

Tearing as it is Woven

SATB Choir
Anselm McDonnell

Preface

Composed by Anselm McDonnell January 2019. Text by Euan Tait, 2018, used with permission.

Instrumentation:

SATB Choir

Text:

i. When the city became the sea

Where the city was,
the lough is now the city's voices.
Its waters burning in the sun,
tearing the mountains to pieces.

The great sea here is accuser
and crowded courtroom.
Here is no city singing,
but only the voice of the sea.

ii. Unravelling psalm

The song is fraying rope
tearing as it is woven
overhead.

iii. Cumha

The frost is rare,
that underfoot snap
rises to so high a pitch
we barely hear,
yet branches stir
far above us.

We know, now,
we are onslaught
not companion
to songs not sung
by falling birds:
trees groan
as we approach.

Sample Order

Sample 1:

Pages 1-3. The main body of material.

Sample 2:

Page 4. The opening two systems, but with Sopranos joining the Altos in the whispering.

Sample 3:

Page 5. The opening two systems, but with Sopranos whispering different material from the Altos.

Sample 4:

Page 6. Figure 3 from Sample 1 but with extra instructions for Sopranos and Basses.

Sample 5:

Page 7. An experiment with an aleatoric melody.

Sample 6:

Page 8. Material from later in the text that explores different instructions for the looping materials.

I plan to start with Sample 5 & 6 as they are fairly brief, then spend the majority of time on Sample 1: using Sample 2, 3 and 4 as alternative options.

Extended Techniques

Headless Notes: Headless stems indicate non-sung vocalisations that follows the rough contours of the indicated shapes. These are unmeasured, but rhythmic stems indicate whether they are intended to be rapid, or slow. A written instruction will show whether the material is to be spoken, whispered, shouted etc.

In the below example the 'rr' is to be rolled strongly, and gliss. downwards.

f *rr*
wh hrr ,
was

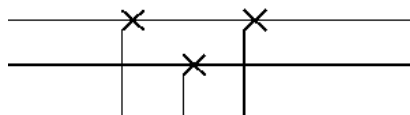


The image shows a musical staff with three lines. Above the staff, the text 'wh hrr , was' is written. The 'wh' is positioned above the first line, 'hrr' above the second line, and 'was' above the third line. Below the staff, there are three vertical stems. The first stem is a simple vertical line. The second stem is a vertical line with a thick, shaded rectangular block at its base, representing a headless note. The third stem is a vertical line with a thick, shaded rectangular block at its base, also representing a headless note. A diagonal line connects the top of the second stem to the top of the third stem, indicating a glissando.

Crossed Noteheads: Are used for percussion, written indications will specify the type. The two lines show the separate hands.

on.

Finger-clicks



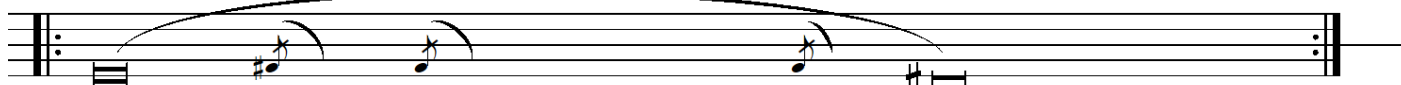
The image shows two horizontal lines representing separate hands. On the top line, there are two 'x' marks, each with a vertical stem extending downwards. On the bottom line, there is one 'x' mark with a vertical stem extending upwards. This notation represents finger-clicks on two different hands.

Algorithmic Textures: Several textures in this piece are based around repeating loops that are performed independently of the other ensemble members. Written instructions at the start of your loop will indicate when you are to move on and whether you begin as a section or individual. When a signal to move on arrives, always move straight on no matter where you are in your loop.

Enter together, independently at your own tempo.

*Repeat until the conductor signals Figure 2, move straight on
wherever you are in this phrase.*

p <> <> <>



Where... _____

The image shows a musical staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The staff contains a sequence of notes: a quarter note (F#), a quarter note (G), a quarter note (A), and a quarter note (B). Above the staff, there are three diamond-shaped symbols (<>) indicating algorithmic textures. The first diamond is above the first note, the second above the second note, and the third above the third note. The staff ends with a double bar line and repeat dots. Below the staff, the text 'Where...' is written, followed by a horizontal line.

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Euan Tait

Anselm McDonnell

SAMPLE 1

Senza Misura

Con. Soloist 3" 2nd Alto group 4"

Whispered, with strongly sibilant sounds. Perform the material independently, and repeat until the conductor signals Figure 1. Move directly on.

Finger-clicks

f wh Hrr *mp* wh *f* wh hrr was *mp* wh wh wh

ad lib.

Con. 3rd Alto group 4" 4th Alto group 2"

A. /

Con. Cue Sopranos. 10"

Enter together, independently at your own tempo. Repeat until the conductor signals Figure 2, move straight on wherever you are in this phrase.

p Where...

A. /

1

 ♩ = 60

S. /

Independently at your own tempo. Repeat until the conductor signals Figure 3, move straight on wherever you are in this phrase.

p Where...

A. /

Con Misura

mp *mf*

T. Where the ci - ty was, the lough is now the ci - ty's

Con Misura

mp *mf*

B. Where the ci - ty was, the lough is now the ci - ty's

2

*Independently at your own tempo.
Do not repeat, move directly on.*

mf _____ *pp*

S. 
Voi - - ces, voi - - ces.

A. 

T. 
voi - ces. Its wa-ters burn - ing - (n).

B. 
voi - ces. Its wa-ters burn - ing in the su - n.

*Independently at your own tempo.
Repeat until the conductor signals Figure 3,
move straight on.*

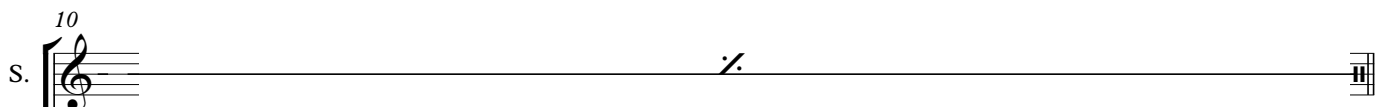
mp _____ *f* _____ *mp*

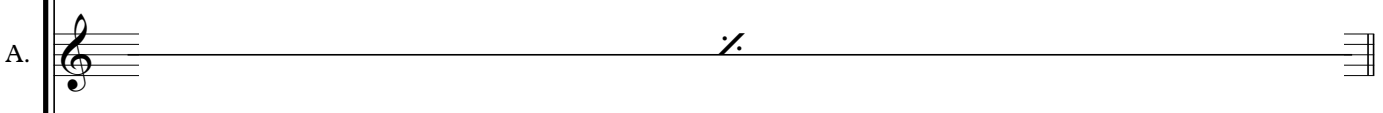
S. 
Tear - - - ing.

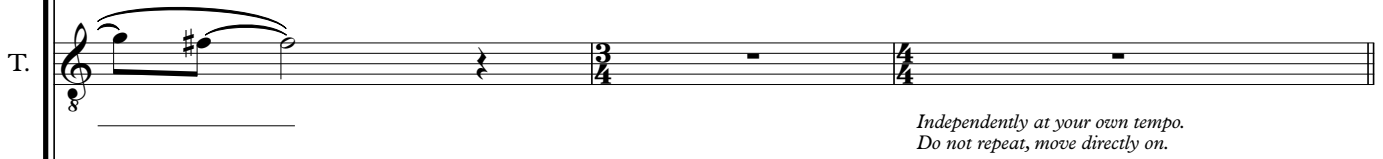
A. 

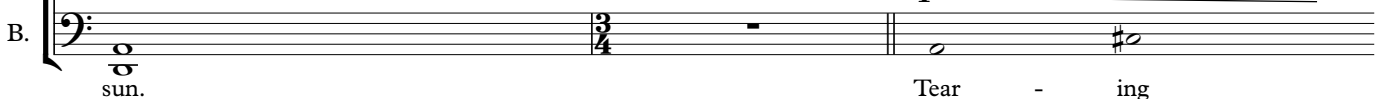
T. 
Its wa-ters burn - - - ing, burn-ing in the sun.

B. 
Its wa-ters burn - - - ing, burn - ing

S. 

A. 

T. 
sun.

B. 
Tear - ing

*Independently at your own tempo.
Do not repeat, move directly on.*

p _____

3 Senza Misura

*Independently at your own tempo.
Repeat until the conductor signals.*

S. *Spoken mp*
13 wh hrr , wh wh wh , wh wh wh , t t t t

A. *mf* *Independently at your own tempo. Do not repeat, move directly on.* *fp* *mf* *Independently at your own tempo. Repeat until the conductor signals.*
Voi - ces, voi - ces, tear - ing.

T. *mp* *Independently at your own tempo. Repeat until the conductor signals.*
Slowly growing 'thunder' sound, slap hands on thighs.

B. *f* *Shouted*
mount - ains, ing the ains to piec es



15"

S. *ff*

A.

T. *ff*

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SAMPLE 2

Senza Misura

Alto soloist 3" 2nd group (SA) 5"

Con.

S. *Whispered, with strongly sibilant sounds. Perform the material independently, and repeat until the conductor signals Figure 1. Move directly on.*

mf wh *Finger-clicks* *f* wh hrr was wh wh wh wh

Hrr

ad lib.

A. *Whispered, with strongly sibilant sounds. Perform the material independently, and repeat until the conductor signals Figure 2. Move directly on.*

mf wh *Finger-clicks* *f* wh hrr was wh wh wh wh

Hrr

ad lib.

3rd group (SA) 4" 4th group (SA) 5"

Con.

S.

A.

1

Cue Sopranos.

10"

Con. *Enter together, independently at your own tempo. Repeat until the conductor signals Figure 2, move straight on wherever you are in this phrase.*

S. *p* Where...

A.

SAMPLE 3

Senza Misura

Alto soloist 3" 2nd group (mixed SA) 5"

Con. ||

Whispered, with strongly sibilant sounds. Perform the material independently, and repeat until the conductor signals Figure 1. Move directly on.

S. *mf* ci ty ci ci ty *f* Clap Rub hands together to create shuffling sound

Whispered, with strongly sibilant sounds. Perform the material independently, and repeat until the conductor signals Figure 2. Move directly on.

A. *mf* wh Hrr wh wh hrr was wh wh wh *f* Finger-clicks

ad lib. >

3rd group (SA) 4" 4th group (SA) 5"

Con. ||

S. /

A. /

1 Cue Sopranos. 10"

Con. ||

Enter together, independently at your own tempo. Repeat until the conductor signals Figure 2, move straight on wherever you are in this phrase.

S. *p* Where... <> <> <>

A. /

Senza Misura

Slowly growing 'thunder' sound,
slap hands on thighs.

mp

S. *Independently at your own tempo.
Repeat until the conductor signals.*
Spoken

*Independently at your own tempo.
Do not repeat, move directly on.*

mf

p

*Independently at your own tempo.
Repeat until the conductor signals.*

fp

mf

Slowly growing 'thunder' sound,
slap hands on thighs.

mp

T. *Independently at your own tempo.
Repeat until the conductor signals.*
Spoken

mf

f

Shouted

mp

Spoken


15"


SAMPLE 5

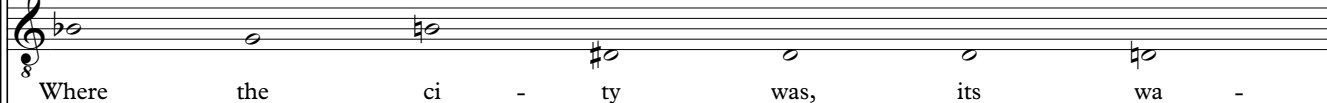
Senza Misura

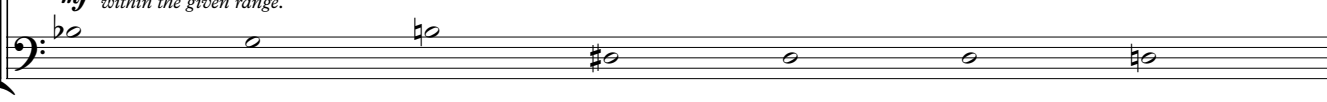
♩ = 72-112

mf Individually at your own tempo
within the given range.

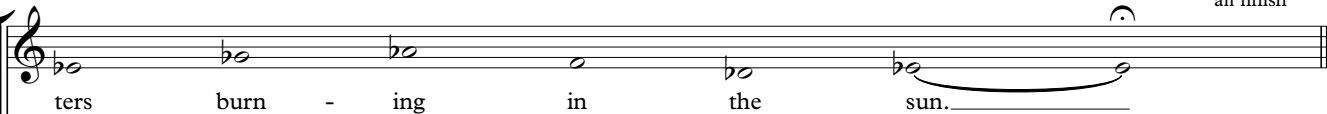
S.  Where the ci - ty was, its wa -

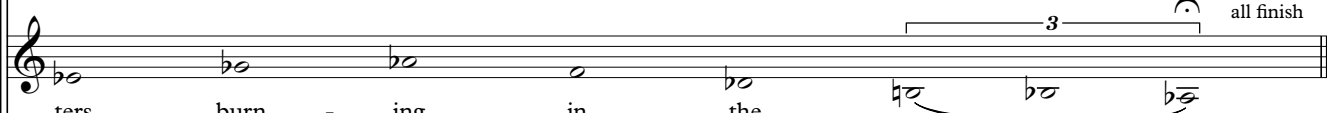
A.  Where the ci - ty was, its wa -

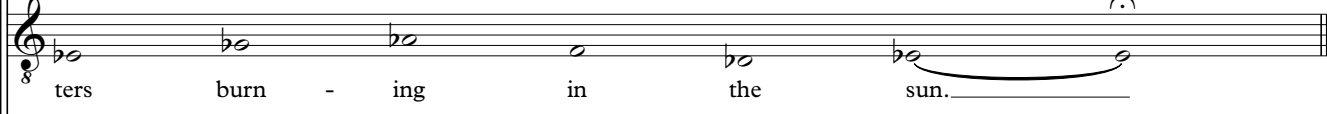
T.  Where the ci - ty was, its wa -

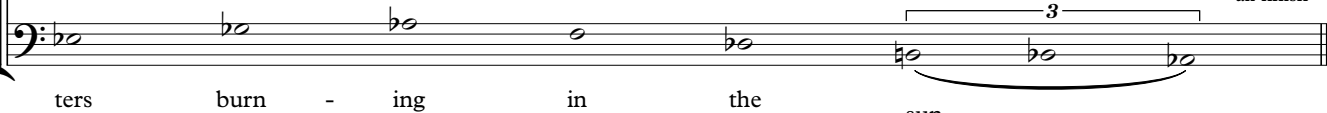
B.  Where the ci - ty was, its wa -



S.  ters burn - ing in the sun. Hold till
all finish

A.  ters burn - ing in the sun. Hold till
all finish

T.  ters burn - ing in the sun. Hold till
all finish

B.  ters burn - ing in the sun. Hold till
all finish

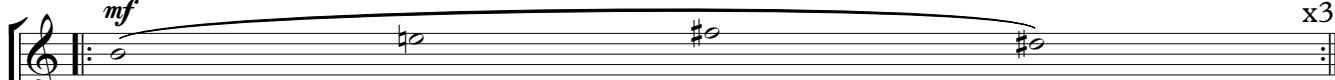
SAMPLE 6

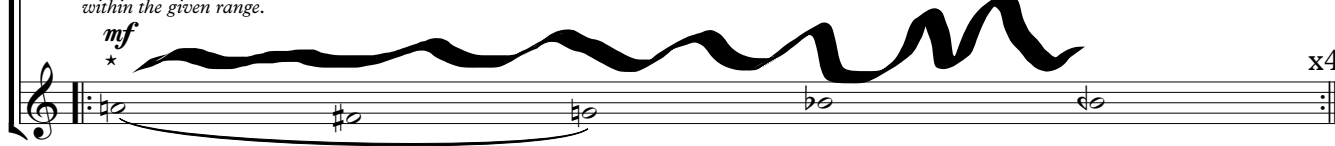
Senza Misura

♩ = 60-84

Individually at your own tempo within the given range.

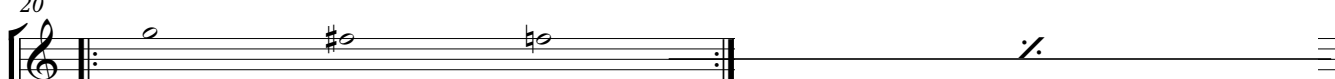
In one breath.

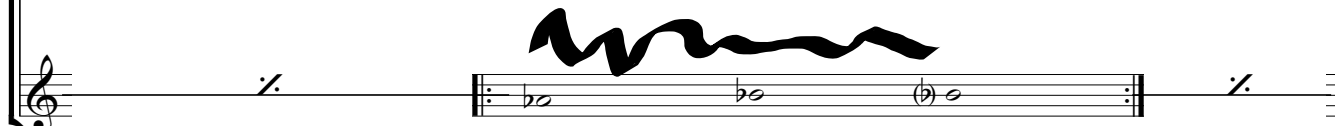
S. *mf* 
 Wo - - - - - ven

A. *mf* * 
 Wo - - - - - ve - - - n

* Place your hand across your mouth and flutter open and closed while singing. Graphic notation indicates speed of this action.



20
 S. 
 o - ver - head

A. 
 o - - - ver - - head