Evelyn Ficarra

War Poems
the dead returning lightly dance

for mixed chamber ensemble and recorded sound
Instrument List

Flute doubling Piccolo
Clarinet in Bb
Trumpet in Bb
2 Percussion
2 Violins
2 Violas
2 Cellos
Double Bass
Recorded sounds

Percussion List

Percussion 1
3 drums - high, medium, low - the high drum doubles as snare
2 Woodblocks
1 Whip (also known as Slapstick)
2 Cowbells
1 Standing Cymbal
1 triangle
1 Referee’s Whistle
Tin Can Chimes
2 Crotales (C and F#)

Percussion 2
3 drums - high, medium, low - the high drum doubles as snare
2 Woodblocks
2 Cowbells
1 Standing Cymbal
1 light chain to play cymbal
1 triangle
1 Referee’s Whistle

War Poems
the dead returning lightly dance
was commissioned by
Poems on the Underground
to commemorate the centenary of
World War One.
All poems are heard in their original language.
Most of the featured poets fought in the war.

Stage/Score Layout

The players are divided into two groups, as if two opposing sides in a war.
This is signified by the score layout:

Group 1 (stage right, the West)
Flute / Picc
Clarinet in Bb
Percussion 1
Violin 1
Viola 1
Cello 1
Double Bass

Group 2 (stage left, the East)
Trumpet in Bb
Percussion 2
Violin 2
Viola 2
Cello 2

The person running the sound cues should also ideally be
on stage, wherever convenient, so that they can take cues from the conductor.

Recommended layout on stage:

```
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FL</th>
<th>CL</th>
<th>VC1</th>
<th>VC2</th>
<th>DB</th>
<th>TPT</th>
<th>perc 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>perc 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VA1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VN1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VA2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VN2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
```
Air sound, unpitched

Inhale noisily through the instrument.

This indicates that the player should drum their fingers on the keys.

**Strings**

A crackling sound achieved by placing the bow directly on the body of the instrument, pressing down and rotating the wrist back and forth.

Each of these shapes indicates harsh bowing. This should be a very grating sound with little or no pitch component. A very radical, harsh effect. The wedge shape indicates an increase or decrease of harshness.

Drumming with the pads of the fingers on the wood (side or back for cello and double bass, side or top for violin and viola).

This clef and diamond notehead indicates playing the strings behind the bridge. The pitch will be indeterminate. The top line is the $\hat{F}$ string, then $A, D, G$ in descending order.

This notehead indicates loud key clicks. If it is on a specific pitch the player should play the pitch indicated but with a very breathy sound. See example below from movement IV.
Drums: there is flexibility as to what sort of drums are chosen. The smallest drum should be a snare. The largest could be a bass drum, or a tenor tom, or a timbale. The middle drum could be a conga.

When the drummer is playing a roll with the finger pads, he or she may wish to vary the technique, either using each finger successively from the pinky inwards (as in the colloquial phrase ‘drumming your fingers’) or doing a tremolo between thumb and one other finger.

Tin Can Chimes are a non standard instrument. These can be constructed out of 5 or 6 tin cans suspended on wire from some wooden sticks. They are played by gently shaking or pushing them into motion.

Crotales: only the F\# and the C are needed.

Drums: again there is flexibility as to what sort of drums are chosen. It is preferable that each percussionist find their own solution, giving their collection of sounds a distinctive character.

The chain for playing the cymbal should be quite a light small chain producing a delicate sound.

All other notes are the same as for Percussion 1.

---

**Performance Notes**

This piece needs a conductor and a sound projectionist. The projectionist may wish to sit with the musicians where they can have eye contact with the conductor, as a certain amount of co-ordination is necessary. It is also possible to substitute live readers (provided there is sufficient rehearsal time for co-ordination) for the poems in movements I (Apollinaire - *La Petite Auto*), II (Trakl - *Im Osten*), III (Ungaretti - *Fratelli*) and the first half of IV (Sassoon - *Attack*). Any live readers should be amplified.

The recorded sounds mostly consist in simple spoken word recordings of poetry, though some cues have additional sounds or manipulations. There is a Max Patch to trigger all the sound cues, which can run on Max Runtime. Each cue is numbered as indicated in the score.

---

**Technical Specifications**

Speakers: minimum one stereo pair, just on the outskirts of the musicians. If more speakers are used, keep a centered, focused image for the poems in movements I, II, III and for Attack in IV - all later cues can have a broader distribution and movement.

One computer running Max MSP 6 or above.

Audio Interface (such as Motu) and cable connections to Mixer / PA system.
Poetry

Movement I
La Petite Auto

Le 31 du mois d’Août 1914
Je partis de Deauville un peu avant minuit
Dans la petite auto de Rouveyre

Avec son chauffeur nous étions trois

Nous dîmes adieu à toute une époque
Des géants furieux se dressaient sur l’Europe
Les aigles quittaient leur aire attendant le soleil
Les poissons voraces montaient des abîmes
Les peuples accouraient pour se connaître à fond
Les morts tremblaient de peur dans leurs sombres demeures

... Je n’oublierai jamais ce voyage nocturne où nul de nous ne dit un mot ...
... o nuit tendre d’avant la guerre ...
... Et quand après avoir passé l’après-midi
Par Fontainebleau
Nous arrivâmes à Paris
Au moment où l’on affichait la mobilisation
Nous comprimes mon camarade et moi
Que la petite auto nous avait conduits dans une époque
Et bien qu’étant déjà tous deux des hommes mûrs
Nous venions cependant de naître.

- Guillaume Apollinaire

Movement II
Im Osten

Den wildenOrgeln des Wintersturms
Gleicht des Volkes finstrer Zorn,
Die purpurne Woge der Schlacht,
Entlaubter Sterne.

Mit zerbrochenen Brauen, silbernen Armen
Winkt sterbenden Soldaten die Nacht.
Im Schatten der herbstlichen Eiche
Seußen die Geister der Erschlagenen.

Dornige Wildnis umgürret die Stadt.
Von blutenden Stufen jagt der Mond
Die erschrockenen Frauen.
Wildes Wolfe brachen durchs Tor.

- Georg Trakl

Movement I
The Little Car

On the 31st of August 1914
I left Deauville shortly before midnight
In Rouveyre’s little car

With his driver there were three of us

We said goodbye to a whole epoch
Angry giants reared over Europe
Eagles left their eyries to wait for the sun
Voracious fish rose from the abyss
Nations rushed to know one another through and through
In their dark dwellings the dead trembled with fear

... I will never forget that nighttime journey where none of us said a word ...
... o tender night from before the war ...
... And after having passed that afternoon
Through Fontainebleau
We arrived in Paris
At the moment when they were putting up the mobilisation posters
We understood, my friend and I
That the little car had taken us into a New Era
And even though we were already mature men
We had nevertheless just been born.

- Guillaume Apollinaire (trans. Charniak, Dharker, Ficarra, Herbert)

Movement II
In the East

Like the wild organ music of the winter storm
Is the dark rage of the people.
The crimson wave of battle,
Of leafless stars.

With broken brows, with silver arms
Night becoms to dying soldiers.
In the shadow of the autumnal ash
The ghosts of the slain are sighing.

A thorny wilderness girdles the town.
The moon frights the terrified women
From bleeding steps.
Wild wolves broke through the gate.

- Georg Trakl (trans. David Constantine)

Movement III
Fratelli

Di che regimento siete Fratelli?

Parola tremante nella notte

Foglia appena nata

Nell’aria spasmante involuntaria risolta
dell’uomo presente alla sua fragilità

Fratelli
- Giuseppe Ungaretti

Movement III
Brothers

What regiment are you from Brothers?

Word trembling in the night

A leaf just opening

In the racked air
involuntary revolts
of man face to face with his own fragility

Brothers
- Giuseppe Ungaretti (trans. Patrick Crouch)
**Movement IV**

**Attack**

At dawn the ridge emerges massed and dun  
In the wild purple of the glowing sun,  
Smouldering through spouts of drifting smoke that shroud  
The menacing scarred slope; and, one by one,  
Tanks creep and topple forward to the wire.  
The barrage roars and lifts. Then, clumsily bowed  
With bombs and guns and shovels and battle-gear,  
Men jostle and climb to, meet the bristling fire.  
Lines of grey, muttering faces, masked with fear,  
They leave their trenches, going over the top.  
While time ticks blank and buoy on their wrists,  
And hope, with furtive eyes and grappling fists,  
Flounders in mud. O Jesus, make it stop!

- Siegfried Sassoon

---

**Du Cotton dans les Oreilles (extraits)**

Écoute s'il pleut écoute s'il pleut  
puis écoutez la pluie si tendre et si douce  
soldats aveugles perdus parmi les cheveux de frise sous la lune liquide  
des Flandres à l’agonie sous la pluie fine la pluie si tendre et si douce confondez-vous avec l’horizon beaux êtres invisibles sous la pluie fine la pluie si tendre la pluie si douce

- Guillaume Apollinaire

---

**Cotton in the Ears (excerpts)**

Listen to it raining listen to it rain  
then listen to the rain so tender and so sweet  
blind soldiers lost amid the barbed wire under a liquid moon  
from Flanders in agony under the fine rain the rain so tender and so sweet  
melt into the horizon beautiful invisible beings under the fine rain  
the rain so tender and so sweet

- Guillaume Apollinaire  (trans. Evedyn Picarra)

---

**Il pleut (extraits)**

Il pleut des voix de femmes comme si elles étaient mortes même dans le souvenir  
C'est vous aussi qu'il pleut merveilleuses rencontres de ma vie ô gouttelettes  
---  
Écoute s'il pleut tandis que le regret et le dédain pleurent une ancienne musique

- Guillaume Apollinaire

---

**It's raining (excerpts)**

It rains women's voices as if they were dead even in memory  
It's you also that rains marvellous encounters of my life o droplets  
---  
Listen if it's raining while regret and disdain cry an ancient music

- Guillaume Apollinaire  (trans. Evedyn Picarra)
Movement V
Anthem for Doomed Youth

What passing-bells for those who die as cattle?
— Only the monstrous anger of the guns.
Only the stuttering rifles’ rapid rattle
Can patter out their hasty orisons.

No mockeries now for them; no prayers nor bells;
Nor any voice of mourning save the choirs,—
The shrill, demented choirs of wailing shells;
And bugles calling for them from sad shires.

What candles may be held to speed them all?
Not in the hands of boys, but in their eyes
Shall shine the holy glimmers of goodbye.

The pallor of girls' brows shall be their pall;
Their flowers the tenderness of patient minds,
And each slow dusk a drawing-down of blinds

- Wilfred Owen

Я знаю правду! Все прежние правды - прочь!
Я знаю правду! Все прежние правды - прочь!
Не надо людям с людьми на земле бороться.
Смотрите: вечер, смотрите: уж скоро ночь.
О чем - поэты, любовники, полководцы?

Уж ветер стелется, уже земля в росе,
Уж скоро звезда в небе застынет вьюга,
И под землею скоро уснем мы все,
Кто на земле не дадут уснуть друг другу.

- Марина Цветаева

Ja znaju pravdu! Vse prežnie pravdy - proč!
Ja znaju pravdu! Vse prežnie pravdy - proč!
Ne nado ljudjim s ljud’mi na zemle borot’ja.
Smotrite: vecher, smotrite: už skoro noć.
O čem - poety, ljubovniki, polkovodcy?

Už vjeter steljesja, uže zemlja v rose,
Už skoro zvezdaja v nebe zastynet vjuga,
I pod zemleju skoro usnem my vse,
Kto na zemle ne davali usnut’ drug drugu.

- Marina Tsvetaeva
(transliteration courtesy of
http://www.lexilogos.com/keyboard/russian_conversion.htm)

I know the truth — give up all other truths!

I know the truth — give up all other truths!
No need for people anywhere on earth to struggle.
Look — it is evening, look, it is nearly night:
what do you speak of, poets, lovers, generals?

The wind is level now, the earth is wet with dew,
the storm of stars in the sky will turn to quiet.
And soon all of us will sleep under the earth, we
who never let each other sleep above it.

- Marina Tsvetaeva (trans. Elaine Feinstein)
War Poems
the dead returning lightly dance
for mixed chamber ensemble and recorded sound

I
La Petite Auto

Forcibly $\dot{z} = 48$
Piccolo

Piu Mosso
$\dot{z} = 120$
Flute

rall., Ponderoso $\dot{z} = 60$

Drums, snares off
Percussion 1

Violin 1

Viola 1

Violoncello 1

Contrabass

Recorded Sounds

Trumpet in Bb

Drums, snares off
Percussion 2

Violin 2

Viola 2

Violoncello 2

Evelyn Ficarra
Le 31 du mois d'Août 1914
Je partis de Deauville un peu avant minuit
Dans la petite auto de Rouvroy
Avec son chauffeur nous étions trois
Nous dîmes adieu à toute
une époque

Les géants furieux
se dressaient sur
l'Europe

Les aigles
quittaient leur
aire en attendant
le soleil

Les poissons voraces
montaient des abîmes

Les peuples accouraient
pour se connaître à fond
Mit zerbrochenem Brauen, silbernen Armen

Wacht sterbendem Soldaten die Nacht.
Picc.  

Cl. 

Perc. 1 

Vln. 1 

Vla. 1 

Vc. 1 

Cb. 

Rec. 

Tpt. 

Perc. 2 

Vln. 2 

Vla. 2 

Vc. 2 

sul pont. 

sul pont. 

sul pont. 

sul pont. 

sul pont. 

involontaria rivolta 

dell'uomo presente 

con sordino 

con sordino 

con sordino 

normale 

normale 

f
IV

Attack

Swifly $\approx 120$

Suddenly slower, weighed down $\approx 60$

Determined $\approx 76$

Fl.

Cl.

Perc. 1

Vln. 1

Vla. 1

Vc. 1

Cb.

Rec.

Tpt.

Perc. 2

Vln. 2

Vla. 2

Vc. 2

Susp. cymbal

Medium mutes

Lowest Drum (L.D.)

Snare (Sn.)

3 Drums

snares on

Sn.
very quiet breathy note but key clicks as loud as possible

finger drumming on keys, both hands

col legno

con sordino

---

Partly, elements of the music notation are visible, including musical notes, dynamics (p, f), and various instructions for performance. The score is for multiple instrumental parts, including strings and percussion, with specific instructions for each.
poco rall.

mf finger drumming on keys, both hands

D Gently \( \frac{d}{2} \approx 60 \)

At dawn the ridge emerges massed and dun*,

In the wild purple of the glow*ring sun*.
finger drumming on keys, both hands

Col legno

Smouldering through spouts of drifting smoke that shroud* The menacing, scarred slope*

and, one by one, Tanks creep and topple forward to the wire.*

Then,*

*Smouldering through spouts of drifting smoke that shroud
*The menacing, scarred slope
*and, one by one, Tanks creep and topple forward to the wire
*Then
clumsily bent.

With bombs and guns
and shovels and battle-gear,
Men jostle and climb to meet the
torrid fire.

Laws of gloom, muddling faces, mashed with
fear.

They leave their trenches, going over the top.

While time ticks...
...écoute s'il pleut écoute s'il pleut....
V

Youth / Truth