

GEORGE BENJAMIN

Ringed by the Flat
Horizon

for full orchestra

(1979–80)

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FABER *ff* MUSIC

Ringed by the Flat Horizon was written for the Cambridge University Musical Society and first performed by the CUMS orchestra conducted by Mark Elder on 5 March 1980

The first London performance was given by the BBC Symphony Orchestra conducted by Mark Elder at a Henry Wood Promenade Concert at the Royal Albert Hall on 25 August 1980

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Duration: 20 minutes

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for Olivier Messiaen

Who are these hooded hordes swarming
Over endless plains, stumbling in cracked earth
Ringed by the flat horizon only
What is the city over the mountains
Cracks and reforms and bursts in the violet air

from *The Waste Land* by T.S. Eliot
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A dramatic photograph of a thunderstorm over the New Mexico desert and an extract from T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* provided the inspiration for this piece.

I wanted to portray an eerie tension as a landscape is overwhelmed by a vast storm. The work starts slowly and mysteriously, with a succession of three textures that recur throughout the structure – weird, soft, bell chords, a sustained semitone clash, and deep tremors in the lower registers of the orchestra which depict distant thunder. Piccolo solos surrounded by high violins follow, and fuller developments of the opening ideas gradually transform the momentum to faster music.

Here a sonority of wind and muted trumpets, punctuated by wooden percussion, is juxtaposed with quieter, more lyrical cello solos. These build with increasing intensity, culminating in a massive climax, after which the music slowly descends to the bass register, subsiding in a solitary bass-drum roll.

There follows a sequence of dark, ominous chords for full orchestra (a sound completely new to the piece), interspersed with solo melodic lines over the deep tremors of the opening. For a moment the original semitone clash hovers motionless in the air; the thunder at last erupts in a violent explosion; and the work returns to a mood of unreal calm, ending as it began, with a soft bell chord.

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ORCHESTRA

3 Flutes (2nd and 3rd doubling Piccolos)

2 Oboes

Cor Anglais

3 Clarinets in B \flat (2nd doubling E \flat , 3rd doubling Bass)

2 Bassoons

Double Bassoon

4 Horns in F

Trumpet in D

2 Trumpets in B \flat

3 Trombones

Tuba

Percussion (5 *players*):

1. 4 Timpani, Side drum, Sizzle (nailed) cymbal
2. Bass drum (*very large and deep*), 5 Temple blocks, 5 Small bongos, Glass chimes, Whip, Small suspended cymbal
3. Glockenspiel, Tam-tam (*very large*), 3 Suspended cymbals, Triangle, Tubular bells (*shared with 5*)
4. Vibraphone, Xylophone, Large suspended cymbal
5. Tubular bells, Cymbals (pair), 5 Temple blocks (*shared with 2*), 5 Small bongos (*shared with 2*)

Temple blocks and small bongos



played simultaneously

Glockenspiel



3 Suspended cymbals



Vibraphone



Xylophone



Tubular bells



Celesta (4 octaves)

Piano

Harp

Strings preferably 16.16.12.10.8 (*basses 5–8 with low C string*)

Score in C

Orchestral parts available on hire

RINGED BY THE FLAT HORIZON

GEORGE BENJAMIN

Mysterious (Extremely slow; $\text{♩} = 50$) Faster ($\text{♩} = 75$)

Flutes 1 & 2

Bassoons 1 & 2

1 & 2
Horns

3 & 4

Trombones 1 & 2

with mutes

Timpani ①

Bass Drum ②

Glockenspiel ③

Vibraphone ④

Tubular Bells ⑤

Celesta

Piano

Harp

Violins 1

Violins 2

Violas

Cellos

Doublebasses div. a4

4/4 2/4 4/4

ppp mf p

flz.

always with metal sticks

with metal Glock. sticks

Ped. (motor off)

always with normal beaters

Tum-tan

ppp

Ped. Ped. Ped.

(C, D, E, F, G, A, B)

ppp

mf

with mutes div.

div.

div. pizz.

1.2. pizz.

3.4. pizz.

5.6. pizz.

7.8. pizz.

arco

arco

arco

arco

* It is vital that the pianist sustains the pedal throughout this - and later similar - passages.

B

accel. (♩ = 60) (♩ = 76) **rall. molto** **Very slow** (♩ = 84)

FL. *pp* *cresc.* *f* *dim.* *pp* *to Picc.*

Ob. I *SOLO* *ppp* *cresc.* *f* *dim.* *ppp* *pp*

Cl. *pp* *cresc.* *f* *dim.* *pp* *to Bass Cl.*

Bsn. I *ppp*

Hr. I *pp* 2/4 1.2.3. with mutes 3/4 2+3/8 3/4

Vibra. ④

Cel. *f*

Pno. *pp*

Harp *p*

Vin. 2 div. 2/4 3/4 without mutes *div. a3* 2+3/8 3/4

Vla. *ppp* *unis.* *pizz.* *p* *ppp* *div. arco* *p* *ppp*

Vlc. I solo *ppp*

Preview File Only

accel. **C** Gently flowing (♩ = 80)

The musical score is arranged in systems. The instruments listed on the left are: Picc., Fl., Ob. 1, C.A., Cl., Ban., Hrn. 1 (muted), Tpt. 1, Vibra., Cel., Pno., and Harp. The score includes various dynamic markings such as *ppp*, *p*, *mf*, and *f*. It also features performance instructions like "with mute" and "Ped. ...". The bottom of the score shows time signatures: 3/4, 4/4, 2/4, 3/4, 2/4, 3/4, 3/4, 4/4, 2/4, 3/4, 4/4.

N.B.: Those phrases marked between the following signs: [] must predominate above all other parts (and similarly in other passages).

D

This musical score, labeled 'D', is a page from a larger work, likely a symphony or concerto. It features a full orchestral ensemble. The instruments and their parts are as follows:

- Picc.** (Piccolo): Flute part with dynamics *p*, *pp*, and *ppp*.
- Fl.** (Flutes): Multiple parts with dynamics *pppp*, *p*, *pp*, *ppp*, *mf*, and *f*.
- Ob. I** (Oboe I): Part with dynamics *ppp*, *pp*, *f*, and *pp*.
- C.A.** (Cor Anglais): Part with dynamics *p* and *p*.
- Cl.** (Clarinets): Multiple parts with dynamics *pppp*, *ppp*, *p*, *ppp*, *pp*, *mf*, and *pp*.
- B.Cl.** (Bass Clarinet): Part with dynamics *p*, *pp*, *mf*, and *ppp*.
- Bsn.** (Bassoon): Part with dynamics *pp*, *pp*, *p*, *pp*, *mf*, and *ppp*.
- Hns. (muted)** (Horns): Part with dynamics *p*, *ppp*, *p*, and *ppp*.
- Trpt. I (muted)** (Trumpets): Part with dynamics *ppp*, *p*, and *pp*.
- Vibra.** (Vibraphone): Part with dynamics *pp* and *ppp*, including pedal markings.
- Cel.** (Cymbals): Part with dynamics *pp*, *mf*, *f*, *p*, and *mf*.
- Pno.** (Piano): Part with dynamics *pp* and *pp*, including pedal markings.
- Harp**: Part with dynamics *mf*, *p*, and *p*.

The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings. It also features time signature changes from 3/4 to 2/4 and back to 3/4. A large, semi-transparent watermark 'Preview File Only' is overlaid diagonally across the center of the page.

Slower

a tempo

rall.....

This musical score page features the following instruments and their parts:

- Picc.**: Piccolo part with dynamics like *pp* and *pppp*.
- Fl.**: Flute part with dynamics like *pppp*.
- Ob.1**: Oboe part with dynamics like *pppp* and *pp*, including a *SOLO* section.
- C.A.**: Clarinet in A part with dynamics like *pp* and *pppp*.
- Cl.**: Clarinet in Bb part with dynamics like *pppp* and *p*, including a *SOLO* section.
- B.Cl.**: Bass Clarinet part with dynamics like *pppp* and *p*, including a *SOLO* section.
- Bsn.1**: Bassoon part with dynamics like *pppp* and *p*.
- Hns. (muted)**: Horns part, muted, with dynamics like *pppp*.
- Tpt.1 (muted)**: Trumpet 1 part, muted, with dynamics like *pppp*.
- Vibra.**: Vibraphone part with dynamics like *pppp*, *pp*, and *pppp*, including *Ped.* markings.
- Cel.**: Cymbals part with dynamics like *pp* and *p*.
- Pno.**: Piano part with dynamics like *pppp*, *pp*, and *pppp*, including *Ped.* markings.
- Harp**: Harp part with dynamics like *mf*, *pp*, and *p*, including *nat.* markings.
- Vla. div. a3**: Violin division part with dynamics like *pp* and *pppp*, including *sul IV* and *arco* markings.
- Vic. div. a3**: Viola division part with dynamics like *pp* and *pppp*, including *arco* markings.
- Db.**: Double Bass part with dynamics like *pppp* and *p*, including *unis.* and *scco* markings.

Time signatures 3/4 and 2/4 are indicated at the bottom of the score.

E rall. Very slow (♩ = 56)

accel.

Picc. *ppp* *f* *ppp*

Fl. *ppp* *f* *ppp*

Ob. 1 *pppp*

Vibra. ④ *ppp* Ped.

Cel. *pp*

Vin. I *pppp* bow freely *p*

3/4 4/4 4/4

(♩ = 72) rall. Very slow **F**

Picc. *f* *p* *mf* *pp* *f* *ppp*

Fl. *mf* *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *ppp*

Glock. ③

Vibra. ④ with metal Glocksticks (motor off) *pp* Ped. Ped. Ped.

T. Bells ⑤ *pp*

Cel. *pp*

Pan. *ppp* Ped. Ped. Ped.

Harp *pppp*

1 solo *ppp* (norm.) *molto ff* *capras.*

Vin. I *ppp*

gli altri *ppp*

3/4 4/4

accel.

(♩ = 75)

rall.

Picc. (6)
 Fl. (4)
 Ob.
 C.A.
 B.Cl.
 Cl.
 Bsn.
 Hrn. 1.2. 3.4. without mutes
 Tpt. 1 (muted)
 Timp. ①
 B.D. ②
 Tam-tam ③
 Pno. (Ped. sempre)
 Harp (C, D, E, F, G, A, B)
 1 solo Vln. 1
 gli altri Vln. 2
 Vla.
 Vcl.
 Db. div. a 2

G

(rall.)

Very slow (♩ = 56)

SOLO

The musical score is arranged in a standard orchestral format with the following instruments and parts:

- Picc.** (Piccolo): Solo part with dynamics *pp*, *f*, and *mf*.
- Fl.** (Flute): Part with dynamics *f*, *p*, *pp*, and *ppp*, including *dolce* markings.
- Ob.** (Oboe): Part with dynamics *p* and *pp*.
- C.A.** (Cor Anglais): Part with dynamics *p* and *mf*.
- Ek.Cl.** (E-flat Clarinet): Part with dynamics *p*, *pp*, *ppp*, and *pp*, including *dolce* markings.
- Cl.** (Clarinet): Part with dynamics *p*, *pp*, *ppp*, and *pp*, including *dolce* markings.
- Bsn.** (Bassoon): Part with dynamics *mf* and *pp*.
- Has.** (Horn): Part with dynamics *p* and *pp*.
- Tpt. 1 (muted)** (Trumpet 1): Part with dynamics *ppp*.
- Vibr.** (Vibraphone): Part with *soft sticks* and *Ped.* markings.
- Cel.** (Celesta): Part with dynamics *p* and *pp*.
- Harp**: Part with dynamics *p*.
- Vln. 1** (Violin 1): Part with *unis.* (unison) and *ppp (bow freely)* markings.
- Vln. 2** (Violin 2): Part with dynamics *f* and *p*.
- Vla. div.** (Viola): Part with dynamics *p* and *pp*.
- Vlc. div.** (Violoncello): Part with dynamics *p* and *pp*.

Rehearsal marks are indicated by large numbers 2, 3, and 4, with time signatures 4/4, 3/8, and 4/4 respectively.

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H

The musical score is arranged in a standard orchestral layout. The instruments and their parts are as follows:

- Picc.**: Piccolo, with dynamic markings *f*, *mf*, *pp*, and *p*.
- Fl.**: Flute, with dynamic markings *ppp*, *f*, *mf*, *pp*, *p*, *ppp*, *mf*, *pp*, *mf*, and *p*.
- B.D. ②**: Bass Drum, with a *ppp* marking.
- Glock. ③**: Glockenspiel, with a *pp* marking.
- Vibra. ④**: Vibraphone, with markings for "metal Glock.sticks", *pp*, and "Ped.".
- T. Bells ⑤**: Tam-tam Bells, with a *pp* marking.
- Cel.**: Cello, with dynamic markings *ff* and *pp*.
- Pno.**: Piano, with dynamic markings *pp*, *ppp*, and "Ped.".
- Harp**: Harp, with dynamic markings *ppp* and *pp*.
- 1 solo Vln. 1**: Violin I, with dynamic markings *ppp*, *mf*, and *ppp* (norm.).
- gli altri**: Violin II and other strings, with dynamic markings *ppp* and *mf*.
- Db. div. ④**: Double Bass, with *pp* markings.

The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic hairpins. A large blue watermark "Preview File Only" is overlaid diagonally across the center of the page.

accel.....

8

Picc. ①

Fl. ①

3 4

Timp. ①

B.D. ②

Glock. ③

Vibra. ④

T. Bells ⑤

Cel. ⑥

Pno. ⑦

Harp ⑧

(Cb, Db, Eb, Fb, Gb, Ab, Bb)

8

(slow, accel.)

3 4

I solo

Vln. 1 ⑨

gli altri ⑩

pizz. arco

ppp < p

ppp < p

ppp < p

(pizz.)

(pizz.)

arco

arco

arco

arco

arco

This page contains the musical score for the first system of a piece titled "Fast (J. 75)". The score is arranged for a full orchestra and includes the following parts:

- Woodwinds:** Flute (FL), Oboe (Ob.), Clarinet in A (C.A.), E-flat Clarinet (E♭CL), Clarinet in B-flat (CL), Bassoon (Bsn.), Horns (Hrn.), Trumpet I (Tpt. I), and Trombone (Tbn.).
- Brass:** Trumpet I (Tpt. I) and Trombone (Tbn.).
- Percussion:** Timpani (Timp.), Bass Drum (B.D.), and Tam-tam.
- Keyboard:** Piano (Pno.) and Harp (Harp).
- Strings:** Violin I (Vln.1), Violin II (Vln.2), Viola (Via.), Violoncello (Vcl.), and Double Bass (Db. div. 1st and 2nd).

The score features complex rhythmic patterns, including triplets and various time signatures such as 3/4, 4/4, and 2/4. Dynamics range from *ppp* (pianississimo) to *ff* (fortissimo). Articulations include accents, slurs, and specific techniques like *div. pizz.* (divisi pizzicato) and *un. arco* (unison arco).

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J

Fl.

Ob.

C.A.

Es.Cl.

Cl.

Trsn.

D.Tpt.

Tpt.

Tbn. (muted)

5 T. Bells

5 Sim. Bongos

Xylophone

12345

(Bongos with very hard sticks: N.B. accented, but never too loud!)

Pno.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla. div.

Vlc. div.

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