Bushra El-Turk

Murmurations

for 15 instruments



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Bushra El-Turk

Murmurations

for 15 instruments

dur: 10'

Score in C

This piece was written for the Birmingham Contemporary Music Group to be workshopped at the end of April 2014 in conjunction with the University of Birmingham.

Instrumentation:
Flute (dbl. piccolo, bass flute)
Oboe (dbl. cor Anglais)
Clarinet in B♭
Bassoon

Horn in F
Trumpet in B♭
Trombone

Percussion (1 player)
- Bass drum,
- Vibraphone (without motor),
- Log drum (or something nearer to the sound of a Japenese Kakko)
- Like a ratchet but quieter.

Piano - with plectrum
Harp - with plectrum

Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Violoncello
Double Bass

Performance Notes:



= quarter-tone flat

Piccolo - until rehearsal mark D, to sound like the ryuteki. Gradually *gliss.* up and down.

Oboe - Bar 20 to 40 - reed only - pitched at slightly flattened C.
Bar 43 to 53- with oboe non vib.
Bar 56 to 104 - con vib.
Bar 105 to end - switch to cor Anglais
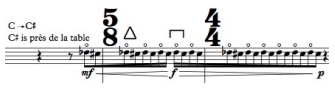
Clarinet in B♭ - until Bar 54 - non vib.

Bassoon - Bar 20 to 33 - reed only, pitched at slightly flattened C. Doesn't need to match the reed-only oboe in pitch
Bar 42 onwards - *nat.* with bassoon

Trumpet in B♭ - when muted, use Harmon mute.

Piano - forearm clusters, as in bar 4, where right arm on white keys and left arm on black.
- palm clusters where hand is of horizontal length on white/black keys.
- all senza Pedale unless stated otherwise
- Bar 56 - inside piano - fast plectrum scrape up coiled string

Harp - with nail 

- between harmonic and près de la table 

- près de la table with the aim to sound like a qanoun (Arabic plucked zither)

Strings - legato non vib to sound like the Japanese sho until rehearsal mark D
- from rehearsal mark G, 'cello especially plays in octaves, of which the 1st and 2nd fingers alternate in a light pizzicato on the lower string

Composer's Notes

murmuration - noun literary 1 [mass noun] the action of murmuring: *the murmuration of a flock of warblers*.
2 rare a flock of starlings.

During my artists residency in Gotland's Visby in Sweden, I was sent a few photos of birds in murmuration. I was struck by the way the birds danced in the air together in a beautiful, graceful synchronicity and yet, within their make-up each bird was flapping in a highly-charged relentlessness. I was awed by a similar grace and charge about Japanese court music which is the pretext for this piece. Adopting the gestures of this ritual - the piccolo which represents the ryuteki, the non vib clarinet and the oboe's and bassoon's reeds like the hichiriki, the non vib. string quartet like the sho with its piercing static harmonies and swells for the first section of the piece.

The entire piece revolves around an embellishment of the note C of which the melody is the nuclear melody taken from a violin transcription of an Arabic taqsim (Arabic type of modal improvisation) The piece evolves as textural variations on a theme, made up of three main sections.

Gagaku instruments: http://iha-gagaku.com/english/instruments.html

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Murmurations

for 15 instruments

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Piccolo
Oboe
Clarinet in B♭
Bassoon
Horn in F
Trumpet in B♭
Trombone
Percussion
Piano
Harp
Violin 1
Violin 2
Viola
Violoncello
Double Bass

Soaring ♩=66

port.

p *espress.e rubato quasi Japanese Ryuteki (from bar 1-10)*

fltz.

mf

A

Maestoso ♩=72

fltz.

con sord.
Harmon

pp

Log drum

pp < **p**

To Vib.

forearms cluster
(Right arm on white keys
Left arm on black keys)
senza Pedale
unless otherwise stated

palm
cluster

ppp

p

pizz.

slap
fingerboard

arco
ricochet

mf **pp**

11

Picc.

Ob.

Cl.

Hn.

Tpt.

con sord.

Tbn.

non vib.

Vln. 1

non. vib.

Vln. 2

non vib.

Vla.

non vib.

Vc.

arco

Db.

B

19

Picc.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
Tbn.
Pno.
Hp.
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vc.
Db.

gliss.
port.
reed only
non vib.
fltz.
ricochet
Fast plectrum scrape up one coiled string
Fast then slow plectrum scrape up one coiled string

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

27

Picc.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
Tbn.
Pno.
Hp.
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vc.
Db.

palm cluster
arms cluster
strike string with palm of hand (after which aka palm strike)
F→F♯
ricochet

32

fltz.

Picc.

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn.

Hn.

Tpt.

Tbn.

Vibraphone

L. D.

Pno.

l.v

Hp.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

C

40

Picc.

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn.

Hn.

Tpt.

Tbn.

Pno.

Hp.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

nat. non vib. (with bassoon)

nat. non vib. (with oboe)

port.

ricochet

A→A♯

l.v.

46

Picc. Ob. Cl. Bsn.

Hn. Tpt. Tbn.

Vib.

Pno.

l.v

senza pedale

L.H

Hp.

l.v

Vln. 1 Vln. 2 Vla. Vc.

50

Picc.

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn.

fltz.

To Fl.

Hn.

Tpt.

Tbn.

To B. D.

Vib.

Pno.

Hp.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

D

56 Flute

Fl.

Ob. con vib.

Cl. con vib.

Hn.

Tpt. senza sord.

B. D. Bass Drum

Pno. inside piano - fast plectrum scrape up coiled string

Hp. palm strike

E♮F♭G♮A♯ B♭C♮D♭

près de la table (quasi qanoun) bisbigliando

D

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

65

Fl.

Ob.

double trill

Cl.

fltz.

Bsn.

Hn.

fltz.

Tpt.

fltz.

Tbn.

senza sord.

fltz.

Pno.

Hp.

palm strike

Vln. 1

gliss.

port.

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

72

E

Poco più mosso ♩=80

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn.

Hn.

Tpt.

Tbn.

B. D.

Bass Drum

Ratchet

To B. D.

Pno.

palm strike

Hp.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

slow wide vib.
less than a semitone
either side of note

Vc.

Db.

79

Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
Tbn.
Rt.
Pno.
Hp.
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vc.
Db.

fltz.
Bass Drum
To Vib.
Vibraphone
Ratchet
palm strike
slow wide vib.
less than a semitone
either side of note
gliss.
port.
sul pont.
nat.

F

88

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn.

Hn.

Tpt.

Tbn.

Rt.

Pno.

Hp.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

fltz.

To B. D.

Bass Drum

To Vib.

Vibraphone

palm strike

slow wide vib.
less than a semitone
either side of note

sul pont.

nat.

gliss.

port.

96

Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
Tbn.
B. D.
Pno.
Hp.
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vc.
Db.

fltz.
nat.
To B. Fl.
Bass Drum
To Vib.
Vibraphone
palm strike
slow wide vib.
less than a semitone
either side of note
molto sul pont.
gliss.

105

G **Tempo primo**

B. Fl. — Bass Flute — *ff*

C. A. — Cor Anglais non vib. — *ff* — *p*

Cl. — *ff* — *p*

Bsn. — *ff* — *p*

Hn. — *ff* — *p*

Tpt. — *ff* — *p*

Tbn. — *ff* — *p*

Vib. — pitch bending - down and up as fast as possible mimicking the piano — *mf*

Pno. — Inside piano Press with LH lightly on strings to sound pitch a little when playing keys — *mf* *f* *p* — one arm on black/white keys — *pp* *p*

G **Tempo primo**

Vln. 1 — *ff* — *p*

Vln. 2 — *ff* — *p*

Vla. — Played upright on lap (only if possible) — *ff* — *p*

Vla Lower string — pluck same string 1st & 2nd fingers

Vc. — *ff* — *p*

Vc. Lower string — pluck lower string 1st & 2nd fingers

Db. — *ff*

Db. Lower string — pluck same string 1st & 2nd fingers

113

B. Fl.
C. A.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
Tbn.
Vib.
Pno.
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vla
Lower
string
Vc.
Vc.
Lower
string
Db.
Db.
Lower
string

port.

121

B. Fl.
C. A.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
Tbn.
Pno.
Hp.
C → C♯
C♯ is près de la table
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vla
Lower
string
Vc.
Vc.
Lower
string
Db.
Db.
Lower
string

H

129

B. Fl.
C. A.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
Tbn.
Pno.
Hp.
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vla Lower string
Vc.
Vc. Lower string
Db.
Db. Lower string

5/8 △ ⌐ I 4/4

gliss.
port.

136

B. Fl.
C. A.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
Tbn.
Pno.
Hp.
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vla Lower string
Vc.
Vc. Lower string
Db.
Db. Lower string

J

143

B. Fl.
C. A.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
Tbn.
Pno.
Hp.
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vc.
Vc.
Lower
string
Db.

ppp
mp
p
pp
port.
IV
gliss.

148