

Israel Lai (2018)

To Distance

for string quartet

To Distance takes its inspiration from *Í Fjarlægð*, a quaint and little-known Icelandic art song also known in English as *To the Distant Beloved*. This string quartet deals with ideas of distance and breadth within both space and time, with spaced-out thematic materials distilling and hastening as the music progresses. The *cantus firmus* is developed and obscured through a faint echo of Medieval troping and Renaissance parody techniques through time, until it cross-fades into another *cantus firmus* undergoing the reverse process. A carousel of harmonic colours culminates in a revelation of the true core of the piece—the final cry from *Í Fjarlægð*—before fading into the distant winds.

The deliberately vague title *To Distance* is literally translated from *Í Fjarlægð*, imbued with a sense of alienation and remoteness.

Performance notes

 bow behind the bridge


s.t. sul tasto

poco vib. / *vib. ord.* / *molto vib.* very little vibrato / normal amount of vibrato / vibrato with large amplitude (but not higher frequency)

s.p. sul ponticello

p.o. ordinary bow position

 crescendo dal niente / diminuendo al niente

 pluck with fingernails, if possible

tremolos Tremolos and fingered tremolos are all unmeasured, but take note of the accents marked on certain tremolo notes.

To Distance

« Denn vor Liebesklang entweicht
 Jeder Raum und jede Zeit,
 Und ein liebend Herz erreicht,
 Was ein liebend Herz geweiht! »

On still waters ♩ = 72

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Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Violoncello

s.t.

poco vib.

ppp

H s.t.

pp breathe as if singing
 legatissimo

7

pp vib. ord.

pp vib. ord.

pp vib. ord.

p

13

p.o.

pp senza espr.

H p.o.

p

p.o.

p senza vib.

vib. ord.

p.o.

pp senza espr.

19

p *mp* *mp* *mfp* *pp*

s.p.

p.o.

mfp

mfp

25

A

p *mp* *mp* *mfp* *pp*

s.p.

p sub.

p.o.

H p.o.

pizz.

arco

p *mf* *pp*

30

pp *molto* *pp* *molto* *mf*

pizz. *arco* *H*

pp *mf*

pizz. *arco*

p

molto *pp* *p*

6 36

arco (p.o.)

mp nonchalantly

mp

mp

f

mf

mf

mf

pizz.

f

mp

gliss.

gliss.

gliss.

gliss.

port.

p⁵

p⁵

p⁵

B

41

ppp

ppp

mf

pp

mp

ppp

ppp

pp

mp

pp

mp

46

p

poco a poco dim.

poco a poco dim.

f

pp

mf

pp

f

pp

mf

pp

pp

mf

pp

arco

pp

mf

pp

C

52

ppp *f* *pizz.*

f pp poco vib.

f pp poco vib.

pp *f pp poco vib.*

58

f pp

f pp

f pp

64

mf

f pp *f pp* *f pp* *ppp* *p giocoso*

f pp *f pp* *f pp* *ppp* *p giocoso*

f pp *f pp* *f pp*

70

poco
pp
pp
V simile

76

arco
f resonantly
mf
mf
mf

(non cresc.)
16
16
16

81

accel.
f

V

♩ = 168 allargando

86

As if suspended in mid-air ♩ = 108

90

ff molto espr.
e molto vib.

fpp

fpp

ff

Tempo I ♩ = 72

p.o. —————> poco s.p.

95

animando

fff

animando

f

animando

f

animando

p.o. —————> poco s.p.

fff

più s.p.
p

D

p.o.

mp senza espr.
5
ppp
at the tip
ppp
at the tip
p.o.
mp senza espr.
5

ppp
5
mp senza espr.
5
ppp
s.t.
pp
s.t.
pp
s.t.
pp
s.t.
pp
s.t.
pp

116

mfpp poco vib. pp p.o. fp s.t. fp s.t. p.o. fp

Detailed description: This system contains six measures of music. The top staff has a treble clef and a key signature of two flats. It features a series of chords, with a long horizontal line spanning from the second measure to the fifth. The second staff has a treble clef and contains chords and a long horizontal line. The third staff has a bass clef and contains chords and a long horizontal line. The fourth staff has a bass clef and contains chords and a long horizontal line. Dynamic markings include *mfpp poco vib.*, *pp*, *p.o.*, *fp*, and *s.t.*.

122

pp p.o. s.t. p.o. (p) fp s.t. p.o. fp

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128

mf mp

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