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# **Unreal City**

Alexander Kolassa

(2011)

‘Fourmillante cité, cité pleine de rêves,  
Où le spectre en plein jour raccroche le passant!’  
Les Sept vieillards, Baudelaire

The name of this piece is lifted from a recurring phrase in T.S. Eliot’s landmark poem, *the Waste Land* (1922): ‘Unreal City/Under the brown fog of a winter dawn’ and later ‘Unreal City/Under the brown fog of a winter noon’.

In the extensive analysis he published along with the poem Eliot refers the reader to Baudelaire’s *Les Sept vieillards*, specifically the two lines in the epigraph above. Both poems share in a similar mystification of the urban landscape, exploring the mixture of alienation and awe the individual feels as they are eclipsed by their respective modernities. In light of the Lowry exhibition soon to be opened here at the University of Nottingham, consideration of the above could inspire a reinterpretation of Lowry’s supposed naive celebration of the northern industrial cityscape. The austere and imposing industrial structures, juxtaposed against the busy optimism in the streets below poses an interesting flipside to the bleaker post-war image of Eliot’s *The Waste Land*; it is the space somewhere between these two images that I have set out to explore in music.

The piece can be divided into three parts; a slow-paced opening which deals with large structures and combinations of instruments, often overlapping. The harmony here is intentionally static – like the monolithic factories of the industrial landscape – built primarily upon a pitch-class set which emphasises both a major and a minor 3<sup>rd</sup>, and a more dissonant 2<sup>nd</sup>. However, the security of the Unreal City is undermined and eventually gives way to a fast section; here we have the individual movement of instruments and a spiralling kaleidoscope and widening harmony that is characterised by fifths. Elements of the static harmony are maintained and following a final build up the piece collapses back into a recapitulation of the initial slow section.

(programme note: October 2011)

flute

oboe

clarinet in Bb

bassoon

horn in F

percussion (one or two players optional)

    vibraphone

    finger cymbals (\*)

strings (quintet, vln I and II, vla, vc, cb)

\* The finger cymbals referred to here are small (about 2-3 inches in diameter) and when struck against each other (lightly and on the side) emit a particularly resonant high pitched 'ping', Held at the base, a vibrato effect can be achieved by subtly 'wobbling' the cymbals.

# Unreal City

Alexander Kolassa (2011)

grand and spacious, at a slow walk ( c. ♩ = 63 )

Flute

Oboe

Clarinet in B $\flat$

Bassoon

Horn in F

Finger Cymbals

Vibraphone

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Violoncello

Contrabass

motor off

*p* *f* *p*

*f* *mp*

*f* *mp*

*f* *mp*

*pp*

grand and spacious, at a slow walk ( c. ♩ = 63 )

A

poco rit. . . . . very slow, impeded ( c. ♩ = 50 )

4

Fl. *p* *mf* *pp*

Ob. *p* *mf* *pp*

Cl. *p* *mf* *pp*

Bsn. *p* *mf* *pp*

Hn. *p* *mf* *pp*

F. Cym. vibrato.

Vib. *mf* *mp*

A

poco rit. . . . . very slow, impeded ( c. ♩ = 50 )

Vln. I *mf* *pp* *mf* *pp*

Vln. II *mf* *pp* *mf* *pp*

Vla. *mf* *pp* *mf* *pp*

Vc. *mf* *pp* *ff*

Cb. *f* *pp*

8

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn.

Hn.

F. Cym.

Vib.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

*ff* *pp*

*f*

*f* *p*

*ff* *pp*

con sord. senza sord.

*< f >* *pp* *ff* *pp*

damp. damp. damp.

*mf*

*f* *pp* *f*

*pp* *< ff >* *f* *pp* *f*

*ff* *pp* *ff* *pp*

12

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

Ob. *p* *mf* *pp*

Cl. *mf* *pp*

Bsn. *ff* *pp* *ff* *mp*

Hn.

F. Cym.

Vib. *f* *p* *mp*

Vln. I *pp* *mf*

Vln. II *pp* *mf* sul tasto.

Vla. *pp* *ff* *ff* *pp*

Vc. *pp* *ff* *ff* *pp*

Cb. *ff* *pp* *ff* *pp*



16 **B**

Fl.

Ob. *p* *mp*

Cl.

Bsn. *pp* *ff* *pp*

Hn. con sord. *ff* *pp*

F. Cym. damp

Vib.

**B**

Vln. I *p*

Vln. II *pp* norm. *ff* *f* *pp*

Vla. sul pont. norm. *ff* *f* *pp*

Vc. sul pont. norm. *ff* *f* *pp*

Cb. *ff* *pp*

19

Fl.

Ob. *mf* *f*

Cl.

Bsn. *ff* *pp*

Hn. senza sord. *ff* *pp*

F. Cym. damp. *f*

Vib.

Vln. I *pp*

Vln. II *ff* *f* *pp*

Vla. *ff* *f* *pp*

Vc. *ff* *f* *pp*

Cb. *ff* *pp*

C

Detailed description: This page of a musical score covers measures 19 through 22. It features a woodwind section (Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Bassoon, Horn) and a string section (Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, Contrabasso). The percussion part includes a F. Cym. (F. Cymbal). The score is divided into four measures. Measure 19 starts with a 4/4 time signature. Measure 20 changes to 5/4. Measure 21 changes to 3/8. Measure 22 returns to 4/4. A rehearsal mark 'C' is placed at the beginning of measure 21. Dynamics include *mf*, *f*, *ff*, *pp*, and *f*. Performance instructions include 'senza sord.' for the Horn and 'damp.' for the F. Cym. The woodwinds and strings play melodic lines, while the percussion provides rhythmic accompaniment.

poco accel.

poco rit.

Musical score for Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Clarinet (Cl.), Bassoon (Bsn.), Horn (Hn.), and F. Cym. The score is in 4/4 time and includes dynamic markings such as *f*, *ff*, *mf*, *mp*, *ff*, and *pp*. The Flute part features triplets and a crescendo. The Clarinet part has a *ff* dynamic. The Bassoon part has a *pp* dynamic. The Horn part is silent. The F. Cym. part has a tremolo effect.

poco accel.

poco rit.

Musical score for Violin I (Vln. I), Violin II (Vln. II), Viola (Vla.), and Cello (Vc.). The score is in 4/4 time and includes dynamic markings such as *mf* and *pp*. The Violin I, Violin II, and Viola parts all start with a dynamic of *mf* and then transition to *pp*. The Cello part is silent.

**D**

a tempo ( c. ♩ = 50 )

25

Fl. *pp* *mf* *pp*

Ob. *pp* *mf* *pp*

Cl. *pp* *mf* *pp*

Bsn. *ff* *pp* *ff* *pp*

Hn. *pp*

F. Cym.

Vib.

**D**

a tempo ( c. ♩ = 50 )

Vln. I *pp* *mf* *pp*

Vln. II *pp* sul pont. *mf*

Vla. *pp* *mf*

Vc. *pp* *mf*

Cb. *ff* *pp* *ff* *pp*

28

Fl. *pp* — *mf* — *pp*

Ob. *pp* — *mf* — *pp*

Cl. *pp* — *ff* — *pp*

Bsn. *mf* — *p*

Hn. *f* — *p*

F. Cym.

Vib.

Vln. I *mp*

Vln. II *p* — *pp* — *mf* — *pp*

Vla. *p* — *pp* — *mf* — *pp*

Vc. *p* — *pp* — *mf* — *pp*

Cb. *pp* — *mf* — *pp* — *ff* — *mf*

**E**

faster, chattering ( c. ♩ = 120 )

33

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn.

Hn.

F. Cym.

Vib.

*pp* — *mf* — *pp*

*f* — *pp*

*pp* — *mf* — *pp*

*f*

**E**

faster, chattering ( c. ♩ = 120 )

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

(on the string)

*p* — *mf* — *p*

(off string)

*p* — *mf* — *p*

36

Fl. *mp*

Ob. *ff* — *pp*

Cl. *p* — *mf* — *p* — *mf* — *p*

Bsn. *ff* — *pp* — *ff* — *pp*

Hn. *ff* — *pp* — *f* — *pp* — *f* — *p*

F. Cym.

Vib.

Vln. I (on the string) *mp sempre*

Vln. II *p*

Vla. (off string) *mf* — *p*

Vc.

Cb. *mf* — *p*

Detailed description: This page of a musical score covers measures 36, 37, and 38. The music is written for a full orchestra. The woodwind section includes Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Clarinet (Cl.), Bassoon (Bsn.), and Horn (Hn.). The string section includes Violin I (Vln. I), Violin II (Vln. II), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Contrabass (Cb.). The percussion section includes F. Cym. (F. Cymbal) and Vib. (Vibraphone). The score is divided into three measures by vertical bar lines. Measure 36 is in 4/4 time, measure 37 is in 2/4 time, and measure 38 is in 4/4 time. The key signature has one sharp (F#). Dynamics are indicated by *mp*, *ff*, *pp*, *p*, *mf*, *f*, and *mp sempre*. Performance instructions include '(on the string)' for Vln. I and '(off string)' for Vla. The woodwinds and strings play rhythmic patterns, while the horns play melodic lines. The percussion parts are mostly rests.

39

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn.

Hn.

F. Cym.

Vib.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

*mp* — *mf* — *mp*

*p* — *f* — *mp*

*mf*

*mf* — *ff*

*mf*  
Ped.

*pp*

*f*

(on the string)  
*pp*

(on the string)  
*ff*

*p* — *f* — *p* — *ff*



**F**

42

Fl. *ff* *p* *f*

Ob. *f*

Cl. *f*

Bsn. *f* *mp* *f*

Hn. *f*

F. Cym.

Vib.

**F**

Vln. I *f*

Vln. II

Vla. *f*

Vc.

Cb.

44

Fl. *mf*

Ob. *f* *mp* *f* *mf*

Cl. *mf* *f*

Bsn. *p* *f*

Hn. open (o) *p* *f* *pp* *f* *pp*

F. Cym.

Vib. *mp*

Vln. I *p* *mf* *p*

Vln. II *mf*

Vla. *mf*

Vc. *mp* *mf*

Cb. *mf* *mf*

47

Fl. *f* *p* *ff*

Ob.

Cl. *ff*

Bsn. *mf* *ff*

Hn. *f* *pp* *f*

F. Cym.

Vib. *ff*  
Ped.

Vln. I *f* *pp* *f*

Vln. II *f* *f* *pp* *f*

Vla. *f* *pp* *f*

Vc. *f* *pp* *f*

Cb. *ff*

**G**

un poco meno mosso

50

Fl. *mp*

Vib. *p*



53

Fl. *p* *mf*

Vib.

Vln. I *p*

Vln. II *p*



58

Fl.

Vib.

Vln. I

Vln. II *sul pont.*

61

Fl. *f*

Ob. *pp* — *f*

Cl. *mp* *p*

Bsn. *mp* — *f* — *mp* *pp* — *f*

Hn. *p*

F. Cym.

Vib.

Vln. I *f* — *p* *mf*

Vln. II (sul pont.) *mf*

Vla. con legno *pp* — *mf* — *pp*

65

Fl. *pp*

Cl. *f* — *p* — *ff* — *p*

**H**

energetic chattering (again) ( c. ♩ = 120 )

68

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn.

Hn.

F. Cym.

Vib.

**H**

energetic chattering (again) ( c. ♩ = 120 )

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

71

Fl. *p* *f* *p*

Ob. *pp* *mf* *p* *f* *pp*

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

Bsn. *pp* *mf* *p* *ff* *pp* *ff* *pp*

Hn. *p* *f* *p*

F. Cym.

Vib. *ff* *pp*

Vln. I *f*

Vln. II *mf*

Vla. *f*

Vc.

Cb.

74 **I**

Fl. *ff*

Ob. *mf*

Cl. *p* *ff* *p* *mf*

Bsn. *ff* *pp* *ff* *pp* *mf* *mp*

Hn. *pp* *ff*

F. Cym.

Vib. *mf*

**I**

Vln. I *mf*

Vln. II *f*

Vla. *mf*

Vc. *legato* *f* *mp*

Cb.

3/4

Detailed description: This page of a musical score covers measures 74, 75, and 76. It features a woodwind section (Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Bassoon), Horns, Percussion (F. Cym., Vib.), and a string section (Violins I & II, Viola, Violoncello, Contrabass). The score includes various dynamics such as *ff*, *mf*, *p*, *pp*, and *f*, along with performance markings like *legato*. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. A first ending bracket labeled 'I' spans measures 74 and 75. The woodwinds and strings play complex rhythmic patterns, while the horns play sustained notes. The percussion parts are mostly rests.



J

77

Fl. *pp* *mf*

Ob. *f* *p* *ff*

Cl. *f* *f*

Bsn. *f* *p* *ff*

Hn. *mp* *mf*

F. Cym.

Vib.

Vln. I *f*

Vln. II *f*

Vla. *f*

Vc. *mf* *f*

Cb.

**molto meno mosso** ( c. ♩ = 92 )

80

Fl. *f*

Ob. *mf*

Cl. *ff*

Bsn. *mf*

Hn. *mf* open *< ff =*

F. Cym.

Vib. *f* *mp*

**molto meno mosso** ( c. ♩ = 92 )

Vln. I *pp* *< ff =*

Vln. II *pp* *< ff =*

Vla. *pp* *< ff =*

Vc. *pp* *< ff =*

Cb. *ff*

3 6 6

83

Fl. *pp* *ff* *sfz* *f* *pp*

Ob. *f* *pp* *mp*

Cl. *f* *pp*

Bsn. *f* *pp* *mf* *pp*

Hn. *pp*

F. Cym.

Vib.

Vln. I *pp*

Vln. II *pp*

Vla. *pp*

Vc. *pp*

Cb. *pp* *mf* *pp*

**K**

*l'istesso tempo*

86

Fl. *mp*

Ob. *p*

Cl. *pp*

Bsn.

Hn.

F. Cym.

Vib. *mf*

**K**

*l'istesso tempo*

Vln. I *p* *mf*

Vln. II *p* *mf*

Vla. *p* *mf*

Vc. *p* *mf*

Cb.

The score is divided into two systems. The first system (measures 86-89) features woodwinds and percussion. The second system (measures 90-93) features strings and vibraphone. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature changes from 3/4 to 4/4 to 5/4 and back to 4/4. Dynamics include *mp*, *p*, *pp*, and *mf*. A section marker **K** is present in both systems.



95

Fl. *pp* *f* *mp* *p* *mp* *pp*

Ob. *mf* *mp* *mf* *mp* *p*

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

Bsn. *ff* *pp*

Hn. *f* *pp* *mf* *con sord.* *mp*

F. Cym.

Vib. *mf* *p* *mp*

Vln. I *pp* *mf* *pp*

Vln. II *pp* *norm.* *pp* *mf* *pp*

Vla. *ff* *pp* *pp* *mf* *pp*

Vc. *ff* *pp* *mf* *pp*

Cb. *ff* *pp*