

In Vision I Roamed

For SATB choir and 9 instruments

Laura M. Kramer
Text by Thomas Hardy

duration: approx 6 min.

Instrumentation

Flute
Oboe
Alto Saxophone
Bassoon
Percussion: 1 Medium and 1 Large Suspended Cymbal,
Marimba, Medium Tam-tam
Guitar

Choir:
Soprano
Alto
Tenor
Bass

Violin
Cello
Bass

Program Note

In Vision I Roamed is the first movement of a larger work-in-progress, to be included with three movements total.

Normally, a vocal work is built from an inspiring text, and the harmonies, rhythms and orchestration are all designed from what that text suggests. However, I did the opposite for this piece. I was particularly looking for a poem where the nature of the words themselves could sound musical, especially when annunciated in unconventional ways, mimicking the sounds of cymbals and other percussive noises. *In Vision I Roamed* struck me immediately upon reading it, as it incorporates all of the qualities I was looking for. The overall mood and setting of the text provided an outlet for me to experiment with certain timbral effects that can only be done with multiple voices. At the time I was very interested in spectral music (based on the overtone series), especially that of Per Nørgård, a Danish composer who uses a numeric system to derive pitches. I don't use the overtone series strictly, but rather form a harmonic skeleton from the concept and derive tone clusters from the upper partials. These clusters result in an atmospheric sound, capturing the imagery of gazing at the sky.

Thomas Hardy (1840-1928), a British poet, was an amateur violinist and especially interested in folk music. Ever since taking a course in English music history and traveling to Oxford and London, I have been looking for an opportunity to incorporate folk elements into a piece of music. Upon discovering Thomas Hardy's work, this project finally became my chance to do so. Folk tunes were probably surrounding him as he wrote *In Vision I Roamed*, and I could enhance its meaning by incorporating such elements. They are quite often modal and the contour of the melodies is usually symmetrical. Both of these qualities are portrayed in small folk-like fragments, fitting into the harmonies of seventh and ninth chords. The text generally suggests a duple rhythm, but it sometimes veers off as if a singer were improvising. *In Vision I Roamed* is a bittersweet poem. It begins calm, gradually increases with motion, and concludes with a reflection.

*In vision I roamed the flashing Firmament,
So fierce in blazon that the Night waxed wan,
As though with an awed sense of such ostent;
And as I thought my spirit ranged on and on*

*In footless traverse through ghastr heights of sky,
To the last chambers of the monstrous Dome,
Where stars the brightest here to darkness die:
Then, any spot on our own Earth seemed Home!*

*And the sick grief that you were far away
Grew pleasant thankfulness that you were near,
Who might have been, set on some outstep sphere,
Less than a Want to me, as day by day
I lived unaware, uncaring all that lay
Locked in that Universe taciturn and drear*

- Thomas Hardy

14

Fl. *f*

Ob. *mp* < *mf*

Alto Sax.

Bsn. *f*

Perc. medium yarn mallets *p* < *mp*

Mar. *mf*

Gtr. *f* *mf*

S. *f* *mf* *mf*
 roamed I roamed In vi - sion I roamed the

A. *f* *mf*
 roamed In vi - sion I roamed the

T. *mf* folk-like
 roamed roamed, I roamed

B. *mf* folk-like *p* *mf*
 roamed I roamed I roamed the

Vln. *f* *p* < *mf* *mf* (no accents) *p* < *mf*

Vc. *f* *mf* *p* < *mf* (no accents) (*mf*)

Db. *f* *mf* *p* < *mf* legato

18 Building

accel.

(C)

♩ = ca. 72

19

Fl. *pp* *mp* *mf*

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

Alto Sax. *pp* *mp* *mf*

Bsn. *mp* *mf*

Perc.

Mar. *mf* *f*

Gtr. *mf* *f*

S. *f* *mp sub.* *mf* *f*
 flash ing fir - ma ment, the flash ing flash - ing flash ing fir - ma ment

A. *f* *mp sub.* *mf* *f*
 flash ing fir - ma ment, the flash ing fir ma ment flash - ing fir - ma - ment flash - ing fir - ma ment

T. *f* *mp sub.* *mf* *f*
 flash ing fir - ma ment, flash - ing fir ma ment flash - ing flash ing fir - ma ment

B. *f* *mp* *f*
 flash ing fir - ma - ment flash - ing fir - ma ment

Vln. *f* *mp* *f* *mp* *f*
 accel. *col legno* normal

Vc. *mp sub.* *mf* *f*

Db. *mp sub.* *f*

♩ = ca. 72

27 Stately

Fl. *mf*

Ob. *mf*

Alto Sax. *mp* *mf*

Bsn. *mf*

Perc.

Mar. *mf*

Gtr. *f* *mf*

S. fierce (ce) In bla-zon that the night waxed wan so fierce the

A. *mf* slide fierce (ce) so fierce in bla-zon that the night waxed wan the

T. *mf* slide fierce (ce) so fierce in bla-zon that the night waxed wan the

B. *mf* fierce (ce) In bla zon that the night waxed wan so fierce the

27 Stately

Vln. *mf*

Vc. *f* pizz.

Db. *f* pizz.

poco accel.

30

Fl.

Ob.

Alto Sax.

Bsn.

Perc.

Mar.

Gtr.

S.

A.

T.

B.

Vln.

Vc.

Db.

5

3

3

8

mf

mf

f

mf

f

mf

f

mf

f

mf

f

mf

f

night waxed wan the night waxed (xed) wan waxed (xed) wan

night waxed wan the night waxed (xed) wan

night waxed wan the night waxed wan

night waxed wan the night waxed (xed) wan

mf

f

mf

f

mf

f

mf

f

arco

mf

poco accel.

♩ = ca. 80

35 Gliding

34

Fl.

Ob.

Alto Sax.

Bsn.

Perc.

Mar.

Gtr.

S.

A.

T.

B.

mf

pp — *mp*

f

f

f

f

as though with an awed sense of such os - tent the

as though with an awed sense of such os - tent

the night_ waxed

the night_ waxed

♩ = ca. 80

35 Gliding

Vln.

Vc.

Db.

arco

mf legato

pizz.