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HELGI R. INGVARSSON
TOMAS TRANSTRÖMER

SOLITUDE 1

A MONODRAMA STUDY

SOLITUDE 1

Solitude 1 is written for a soloist and left hand piano. It was first performed 31st March 2015 at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama by tenor Gustav Hasfjord, and pianist Michelle Santiago. The second performance took place on 11th September of the same year at St. Johns Smith Square, where a spoken word version was delivered by Eliza McCarthy, with the pianist Siwan Rhys.

Solitude 1 was written as part of a Guildhall School project led by pianist Rolf Hind, where several Guildhall composers wrote music for vocals and left hand piano inspired by the works of Swedish Nobel Prize poet Tomas Tranströmer. The reason for it being for left hand piano, is that in 1990 Tranströmer suffered a stroke that paralyzed the right side of his body and affected his speech. He then trained himself to play piano only with his left hand.

SOLITUDE 1

*I was nearly killed here one night in February.
My car slewed on the ice, sideways,
into the other lane. The oncoming cars-
their headlights- came nearer.*

*My name, my daughters, my job
slipped free and fell behind silently,
farther and farther back. I was anonymous,
like a schoolboy in a lot surrounded by enemies.*

*The approaching traffic had powerful lights.
They shone on me while I turned and turned
the wheel in a transparent fear
that moved like egg white.
The seconds lengthened out- making more room-*

*they grew long as hospital buildings.
It felt as if you could just take it easy
and loaf a bit
before the smash came.*

*Then firm land appeared: a helping sand grain
or a marvellous gust of wind. The car took hold
and fishtailed back across the road.
A signpost shot up, snapped off -a ringing sound-
tossed into the dark.*

*Came all quiet. I sat there in my seatbelt
and watched someone tramp
through the blowing snow
to see what had become of me.*

In *Solitude 1* the soloist is given space to improvise, and the only thing provided by the composer is the poem. The soloist can choose to either improvise a sung vocal line, or speak the text. There are two versions of the piano accompaniment, presenting varying degree of openness, but only one part for the soloist. The soloist should use the same part for both versions, but alter the interpretation of the poem greatly between versions. Dynamics and tempi are free for both soloist and pianist. Performers should experiment with these factors in their development of the dramatic performance.

Solitude 1 requires both performers to approach the performance with a degree of playfulness.

VERSION 1

In Version 1 of the accompaniment the pianist has ten, repeatable mobiles to be played chronologically. The soloist controls the pace at which the pianist advances through these mobiles.

Each verse of the poem has been allocated a piano mobile. As soon as the soloist finishes reciting or singing the text in a verse, the pianist should move seamlessly on to the next mobile. For instance, the pianist moves straight over to the second mobile after the soloists performs *'their headlights- came nearer.'* He or she should not wait for the soloist to start reciting *'My name, my daughters, my job'* before playing the second mobile. On the contrary, the pianist should move on to the second mobile before the soloist starts their next line. No matter where the pianist is located in the twenty-four crotchets of the first mobile, he or she should jump to beat one of mobile 2.

Sometimes the soloist's script-part calls for dramatic silences. These are represented by ellipsis (...).

VERSION 2

In Version 2 the pianist is essentially playing the same material as in Version 1, but here it is presented as twenty-six chords and four rhythmic patterns. The two sets can be freely combined by the pianist in response to how the soloist interprets the drama. The sectioning of the text from Version 1 does not apply here so the brackets and boxed numbers in the script-part should be ignored. Instead, the pianist simply moves through the material as he or she sees fit, until the soloist reaches the poem's last paragraph.

The pianist should then move to the coda (chord 22) no matter what they are playing at that time.

SOLITUDE

SCRIPT-PART

To be performed with versions 1 and 2 piano accompaniment

1. *Right here I was nearly killed one night in February.
My car slewed on the ice, sideways,
into the other lane. The oncoming cars-
their headlights- came nearer.* } 1
2. *My name, my daughters, my job
slipped free and fell behind silently,
farther and farther back. I was anonymous,
like a schoolboy in a lot surrounded by enemies.* } 2
3. *The approaching traffic had powerful lights.
They shone on me while I turned and turned
the wheel in a transparent fear that moved like egg white.
The seconds lengthened out- making more room-
they grew long as hospital buildings.* } 3
} 4
- ... } 5
4. *It felt as if you could just take it easy
and loaf a bit
before the smash came.* } 6
- ... } 7
5. *Then firm land appeared: a helping sand grain
or a marvellous gust of wind. The car took hold
and fishtailed back across the road.
A signpost shot up, snapped off -a ringing sound-
tossed into the dark.* } 8
6. *Came all quiet. I sat there in my seatbelt
and watched someone tramp through the blowing snow
to see what had become of me.* } 9
- ... } 10

Piano left hand

SOLITUDE 1

Version 1

Helgi R. Ingvarsson

1 **Tempo free**
Molto Rubato Uneven, shimmering trills.
2 against 1

8vb

3

4

8vb

8vb

6

(b) 8vb

7

8vb

8

8va

9

8vb

8vb

10 **6**

8vb

11 **7**

12 **8**

15mb

8vb

8vb

13 **9**

8vb

14 **10**

SOLITUDE

EINSEMD

piano one hand (v2) and improvising singer/actor

Play the chords chronologically
and apply the rhythms freely to either upper or lower stave
in response to the actor's interpretation of the poem.

Helgi R. Ingvarsson

Tempo free
Molto rubato

MATERIAL 1 : THE CHORDS

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18

19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26

(8)-----

(8)-----

(8)-----

Came all quiet. I sat there in my seatbelt...

Detailed description: This section contains 26 numbered measures of musical notation. Measures 1-9 are in the bass clef. Measures 10-18 are split between bass and treble clefs. Measures 19-26 are in the treble clef. A dashed line with '(8)' indicates an 8-measure rest. A text box in measure 22 contains the lyrics 'Came all quiet. I sat there in my seatbelt...'. The notation consists of chords and single notes on a grand staff.

MATERIAL 2 : THE RHYTHMS

Tempo free
Molto rubato

Shimmering
arpeggio

1 2 3 4

Detailed description: This section contains 4 numbered measures of rhythmic notation. Each measure is represented by a horizontal line with 'x' marks indicating rhythmic points. Measure 1 includes a treble clef and a 'Shimmering arpeggio' symbol. Measure 2 includes a treble clef. Measure 3 includes a treble clef and a sharp sign. Measure 4 includes a treble clef and a sharp sign. The notation is designed for improvisation.