First system of the musical score. It consists of two staves. The top staff is a treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 4/4. It contains four measures of whole rests. The bottom staff is a treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 4/4. It contains four measures of music. The first measure has a five-measure rest (5) and a dynamic marking of *mp*. The second measure has a five-measure rest (5) and a dynamic marking of *p*. The third measure has a five-measure rest (5) and a dynamic marking of *mp*. The fourth measure has a five-measure rest (5) and a dynamic marking of *p*. There are also some slurs and ties in the bottom staff.

5

poco rit.

Second system of the musical score. It consists of two staves. The top staff is a treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 4/4. It contains four measures of whole rests. The bottom staff is a treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 4/4. It contains four measures of music. The first measure has a five-measure rest (5) and a dynamic marking of *pp*. The second measure has a five-measure rest (5) and a dynamic marking of *mp*. The third measure has a five-measure rest (5) and a dynamic marking of *p*. The fourth measure has a five-measure rest (5) and a dynamic marking of *mf*. There are also some slurs and ties in the bottom staff.

♩ = 66

Third system of the musical score. It consists of two staves. The top staff is a treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 4/4. It contains four measures of music. The first measure has a dynamic marking of *p*. The second measure has a dynamic marking of *mp*. The third measure has a dynamic marking of *p*. The fourth measure has a dynamic marking of *p*. The bottom staff is a treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 4/4. It contains four measures of music. The first measure has a dynamic marking of *pp*. The second measure has a dynamic marking of *p*. The third measure has a dynamic marking of *mp*. The fourth measure has a dynamic marking of *mp*. There are also some slurs and ties in the bottom staff.

Speak-ing to the dead for the dead Speak-ing of speak-ing

14

Fourth system of the musical score. It consists of two staves. The top staff is a treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 4/4. It contains four measures of music. The first measure has a dynamic marking of *mp*. The second measure has a dynamic marking of *p*. The third measure has a dynamic marking of *p*. The fourth measure has a dynamic marking of *p*. The bottom staff is a treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 4/4. It contains four measures of music. The first measure has a dynamic marking of *p*. The second measure has a dynamic marking of *p*. The third measure has a dynamic marking of *mp*. The fourth measure has a dynamic marking of *mp*. There are also some slurs and ties in the bottom staff.

to or for the dead

18

molto accel. ♩ = 132

Fifth system of the musical score. It consists of two staves. The top staff is a treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 4/4. It contains four measures of whole rests. The bottom staff is a treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 4/4. It contains four measures of music. The first measure has a dynamic marking of *f*. The second measure has a dynamic marking of *f*. The third measure has a dynamic marking of *f*. The fourth measure has a dynamic marking of *ff*. There are also some slurs and ties in the bottom staff.

22 $\text{♩} = 76$

p *mf*

Speak-ing to the dead _____ Speak-ing what was

p *mp* senza vibrato

27 *mp*

whis-pered in se-cret _____ Speak-ing the whis-pers _____ of or in the

pp *mp* poco vibr. flz. senza vibr. poco vibr.

31 *f*

clouds. _____ Whis-pered writhe or wraith

mf (poco vibr.) flz.

35

Whis-pered writ - ing wraith words

poco f *mp*

39 *mf*

Writh-ing wraiths whis-pered the word_____ Writ-ing wraiths *p*

p

d#

43

whis-pered beau-ty_____ Writ-ing wraiths

flz.

46

whis-pered Writ-ing_ wraiths._____

pochissimo vibr. flz. senza vibr. flz. *pp*

Found somewhere

♩ = 66, mysterious

The image shows a musical score for "The Bird Song" by John Cage. It consists of two staves of music. The first staff is in 3/4 time and features a melody with lyrics "Found some-where" and "found some-where". The second staff is in 3/4 time and features a melody with lyrics "2nd trill key" and "2nd trill key". The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and trills, as well as performance instructions like "mp" (mezzo-piano) and "p" (piano).

Found some-where found some-where

2nd trill key 2nd trill key

5

mf *mp*

3 3 3 3 3

be-tween ma-gic be-tween ma-gic and

(tr)

mf *mp*

8 *mf* *poco rit.* *mp*

pos-si-bil - i - ty

mf

16 $\text{♩} = 60$
 11 *mf*
 Like a num - ber _____ or me - ta - phor _____

2nd trill key
tr
mp p *mf* *f*
 3 3 6

$\text{♩} = 66$
 14 *f* *mp* *mf*
 On _____ the bor - der of the real _____ Like a num - ber _____ or

17 *mp* *rit.* *p*
 me - ta - phor Ma - gic and pos - si - bil - i - ty _____ Found some - where be -

21 $\text{♩} = 56$
 tween. Found some - where _____
mp *p*
 3

24

mp

Like her mir-rors_____ on the page_____

molto legato
soft-tongued
pp

27

Her page_____ of mir-rors_____

mp *pp*

30

mp

On_____ the bor-der_____ of sense Re-

p *pp* *mp*

33

mf

flec-tion of the fall-en_____ Tree_____ of hea-ven_____

pp *mp*

36

mp *p*

Re - flec-tion of the fall - en_____ fall - en

pp *p*

♩ = 76 accel..

18₃₉

world of re-pe-ti-tion. And in

mf 3

pp

♩ = 100

42

this and in this And in this and in that

f rit.

f 3 3 3

3 3

46

♩ = 56

What did she see? what did she re - flect?

mf *f* 6 *mp*

3 3

49

2nd trill key *tr*

trill 3rd finger left hand *tr*

senza vibr.

p 3

53

page af - ter page.

mp poco *mp* *p*

poco vibr. 3 2nd trill key *tr*