

Paul Clift

The sea isn't rising, the ground is sinking

for soprano, saxophone, percussion, piano & real-time electronics

duration ca. 10'

2017

Première: Vertixe Sonora—19 December, 2017 in Santiago de Compostela—CGAC *Sound Correspondences* Series



Version 26/04/2018

Instrumentation:

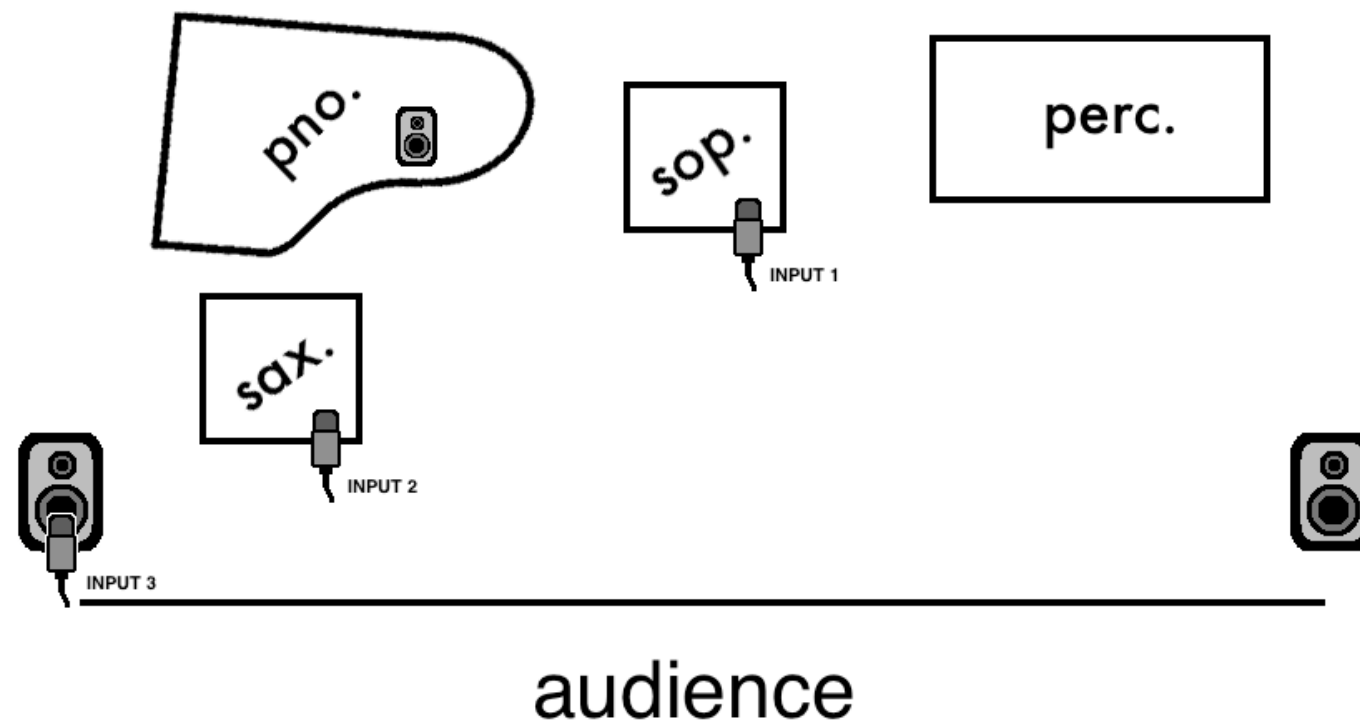
- soprano, also playing maraca (ideally, a mid-sized, bright-sounding model such as the **LP 389** or **Meinl PM1BK**)
- saxophone (alto & soprano)
- percussion
 - crotales (sounding E6, Ab6)
 - vibraphone (plugged in!)
 - one timpani (any size is fine)
 - one maraca (ideally, a mid-sized, gentle-sounding model such as the **Meinl MWM2AM**)
 - large bass-drum
 - medium thunder-sheet
 - medium tam-tam
 - medium cymbal
 - soft marimba mallets (4)
 - hard plastic glockenspiel mallets (2)
 - soft timpani mallets (2)
 - bow (2)
- piano, also playing maraca (ideally, a mid-sized, gentle-sounding model such as the **Meinl MWM2AM**)
 - Bbs 0 & 1 should be prepared with one large paperclip attached and hanging freely on each of the two strings; the resulting sound should be buzzy and metallic.

Performance notes:

For the realisation of this piece, the following materials are necessary:

- an audio interface & mixer with at least three outputs
- a stereo pair of loudspeakers
- one contact transducer (such as the **Dayton Audio DAEX32EP-4** [40W/4Ω], attached to the resonance-board of the piano)
- one condenser microphone for the singer
- one condenser microphone for saxophone
- one condenser or dynamic microphone for feedback production
- a MIDI pedal (and USB interface), operated by the saxophonist
- Max/MSP v.7x
- Max/MSP patch; downloadable at www.paulclift.net/pieces/TSIRTGIS

Proposed Stage Layout:



I raise my eyes and see the corner of the ceiling falling in.
This house, I think, is collapsing.
Then the house transforms. It dissolves or expands.
It becomes landscape. It turns into the rocky red soil at the edge of the palm groves.
I am walking. I am still inside the house, sweeping. The inside becomes the outside.
A young man I don't know is telling me:
"Watch your step, don't walk, don't sweep here, you are standing on a graveyard.
Everything is disintegrating—the ground is sinking. If you step on it you'll find yourself inside a grave."
I raise my eyes. I realise that I am walking on the grounds of a cemetery.
An old cemetery, unmarked and invisible.
One can guess that there are graves only from the shape of the terrain, uneven and full of holes.
I think, a forgotten graveyard.

The Sphere of the Moon — the dream

Taken from the book: *Impasse of the Angels—Scenes from a Moroccan Space of Memory*
[A collection of Berber & Arabic folkloric poetry from the Dra' Valley in Morocco, compiled and translated by Stefania Pandolfo]

Programme note:

This work, in many ways quite minimalist in nature (or rather, one might see it as an embellished medium for the transmission of speech), draws upon a translation of an obscure text of unknown authorship, taken from a collection of Berber & Arabic folkloric poetry from the Dra' Valley in Morocco. The text both defines and is at odds with the musical structure; certain passages are simply recited, others are sung, repeated in loops within a dense musical setting, as if text and musical structures are pulling in opposing directions.

The work describes a nightmarish scene in which the first person narrator describes being inside a house which begins to collapse (one imagines an earthquake), before suddenly metamorphosing into an outdoor setting, a cemetery whose ground is collapsing, leaving exposed the remains of those interred there. In stark contrast to the setting, the speaker remains calm, detached. This struck me as an apt allegory for the present climate in which so many—consciously and deliberately, and not as consequence of ignorance as we might deceive ourselves into believing—celebrate (with pride!) the bigotry, misogyny, intellectual bankruptcy, and ultimately self-destructive nature of political discourse in the Western hemisphere. This is not a piece of political activism (I seldom make reference to politics in my work); simply, it is a manifestation of the effect of receiving words and observing actions, a reaction to an environment.

With many thanks to the musicians of Vertixe Sonora for giving me this opportunity.

-Paul Clift, November 2017

The sea isn't rising, the ground is sinking

A1 ♩ = 72

for soprano, saxophone, percussion, piano & electronics

Paul Clift
(composed 2017)

The score is divided into five systems of staves, each with a specific time signature: 2/4, 4/4, 2/4, 4/4, 3/4, and 4/4. The parts are as follows:

- Electronics:** Features a drone in the 4/4 section, a piano freeze in the 3/4 section, and a Maraca in the final 4/4 section.
- Soprano:** Includes a vocal line starting with a [a] vowel sound, a *p* dynamic marking, and a *pp sempre* marking in the final section.
- Alto Saxophone:** Contains a melodic line with a *f* dynamic, a *rallentando bisbigliano* instruction, and a *legatissimo* marking. It also features three numbered boxes (1, 2, 3) indicating specific musical events.
- Percussion:** Lists instruments: vibraphone, bass drum, cymbal, med. tam tam, crotales, thundersheet, and 1 timpani. It includes a *Crotales* section, a *Thunder-sheet* section with a 6:8 ratio, and a *near edge* section.
- Piano:** Features a *sounding* section with a *mp* dynamic, a *fff* section with a 6:8 ratio, and a *maraca* section with a *pp sempre* marking.
- Bottom Staff:** Includes a *Ped.* (pedal) section and a *+C# buzz diffused inside piano* section with an *al niente* instruction.

9

Elec.

Sop.

Alto Sax.

Perc.

Pno.

Maraca swirl in circular motion →

pp sempre

4

14

Elec.

Sop.

v. breathy, in a monotone; with very weak voice, almost whispered →

p 3 I raise m - y eyes_____ and see_ the [h]_ the cor - ner of the cei-ling

Alto Sax.


5 5 5 5 6 5 5 3 5 5 3 5 5 3 5 5 3

Perc.

Pno.

continue for as long as possible then set down discreetly

pp *mp* 8va 8va 3

[voice diffused inside piano via transducer] 

Red.

20 **4/4** *mf*

Elec.

Sop.

fa lling in

[a]

6 7 8

Alto Sax.

sempre legatissimo, a little irregular in timing →

poco rall.

Perc.

Maraca
Cymbal

pp in center

Thin wooden drumstick
on surface edge
imitate rhythm of saxophone;
vary position ad lib.

Vibraphone

p

Pno.

mp

8^{ub}

***Notes prepared with paper-clips*

f

3
4

25

Elec.

Maracas *simile A1*

Sop. *simile A2* *pp*

This house I think is co-llap - sing_

Alto Sax.

9

10

Perc. *Maracas simile A1* *pp*

Vibraphone *p* *Ped.*

Pno. *pp*

mf [a]

f

6

3

+

+C# buzz diffused inside piano

+voice

A3

31 $\frac{4}{4}$ *mf*

Elec. *p*

Sop.

Alto Sax. *simile, a little faster than last time*

Perc. *sim. pp* *Thin wooden drumstick on surface edge simile A3* *p*

Pno. *mf* *p* *8va* *3* *8va* *3* *3* *3* *p* *8va* *8va*

11

+C# buzz diffused inside piano

2
4

36

Elec.

Sop.
Then the house trans forms_ it di-ssolves

Alto Sax.

Perc.
Crotale pressed on timpani skin
Timpani Pedal

Pno.

(P)
+voice

A4

41 $\frac{4}{4}$

+glitchy sounds→

Elec.

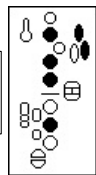
sine tones→

Sop.

or ex - pands

it be - comes land - scape

12



breathe as necessary and re-enter discreetly →

Alto Sax.

< (p)

Vibraphone
(pedal blocked down)

ON: slow

Perc.

l.v

p

pp

Pno.

8va

ppp

mp

una corda

(P)

5

5

47

Elec.

Sop.

it turns in - to the ro - cky red so - il at the edge of the palm - grove.

Alto Sax.

Perc.

Pno.

(P)

52

Elec.

random on/off→

Sop.

I am wa- lking,

I am still

in- side the house.

Alto Sax.

Perc.

Pno.

(u.c)

(P)

A5

57

4/4

3/4

Elec.

very grungy sound →

Sop.

ff

The in - side be - comes in - side be - - comes

13

Alto Sax.

ff

ff

f

ff

Bass drum
Tam-tam
ff sempre

Perc.

f l.v

Pno.

fff

tremolo w/ two hands where possible

(flutter pedal)

60 $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$

Elec.

Sop.

Alto Sax.

Perc.

Pno.

the out side

14 15 16

Thunder-sheet

Crotales

piano freeze →

pp

f *ff* *f* *ff* *f* *ff*

fffz *fff*

5 6 5 5

8th

64

Elec.

Sop.

Alto Sax.

Perc.

Pno.

Maraca *simile A1* →

pp sempre

17

ff

rallentando bisbigliano

legatissimo

p

15

mf *l.v*

Thunder-sheet

ff

6:8

Maraca *simile A1* →

pp sempre

8va

fff

6:8

8

8

+C# buzz diffused inside piano

A7

69

Elec.

Sop.

Alto Sax.

Perc.

Pno.

pp sempre

mp

simile A2

p

3

A young man_ I don't know is_ te-lling me:

18

19

74

Elec. *mp*

Sop. *p*
 "Watch your step, you are standing on a grave - yard."
 [a]

Alto Sax. *simile A3*

Vibraphone *p*
Ped.

Perc.

Pno. *p*
continue for as long as possible then set down discreetly
f

20

21

A8

2/4

79

Elec. *+glitchy soundss →*
sine tones →

Sop.
 The ground is sin - king. I am still in - side.

Alto Sax. *breathe as necessary and re-enter discreetly →*
 22 *(p)*

Perc.
 Crotales pressed on timpani skin *3*
 Timpani Pedal *l.v*
 Vibraphone *ON: slow, ped simile A6*
pp

Pno. *8va*
5 *p* *ppp*
 Ped.

A9

84 4/4

2/4

4/4

Elec.

very grungy sound →

piano freeze →

ff

Sop.

ff

The in - si - be-comes in - side - be - comes the out - - - -

23

24

legatissimo, as fast as possible →

Alto Sax.

ff

f

Bass drum
Tam-tam

ff sempre

Thunder-sheet

l.v

l.v

Perc.

f l.v

f

tremolo w/ two hands where possible

fff

fff

sffz

(flutter pedal)

5

6

5

5

6

A10

The score is divided into measures 25, 26, 27, and 28. Above the staff, the time signatures are 3/4, 4/4, 3/4, 2/4, and 7/8. The Soprano part has lyrics: "side" (measures 25-27) and "The in - side" (measure 28). The Percussion part includes instructions for "Bass drum" and "Tam-tam" with a dynamic of *ff sempre*. The Piano part has a dynamic of *fff* and includes fingerings like "5" and "8^{va}". A note at the bottom reads "+C# buzz diffused inside pian".

94 $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{3}{8}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$

Elec. ϕ ff

Sop. be - - comes The in - side be pp ff

Alto Sax. **29** *legatissimo, as fast as possible* f **30** *dim* p **31** ff f

Perc. *l.v* Thunder-sheet f ff ff ff f *l.v*

Pno. $fffz$ fff fff fff fff fff

8^{va} 8^{vb} 5 6 5

+C# buzz diffused inside piano

2/4

4/4

99

Elec.

Sop.

Alto Sax.

Perc.

Pno.

comes in side be comes the out side

32

legatissimo, as fast as possible

Thunder-sheet

l.v

fffz

tr

6

5

5

6

5

A12

103 $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{2}{4}$

Elec.

Sop.

Alto Sax.

Perc.

Pno.

dim... *mf* *ff* *f* *ff* *f* *ff*

mp *ff*

ff *l.v* *ff* *ff* *ff*

ff *sempre*

33 34

The in - si - be - comes in - side - be - comes

8va

8vb

+C# buzz diffused inside piano

A13

107 $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$

Elec. *piano freeze* → *ff* *piano freeze* →

Sop. out - - - side

Alto Sax. **35** *legatissimo, as fast as possible* → *f* *dim.* **36** *mp* **37** *ff* **38** *mp* **39** *3*

Perc. *Thunder-sheet* *f* *l.v* *Crotales* *mf* *l.v* *Thunder-sheet* *ff* *6:8*

Pno. *fffz* *tr* *6* *5* *8^{ub}* *fff* *6:8* *8^{va}*

111 $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{3}{8}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{2}{4}$

Elec.

Sop.

Alto Sax.

Perc.

Pno.

40 41 42 43 44 45 46

ff *ff* *mp* *ff* *mp* *ff* *mf*

6:8 *l.v* *6:8* *Crotales* *mf*

8^{va} *fff* *6:8* *fffz* *fff* *6:8* *8^{va}*

8^{vb} *8^{vb}* *8^{vb}* *8^{vb}*

117 $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{2}{4}$

Elec.

Sop.

Alto Sax.

Perc.

Pno.

Thunder-sheet

47 48 49 50 51 52

ff *ff* *ff* *ff* *ff* *ff*

ff *f* *ff* *fffz* *fff*

6:8 6:8 6:8 6:8

8^{va} 8^{ub}

ff *f* *ff* *fffz* *fff*

ff *ff* *fffz* *fff*

ff *f* *ff* *fffz* *fff*

122 $\frac{4}{4}$

Elec.

piano freeze →

pp

Sop.

mf espress.

I raise

mp

m - y eyes.

53

SWITCH TO SOPRANO SAX.

Alto Sax.

ff

Perc.

ff

6:8

Vibraphone

ON: fast

p

p

Ped. →

Pno.

fff

6:8

8va

(P) → *al niente*

128

Elec.

dim.

Sop.

p

I re - a - lise

p

I'm wa lking on

54

Alto Sax.

Perc.

Pno.

B2

135

The musical score consists of five staves. The top staff is for the Electric guitar (Elec.), featuring a continuous tremolo pattern. The second staff is for the Soprano voice (Sop.), with lyrics 'on a ce - me try' and a dynamic marking of *p*. The third staff is for the Soprano Saxophone (Sop. Sax.), starting at measure 55, with dynamics *pp sempre* and *piu*, and includes triplets and a nonet. The fourth staff is for Percussion (Perc.), with sustained notes. The fifth staff is for Piano (Pno.), which is mostly silent.

139

Elec.

Sop.

Sop. Sax.

Perc.

Pno.

un - - - marked and in - vis - i - ble.

9 piu

9 piu

n

B3

3/4

4/4

143

Elec.
 Sop.
 Sop. Sax.
 Perc.
 Pno.

un - - - - - marked and in vi - 3 si - ble.

9 piu
3 3 3 3 3
cresc
9 piu
3 3

Cymbal upside-down on timpani
 move timpani pedal up and down very slowly →
mp pppp cresc
 imitate dynamics of piano, but always much softer →

pppp

Ped.

148

$\frac{3}{8}$ $\frac{4}{4}$

The musical score is divided into four systems. The first system (measures 148-151) is in 3/8 time. The second system (measures 152-155) is in 4/4 time. The Soprano part begins with the lyrics "This house I think is". The Soprano Saxophone part features a complex melodic line with many beamed notes, including a 9-note phrase and several triplets. The Percussion part consists of a continuous rhythmic pattern. The Piano part includes a 3:2 triplet and dynamic markings such as *pp*, *pppp*, and *mp*. The score concludes with a fermata over the final measure.

154

Sop. *mp* the cei - ling *mf* is fa - lling in *mp* the cei - ling *f* fa - lling in

Sop. Sax. *9 piu* *3* *3* *9 piu* *3* *3* *3* *3*

Perc. *f* *l.v (fade w/ mallet)*

Pno. *p* *3:2* *3:2* *mf* *3:2* *3:2* *mp* *3:2* *mf* *ff cresc* *3*

B4

158

The score consists of four staves: Soprano (Sop.), Soprano Saxophone (Sop. Sax.), Percussion (Perc.), and Piano (Pno.).

- Sop. Staff:** Features a vocal line with lyrics "cei - ling fa - lling fa - lling". Dynamics include *mf*, *f*, and *cresc*. There are triplets and slurs.
- Sop. Sax. Staff:** Features a saxophone line with dynamics *f*, *p*, *mp*, *pp*, *mp*, *pp*, *mf*, and *p*. It includes triplets and slurs.
- Perc. Staff:** Labeled "Timpani". Includes the instruction "REMOVE CYMBAL". Dynamics are *pp* and *cresc*. A note says "while respecting the crescendo, vary dynamics slightly in imitation of the piano→".
- Pno. Staff:** Features piano accompaniment with triplets, slurs, and dynamic markings like *mf* and *p*.

162 $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$

Sop. fa - - - lling 3 fa - - - ling 3 fa - - - - - 3

Sop. Sax. f mp f mp f mf ff mf ff mf

Perc. f *possibile*

(P)

B5

165 $\frac{3}{4}$

Sop. *ff senza dim.*

Sop. *ff senza dim.*

ling fa - - - - - ling in -

Sop. Sax. *simile*

Sop. Sax. *simile*

ff *mf* *pppp*

Perc. (stop roll)

Perc. (stop roll)

ff l.v (Φ)

57



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