

Matthew Whittall

Night, sleep, death and the stars

(three preludes and a fantasy after Walt Whitman)

for flutes and harp

2008

Music Finland



THIS PREVIEW
IS IN LOW RESOLUTION

**For promotional
use only**

Music Finland

Matthew Whittall

Night, sleep, death and the stars

(three preludes and a fantasy after Walt Whitman)

for flutes and harp

(2008)



Composer's note:

The title *Night, sleep, death and the stars* is the final line of a short poem from Walt Whitman's last years, *A clear midnight*, one that has haunted me since I first read it many years ago, demanding further exploration, likely because it encompasses several themes that continue to figure prominently in my music – with the exception of death, a topic whose more gothic associations I have gratefully relegated to a more Romantic past. Having all these ideas present in the same piece, though, was something new, so I felt the need to approach them in a fresh way, deliberately going against the manner in which one might expect them to be treated. Thus, this night is still and wondrous, yet unnerving under the surface. Sleep brings no rest; rather, the mind begins to work overtime, ideas racing around and multiplying in great profusion. There is no mourning, nor even a shade of physical death, only peace and meditation; and the stars are not small, cold and distant, but blazing hot and surrealistically close, like the vision of the heavens of Van Gogh's *La nuit étoilée*.

Owing to the four distinct images, my usual single- or bridged-movement approach to form quickly gave way to the idea of four separate pieces, each based on different musical materials. After Hanna Kinnunen requested that her part make use of multiple flutes, particularly the low members of the family, it naturally followed that I should write one piece for each instrument, thus including the piccolo, which makes its appearance (in an intentionally perverse way) in the "death" movement, leaving the bass flute to inhabit the stars.

Night, sleep, death and the stars was commissioned by Hanna Kinnunen and Lily-Marlene Puusepp for première in July 2008 at the Crusell Week in Uusikaupunki, Finland on a concert series titled – entirely coincidentally – "Night Serenades".

Duration



re.

formance,
must be observed.

for Hanna and Lily
Night, sleep, death and the stars

Matthew Whittall
(2008)

i. Still; Restless

Play
Flute
Sing
Harp

p-mp *p* *p* *poco* *mf* *mf* *mf*

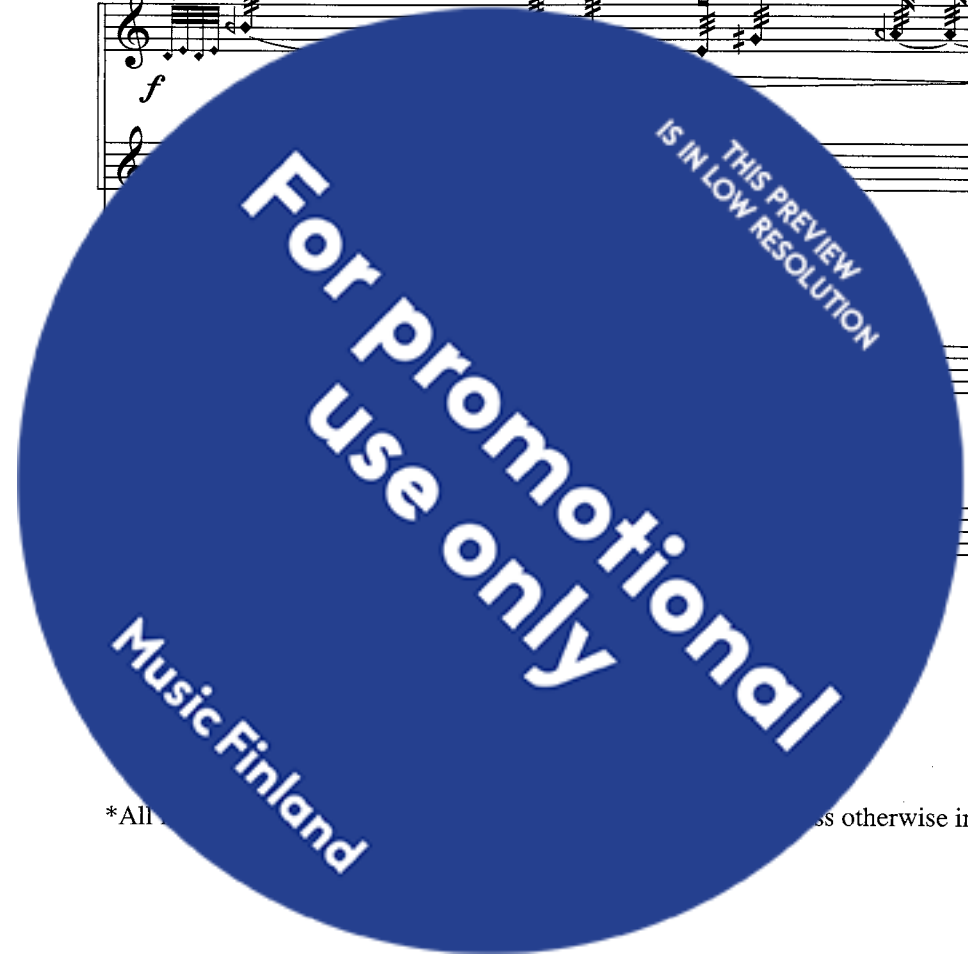
* $\text{♩} = 52-56$

Detailed description: This system contains the first three staves of the score. The 'Play' staff has a whole note with a fermata and a dynamic marking of *p-mp*. The 'Flute' staff has a whole note with a fermata and a dynamic marking of *p*. The 'Sing' staff has a whole note with a fermata and a dynamic marking of *p*, with a *poco* hairpin indicating a slight increase in volume. The 'Harp' staff has a whole note with a fermata and a dynamic marking of *mf*, featuring a triplet of eighth notes.

$\text{♩} = 52-56$ (whistle tone)

f *p* *f* *mp* *mp* *p* *mf* *p* *pp*

Detailed description: This system contains the next three staves. The 'Play' staff has a whole note with a fermata and a dynamic marking of *f*, with a 'whistle tone' annotation and a five-measure rest. The 'Flute' staff has a whole note with a fermata and a dynamic marking of *p*. The 'Sing' staff has a whole note with a fermata and a dynamic marking of *f*. The 'Harp' staff has a whole note with a fermata and a dynamic marking of *mp*, featuring a five-measure rest. The bottom staff (likely piano) has a whole note with a fermata and a dynamic marking of *p*, with a five-measure rest. The bottom-most staff has a whole note with a fermata and a dynamic marking of *pp*.



*All dynamics are as otherwise indicated.

ord.

mf *f* *pp* *pp* *poco* *pp* *more* *pp* *mf* *sub.*

3-4" 5-6"

(change fingering quickly)

f *pp* *mp* *mp* *mp*

raise pedal to buzz point only

l.v.

8va

D \flat → D \sharp

ord.

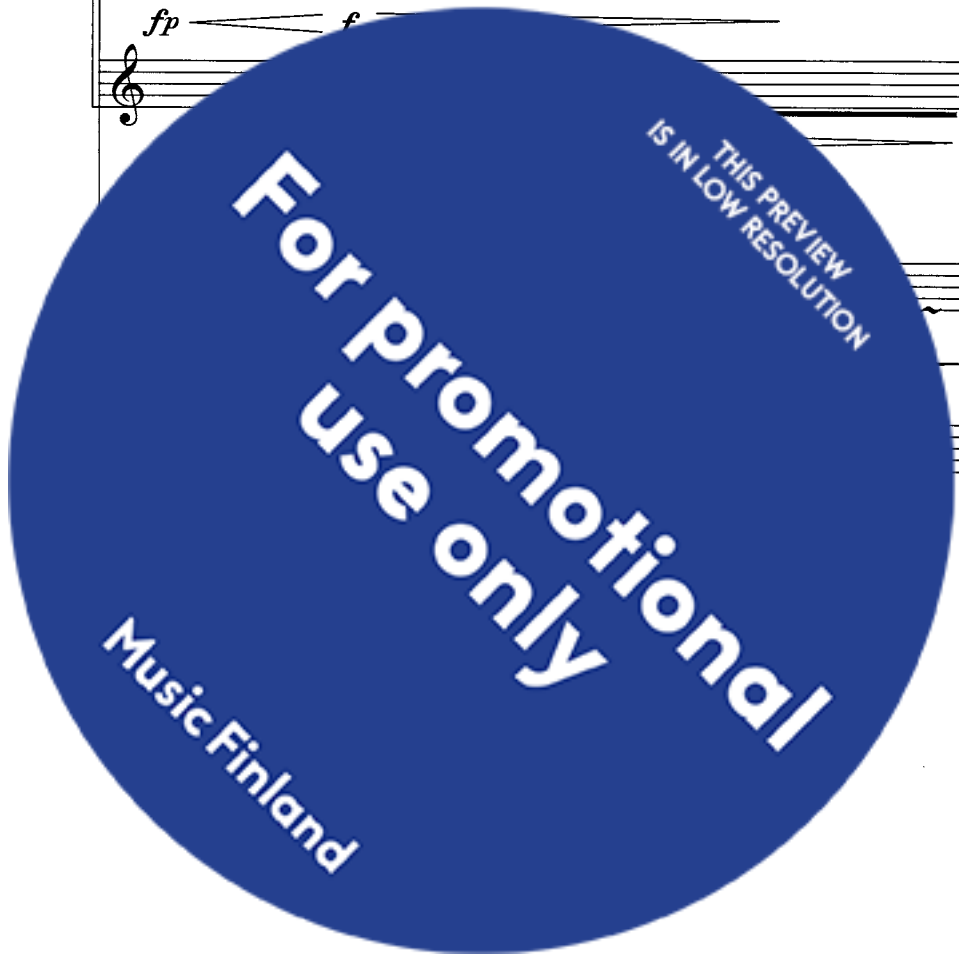
fp *f* *pp* *ff* *mp* *mp* *mf* *ff*

5-7" 5-7"

tr *tr* *mf* *dry* *ff* *short*

3

(damp plucked strings only, allow harp to resonate)



ord.

p *mp* *pp* *mf*

♩ = 52-56

(grace notes on the beat)

ff *l.v.*

pp *mf* *pp*

ff *l.v.* *mp* *p*



*Score for this movement is not in C

ii. Dreamy; Volatile ♩ = 126-132

Alto flute (in G) *f* forceful, slightly airy *mp*

Harp *f* *mp*

13 *f* normal tone *mp* *mp* *mp* *mp*

f *mp* *mp* *mp*

25



46

59

ossia

71

82

(With no sense of downbeat – accent indicated notes only)
(tongue-ram)

f *mp* *f* *mp* *f* *mf* *mp*

f *f* *f* *mf*



6109

air tone

ff *f* *p* *p*



128 *pizz.* *sim.*

mf strong accents

mp *mf* *mp* *mf* *mp* *p* *f* *p*



142

p *f* *mp* *mf* *mp*

pizz. + key clicks

mf *mf* *p*



169 pizz. *mp* *ord.* 3 3 3 5 5 5 5 7

mp *mf*

181

193

204

dim. (tone becoming progressively airier).....

& *dim.* (moving hands slowly closer to soundboard).....



iii. Tensely calm

Piccolo

Harp

slow accel.----- fast, flowing rit.----- slow

slow----- slow

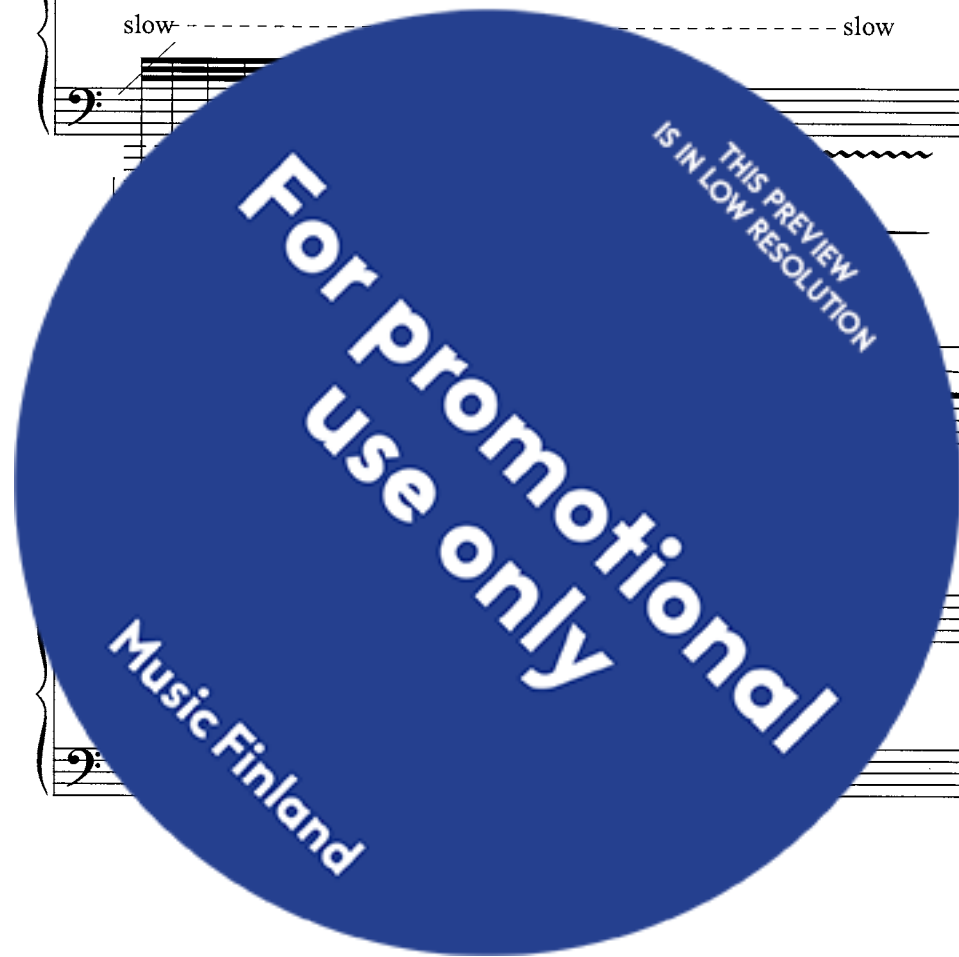
slow----- fast

4-6" 10-15" 8-10" 5-7" 7-10" 4-6" 10-15" 8-10" 5-7" 7-10" 4-6"

pp *pp* *mp* *mf* *pp* *pp* *mf* *poco f* *mf*

l.v. *l.v.*

Take tuning key quickly



7-10" , 5-7" 7-10"

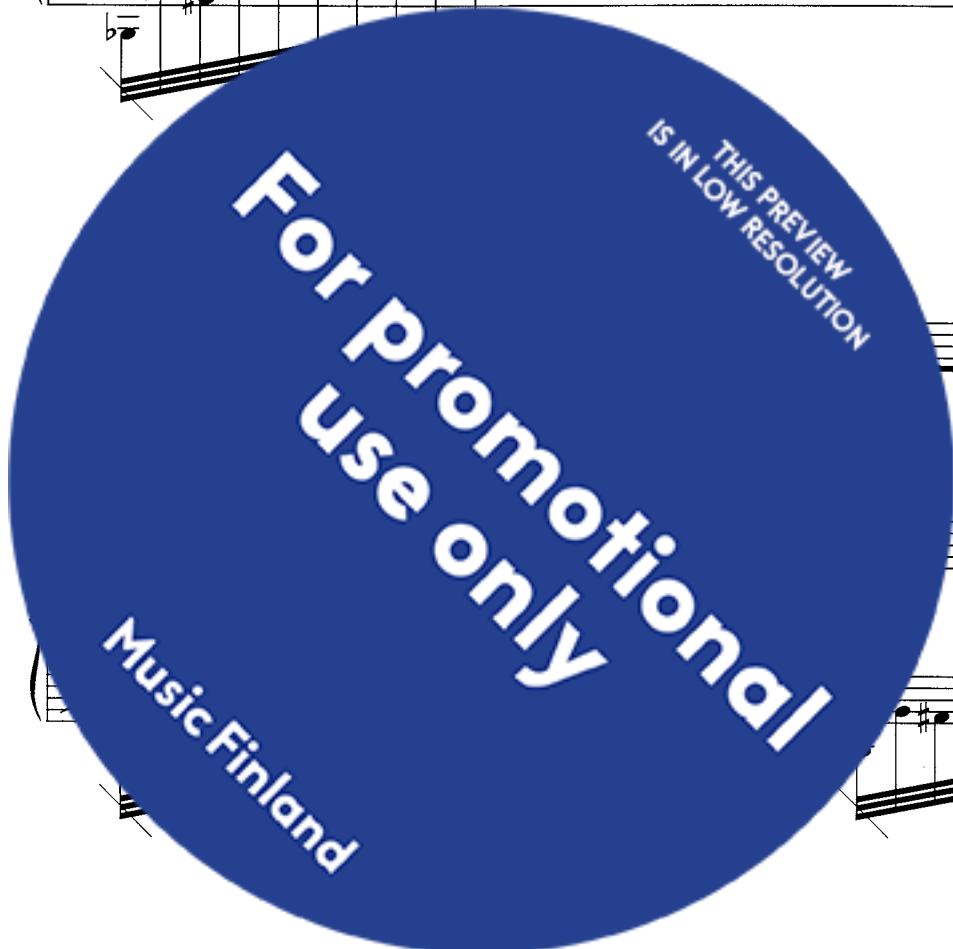
ppp , *pp* *pp*

mp (gentle) *l.v.*

5-7" 7-10" as long as possible (full breath)

pp *pp* *pp*

ppp *ppp* *attacca iv*



iv. Violent; Ecstatic

Harp

fff *loco* $\text{♩} = 69-72$ *circular gliss.* *freely, cadenza-like* *ff* *fff* *gong* *fff* *slow* *fast*

8va 8va 8va 8va

8vb 8vb 8vb 8vb

sfzp *f* *ff* *mf* *ff* *f* *p* *Calming* *l.v.*

8vb 8vb 8vb 8vb

10 *Slower* *f* *mp* *pp* *Slower* *f* *mp* *mf* *Slower* *f* *mp* *Accel.*

gong *pluck* *gong* *pluck* *gong* *pluck* *gong* *pluck*

8vb 8vb 8vb 8vb

15 *f* *f* *p* *fast, light* *fp*

mf *sfz* *p* *mf* *sfz* *p* *gradual cresc.*



30

mp

33

Accel.

Slower

Accel. molto (slowly becoming gliss.)

Accel.

35

B. fl.

broken tone multiphonic (as many overtones as possible)

(grace notes on the beat)

fff

slap soundboard

hard plastic plectrum

f

fff

ff

short glisses, sharp accents *f*

♩ = 63-66

f

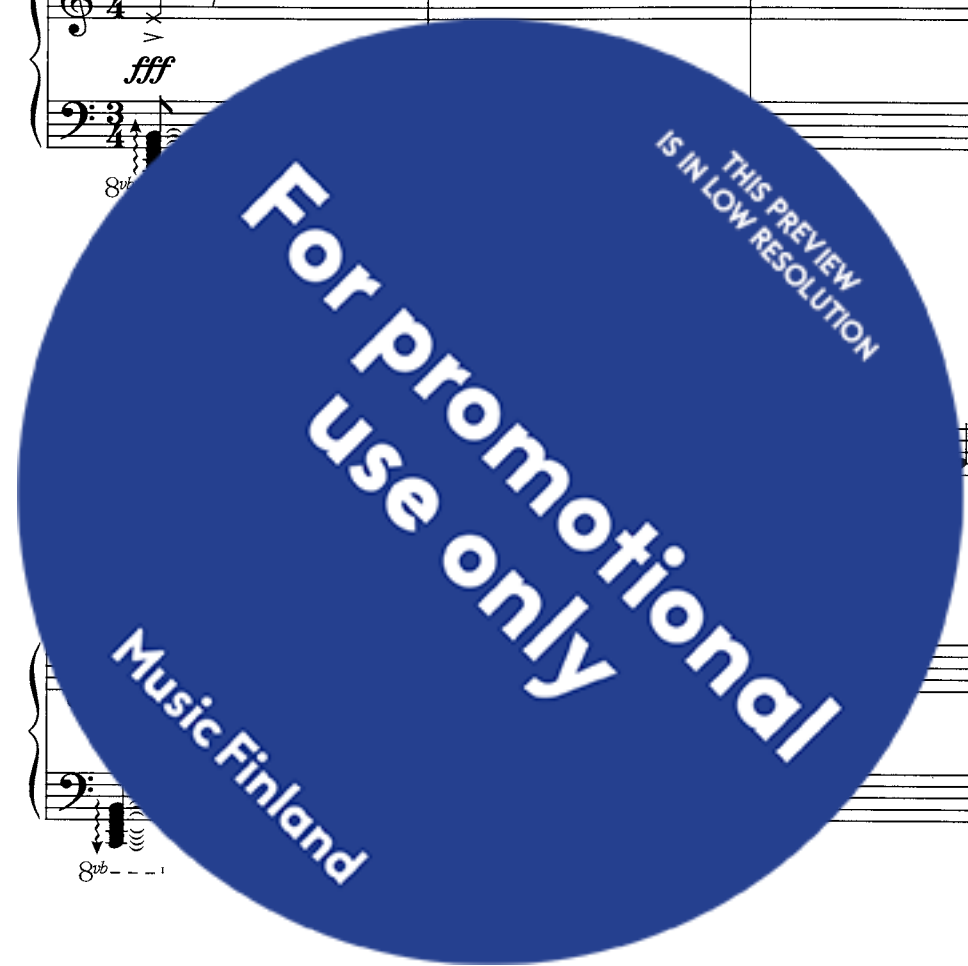
fp

mp

f

mp

f



46

tr tr tr tr tr tr

fp *fp*

mf *mp* *f* *mp* *mp*

3 5 6

mf *mf* *mf*

51

mp *ff* *pp* *mp*

mp *pp* *ff* *pp* *f* *f* *p* *mp*

p

ff *ff*

3 3

(bring out rhythm)

mp *mp* *mf*

f *f*

3 5 5 5 5

8va



65

mf *fp* *mp* *p*

f *f* *f* *mp* *mf fluid* *f*

f *f* *f* *mp*

73

Calming

p

p

82

Majestic; Powerful

fff *fff* *fff*

ff *ff* *fff*

short glisses, sharp accents

hand-over-hand glisses.

circular gliss.

B.

Hp.

fp *f* *ff* *f* *mp*

mf

overblow



B. fl. *fp* *tr* *mp* *6* *6* *6* *ff* *fp* *tr* *mp*

Hp. *Sub-1* *mp* *8vb-1* *p*

3. fl. *mp* *mf* *f* *ff* *fp* *fff* *p* *ff* *f* *mp* *mp*

Hp. *overblow* *tr*

Calming *mp* *f* *mp* *p* *mp*

3 *2* *3* *3*

♩ = 72

8va until end *p* chiming gently

8va until end

3 *ff* *C#4 (2345/2)*

slap soundboard *f*

gong *Sub-1*



108

mp *mf* *p*

122

ff *p* *dim. al niente* *No rit!* *p* *f* *pp*

135

ff *ff* *f* *ff* *8va* *8va*



*Alternate flutist score in G
Score for this movement is not in C

ii. Dreamy; Volatile ♩ = 126-132

Alto flute (in G) *f* forceful, slightly airy *mp*

Harp *f* *mp*

13 *f* normal tone *mp* *mp* *mp* *mp*

f *mp* *mp* *mp*

25



46

59

ossia

71

82

(With no sense of downbeat – accent indicated notes only)
(tongue-ram)

f mp f mp f mf mp



109

air tone

ff *ff* *f* *p* *p*

128

pizz. *mf* strong accents *sim.*

mp *mf* *mp* *mf* *mp* *p* *f* *p*

142

p *f* *mp* *mf* *mp*

pizz. + key clicks

mf *mf* *p*



169 pizz. *mp* *ord.* *mf*
smooth, less accented than in the beginning

mp *mf*

181

193

204

dim. (tone becoming progressively airier)

& dim. (moving hands slowly closer to soundboard)

