



RED DESERT

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AUGUST 2011

RED DESERT

commission by Ansambel U

“Three or four night-stars; the scattered brush, parched earth and sand, the black sea-sky, hovering blanket: the land is broken up by zigzags, where the water has seeped through into the ground, and left salt crystals on those infinitesimal ledges. And the rest, the rest is dead like old tree stumps and blunt lead, stretching over to the horizon which is burned by the sun each morning like a ticking clock. This is the **red desert**, which the waves do not reach, on which the storm does not tread. It is where my dreams are, where I have come to-”

INSTRUMENTATION: piccolo/flute, clarinet, percussion (Chinese cymbal, Vibraphone), piano, violin, and violoncello.

DURATION approx 8 ’

notes, 18 July 2011

The last few weeks have been difficult. The idea is so strong and yet there is no metamorphosis into the music. The notes resist direction, and direction is the only thing here to hang on to. I fear I have written something quite minimalist, but this was the only way. This is the truth to the idea.

The desert is a foreign thing to many people; at least, I think it seems so on the surface. Those things we associate with desert – sand, heat – are just nothing compared to what a desert can be, what it perhaps is, even. The desert is not a place but an idea: only once the realization is made, can something become “desert”. And for me, what it has become for me, this realization, is simply one of thirst. Dry parched throat, mortality, healed by water...

When you travel through a real, physical desert, as I have many times, these sensations are primary: **distance, linearity, destination.** This piece is “structured” on those sensations and narrated by the thirst I mentioned before.

The only indeterminate aspect is the arrival, for it is always in question and experienced differently, in physical and emotional terms, of course. In this case, the arrival is a surprise: I am loathe to call it a “salvation” of sorts, in terms of the material, but it is a momentary glance away from inevitability. For to cross the desert: by itself, this idea, is one of beating the odds.

re Desert

E. A. Birman (b. 1987)

change
breath
ad
libitum
solo
vento

Devoto $\text{♩} \sim 56 - 63$

Piccolo

Clarinet in B \flat
sung or hummed on unis. with played pitch
change breath ad libitum
0 *pppp*

Percussion
CHINESE CYMBAL
quiet, almost inaudible tremolo
0 *pppp*

Piano
8va -
ppp *pppp*
3
3
3
3

Violin
con sord. change bow freely, almost shakily
Sul D
0 *pppp sost.*
3
3
3
3

Violoncello
con sord. molto sul pont.
0 *pppp*

ffz *ppp* *pppp* 0 subito *pppp*

2
6

Pic. *ppp*

B♭ Cl. *ppp* *fp* *f* *ppp* *pp* *ff* *p* *ff* *pppp*

Perc. *ff*

Pno. (8^{va})
(almost inaudible) *pp*

(Ceo.)

Vln. *ff*

Vc. *pp* *ppp* *ff* *fp* *f* 0

norm. 5:4 sul pont. 3 norm.

10

Pic. *pppp* *sost.* sing at written pitch

B♭ Cl. *pppp* change breath ad libitum play only: 0

Perc. 10 *mf* intensity triangle beaters, do not let ring

Pno. 10 *ppp* *mp* *pppp* 8va place finger on near part of string, before the hammer

(Ped)

Vln. 10 *pp* *pppp* *ppp* *sost.* senza sord. *pppp* *sost.* 3 3

Vc. 10 *pp* (sord.) *ppp* *sost.* very light and airy, like taking breaths

4
18

Pic. play only: *subito pp* *mf* *ff*

B♭ Cl. *f* *ppp* begin humming to create beats, move out of tune randomly

Perc. 18 *ff* *mf* *ff* with cb. bow

Pno. 18 *pp* *molto f* *ff* *mf*

Vln. 18 *sul pont.* *norm.* *mp* *ff* *ppp* *sul pont.*

Vc. *pp* *mp* *f* *f* *ppp* *mp*

(Leo)

accl. molto ----- *a tempo primo* *sotto voce*
 Pic. *ppp*
 B♭ Cl. *grido* ----- *ffff*
 Perc. *with cb. bow* *f* ----- *f*
 Pno. *8va* ----- *ff* ----- *fff* ----- *ppp* *marimba mallets, inside piano*
 Vln. *7:4* ----- *pp* ----- *subito ff* ----- *fff* ----- *pppp* ----- *8va* ----- *molto vib.*
 Vc. *mf* ----- *ff* ----- *subito ff* ----- *fff*

Musical score for Piccolo, B♭ Clarinet, Percussion, Piano, Violin, and Viola. The score includes various dynamics, articulations, and performance instructions such as "grido", "with cb. bow", and "marimba mallets, inside piano".

6
26

Pic. *mf* *pp* *ppp* *pp* *ppp* *pppp*

B♭ Cl. *pp* *ppp* *pp* *ppp* *pppp*

Perc. norm. *pp*

Pno. (8^{va}) (8^{vb}) (quietly)

Vln. *p* *ppp*

Vc. *mf* *ppp sost.*

--- switch to flute ---

respiro respiro

respiro respiro

35

Pic. FL. sing at written pitch *pppp* *sost.* *3* play only:

B♭ Cl. *mf* 0 *p* *3*

Perc. 35 intensity → ← triangle beaters, do not let ring *mp* *mf* *mp* light, let reverb *ppp* *3*

Pno. 35 *pp* *ppp* *8va* *3* *ped.* (quietly) *3*

Vln. 35 *pp* *ppp* *subito p* *ppp* *con sord.* *nonvib.* *vib.* *molto vib. espressivo* *3*

Vc. 0 *ppp* *p* *3*

8
41 (FL.) --- switch to piccolo ---

Pic. *f* *frullato*

B♭ Cl. *ff* *ff* > *sfz* > *ppp* < *fff* *pp* < *ff* *ppp* *f* *play only:*

sung or hummed on unis. with louder than played pitch: *pp* < *ff* *ppp*
 release breath
 sung or hummed on unis. with played pitch

Perc. *pf* *ppp* *brush* *norm.*

Pno. *f* *ff* *f* *mp* *ppp* *ppp* dampen string so that "A" harmonic is heard

Vln. *ff* *ff* *fffppp sost.* *molto* *molto* *molto* *molto* *molto* *ff* *sf*

Vc. *ff* *ff* *fff* *ppp* *ff* *ff* *f*

respiro *gva* *arco* *pizz.* *pesante* *quasi sul pont. sim.*

Pic. 46 *mp* *sf* *solo vento*

Musical score for Piccolo (Pic.) starting at measure 46. The instrument plays a series of quarter notes with a dynamic of *mp*. At measure 47, the dynamic changes to *sf* for a single note. From measure 48 onwards, the instrument is marked *solo vento* and plays a sustained, breathy line.

B♭ Cl. *mp* 3 0

Musical score for B♭ Clarinet (B♭ Cl.) starting at measure 46. The instrument plays a melodic line with a dynamic of *mp*. It includes a triplet of eighth notes in measure 47 and ends with a fermata in measure 48.

Perc. 46 *mp* *ppp* almost nothing *delicato*

Musical score for Percussion (Perc.) starting at measure 46. The instrument plays a rhythmic pattern with a dynamic of *mp*. In measure 47, the dynamic drops to *ppp*. In measure 48, it is marked "almost nothing". In measure 49, it plays a delicate pattern marked *delicato*.

Pno. 46 *subito ff* *mf* *ppp* *p* *8va-* *8va*

Musical score for Piano (Pno.) starting at measure 46. The score is split into two staves. The right hand starts with *subito ff* and plays chords. The left hand has a *p* dynamic. Dynamics change to *mf* in measure 47 and *ppp* in measure 48. There are markings for *8va-* and *8va* in measures 47 and 49. Pedal markings (*Ped.*) are present in measures 46 and 47.

Vln. 46 *mp* *ppp* 3

Musical score for Violin (Vln.) starting at measure 46. The instrument plays a melodic line with a dynamic of *mp*. It includes a triplet of eighth notes in measure 47 and ends with a fermata in measure 48. The dynamic changes to *ppp* in measure 49.

Vc. *mp* 0

Musical score for Violoncello (Vc.) starting at measure 46. The instrument plays a rhythmic accompaniment with a dynamic of *mp*. It ends with a fermata in measure 48.

10
50

Pic. *fff sf* *respiro* *ff* *stridulo*

B♭ Cl. *f* *ff*

Perc. 50 dampen immediately *f* *respiro*

Pno. 50 *f* *ff* *ped.*

Vln. 50 *crunch* *respiro* *fff sf* *ff sost.* *con sord.*

Vc. *f* *respiro* *con sord.* *ff* 5:4 5:4

Detailed description: This is a page of a musical score for six instruments: Piccolo, B♭ Clarinet, Percussion, Piano, Violin, and Viola. The page is numbered 10 at the top left and 50 in the first measure of each staff. The Piccolo part starts with a *fff sf* dynamic, followed by a *respiro* mark, and then a *ff* dynamic with a *stridulo* (stridulation) effect. The B♭ Clarinet part has a *f* dynamic, a *respiro* mark, and then a *ff* dynamic with a triplet. The Percussion part has a *f* dynamic, a *dampen immediately* instruction, and a *respiro* mark. The Piano part has a *f* dynamic, a *respiro* mark, and then a *ff* dynamic with a triplet and a *ped.* (pedal) mark. The Violin part has a *crunch* instruction, a *respiro* mark, a *fff sf* dynamic, a *ff sost.* dynamic with a triplet, and a *con sord.* (con sordina) instruction. The Viola part has a *f* dynamic, a *respiro* mark, and then a *con sord.* instruction with a *ff* dynamic and two 5:4 time signature changes.

Pic. 56 *quasi vento* → 11
fff *sfz > mf* *fff* as loud as possible

B♭ Cl. *sfz > mf* *ff*

Perc. 56 with cb. bow
p *ff* *f* as fast as possible

Pno. 56 *ff* *pp* *fff*
15^{ma} 8^{va} 8^{va} 8^{va}
(Led) Led. 8^{vb}
ff

Vln. 56 *ff* *fff* crunch

Vc. 5 *5:4* *fff*

12 *solo vento* *quasi vento* *accel.* -----

Pic. *f* > *ppp* *f* *begin humming to create beats, move out of tune randomly*

B♭ Cl. *sung or hummed on unis. with vib.* *sfz* *pp* *f* *sfz*

Perc. *with cb. bow* *f* *fff* *pp* *ff* *pp*

Pno. *fff* *let reverb indefinitely*

Vln. *senza sord.* *pp* *ff* *pp* *ff* *pp* *ff*

Vc. *senza sord.* *pp* *ff* *sul pont. 7:4* *pp* *ff* *ppp* *norm.*

Incoerente $\sim 60 - 72$

(accel.)

Pic. *solo vento*
sfz \rightarrow *fff*

B \flat Cl. *grido*
ppp \rightarrow *ff*

Perc. *f* *ff* *fff*

Pno. *at the tip of the string (inside)*
mf \rightarrow *ff sost.*
8^{vb} *ped.*
 \rightarrow *ad lib., with loud accents each time Pedal is used*

Vln. *sul pont.* *7:4* *5:4*
pp \langle *ff* \rangle *pp*

Vc. *sul pont.* *3* *pizz.*
pp \langle *ff* \rangle *pp* *ff*

accel.

Pic. 67

B♭ Cl. 67

Perc. 67

Pno. 67

8vb

Vln. 67

Vc. 67

70 (*accel.*)

Pic.

B \flat Cl.

Perc.

70

Pno.

fff *sost.*

fff *sost.*

8^{vb}

8^{vb}

8^{vb}

70

Vln.

Vc.

Come una corrente rotta

il più velocemente possibile

decel. --- ~ 56 - 60

slap
tongue
+ key
click solo vento

Pic. 74

B♭ Cl.

Perc. 74

with cb. bow

triangle beaters, do not let ring

p < f f ppp

Pno. 74

3 3

(8vb)

(Ped. ad lib.)

p

Vln. 74

arco

mf f sost.

Vc. 74

arco con sord. molto vib.

p < f > p

slap
tongue
+ key
click

3 solo vento

79

Pic. *f* *p* *sost.* *ff* *ff*

B♭ Cl. *ppp* *sost.* sung or hummed on unis. with played pitch *ppp* *p* *ppp* sung only: *f*

Perc. *mp* *ppp* with cb. bow *f* *p* *f* rute *ppp* *mf*

Pno. *pppp* *8va*

Vln. *ppp* *sost.* sul pont.

Vc. norm. *pppp* *fp* 3 3 0

84

Pic. *slap tongue + key click*

B \flat Cl.

Perc.

84

VIB.
con motore
trem. as fast as possible

ppp (very gradual)

Pno.

84

(Ped)

(quietly)

Vln.

Vc.

84

0

senza sord.

0

93

Pic. *solo vento* *f* *sing at written pitch* *f* *f* *f*

B♭ Cl. *sung or hummed an octave below played pitch* *mp* *ff* *ppp* *mf* *begin humming to create beats, move out of tune randomly*

Perc. *p* *(very gradual)* *mp* *(very gradual)*

Pno.

Vln.

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

Pic. *solo vento* *f* *f* *f* *f* *f*

B♭ Cl. *ppp* *fff* *sffz* *ppp*
begin humming, move out of tune to a shriek *grido* *begin humming, move out of tune to a shriek*

Perc. *f* *fff*

Pno. *ff* *ff*
8va

Vln. *ff*

Vc. *f* *p* *f* *f* *p* *f* *p*
pizz. *arco* *pizz.* *arco*

Detailed description: This page of a musical score, numbered 20, features six staves. The Piccolo staff (top) has a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#), with a tempo of 101. It contains six measures of music, each starting with a triplet of eighth notes marked with accents (>) and a dynamic of *f*. Above the staff, three arrows labeled "solo vento" point to the first, third, and fifth measures. The B♭ Clarinet staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp. It contains six measures of music. The first measure starts with a dynamic of *ppp*. The second measure has a dynamic of *f*. The fifth measure has a dynamic of *fff* and is marked "grido". The sixth measure has a dynamic of *sffz*. The Percussion staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp. It contains six measures of music, each with a dynamic of *f*. The Piano staff has a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and a key signature of one sharp. It contains six measures of music. The first measure has a dynamic of *ff*. The fifth measure has a dynamic of *ff* and is marked "8va". The Viola staff has a bass clef and a key signature of one sharp. It contains six measures of music. The first measure has a dynamic of *f*. The second measure has a dynamic of *p*. The fifth measure has a dynamic of *f*. The sixth measure has a dynamic of *p*. The Viola staff also includes markings for "pizz." and "arco" in the fifth and sixth measures.

107 *solo vento*

Pic.

f

B♭ Cl. *grido*

f

Perc. *as loud as possible*

let reverb

Pno.

(Ped)

(quietly)

Vln.

Vc. *f*

Detailed description: This page of a musical score contains six staves. The Piccolo staff (top) starts at measure 107 with a series of sixteenth notes, marked with accents and a dynamic of *f*. Above it, a line with arrows indicates a *solo vento* effect. The Bass Clarinet staff (B♭ Cl.) features a long, wavy line representing a *grido* (cry) effect, also marked with a dynamic of *f*. The Percussion staff (Perc.) has a series of sixteenth-note chords, marked *as loud as possible*, with a dashed line above indicating a *let reverb* effect. The Piano staff (Pno.) is empty. The Violin (Vln.) and Viola (Vc.) staves have long, wavy lines representing sustained notes, with the Viola starting at measure 107 with a dynamic of *f*. A horizontal line with a pedaling symbol (Ped) is positioned below the Piano staff, and the word *(quietly)* is written at the end of this line.