

Firmament

for 2 flutes, piano, and 2 percussionists

by John O'Brien (2010)

“...*this most excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave o’erhanging firmament, this majestic roof fretted with golden fire...*”

Hamlet
Act 2, Scene 2.

Resonance and registral change are the key expressive elements in *Firmament*. The murky sound world of the opening music, characterized by the flutes and piano in their lowest register in combination with highly resonant percussion, transforms very gradually to become a dense, high-register texture. The final section is a kind of aftermath of the preceding music, which has created a wake of fragmented sounds. Here the original resonant character of the piano exists in a shadow form, as silently depressed chords, the strings of which are activated sympathetically through loud, *staccato* attacks of adjacent pitches.

Firmament

John O'Brien (2010)

with restrained intensity

4/4 3/4 4/4 2/4 4/4 3/4 4/4 2/4 4/4 3/4

Flute 1 *ppp* *pp*

Flute 2 *ppp* *pp*

Percussion (med. felt) *ppp* med. gong lg gong b.d. *pp*

Vibraphone (soft yarn) motor off Led. to measure 48. *ppp* arco mallet

Piano *ppp* Led. to measure 77. *pp*

12 3/4 4/4 3/4 4/4 [A] 3/4

Fl. *p*

Fl. *p*

Perc. med. gong lg gong b.d. med. gong lg gong b.d. *p*

Vib. arco mallet *p* arc. mal. *p*

Pno. *p*

22 3/4 4/4 3/4 4/4 3/4 4/4 2/4

Fl. *p*

Fl. *p*

Perc. *mg*

Vib. 3

Pno. *p*

32 $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$

Fl. 3^{rd}

Perc. gong b.d.

Vib. arc. mal.

Pno.

41 $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ **B**

Fl. 3^{rd} mp

Fl. 3^{rd} mp

Perc. mp (med. yarn)

Vib. mp *

Pno. mp

51 $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$

Fl. mf f

Fl. mf f

Perc. gong b.d. mf

Vib. mf

Pno. mf

60

Fl. $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$

Perc. *f*

Vib. *f*

Pno. *f*

67

Fl. $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$

Fl. *ff* *ff*

Perc.

Vib.

Pno.

73

$\frac{4}{4}$ **C** increasing tension

Fl. $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$

Fl.

Perc. *ff*

Vib. *ff*

Pno. *ff*

*

78

Fl. $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$

Perc.

Vib.

Pno.

84

Fl. $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$

Perc.

Vib.

Pno.

88

Fl. $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$

Fl. $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$

Perc.

Vib.

Pno.

ff *ff* *ff* *pp* *pp*

sost. ♩

ff *pp*

sus. cym. *glock.*

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

Fl.

Perc.

Vib.

Pno.

ff *sost.* *pp*
Ped.

100 $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$

Fl.

Perc.

Vib.

Pno.

ff *sost.* *pp*
Ped.

106 $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$

Fl.

Perc.

Vib.

Pno.

ff *sost.* *pp*
Ped.

111

3/4 4/4

Fl. *mf*

Perc. *b.d.*

Vib. *mp*

Pno. *mp*

sost. Ped.

116

3/4 4/4 3/4 4/4

Fl.

Perc. *cym.* *ff* *b.d.* *mp*

Vib. *pp* *ff* *pp* *ff*

Pno. *pp* *ff* *loco* *pp* *ff* *ff* *pp*

sost. Ped.

124

3/4 4/4 3/4 4/4

Fl.

Perc. *cym.* *b.d. ('ord')* *p*

Vib. *pp* *ff* *pp*

Pno. *ff* *pp* *loco* *ff*

8va. 1 *** *8va. 1* *sost. Ped.*

let ring