

Plainer Sailing
[2012]

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Full Score

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Duration: 10 minutes

SCORE IN C

Instrumentation

Solo Soprano
Flute
Bb Clarinet
(Solo Strings)
Violin 1, 2
Viola
Violoncello
Double Bass
Piano

Programme Note

Plainer Sailing was written for *The Riot Ensemble*, and was premiered by them on an LSO Discovery Concert on 17 June, 2012. The instruments used in the piece are exactly the same line-up as *Song Offerings* (by Jonathan Harvey), and the work is dedicated to him. The piece sets the words of a poem by Sasha Dugdale, whom I met at the 2011 Jerwood Opera Writing Course in Aldeburgh.

The full title of her poem is "*Plainer Sailing (Alzheimer's) for A.W.*" For me, the revealing text of *Plainer Sailing* is the central quatrain that unleashes a central question of life:

She too surveyed the calm, and was concerned:
What to make of all the signs, for the sea is rarely blank.
And there was a circling, a moment returned
When daughter was mother, and there the sun shrunk

The poem is this collection of images and – as it's put here - 'signs'. The question it asks is: *What to make of all the signs?*

The music doesn't provide a specific answer. It isn't a manifesto, nor do I see music as a philosophical argument. It's more of a record of me exploring that question, and I hope it's heard as an invitation for the listener to join me in considering the question.

For Jonathan Harvey

Plainer Sailing

Words: Sasha Dugdale
Red House, Oxford Poets, 2011
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Aaron Holloway-Nahum
2012

♩ = 80 freely, with movement

The musical score is arranged in a system with eight staves. From top to bottom, the staves are: Soprano, Flute, Clarinet in Bb, Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, Violoncello, and Double Bass. The Soprano part begins with the lyrics "She w[ah]". The Flute part includes the instruction "sing and play (at same pitch)". The Clarinet in Bb part features a triplet and dynamic markings *p*, *f*, and *pp*. The Violin 1, Violin 2, and Viola parts have dynamic markings *p* and *pp*. The Violoncello part includes a glissando marked "(gliss*)" and dynamic markings *p* and *gliss.*. The Double Bass part has dynamic markings *f* and *pp*. The score is written in 4/4 time and includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

♩ = 80 freely, with movement

The Piano part is shown on a single staff at the bottom of the score. It includes dynamic markings *poco f* and *p (echo)*. The music is written in 4/4 time and features various musical notations such as slurs and accents.

*Strings: glissandi always smooth and evenly-paced, lasting for the full duration of the indicated note. Avoid bow changes at the beginning or arrival points.
**Strings: All accents with ties to them are 'vibrato accents'. The note is accentuated with a momentary left hand vibrato rather than the bow.

♩ = 80 half time

7 *p* *factual, non espress.* (recit) (cant)

S. She walk - ed then pale and un-bent Frail as a cloud. filled with a cloud's wa - tered

Fl. *microtonal fingerings* *pp* *pp*

Cl. *p* *pp* *p* *pp*

Vln. 1 *f* *p* *sub.* *pp* *slow bow, non vib. except where indicated by accents* *p* *pp* (*pp non cresc.*)

Vln. 2 *slow bow, non vib.* *p* *pp* (*pp non cresc.*)

Vla. *slow bow, non vib. except where indicated by accents* *f* *p* *sub.* *pp* *p* *pp* *sub.* (*pp non cresc.*)

Vc. *pizz.* *p* *arco, slow bow, non vib.* *pp*

Db. *pizz.* *p* *arco, slow bow, non vib.* *pp*

Pno. *ff* *p* *pp*

♩ = 80 half time

13 *mp* *pp* *p* *espressivo* *mp*

S. ligh - [t] And all the ropes were gone, gone and

Fl. *with lots of breath* *pp* *mp* *sing same pitch as played*

Cl. *mf* *f* *pp* *p*

Vln. 1 *p* *pp* *p*

Vln. 2 *p* *pp* *p*

Vla. *p*

Vc. *p* *pp* *p*

Db. *IV (sounding loco)* *p*

Pno. *p* *pp* *p*

℞

rit. (rubato)

In Time (A Tempo)

18

S. *mf* *p* *mf* *3*
 the lan guage the lan - guage and the lan guage un - learn - - - t and vi - tal knots

Fl. *mf* *ord. 3* *sing same pitch as played* *p* *mf* *f* *p*

Cl. *p* *mf* *f* *p*

Vln. 1 *f* *(f)* *pizz., vib. molto*

Vln. 2 *f* *(f)* *pizz., l.v.*

Vla. *f pp* *f* *pizz., vib. molto*

Vc. *gliss.* *f* *pizz., vib. molto*

Db. *f* *pizz., vib. molto* *f*

Pno. *pp* *f*

Red.

rit. (rubato)

In Time (A Tempo)

22

S. *f* *p cant.* *(p)*
 of pas - [t] and fu - ture pas - [t] and fu -

Fl. *mf* *p*

Cl. *p* *mf* *p*

Vln. 1 *p* *arco* *p* *mf* *p* *mp*

Vln. 2 *p* *arco* *p* *mf* *p* *mp*

Vla. *p* *arco* *p* *mf* *p* *mp*

Vc. *pizz (pluck) secco* *mp* *arco* *mp*

Db. *pizz. l.v.* *p* *(pizz.)* *mp* *p sempre*

Pno. *gliss.* *p* *mf* *p*

Red.

28

S. *ture long un - tie [d].*

Fl. *f p mf sub. p*

Cl. *p*

Vln. 1 *p p*

Vln. 2 *p p*

Vla. *gliss. p p*

Vc. *p p*

Db. *secco arco (as before)*

Pno. *8va delicately p 3 mf p mp*



35 *♩ = 80 (double time) accel →*

S.

Fl. *f p mf p*

Cl. *f p*

Vln. 1 *detaché sempre p energetico*

Vln. 2 *pizz. f sfz*

Vla. *p energetico*

Vc. *pizz., lv. f: sfz*

Db. *f: sfz*

Pno. *♩ = 80 (double time) accel → poco f*

40

S. *mf*
There

Fl. *p* *mf cantabile* *p*

Cl. *mp* *p*

Vln. 1 *6* *6* *gliss.* *6*

Vln. 2 *p* *sfz*

Vla. *arco* *6* *6* *6* *6* *sim.*

Vc. *f aggressively* *6* *6* *6* *6* *f: sfz*

Db. *p* *f*

Pno. *f* *15^{mo}* *3*



43

S. was no sail - ing. with - ou - [t] the au - ger on board

Fl. *p* *mf* *f* *p* *poco* *mp*

Cl. *p < mf* *p*

Vln. 1 *1* *cresc.*

Vln. 2 *f: sfz* *p* *f* *fp*

Vla. *pizz.* *arco* *p energetico* *pizz. vib. molto* *arco (III) (sounds)* *mf*

Vc. *f: sfz* *pizz. Lv.* *p < mf* *f* *f* *p sempre*

Db. *f: sfz* *p sempre*

Pno. *(15)* *>mp* *f* *p* *f* *p*

48 $(\text{♩} = 100+)$ *f* *p sub.* *f* *p sub.* *blend with violin*

S. Who shaped each day and told what tum - bled

Fl. *poco f* *p*

Cl. *fp* *mf* *f*

Vln. 1 *mf* *f* *p* *sul pont.* *ord (sub.)* *blend with soprano* *gliss.*

Vln. 2 *pizz.* *mf decres.* *pp* *pizz., l.v.*

Vla. *mf decres.* *p* *f* *pizz., l.v.*

Vc. *mf p sub.* *mp* *f* *pizz., l.v.*

Db. *mf p sub.* *mp* *f* *pizz., l.v.*

Pno. *mf* *p* *loco* *f*

53 *rit...* *f* *questioning* $\text{♩} = 80$ Tempo II

S. pas - [t] Who sought the truth in fea - thered gore.

Fl. *p* *mf* *p* *p*

Cl. *p* *pp*

Vln. 1 *f* *(l.h. pizz)* *0 arco (III)* *ff* *f*

Vln. 2 *arco, détaché* *f* *(l.h. pizz)* *0 arco (III)* *ff* *f* *gliss.*

Vla. *arco, détaché* *f* *(l.h. pizz)* *0 arco (III)* *ff* *f*

Vc. *arco* *wide, slow vib.* *poco f* *(non vib.)* *bend downward*

Db. *f*

Pno. *rit...* $\text{♩} = 80$ Tempo II

57 *p espressivo*

S. While oth - ers - watched -

Fl.

Cl.

Vln. 1 *p* *pp* *p*

Vln. 2 *p* *pp* *p*

Vla. *pp* *p sempre*

Vc. *p sempre*

Db. *arco* *p sempre*

Pno. *sfz* *pp sub.* *poco* *p* *pp sub.*

60 *mf* *f*

S. fro- [m] the crow - [ss] ne - [ss] - t

Fl.

Cl. *f* *mf*

Vln. 1 *mf* *p*

Vln. 2 *mf* *p*

Vla. *mf* *espressivo* *f espressivo* *mp* *p*

Vc. *mf* *p*

Db. *mf* *pizz., l.v.* *mf*

Pno. *f* *pp sub.* *poco a poco* *mf* *(lift pedal)*

♩ = 40 Tempo II, slow and spacious **accel poco**

64 **p**

S. She too sur eyed the calm [m]

microtonal fingerings
1 2 1 2 1

Fl. **pp** **p** **mp** **mf**

Cl. **pp** **p** **mp** **mf**

Vln. 1 **pp sempre** *gliss.*

Vln. 2 **pp sempre** *gliss.*

Vla. **pp sempre** *gliss.* **p**

Vc. **pp sempre** *trem. (non vib.)*

Db. **pp sempre** **p**

♩ = 40 Tempo II, slow and spacious **accel poco**

Pno. **mf** **p** **p murmuring** **mp**

♩ = 52 - 60 with more urgency

71 **f**

S. What to ma - [k]e [ah] of all

Fl. **f** **mf** **p** **f**

Cl. **f** **p poss.**

Vln. 1 **f** *freely* *with the soprano*

Vln. 2 **p** **mf** **f sempre** *trem. (non vib.) (finger vib) as before*

Vla. **mf** **f sempre** *trem. (non vib.) (finger vib) as before*

Vc. **mf** **f sempre** *trem. (non vib.) (finger vib) as before*

Db. **mf** **f sempre** *(sim...)*

Pno. **♩ = 52 - 60 with more urgency**

76

in free time and rhythm
p *espressivo*

in time ***mf***

S. the signs For the sea is rare-ly bla - n[k] and there was a cir - cling

Fl. *mf* *f* *mf* *p* *mp* *mf* *f* *gliss.* *mf* *f*

Cl. *f* *pp* *mp*

Vln. 1 *gliss.* *f* *take mute* *con sord.* *mp* *mf* *f*

Vln. 2 *take mute* *con sord. at tip* *mf > p* *mf > p* *mf*

Vla. *gliss.* *take mute* *con sord. at tip* *mf > p* *mf > p* *mf*

Vc. *take mute* *con sord. at tip* *mf > p* *mf > p* *mf*

Db. *pizz., vib. molto* *f* *(senza sord.) arco at tip* *mf > p*

Pno. *8-10"* *in time* *p* *loco* *p* *mf* *3* *8th*

♩ = 72 - 80 interlude

82

S. *f* *gliss.* [m] a mo - ment re - turned.

Fl. *p sub.* (ord) (sing and play →) 3 (ord - match cl high note)

Cl. 3

Vln. 1 *at tip* *p* *pizz., l.v. remove mute* *f* *arco, senza sord.* *molto legato* 3

Vln. 2 *at tip* *p* *pizz., l.v.* *f* II *sim.*

Vla. *at tip* *p* *l.h. pizz.* *mp* *pizz., l.v.* *f* *vib. molto*

Vc. *at tip* *p* (as before: single bow, l.h. vib on accents) *gliss.* *mf* *p*

Db. *pizz. l.v.* *mf* *pp* *p* *pizz., pluck, vib. molto* *f*

Pno. *p (loco)* *mf* **♩ = 72 - 80 interlude**

8th

accel

mf

when daugh -

88

S.

Fl.

Cl.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

Pno.

p

ord.

M

(nearly 'D') (top note 8va)

wide, slow vib.

p sempre

senza sord. arco slow trem → fast trem → slow trem

sim.

slow trem → fast trem molto sul pont.

(pizz)

mf

senza sord. arco

(gliss)

gliss.

p

senza sord. slow bow, non. vib except where indicated

I

p sempre

gliss.

slow bow, non. vib except where indicated

arco

#

p sempre

accel

p

(4)

♩ = 92 - 100 gaining momentum

93

S. *pp* *f*
-ter was moth-er and there the sun shrun-[k] and ben-[t] and was nar

Fl. *ord.* *gliss.* *sing & play*

Cl. *8^{va}* *pp poss.* *p* *mf* *microtonal fingerings* 1 2

Vln. 1 *gliss.* *p < mf* *p*

Vln. 2 *gliss.* *pp < mf* *p < mf*

Vla. *pp < mf* *p*

Vc. *pp < mf* *pp*

Db. *pizz. 0 Lv. 0* *f*

♩ = 92 - 100 gaining momentum

Pno. *p*

8^{va}

100

S. *mf* *f*
-row at the line the line of sky and still the clouds

Fl. *mf* *f* *ff* *fpp*

Cl. *mf* *mf* *f* *fpp*

Vln. 1 *gliss.* *mp* *gliss.* *mf* *f aggressivo*

Vln. 2 *pizz. vib. molto* *f* *arco* *mf* *gliss.* *f* *pizz. vib. molto* *sffz*

Vla. *mf* *gliss.* *f* *legato* *gliss.* *f*

Vc. *f* *p* *f* *ff pp sub.* *full bow slow bow*

Pno. *mf*

(8) 8^{va}

104

S. *twi* *sted*

Fl. *mf* *poco f*

Cl. *mf* *f*

Vln. 1 *strum* *Lv.* *arco*

Vln. 2 *sfz* *p* *mp*

Vla. *p* *gliss.*

Vc. *mp*

Db. *f*

Pno. *poco f*

ff

♩ = 116 - 120 with power and forcefulness

107

S. *p* *mp* *f*
and birds flew All a bove...

Fl. *mf* *pp* *mp* *f*
sing and play *ord. sing and play*

Cl. *f*

Vln. 1 *tr* *pp* *mp* *pp* *f*

Vln. 2 *gliss.* *p* *f*

Vla. *mf*

Vc. *(sim.)* *f* *p sub.* *f*

Db. *ff*

♩ = 116 - 120 with power and forcefulness

Pno. *8va* *p*

112 *ff* *f*

S. at that time there was no end to li - fe.

Fl. *ff* *f* *gliss.* *ff* *f sempre* *mf*

Cl. *ff* *p* *f*

Vln. 1 *ff* *f sempre* *sul pont. (non trem, pont.)*

Vln. 2 *ff* *f sempre* *pizz, lv.* *f*

Vla. *ff* *f sempre* *pizz, lv.* *f arco* *f*

Vc. *ff* *f sempre* *ff sub.* *f sempre*

Db. *f* *ff* *f sempre*

Pno. *fp delicately* *mp* *mf* *f sempre*

8va *8va* *8va*

120

S.

Fl. *f* *mp* *ff*

Cl. *f* *ff* *fff*

Vln. 1 *mf* *ff* *pizz secco* *ff:fff* *arco* *ff*

Vln. 2 *gliss.* *f* *f* *(ord.) pizz, vib molto* *pizz secco* *ff:fff* *arco* *ff*

Vla. *f* *ff* *pizz secco* *ff:fff* *arco* *ff*

Vc. *pizz, vib molto* *ff* *pizz, lv.* *ff* *arco* *ff*

Db. *ff* *ff* *pizz, lv.*

Pno. *5* *6* *8va*

125 *accel poco a poco*

S. *f poss.*
and no end to oth - er bright - ness at least - as true
sing and play *ord. non vib.* *sing and play*

Fl. *gliss.*
poco f *mp* *p* *mf* *p* *pp*

Cl. *microtonal fingerings*
1 2 1 2 2 3
poco f (do not cover soprano)

Vln. 1 *molto pont.*
pp *p*

Vln. 2 *molto pont.*
pp *non cresc.*

Vla. *molto pont.*
pp *non cresc.*

Vc. *molto pont.*
pp *non cresc.* *ord.* *pp*

Db. *sounding (loco)*
pp *p* *pp*

Pno. *accel poco a poco*

(8) *ff*

♩ = 144 - 152 desperately

133 *poco f*

S. That seem_ like_ mir - a - ges now_ For signs were_ mass - ing to dis - play_ them-
(sing and play) *ord.*

Fl. *poco f* *p* *ff*

Cl. *p* *f* *p* *mf* *p* *mf* *p*

Vln. 1 *ord., slow bow, non vib. except where indicated by accents*
p *gliss.* *mf* *mp* *p*

Vln. 2 *ord.* *slow trem* *fast trem*
p *mp* *mf*

Vla. *ord.* *pizz., l.v.* *arco, molto sul pont.*
p *f* *f* *mf* *p*

Vc. *pizz., l.v.* *arco* *gliss.*
p *mp* *f* *p*

Db. *pizz., l.v.* *arco (sounds 8vb)* *trem through gliss.* *full bow* *slow bow, non vib. except where indicated by accents*
poco f *p* *gliss.* *fff* *p sub.*

Pno. *mp* *p* *mf* *p* *(p)*

8^{vb}

♩ = 72 - 76 half time

143

S. *ff*
selves in a com - mon light:

Fl. *flz.* *f* *p* *espress.* *ord.* *mf* *ff* *f*

Cl. *f*

Vln. 1 *p* *ff*

Vln. 2 *p* *mf* *f* *ff*

Vla. *ord.* *p* *mf* *f* *ff*

Vc. *p* *mf* *f* *ff*

Db. *p* *mf* *f* *ff*

Pno. *f* bold and colourful! *p*

(8)

