

Brancusi

*for soprano and
pre-recorded tape
(musique concrète)*

by

F L Dunkin Wedd

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Brancusi

The first Brancusi I saw was *Mademoiselle Pogany* in the Louvre on my first visit to Paris: I was thirteen and I was stunned.

Ever since then I have loved his work, and hoped to write some music related to it. For some years I propped a postcard of *Bird in Space* on my workbench hoping it would generate some inspiration. It did not.

What did, though, was reading the *New York Times'* review of mezzo extraordinaire Buddug Verona James: "*She sounds like a Brancusi*". It's true: she does. I had long promised to write a piece for her, and things came together.

Brancusi's period (1876-1957) was perhaps the high point of the machine age, and his work makes use both of naturalistic forms and machined surfaces. I saw that I could combine a floating soprano line with a pre-recorded *musique concrète* backing track. The piece speaks of where we have come from - and where we are going.

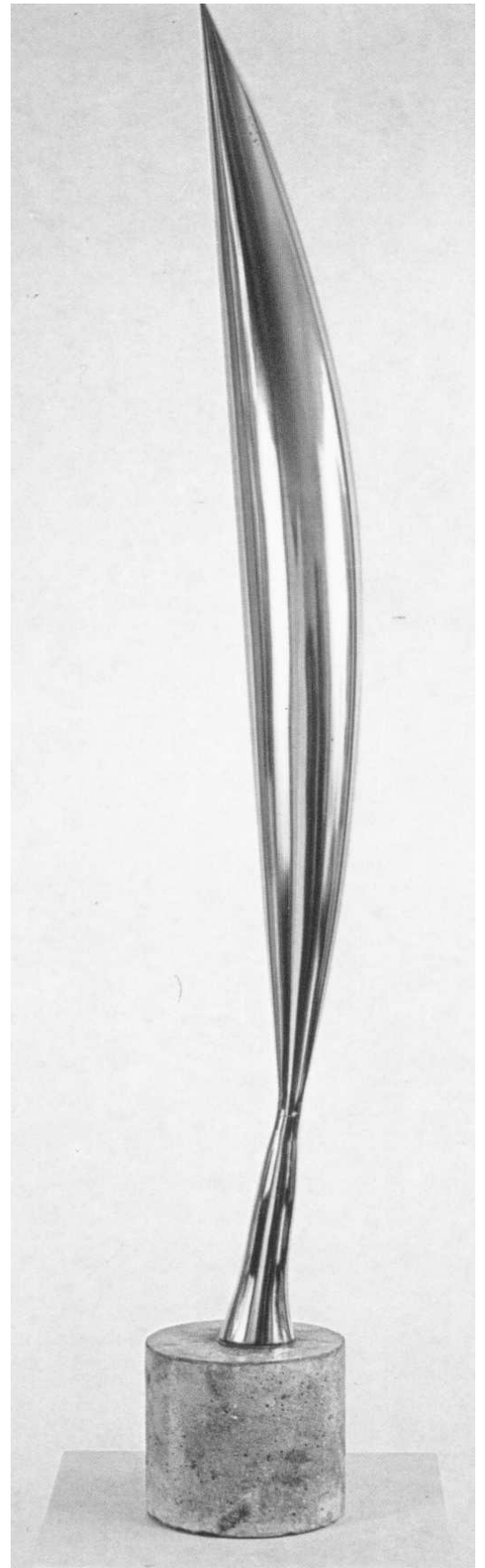
F L Dunkin Wedd
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"What is real is not the external form, but the essence of things... it is impossible for anyone to express anything essentially real by imitating its exterior surface."

Constantin Brancusi

"You talk when you cease to be at peace with your thoughts; and when you can no longer dwell in the solitude of your heart you live in your lips, and sound is a diversion and a pastime. And in much of your talking, thinking is half murdered. For thought is a bird in space, that in a cage of words may indeed unfold its wings but cannot fly."

Kahlil Gibran



Bird in Space

Brancusi

for soprano and pre-recorded tape (musique concrète)

Written for Buddug Verona James

Dedication

This piece is dedicated to Frances Hawken - who spurs me on to try new things.

(I appreciate that I have only now caught up with what Pink Floyd were doing in 1967, but it's new for me and I have done it without mind-altering drugs...)

Key signatures

Less attention has been paid to harmonic correctness than to readability. I apologise to pedants.

Cues

A few orienting sample cues have been included in the vocal part above the stave. There is a one-minute introduction before the vocal line enters (entering with the third piledriver sample), and after the thunderclap a 90-second fade-out.

Timing

Perversely, having used machine sounds, I didn't want them to sound too 'quantised'; so rhythms have been deliberately left ragged and sometimes slightly out of sync - as if being played *rubato!*

Sounds

I started with all the notes sung to 'ah', but I needed more attack and added nonsense syllables. These are not important: the singer may use them, rearrange them or add any sounds she likes.

Acknowledgments

As well as sounds I recorded myself, the backing track includes some from the very wonderful Freesound Project (<http://freesound.iaa.upf.edu>).

I am grateful to Freesound contributors for the use of the following files:

2871	dozer sample.wav	by Sonic
11498	OKM 06.05.05 Birdsong Esbjerg.MP3	by inchadney
14772	jackhammer.aif	by ignotus
14854	Nightingale song.wav	by reinsamba
15559	drunks fighting.aif	by tigersound
21555	nmb01_maxed.wav	by Pooleside
28867	The Burn.WAV	by inchadney
34981	piledriver.wav	by cognito perceptu
38229	ringUK1965.wav	by Charliefarley
43807	WW2AirplaneFlyover.wav	by daveincamas
44205	The Burn.WAV	by inchadney

*F L Dunkin Wedd
Tonbridge, Kent
February 2008*

Brancusi

for soprano and backing track

Thoughtfully

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♩ = 136 *Piledriver* **f**

Wah dee la pee oo

Pneumatic drill *sim*

wi yah nah Kah Kah di ma chee

mah yah ma wa ti na ka loo ee pah me

ti mi nah mi nah yah pah ti mee mah nee tah yah kee

mp

tah mee ti nee ah kee bah rah kah mah wah ti nee

f *Piledriver* **mp**

yah Wah wah ti nee yah tee kah pah lah mee tah pee

mf

oh dah Wah dee lah pee oo wi ya na

p

kah! Ka di ma chee mah yah wah

pp **f** *Qwerk qwerk* **mp**

Kah dee mah Kah dee

mah ti nee Ka di ma
Pneumatic drill *ossia: 8va*
 wa ti na kee bah Ka di ma wah tee
p *f*
 Ka di ma wa ti na chee yah koo Wa ta nah kee
 lah Roo wa ti na ka gi ma di la pi oo wa ti ka gi ma
p
 pa ti ma wah Chee soo dah mee Ta gi ma
f
 wa ka na woo yah Ka ma Wa di la pee oo nah
Crowd noise
 Ka gi mah Tee ga mah Dee la pee oo wah Wee ah pee oo lah Choo wee
p *f*
 ra ma kay Ti ka pah mi ka
 nah Fah roo ee wah nah kay Ta gi ma na kee La too ee na may Di la pee
 wa ti nah Choo ee lah ka loo ee Ti mi nah wa ka ga mah!

fff *f* *Phone*

Ti ga wa ta na wa, ti ga wa ta na wa choo ee

Ti ga wa ta na wa ti ga wa ta na wa choo ee Wa di la pi oo ee

ka gi ma ka loo ee Wa ta na bi ah mi lah

p *mf*

f

gliss *gliss*

mf *ff* *mf*

cresc al fortissimo

ff *Thunder* *Tacet.*