

David Bruce  
**The Eye of Night**  
for flute harp and viola



*Commissioned by Art of Elan, San Diego  
Dedicated to Gordon Brodfuehrer*

## The Eye of Night

The Eye of Night was commissioned by Art of Elan in San Diego and is dedicated to Gordon Brodfuehrer. It is a series of four tender movements, each in their own way a kind of nocturne. The night and in particular the night sky has long held a fascination for me. We all know the awe-inspiring site that awaits us if we are lucky enough to find ourselves away from the city lights in front of a cloudless night sky - I think the awe we experience on such occasions is not just because of the beauty and grandeur of the spectacle - but because it one of the very few times we are directly faced with the vast mystery of the universe. I have made an oath to myself that at least once every year I will make a pilgrimage to somewhere where I am able to lose myself in such a spectacle.

Continuing a source of inspiration from one of the songs in my song-cycle for Dawn Upshaw, *The North Wind was a Woman*, a series of songs conveying the painfully melancholy points of view of inanimate or incorporeal objects: snow, wind, night, the moon and a mountain). I have been drawn to the image, first discovered in a short story by Aimee Bender, of the night sky as a giant eye looking down on us, unblinkingly. The image fascinates me because it captures the complexity of feelings one experiences when staring up into space - it is friendly, familiar and constant, whilst at the same time being overwhelming, dizzying and quietly terrifying.

The first of the pieces has a dark atmosphere, that falls somewhere between sensual and plaintive. The melodic flute lines draw inspiration from the ornamental style of Indian bansuri flute playing. I am very grateful to Alex Housego, a British-born flute player who spent much of his childhood in India and so is familiar with both western and Indian traditions. His advice in finding areas of bansuri-flute technique which would translate adequately to a modern western flute was invaluable.

The second, very short movement has a sweeter atmosphere, showing a more tender and blissful side of night. The third, while still in a largely *piano* or *pianissimo* dynamic register is more active and flowing. The final piece is a lullaby, or 'song without words' inspired by William Blake's Cradle Song where he imagines the 'little sorrows' and 'quiet desires' of a sleeping baby.

David Bruce 11 July 2010

# The Eye of Night

David Bruce

I.

**Tender, sensual, quietly plaintive**  $\text{♩} = 60$

Throughout the piece, but especially in the first movement, the flute writing draws inspiration from the Indian Bansuri flute. Whilst it is recognised the Bansuri is very different from a modern Western flute, the player should nevertheless attempt to capture the nuance and atmosphere of Indian Bansuri playing, particularly on the embellishments and slides.

Alto Flute

**pp** sul tasto. very fast bow, with absolutely no pressure down on to the strings, producing a wispy 'breathing' sound

Viola

**pp**

**Tender, sensual, quietly plaintive**  $\text{♩} = 60$

Harp

**p**

**mf**

A. Fl.

(like a little weep)

Va.

Hp.

v. fast, 'folk-like' grace notes so fast that the grace notes don't necessarily speak clearly

15

A. Fl.

Va.

(\*) these slides should imitate the ornamental slides of Indian violin music

Hp.

F#

G# F#

22

A. Fl.

Va.

Hp.

29

A. Fl.

*ppp*

Va.

*mf*

Hp.

36

A. Fl.

*mf* 9

*p*

turn in

*pp*

Va.

Hp.

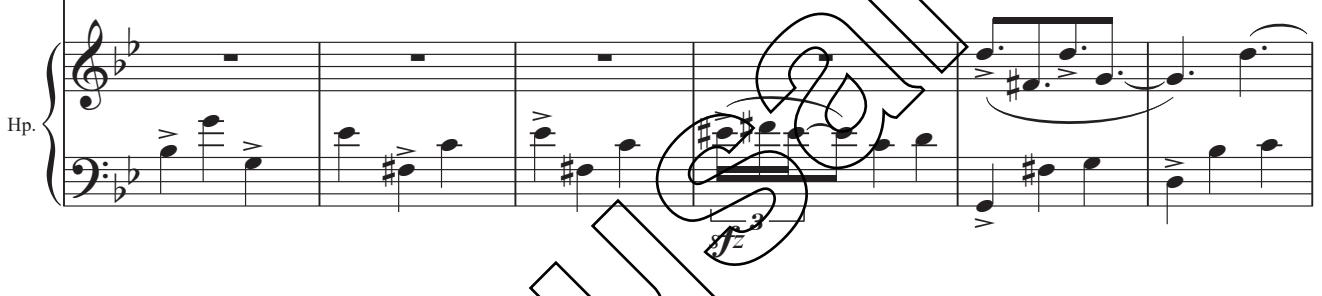
42

A. Fl. 

Hp. 

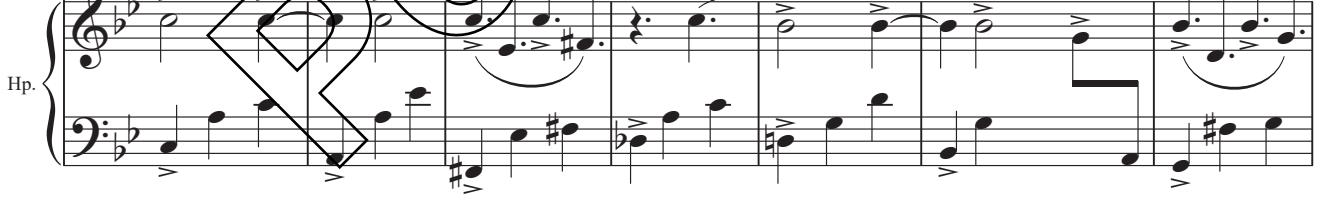
49

A. Fl. 

Hp. 

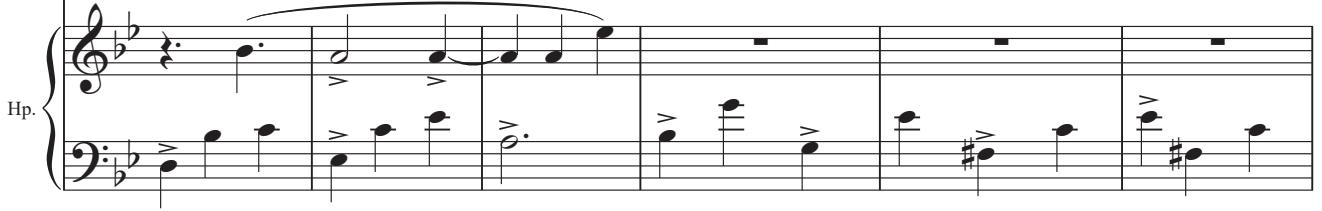
55

A. Fl. 

Hp. 

62

A. Fl. 

Hp. 

**B**

68

A. Fl.

arco  
p

2

gliss.

Hp.

Eb **p**

3

74

Va.

gliss.

Hp.

3

**C**

81

A. Fl.

mp >

turn in

Va.

p

gliss.

mp

Hp.

mp

89

A. Fl.

Va.

Hp.

96

A. Fl.

Va.

Hp.

102

A. Fl.

Va.

Hp.

108

A. Fl.

Va.

Hp.

This section contains three staves. The top staff is for the A. Flute, which plays a melodic line with grace notes and a 'gliss.' instruction. The middle staff is for the Bassoon (Va.), featuring sixteenth-note patterns grouped by '3'. The bottom staff is for the Horn (Horn), with eighth-note patterns and dynamic markings like > and >. Measure 113 concludes with a repeat sign and a first ending bracket.

114

A. Fl.

Va.

Hp.

**E**

**pp**

**tr**

**rp**

**p**

**mf**

This section features three staves. The top staff is for the A. Flute, with a 'gliss.' and a melodic line. The middle staff is for the Bassoon, with sixteenth-note patterns and dynamics pp, tr, rp, and p. The bottom staff is for the Horn, with eighth-note patterns and dynamics mf. Large, stylized letters (E, C, S, P, 9) are superimposed on the music, with arrows indicating specific notes or groups of notes.

122

A. Fl.

Va.

Hp.

This section contains three staves. The top staff is for the A. Flute, with sustained notes and a melodic line. The middle staff is for the Bassoon, with eighth-note patterns. The bottom staff is for the Horn, with eighth-note patterns and dynamic markings like > and >:.

129

A. Fl.

Va.

Hp.

pizz

135

A. Fl.

Va.

(pizz)

p

Hp.

p

143

A. Fl.

Va.

Hp.

ossia octava basso

148

A. Fl.

Va.

Hp.

153

A. Fl.

Va.

Hp.

turn in

G

ben ritmico

mf 3  
ben ritmico

158

Va.

arco  
pp

Hp.

3 3 3

164

A. Fl. Flute *f*

Va. pizz *p* arco *mp*

Hp. { *pizz* *3* *3*

170

Fl. *f* *b*

Va. pizz

Hp. { *f* *P* *S* *G*

177

Fl. (\*), low D fingering

Va. (\*): 'snatch' away the grace-notes here  
- very fast, so that they don't really sound,  
again, as in Indian music

Hp. { *B*<sup>#</sup>

183

Fl.

Va. arco sul tasto, punta d'arco *mp*

Hp. *3* F# *sfp*

188 I

Fl. *f*

Va. arco *mf* ricochet

Hp. *f* F# G#

194

Fl. 3 3

Va. ricochet

Hp.

199

Fl.  $\text{f}^3$   $\text{ff}$

Va.  $mf$   $pizz$   $ff$  arco

Hp.  $ff$  F $\sharp$

203 J

Fl.  $f$

Va. pizz arco pizz arco sul tasto, punta d'arco

Hp.  $mf$

210

Fl.  $f$

Va.

Hp.  $8va$

218

K

Fl. *pp*

Va. *pp*

Hp.

226

Fl.

Va.

Hp.

*rall.*

to A. Fl.

(keep fast tremolo through the rall.)

Va. *pppp*

Hp. *p*

Tenderly       $\text{♩} = 96$

II.

Viola      *pizz sul tasto*  
*p dolce (behind harp)*

Harp      *mp*

Va.      246

Hp.

Va.      254

Hp.

Va.      261

Hp.

**L**

268

A. Fl. 

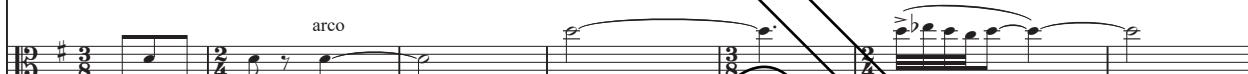
Va. 

Hp. 

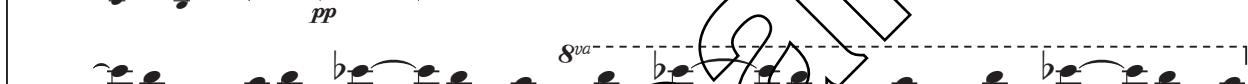
pp sim.

275

A. Fl. 

Va. arco 

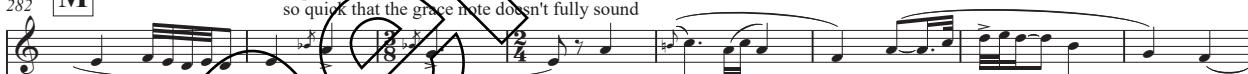
Va. pp

Hp. 

pp sva

282 **M**

v.quick 'folk-like' grace-notes - so quick that the grace note doesn't fully sound

A. Fl. 

Hp. 

p

290

A. Fl. 

Hp. 

297 N

A. Fl.

Va. pizz  
pp

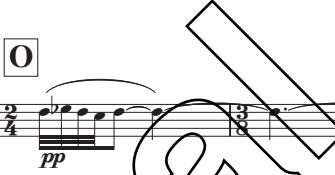
arco  
p

pizz  
pp

arco  
p

H. B.

304

A. Fl. 

Va. pizz 

Hp. 

O

pp sim

8va

312

A. Fl.

Va. arco pp

Hp. (8) loco pp



P

319

A. Fl. | Va. | Hp.

*pp* | *mp* pizz quasi-guitarra | *mp*

325

A. Fl. | Va. | Hp.

*f subito* | *f subito* | *mf*

331

A. Fl. | Va. | Hp.

*mf* | arco I II III IV | *mf*

*f mf*

336

A. Fl.

Va.

Hp.

341

A. Fl.

Va.

Hp.

345

A. Fl.

Va.

Hp.

## III.

**With a lilt  $\text{♩} = 160$** 

Flute       $\text{♩} = 160$   
*pp*      *misterioso*

Viola      *pizz*  
*mf*

Harp       $\text{♩} = 160$   
*mf*

Fl.      352  
*pp*

Va.

Hp.

Fl.      357

Va.

Hp.

361

Fl.

Va.

Hp.

366

Fl.

Va.

Hp.

370

Fl.

Va.

Hp.

374

Fl.

Va.

Hp.

378

Fl.

Va.

Hp.

382

Fl.

Va.

Hp.

386

Fl.

Va.

Hp.

Q

390

Fl.

Va.

slide finger  
as in Indian music

arco

Hp.

394

Va.

Hp.

398

Fl.

Va.

Hp.

401

Fl.

Va.

Hp.

404

Fl.

Va.

Hp.

The musical score consists of five staves of music. The first two staves are for Flute (Fl.) and Violin (Va.), both in treble clef and common time. The third staff is for Double Bass (Hp.) in bass clef. The fourth staff is for Flute (Fl.) in treble clef. The fifth staff is for Double Bass (Hp.) in bass clef. Measure 398 starts with a rest for Flute, followed by eighth-note patterns for Flute and Violin. Measure 401 begins with a sixteenth-note pattern for Flute, followed by eighth-note patterns for Violin and Double Bass. Measure 404 starts with a rest for Flute, followed by eighth-note patterns for Flute and Double Bass. The score includes dynamic markings such as *f*, *ff*, and *p*, along with triplet markings (*3*). Large, stylized letters are overlaid on the music: 'P' is positioned below the first staff, 'O' is above the second staff, 'R' is above the fourth staff, and 'D' is below the fifth staff. The letters appear to be part of a larger word or sequence.

407

Fl.

**S**

Hp.

*mf*

410

Fl.

*mf* cresc.

Va.

*mf* cresc. *mf* *mf*

Hp.

*mf* cresc. *mf*

414

Fl.

*ff*

Va.

*ff*

Hp.

*ff*

**T**

417

Fl.

Va.

Hp.

420

Fl.

Va.

Hp.

424

Fl.

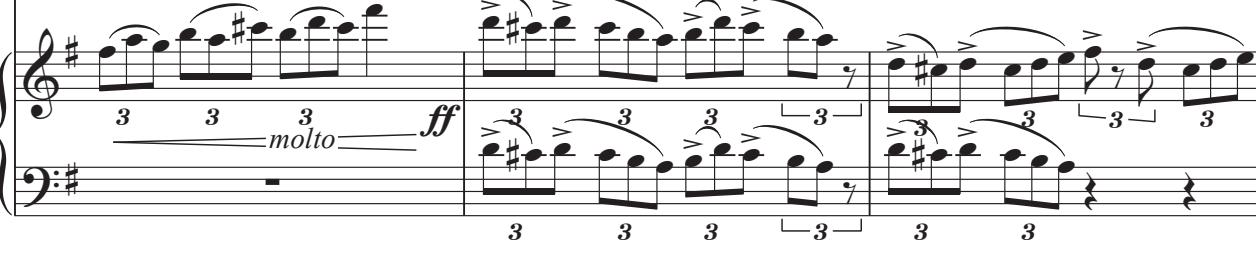
Va.

Hp.

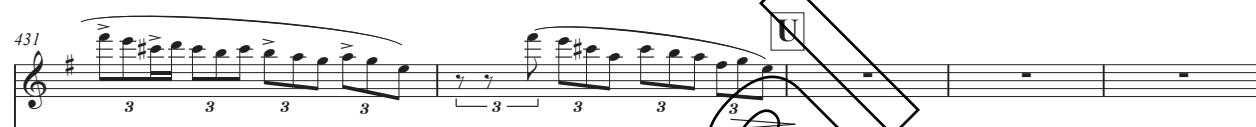
428

Fl.      

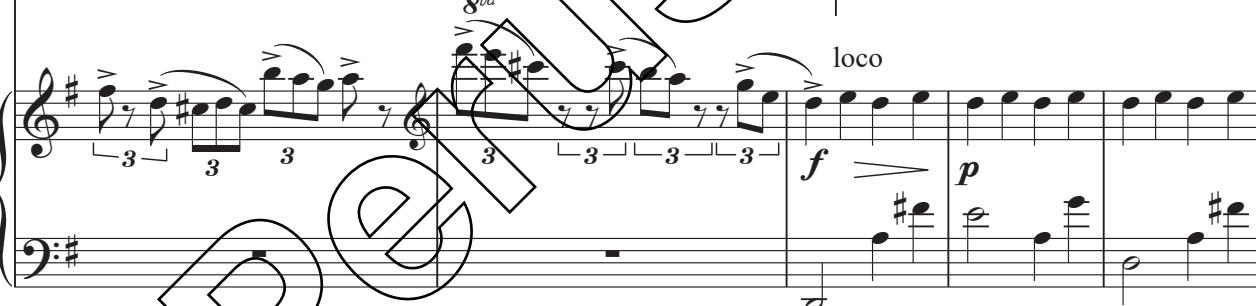
Va.      

Hp.      

431

Fl.      

Va.      

Hp.      

436

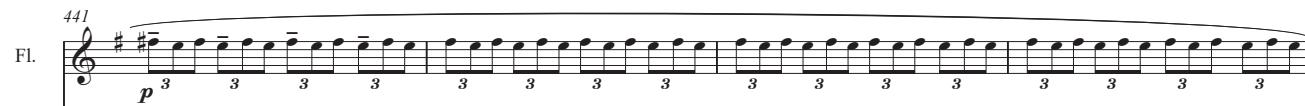
Fl.      

Va.      

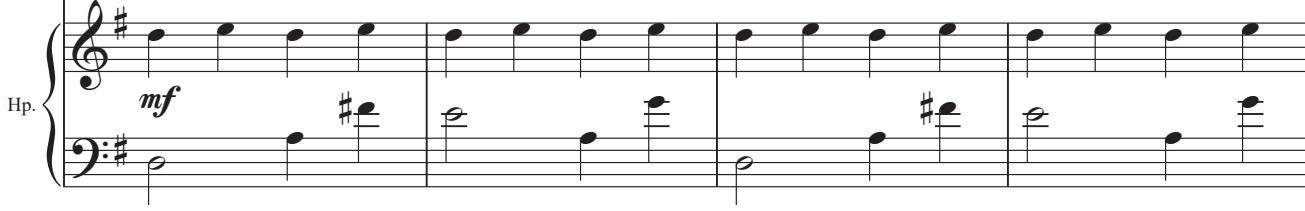
Hp.      

sim.

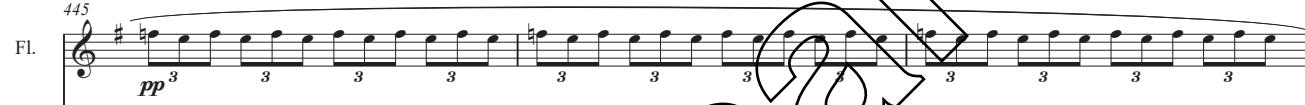
441

Fl. 

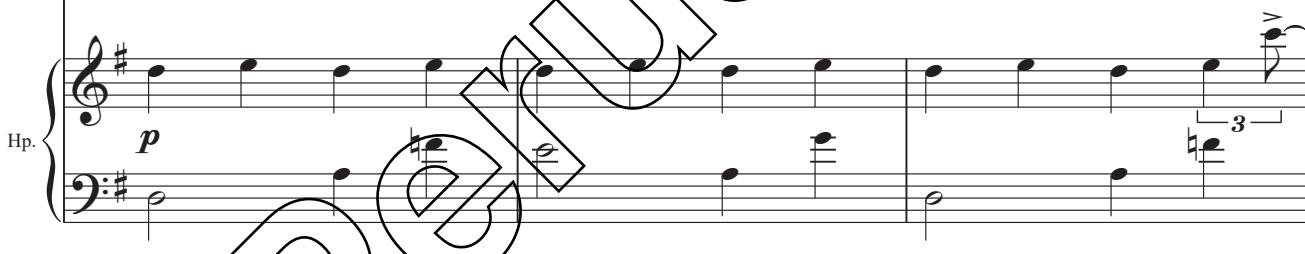
Va. 

Hp. 

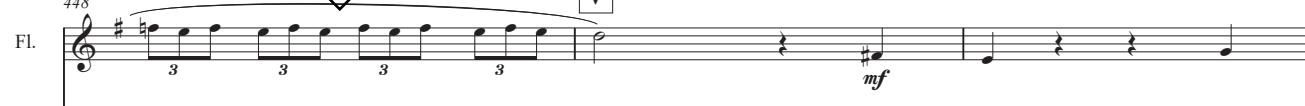
445

Fl. 

Va. 

Hp. 

448

Fl. 

Va. 

Hp. 

451

Fl.

Va.

Hp.

455

Fl.

Va.

Hp.

459

Fl.

Va.

Hp.

462

Fl.

Va.

Hp.

465

Fl.

Va.

Hp.

469

Fl.

Va. (gliss over full length of note)

Hp.

474

Va.  $\text{B}^{\#}$

Hp.

*cresc.*

*mf*    *6 cresc.*    *6*

477

Va.  $\text{B}^{\#}$

Hp.

*gliss.*

*p*    *cresc.*

*mf*

480

Va.

Hp.

*(p)*

*cresc.*

*p*    *cresc.*

483

Fl. *mf* 6 6 6 6

Va. *mf* 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 *p* *cresc.*

Hp. *mf* 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 *p* *cresc.*

486

Fl. - *mf* 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 *cresc.*

Va. 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 *non troppo*

Hp. 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

**P** **S**

488

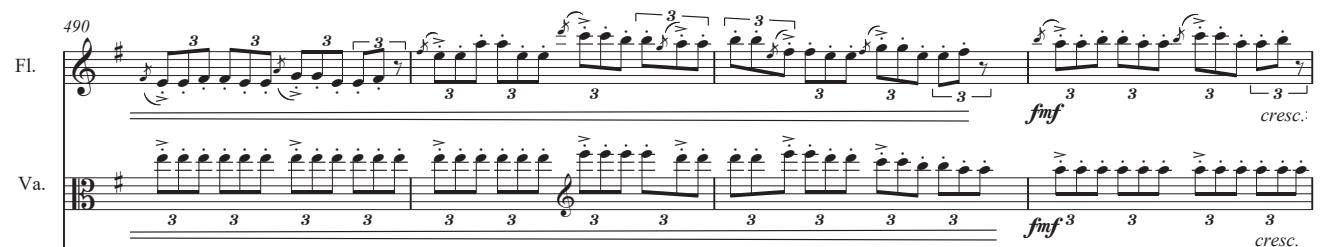
Fl. 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 *fmp* off the string

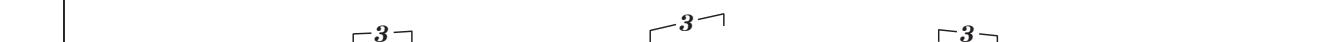
Va. 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 *fmp*

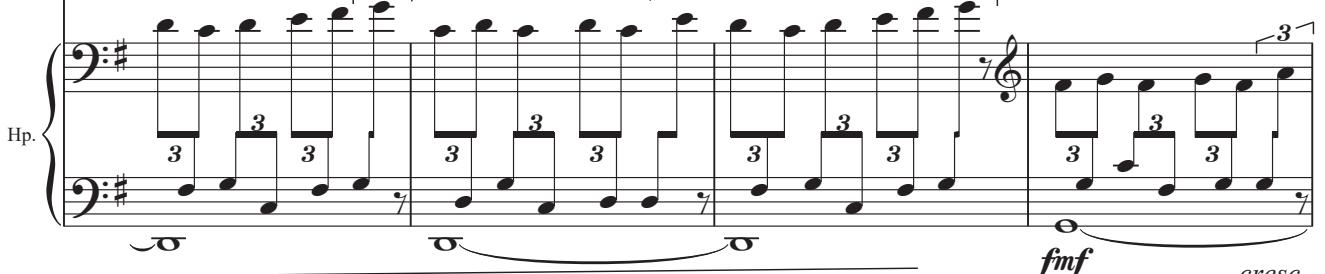
Hp. 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

*fmp*

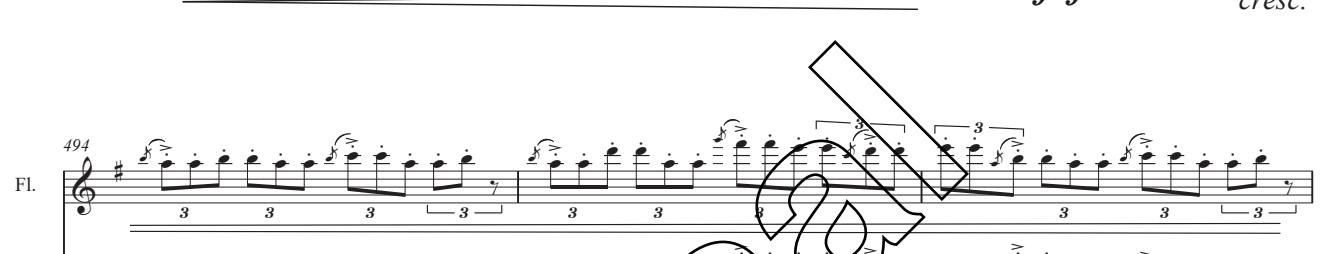
490

Fl. 

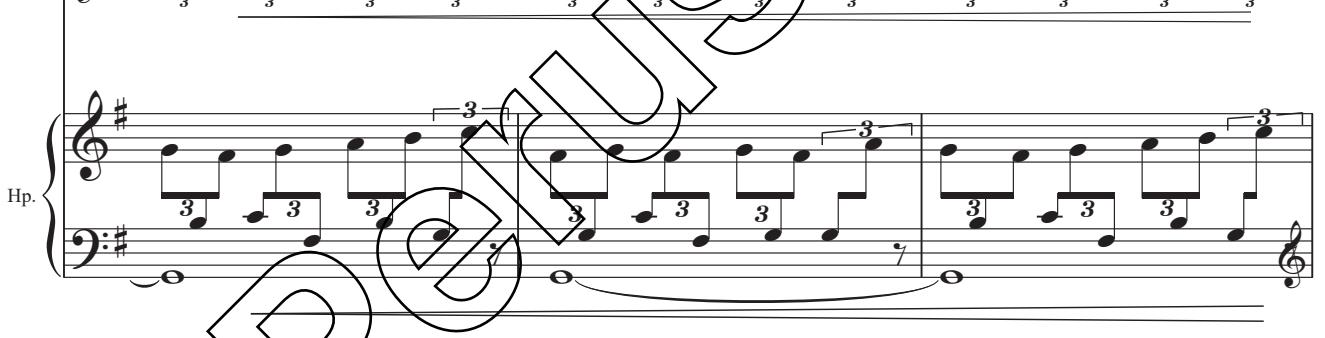
Va. 

Hp. 

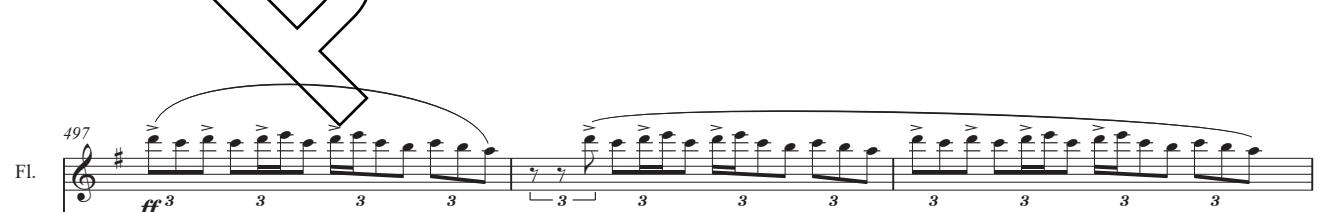
494

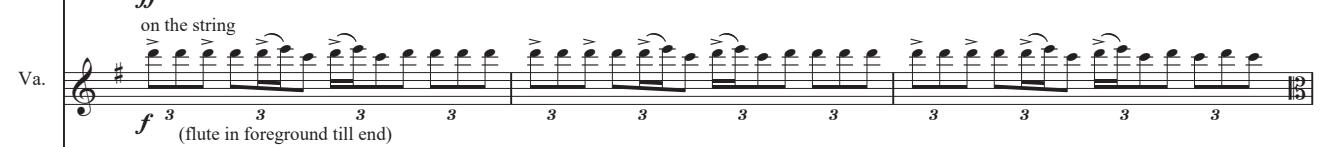
Fl. 

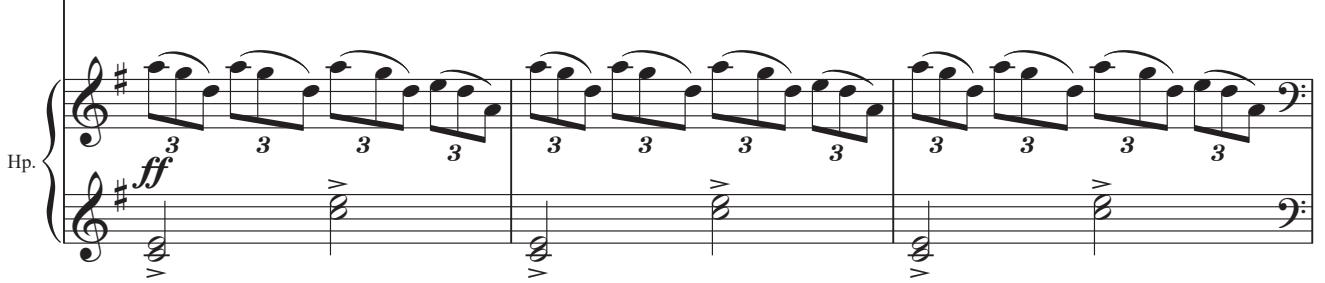
Va. 

Hp. 

497

Fl. 

Va. 

Hp. 

Musical score for Flute (Fl.), Bassoon (Va.), and Double Bass (Hpf.). The score consists of three staves. The Flute staff starts with a dynamic *f* and a tempo marking of 500. The Bassoon staff begins with a dynamic *mf*. The Double Bass staff starts with a dynamic *f*. The music includes various performance instructions such as "as fast as possible" and "3". The bassoon part features eighth-note patterns with grace notes and slurs. The double bass part provides harmonic support with sustained notes.

Fl.

Va.

p

Hp.

*p*

dim.

( ),

P E R S

Musical score page 504. The score includes parts for Flute (Fl.), Violin (Va.), and Double Bass (Hpf.). The Flute part consists of two measures of sustained notes at dynamic *pp*. The Violin part has two measures of eighth-note patterns grouped by threes, with a dynamic marking *dim.* in the second measure. The Double Bass part has two measures of sixteenth-note patterns grouped by threes, with a dynamic marking *pp* and *dim.* in the first measure. Measures are separated by vertical bar lines, and measures are grouped by double bar lines with repeat dots.

## IV.

**J = 72**

senza vib., viol-like

Viola      

517

Va. 

528

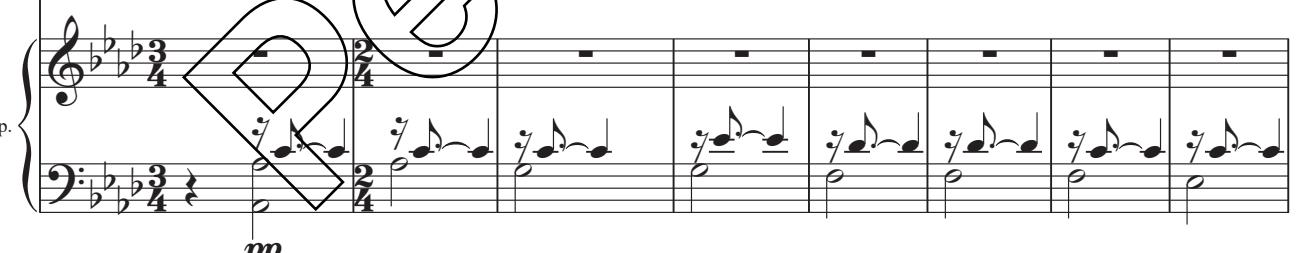
Va. 

**X A tempo**

538

B. Fl.      Bass Flute      

Va. 

Hp. 

546

B. Fl.      

Hp. 

553

B. Fl.

Va. *pp misterioso*

Hp.

559

B. Fl.

Va. *6 6 6 6*

Hp.

564

B. Fl.

Hp.

570 **Z**  
 B. Fl. *pp* *espress.*

Hp. *l.v.*

577  
 B. Fl. *8va*  
 Hp. *PESS*

582 **AA**  
 B. Fl.

Va. *pp*

Hp. *(8)*

588

B. Fl. (pp sempre) 15

Va.

Hp.

592 BB

Va. 6 6

Hp. P C

596 15

Va. 6 6

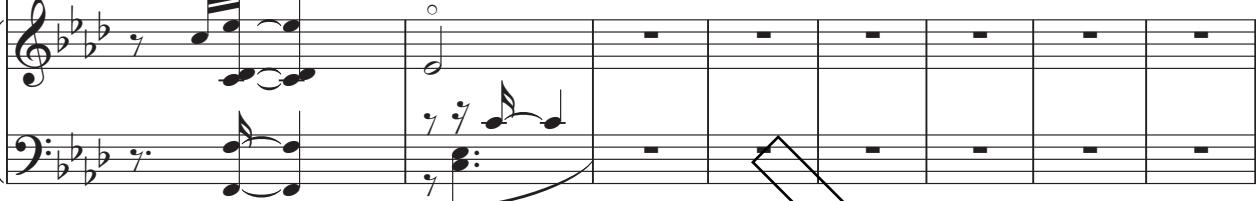
Hp.

**CC Hushed, with great inner intensity**

B. Fl. 600 

Va. 

**Hushed, with great inner intensity**

Hp. 

B. Fl. 608 

Va. 

B. Fl. 618 

Va. 

Hp. 

628

B. Fl.

Va.

Hp.

638 **DD** Calmo

Hp.

649

Hp.

658

Hp.