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As if Making a Confession

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CHRISTIAN BALDINI

As if Making a Confession

for soprano and large ensemble



www.babelscores.com

www.christianbaldini.info

Instrumentation

Soprano (a3-d6) [optional e6]

Ensemble (9 players)

- Flute/Piccolo/Alto Flute in G
- Oboe
- Clarinet in B-flat
- Percussion:
 - Vibraphone – Marimba
 - Bass Drum – Large Snare Drum - 2 Bongos
 - Crotales – Large Suspended Cymbal
 - 5 Temple Blocks – 3 Wood Blocks - bow
- Piano
- Violin
- Viola
- Violoncello
- Double Bass

Duration: about 11 minutes

www.christianbaldini.info

Hora de Estrellas
(1920)

El silencio redondo de la noche
sobre el pentagrama
del infinito.

Yo me salgo desnudo a la calle,
maduro de versos
perdidos.
Lo negro, acribillado
por el canto del grillo,
tiene ese fuego fatuo,
muerto,
del sonido.
Esa luz musical
que percibe el espíritu.

Los esqueletos de mil mariposas
duermen en mi recinto.

Hay una juventud de brisas locas sobre el
río.

Fragmento de *El concierto interrumpido*
(1920)

Ha roto la armonía
de la noche profunda
el calderón helado y soñoliento
de la media luna.

Las acequias protestan sordamente,
arropadas con juncas.
[...]

Fragmento de *Berceuse al espejo dormido*

Duerme.
No temas la mirada
errante
Duerme.
[...]
Como mi Corazon,
asi tu,
espejo mio.
[...]
Duermete sin cuidado,
Pero despierta

Federico García Lorca (1898-1936)

Fragment of *To a Skylark*

[Until we hardly see - we feel that it is
there.]
...
We look before and after,
and pine for what is not.
Our sweetest songs are those that tell of
saddest thought.

Teach me half the gladness
Such harmonious madness
From my lips would flow
The world should listen then - as I am
listening now.

Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822)

Program Notes

As if Making a Confession draws texts from three poems by Federico Garcia Lorca, as well as one by Percy Bysshe Shelley. It is a dramatic piece that features elements from different worlds including opera, theater and chamber music. There is a continuous interaction between singing and reciting, and this is translated musically into a delicate relationship built between and around pitch and noise. Melody and harmony blend with sounds that become structural to the piece, sustained by a polyphonic rhythmical texture that is essential to the musical discourse. Within a diaphanous sound world, there is a constant dichotomy between pitch and noise, English and Spanish, chamber music and opera, tension and release. The work was written for the Plural Ensemble (in Madrid, Spain) in December 2010-January 2011, as a companion piece to Elliott Carter's *A Mirror on Which to Dwell*.

Christian Baldini

Tutti

Whispering, speaking & reciting should be performed with intensity and a theatrical sense. The extremes of introspection or extroversion should be enhanced with the appropriate intensity. The “pitch” or speech intonation is left to the discretion of each performer, and should vary to sound as much as possible like a natural speech, within the given or suggested rhythms.

Vibrato: no vibrato is to be used by any of the instruments throughout the piece, unless especially indicated. It is desired that the singer will use as little vibrato as possible, with the exception of the coloratura fragments.

Arrows indicate a gradual transition between stages (only air to pitch; no pressure to pressure, etc.)

The positioning of the singer on the stage should allow her to move freely and establish a natural connection with the drama, seeking to involve the audience as much as possible.

Winds

Use of only air: with no pitch content (square note-heads)

Frullato: on definite pitches

Frullato: on only air “roaring” - (as if purring)

Producing spoken or whispered sounds inside the instrument: the clarinet begins the work by pronouncing the sound "ch" (as in *chase*) inside the instrument. It is expected that the clarinetist will touch the reed of the instrument with the lower lip, thus using it as a resonator.

Strings

There is use of alternate sound production, such as bowing horizontally (from the fingerboard to the bridge -back and forth-, without moving the bow vertically). In these cases, [represented with x note-heads] there are also possible distinctions that appear in the score as to the use of pressure. "No pressure" will produce a soft hissing, white-noise-like sound. Whenever it is indicated as "great" or "extreme pressure", it will produce a dirty scratchy sound, with very low-frequency components. (Note that there is sometimes a transition between these two stages).

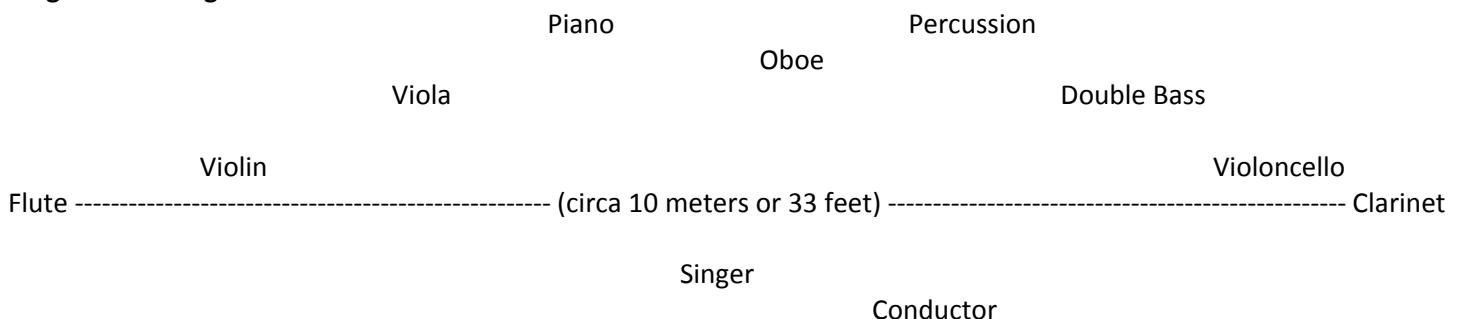
In addition, there is also the possibility of bowing normally (vertically) with the use of extreme pressure, also producing the loss of definite pitch and achieving a very dark, scratchy sound. [represented with square note-heads]

There is on measures 3-5 the request for the Violoncello and Double Bass to bow on the high part of the tail piece. This will produce a complex sound with predominantly low-frequency components (but not scratchy).

Amplification

Each player and the singer should have a microphone (ideally a clip-on, barely visible one) that must be turned on and off for almost every whispering moment. The microphone should only be used in order to make a very soft whispering audible (quiet, but still audible) to everybody in the auditorium. Ideally, if possible, each player should have a speaker (or monitor) in their own place in the seating diagram. The voice of each person should come out of their own speaker, placed next to them.

Stage Positioning



As if Making a Confession

Christian Baldini

Etereo, quasi galleggiando

Flute/ Picc/ Alto Fl

Oboe

Clarinet

Percussion

Piano

Voice

Violin

Viola

Cello

Bass

Flute/ Picc/ Alto Fl

Oboe

Clarinet

Percussion

Piano

Voice

Violin

Viola

Cello

Bass

Semplice

♩ = 60

Fl. piccolo *p* *ppp* to flute

Ob. *ppp*

Cl. *ppp*

Perc. (with hands) bongos *f p* *mf* *pp* crotales - bowed *ppp*

Pno. *8va* *pp* *pp* block the string with left hand hand damped *ord.* (let resonate) *ff* {mic off}

Vce. what is not: un-till we har-dly see we feel that it is there.

Vln. horizontal bowing no pressure *sul ponticello* (still no pitch) *ord bowing* no pressure over pressure white noise (no pitch) *sffz*

Vla. *sul ponticello* *ord bowing* no pressure (still no pitch) overpressure

Vlc. *p* *mf* *f* *sffz* *pppp* *pizz.*

Cb. *mp* *f* *sffz* *ff* (slide down immediately)

8 flute
Fl. *ff* → ord.
pp

Ob. *frullato*
f → *f* → *ff* → *pppp*

Cl. ord. → *frullato* → ord.
pppp → *pp* → *sub.* → *pp* → *pppp*

Perc. bass drum *mf* → *f* → *pp* → *mfp* → *pp*

Pno. *ff* → *ff* → *f* → *ff ppp* → *ff ppp*

Vce. ord. *f* → *pppp* → *frullato* → *pppp* → 5:6
there! → (n) → (rr) → (a) → (i) → (e) → (a) → (n)
sul ponticello → ord. → non harmonic

Vln. *pppp* → *p* → *ff* → *pppp* → sul ponticello

Vla. *pppp* < *pp* > → *pp* → *ff* → *pppp* → sul ponticello

Vlc. *sul ponticello* ↓ ord. → *p* → *ff* → *pppp* → arco → *sul ponticello*

Cb. *pp* → *ff* → *pppp*

14

Fl. *pp* → *frullato* *mp* [microphone] whispering Duer-me no te-mas

Ob. *espressivo* *mp*

Cl. *ppp*

Perc. 14 3 wood blocks *very cool, with expectations* *pp*

14 Pno. *f* *secco* *8va* *ppp* → *f* *ppp* → *3* *ppp*

Vce. 14 *pp* → *mf* *ppp* → *mp* slide *inhale/exhale loudly*
(n) (e) → (rr) (u) → (a)

Vln. 14 ord. *ppp* → *sul ponticello*

Vla. 14 ord. *sul Do* → *vibrato espressivo non harmonic* → *sul ponticello*
f *pp* → *mp* → *ppp* → *sul ponticello*
ord.

Vlc. 14 *ppp* → *sul ponticello*
ord.

Cb. 14 *ppp* → *p* → *><* → *<>*

17

Fl. la mi - ra - da'e rran - te Co - mo mi Co - ra - zon a - si tu, es -

Ob. [microphone] whispering **mp** 5:4 5:4

Cl. Duer - me no te-mas la mi - ra - - - da'e -

Perc.

17 [microphone] **mp** whispering

Pno. Duer-me no te-mas la mi - ra - da'e rran - te Co - mo mi

Vce. **mf** > **p** inhale/exhale more loudly **pp** **mp**

(i) - (e) (u) (m) - (a) (u) (e) (i)

Vln. [microphone] **mp** whispering Duer - me - te sin cui -

Vla. **mp** whispering Duer - me no te-mas Duer - me - te sin cui -

Vlc. [microphone] **mp** whispering Duer - me -

Cb. [microphone] **mp** whispering 5:4 5:4

es - pe - jo es - pe - jo

♩ = 52
(2"-3")

Fl. *mf* *mf* *mf* *pp whispering*,
pe - jo mi - o mi - o, mi - o, mi - o, round
mf *mf* *mf* *pp whispering*
5:4 es - pe - jo mi - o mi - o, mi - o, mi - o, round
mf *pp whispering*
rran - te es - pejo - - - tu es - pe - jo tu round

Perc. *mf* *pp*

Pno. *pp whispering*
(get more breathy)
Co - ra - - zon des - pier - - - ta round

Vce. *mf* gradually losing the vocal quality, going in despair *ff* *p whispering* (2"-3") [microphone] very brief pause
(m) - (a) - - - - - - - - Round, round, round

Vln. *pp whispering*
(get more breathy)
da - do pe ro des pier ta round
Vla. *pp whispering*
(get more breathy)
da - do pe - ro des - pier - ta des - pier - - - ta round
Vlc. *pp whispering*
(get more breathy)
- te pe - ro des - pier - ta des - pier - - - ta round
Cb. *pp whispering*
(get more breathy)
pe - ro des - pier - ta des - pier - - - ta round

Tempo simile ma più flessibile

22 ***ppp*** always whispering

Fl. The round silence of night The round silence...

Ob. ***ppp***
always whispering

El silencio redondo de la noche sobre el pentagrama del infinito El silencio redondo de la noche sobre el pentagrama del infinito El silencio redondo de la noche

Cl. ***ppp***
always whispering

The round silence of night The round silence of night The round silence of night

22 large cymbal - bowed

Perc. ***pppp*** *dal niente* *poco a poco crescendo*

22 ***ppp*** always whispering

Pno. The round silence of night The round silence of night The round silence of night The round silence of night

[mic fading out until off, gradually with crescendo in voice]

22 ***ppp*** whispering speaking
softly

Vce. The round silence of night The round silence of night

22 ***ppp*** always whispering

Vln. The round silence of night The round silence of night

Vla. ***ppp*** always whispering

El silencio redondo de la noche sobre el pentagrama del infinito El silencio redondo de la noche sobre el pentagrama del infinito El silencio

Vlc. ***ppp*** always whispering

The round silence of night The round silence of night

Cb. ***ppp*** always whispering

El silencio redondo de la noche sobre el pentagrama del infinito El silencio redondo de la noche sobre el pentagrama del infinito

(6"-7")

f

Fl. The round silence of night The round....

Ob. sobre el pentagrama del infinito El sil...

Cl. The round silence of night The... **ppp**

(tutti cut off
with piano lid bang)

Perc.

Pno. The round silence of night Ped. (let resonate) so - bre el pen-ta - gra-ma del in - - fi -

Vce. The round silence of night

Vln. The round silence of night

Vla. redondo de la noche sobre el pentagrama...

Vlc. The round silence of night The round

Cb. El silencio redondo de la noche sobre el...

(a) —————

f

[mic off] **f**

[mic off]

mf

mf

whispering p

ffff

shouting **crying**

ffff

horizontal bowing
no pressure,
white noise like

mp

horizontal bowing

3

vertical bowing
extreme pressure

sffz

mp

mf

sffz

fingerboard
no pressure,
white noise like

horizontal bowing

bridge

extreme pressure

mp

whispering

p

5

so - bre el pen - ta - gra-ma

37

Fl. *pp*

Ob. *espressivo*

Cl. *pp*

Perc. *mp* *f* *p*

Pno. *p* *f* *ff*

Vce. *

Vce. the black - ness riddled - by the sing - - ing -

Vln. *ord.* *ppp*

Vla. *senza vibrato* *5:4* *ppp*

Vlc. *senza vibrato* *ppp*

Cb. *ppp*

40

whispering clearly

Fl. *pp* tie - ne e - se fue - go fa - tuo mu - erto, del so -

Ob. *p* < > 5:6 *pp sub.* *mf*

Cl. *pp* *mf*

Perc. 40 5 temple blocks *mp* 5 *mf*

Pno. 40

Vce. 40 — of cri - ckets. *mp*

Vln. 40

Vla. 40

Vlc. 40

Cb. 40

Fl. ni - do *ff* *pp*

Ob. *f* *p*

Cl. *f* *p* *pp*

Perc. *f* *p*

Pno. *ff* *p* *f* *mf* *ppp* *mf* *p*

Vce. that mu - si - cal light per-

Vln. *p*

Vla. *pp* *mp*

Vlc. *pp* *mf* *p* *sul ponticello*

Cb. *pp* *mp* *mf*

46

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

(alto flute)

Perc.

46

Pno.

Vce.

46

ceived - by the spi - - - - rit A thou -

leggiero >< mp > pp

Vln.

Vla.

Vlc.

Cb.

slower *tr* faster

slower *tr* faster

slower *tr* faster

slower *tr* faster

posizione ordinaria

50

Fl. *mf*

Ob. *mf*

Cl. 5 slow *faster gradually* → *as fast as possible*

Perc.

50

Pno.

Vce. 3 sand bu tter - fly ske 3 slide

Vln.

Vla.

Vlc. senza vibrato *ppp* *mp* *ppp* *mf* *pp* *mp* *ppp*

Cb. senza vibrato *ppp* *p* *ppp* *p* *>*

53

molto ritenuto
taking time - - - - - a tempo

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

Perc.

vibraphone - bowed

colla parte

Pno.

Vce.

leggiero
poco rubato, tranquillo

molto ritenuto
taking time - - - - - a tempo

[mic - low volume]
very softly spoken

(m) (a) (a) (e) (u) — (a) - (i) - (a) (u) (i) ske - le - tons A wild crowd

Vln.

Vla.

Vlc.

Cb.

change bows imperceptibly
senza vibrato

flessibile, sfumato

57

Fl. *ppp*

Ob. *cadenza, molto espressivo* *rit.* *to flute*

Cl. *< p > ppp*

Perc. *marimba* *crotolas*
very delicately, with soft beaters lasciare vibrare sempre *r 3*

Pno. *f* *8va* *pp*

Vce. *of young bree-zes o-ver the ri-ver* *r 3*

Vln.

Vla.

Vlc.

Cb.

Come un lamento

Fl. 63

Ob. *mf* *mf* *f* *p* *sub.* *7:6*

Cl. *c* *c*

Perc. 63 *(lasciare vibrare)*

Pno. 63 *c* *c*

Vce. 63 *very introspectively*
bocca chiusa
ppp *c* *c* *(m)*

Vln. 63 *c*

Vla. 63 *c*

Vlc. 63 *c*

Cb. 63 *c*

66 flute roaring

Fl. p (rrr) mf

Ob. $< mf$

Cl. ppp p $sub.$ ppp roaring, lower lip touching the reed

Perc. (crotales) ppp

66

Pno. (touch, blocking the string with left hand) hand damped sf $3.$ hand damped hand damped

Vce. f v ppp mp pp $bocca aperta$ pp p $cadenzando$ $accel.$ - - -

(m) (m) - - - (a) (a) (a) (i) — (a) (o) -

66 horizontal bowing always noise, no pitch no pressure great pressure (no pressure)

Vln. mp ff mp ff $5:3$ $5:3$ $5:3$

Vla. mp great pressure ff mp great pressure 3 3

Vlc. ff mp horizontal bowing no pressure ff mp great pressure 3 3

Cb. col legno battuto $5:3$ ff mp col legno battuto f

Molto ritenuto, cadenzando

(accel.) *rit.* (overblow)

Fl. *p* *mf sffz*

Ob.

Cl.

Perc. *vibraphone - bowed* *ppp* *mf*

Pno. *hand damped* *f*

Vce. *accel.* *ritard.* *pp* *mp* *lentamente, cadenzando* *rit.* *6* (slow, long portamento) (e) - (u) - (i) (m) (m) (m) (a) *(transiion from M to A gradually)*

Vln. *mp* *3* *pp* horizontal bowing

Vla. *5:3* horizontal bowing *pp* horizontal bowing

Vlc. *3* *ff* horizontal bowing *6:5* horizontal bowing *pp* horizontal bowing

Cb. *6:5* horizontal bowing *pp*

Con fuoco

♩ = 96 ord. molto staccato

Fl. 74 *fff* ritard. *molto staccato* (t) (hard attack)

Ob. 74 *fff* (t) (hard attack)

Cl. 74 *molto staccato* (t) (hard attack)

Perc. 74 bass drum with good definition 5:3 5:4 5

Pno. 74 *8va* *brutale, secco* *brutale, secco*

Vce. 74

Vln. 74 *extreme pressure* *sul ponticello* *extreme pressure* only noise *still sul pont,*
some pitch,
dirty sound

Vla. 74 *extreme pressure* *sul ponticello* *extreme pressure* dirty sound

Vlc. 74 *extreme pressure* *sul ponticello* *extreme pressure* only noise

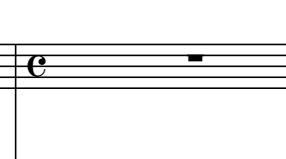
Cb. 74 *extreme pressure* *sul ponticello* *extreme pressure* *col legno battuto*

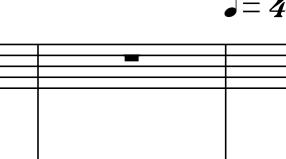
The musical score consists of ten staves. The top four staves are for Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, and Percussion (bass drum). The fifth staff is for Piano. The bottom five staves are for Violin, Viola, Cello, Double Bass, and Piano (continuation). Measure 74 starts with Flute and Oboe playing eighth-note patterns with dynamic *fff*. Clarinet follows with *molto staccato*. Percussion has a bass drum with *with good definition*. Piano has *8va* and *brutale, secco*. Measures 75-76 show various dynamics like *f*, *mp*, *fff*, and *ff*. Measures 77-78 continue with different dynamics and performance techniques such as *sul ponticello* and *extreme pressure*. The score ends with a dynamic *fff*.

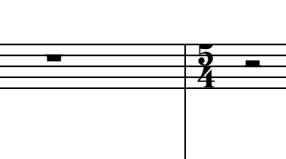
Misterioso

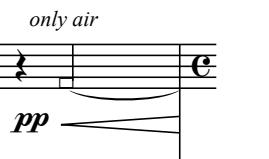
only air

Fl. 

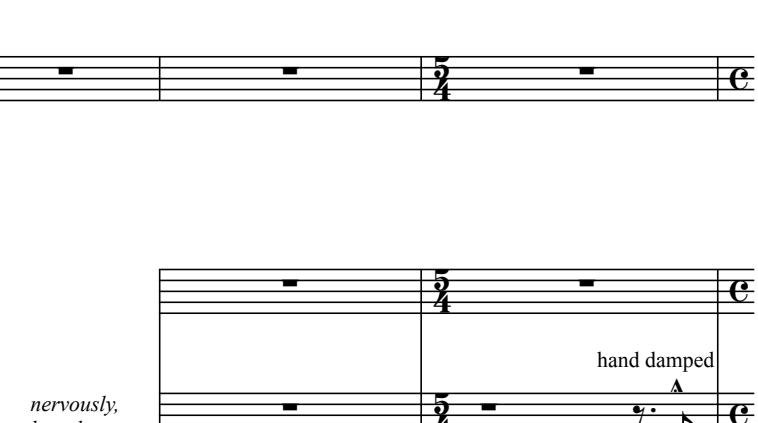
Ob. 

Cl. 

Perc. 

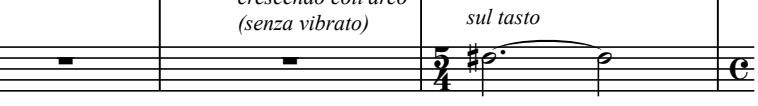
Pno. 

Vce. 

Vln. 

Vla. 

Vlc. 

Cb. 

Text:

- (let resonate)
- nervously, breath out loudly a few times
- * intenso e misterioso
- Ha ro - to la'ar-mo - ni - a
- with fear and no consolation, staring at an audience member Ahhh!!!
- crescendo coll'arco (senza vibrato) sul tasto
- ppp >>

Fl. *pp*
Ob.
Cl. *mp*
Perc. *large snare drum*
mf ————— *ff*
Pno.
ff
Vce. *el cal - de - ron he - la -* ————— *do y som-no-lien*
slide *3* *mf p* *p* *sub.* *(b)*
Vln. *(8va) ---*
ff *3* *sf*
Vla.
pizz.
sul ponticello arco *5* *great pressure* *only noise* *5*
Vlc. *col legno battuto*
ff *great pressure*
Cb. *< > f* *3* *mf* *7:8* *ff*

Fl. *-3* to alto flute

Ob.

Cl. *pp*

Perc.

Pno.

Vce. *< mp >* *3* *<>*
- - - to de la me - dia lu - - - na

Vln. *sul ponticello* *3* *pp*

Vla. *sul ponticello* *3* *pp*

Vlc. *sul ponticello* *#* *pp* ord. *pp*

Cb.

alto flute *mf* *pp* *ppp* *frullato*

$\bullet = 80$

to flute *whispering*

Fl. *mf* las a - ce-quias pro - tes - tan

Ob.

Cl. *pppp*

Perc. 3 wood blocks 2 bongos (WB)
medium-soft mallets *7:6*
mf *f*

Pno. *f* *7:4* *ben articolato*
mf *8vb-*

Vce. *p* Blan - ke-ted in sedge the *f sub.* *mp*

Vln. *pp* *ord.* horizontal bowing *f* *fff*
horizontal bowing *f* *fff*

Vla. *c* *extreme pressure no pitch*

Vlc. *c* *extreme pressure no pitch*

Cb. *c* *ff*

Più tranquillo

Fl. 101 flute *p* *mf* *sub.* *pp*

Ob. *mf* *p* *> pp* *sub.*

Cl. *pp*

Perc. 101 crotolas *lasciare vibrare*
with soft beaters

Pno. 101 *secco* *ff* *8vb* *pp* *5:4* *8va* *pp*

Vce. 101 *reciting calmly* *freely, as if making a confession*
We look be-fore and af-ter our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought

Vln. 101 *ord.* *3* *ppp* *p* *ppp* *pp* *ppp* *< p*

Vla. *ppp* *(sul Do)* *ppp* *< p*

Vlc. *ppp* *p* *ppp* *pp* *ppp* *< p* *sul Re*

Cb. *ppp* *< p*

Mechanical

29

con violenza

$\text{♩} = 80$

to alto flute

Fl. 109 *p* *mf* *p* *f* *p* *ff* *ff* *ff*

Ob. *to alto flute*

Cl. *ch ch ch ch* *p* *ff*

Perc. *bongos & bass drum* *5* *5* *5* *5*

mf pp *mf pp* *f mff* *mf f* *sempre simile, gran cassa sempre mf*

Pno. *pp* *f* *ff* *f* *5* *5* *5* *5*

Vce. *pp* *<mf* *slow portamento* (a)

Vln. *pp* *f* *ff* *ff* *great pressure horizontal movement*

Vla. *arco* *6* *great pressure, almost no pitch content* *sul ponticello* *5* *5* *5*

Vlc. *pp* *f* *p* *ff* *no pitch great pressure*

Cb. *ch ch ch ch* *ch ch* *ff* *ff* *fff* *ff*

arco *6* *great pressure, almost no pitch content* *sul ponticello* *5* *5* *5* *5*

Fl. 117 → ord pitch 6 rotation slide very airy sound (and still some pitch)
mf *ppp* *mf* *ppp* slower → faster
 Ob. (mute effect)
 insert a silk scarf or similar cloth into the oboe's bell suono lontano *
 Cl. *pp* *mp* *ppp* *pppp*
reciting quietly, in peace
 from my lips would flow

Perc. 117

Pno. 117

Vce. 117 *pp*
 half the gladness such harmonious madness (a) -

Vln. 117 change bows imperceptibly
 ord. *ppp*

Vla.

Vlc. ord. *pppp* change bows imperceptibly
 ord. *ppp*

Cb. *ppp*

OBOE *stand up and, during crescendo, lift the oboe's bell towards the auditorium, in a very slow, semi-circular movement

121

Fl. *ppp* *quasi niente*

Ob. *f*

Cl. The world should lis - ten then as I am listening now

Perc.

121

Pno. *p* *ppp* *mf* *ppp* *ppp* *quasi niente*

Vce. *mp pp^{sub}* *pppp* *quasi niente*
(m)

Vln. *quasi niente*

Vla. *ppp* *quasi niente*

Vlc. *ppp* *quasi niente*

Cb. *quasi niente*