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Matthew Whittall

Night, sleep, death and the stars

(three preludes and a fantasy after Walt Whitman)

for flutes and harp

2008

TEOSTO

SUOMALAISEN MUSIIKIN TIEDOTUSKESKUS

FINNISH MUSIC INFORMATION CENTRE

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Night, sleep, death and the stars

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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: ca. 19 min.

- i. 3 min.
- ii. 4 min.
- iii. 3 min.
- iv. 9 min.

All extended techniques are indicated as they appear in the score.

Breath marks (,) indicate a pause of 1-2 seconds.

Breath marks (,) under fermatas indicate a pause of 3-5 seconds.

Pause lengths are meant as a guide and may be changed in performance, according to one's interpretation, but all such notated pauses must be observed, as they are an integral structural element of the music.

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

Matthew Whittall
(2008)

i. Still; Restless

The musical score is arranged in four systems. The first system includes staves for Play, Flute, Sing, and Harp. The Play part consists of long horizontal lines with a few notes and a fermata. The Flute part has a dynamic range from *p* to *mp* and includes a *poco* marking. The Sing part is mostly a long line with a few notes and a *poco* marking. The Harp part features *mf* dynamics and triplet patterns. The second system continues the Play, Flute, and Sing parts, with the Flute part including a *whistle tone* and a *f* dynamic. The Harp part continues with triplet patterns. The third system shows the Flute and Sing parts with *mp* dynamics, and the Harp part with *f* and *mp* dynamics. The fourth system shows the Flute and Sing parts with *mp* dynamics, and the Harp part with *pp* dynamics. A large diagonal watermark 'FOR PROMOTIONAL USE ONLY FIMIC' is overlaid on the bottom left of the score.

*All flute brackets last a free duration of one breath (7-10"), unless otherwise indicated.

ord.

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

3-4" 5-6"

8va

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

raise pedal to buzz point only

l.v.

D \flat → D \sharp

ord.

fp *f*

5-7" 5-7"

f *pp* *mf* *pp* *ff* *mp* *mp* *mf* *dry* *ff* *short*

tr *tr*

(damp plucked strings only, allow harp to resonate)

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ord.

p *mp* *pp* *mf*

$\text{♩} = 52-56$

(grace notes on the beat)

mp *ff* *l.v.*

pp *mf* *pp*

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

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*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

f

mp

mp

25

35

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46

ossia

59

71

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

82

mf strong accents

95

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FIMM

6109

air tone

128

pizz. *mf* strong accents *sim.*

142

156

pizz. + key clicks

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PIMIC

169 pizz. *mp* *ord.* *mf*
← ♪ = ♪ →
3 3 3 5 5 5 5
smooth, less accented than in the beginning

mp *mf*

181

193

204

216

Gradual rit. & dim. (tone becoming progressively airier)

Gradual rit. & dim. (moving hands slowly closer to soundboard)

iii. Tensely calm

Piccolo

Harp

slow accel. fast, flowing rit. slow

pp mp mf

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

pp poco

slow fast slow

pp mf l.v.

slow fast

pp mf poco f l.v.

15-20" 7-10" 4-6"

pp

mf

Take tuning key quickly

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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*

p *pp* *ppp* *ppp*

attacca iv

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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.*

6

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

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

$\text{♩} = 72$ $\text{♩} = 72$ $\text{♩} = 72$

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

23 *fp* *f* *p* *sfz* *p* *sfz* *p* *gradual cresc.*

mf *mf*

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FIMC

30

mp

33

Accel.

Slower

Accel. molto (slowly becoming gliss.)

Accel.

broken tone multiphonic (as many overtones as possible)

(grace notes on the beat)

tr

fff slap soundboard

fff

hard plastic plectrum *f*

short glisses, sharp accents *f*

8vb

Slower

mp

f

fp

mp

f

mp

f

table

5

8vb

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FIMIC

46

51

58

FOR PROMOTIONAL USE ONLY

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* *fff*

mp *f* *ff* *fff*

mp *f* *ff* *fff*

short glisses, sharp accents

hand-over-hand glisses.

circular gliss.

90

Freely

B. fl.

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

fff *mf*

overblow

(air)

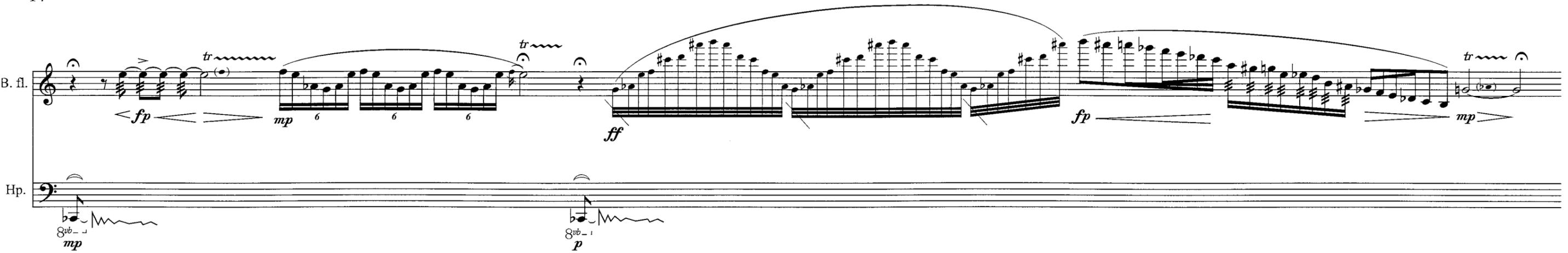
buzz string with paperclip

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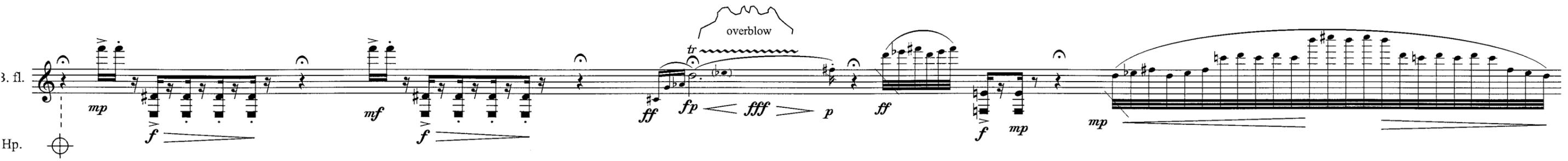
B. fl. *fp* *mp* *ff* *fp* *mp* *tr*

Hp. *mp* *p*



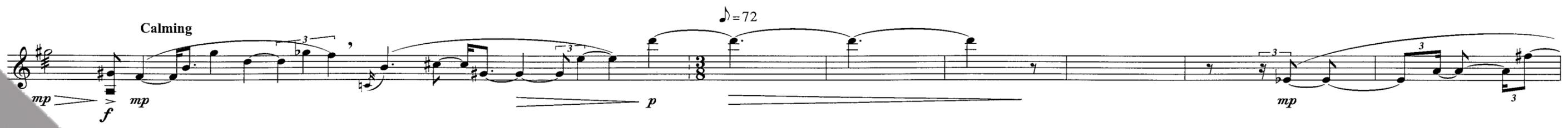
3. fl. *mp* *mf* *ff* *fp* *fff* *p* *ff* *f* *mp* *mp* *overblow* *tr*

Hp. *f* *f* *f* *mp* *mp*



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

♩ = 72



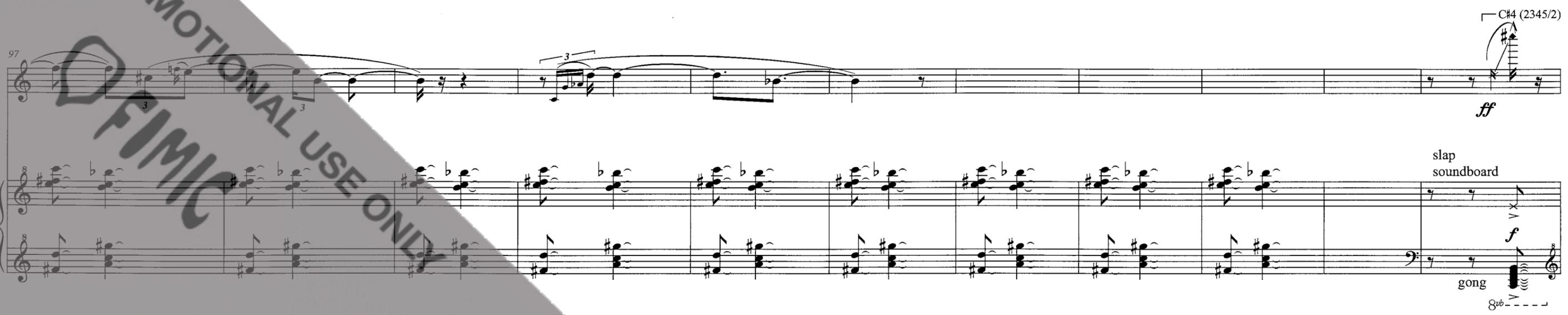
8va until end *p* chiming gently

8va until end



97 *ff* *slap soundboard* *f* *gong* *Sub*

C#4 (2345/2)



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108

mp *mf* *p*

122

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

8va

135

ppp *f* *ff*

8va

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*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

35

FOR PROMOTIONAL USE ONLY

46

ossia

59

71

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

82

mf strong accents

95

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FIMM

109

air tone

ff *ff* *f* *p*

p

128

pizz. *sim.*

mf strong accents

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

142

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

156

pizz. + key clicks

mf *mf* *p*

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169 pizz. ord. 3 3 3 5 5 5 5

3 3 3 5 5 5 5

181

193

204

216

Gradual rit. & dim. (tone becoming progressively airier)-----

Gradual rit. & dim. (moving hands slowly closer to soundboard)-----

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