Title
Where the I Comes From

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Where the I Comes From
by
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A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in
Music and the Designated Emphasis in New Media in the Graduate Division of the University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:
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Professor Ken Ueno

Summer 2018
I first read Josh Bell’s poem “Where the I Comes From” in the aftermath of the 2016 presidential election, at a time when it seemed like America was being torn apart by class and racial conflict. The poem spoke to me because it so honestly describes the propensity for violence which is hidden inside each of us. It is easy to blame one another for our country’s current state of xenophobia and the daily destruction of our democratic institutions, but much harder to recognize the seeds of jealousy, narcissism and hatred within ourselves. We must see our own faults clearly before we can find the common humanity from which we can address everyone – even our enemies – with love and compassion.
Where the I Comes From
for soprano and orchestra

Ursula Kwong-Brown
2017

Program Note

I first read Josh Bell’s poem “Where the I Comes From” in the aftermath of the 2016 presidential election, at a time when it seemed like America was being torn apart by class and racial conflict. The poem spoke to me because it so honestly describes the propensity for violence which is hidden inside each of us. It is easy to blame one another for our country’s current state of xenophobia and the daily destruction of our democratic institutions, but much harder to recognize the seeds of jealousy, narcissism and hatred within ourselves. We must see our own faults clearly before we can find the common humanity from which we can address everyone – even our enemies – with love and compassion.
Our days often ended and began with the sound of voices raised in song. Even after we murdered our friends and neighbors. Even after we brought the attention of our knives to the neighbors of our neighbors, until at last the neighborhoods fell silent and the cities quiet and the city’s city, the country then and next the country, until finally the moon, as if its own reflection, looked upon an Earth that we had emptied nearly back to Eden. Even then, in that silence that seemed almost a silence, sadly we were not alone. All we ever wanted was to be alone, to visit no one, to be visited by nothing. But even after we’d traveled to the nearby planets and relieved them of their voices, even after – and we all knew this was coming – we fell amongst each other, brother and sister, until only I survived, still I heard it, the universe subtracted of its skin and hair, and yet the sound of a voice, like someone singing in the hold of a sinking ship, unbidden and irrelevant, a fathom and a fathom deep, but never fading.
Instrumentation

Soprano (Range: E4-C6)

3 Flutes (3rd doubling Piccolo)
2 Oboes + 1 English Horn
2 B♭ Clarinets + 1 Bass B♭ Clarinet
2 Bassoons + 1 Contrabassoon

4 Horns in F
3 Trumpets in C
2 Tenor Trombones + 1 Bass Trombone
1 Tuba

Timpani
4 drums: 32", 29", 26" & 23"

Percussion I
Chimes
Xylophone
Suspended Cymbal (Sus. Cym.)
Bass Drum* (B.D.)

Percussion II
Marimba, (4.3 octave)
Sandpaper Blocks
Bass Drum*

Percussion III
Vibraphone
Flexatone
Bass Drum*

Percussion IV
Snare Drum (S.D.)
Suspended Cymbal (with bow)
Large Tam Tam (T.T.)
Bass Drum*

* A single Bass Drum can be shared by all 4 players

Harp

Keyboard: Piano, Celesta

Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Violoncello
Double Bass
Performance Notes

Duration: c. 11'30"

Piccolo sounds 1 octave higher than written
Contrabassoon sounds 1 octave lower than written
Glockenspiel sounds 2 octaves higher than written
Celesta sounds 1 octave higher than written
Double Bass sounds 1 octave lower than written

General

Accidentals follow conventional rules: they apply throughout the bar to notes in the same octave.

All tremolo markings are unmeasured and fast as possible.

Woodwinds

flutter tongue

flt. A tone that is rapidly articulated, and produced either by rolling the tongue or by using the uvula in the back of the mouth.

Brass

All brass players need straight mutes

Trumpet 1 also needs a harmon mute

Strings

sul pont. sul ponticello: close to the bridge
sul tasto sul tasto: on the finger board
norm normale: used with sul pont./ sul tasto

----- Gradual and continuous transition
(e.g., from Norm. to Sul Pont.)

Harmonic - Fingered pitch (not sounding)

Harp

Harmonics sound 1 octave above the notated pitch.
With anguish
Same tempo

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
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<td>Fl. 1</td>
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<td>Ob. 1, 2</td>
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<td>Eng. Hn.</td>
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<td>B. Cl.</td>
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<td>Cbsn.</td>
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<td>F Hn. 1, 2</td>
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<td>F Hn. 3, 4</td>
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<td>C Tpt. 1, 2, 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Soprano</td>
<td>end ed</td>
<td>and began</td>
<td>with the sound of</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vla.</td>
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Calmly
Picc.
Fl. 1
Ob. 1, 2
Eng. Hn.
Cl. 1, 2
B. Cl.
Bsn. 1, 2
Cbsn.
Fl. Hn. 1, 2
F Hn. 3, 4
C Tpt. 1, 2, 3
Tbn. 1, 2
Tba.
Timp.
Hp.
Pno.
Soprano
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
Picc. Fl. 1, 2
Ob. 1, 2
Eng. Hn.
Cl. 1
B. Cl.
Bsn. 1, 2
Cbsn.
F Hn. 1, 2
F Hn. 3, 4
C Tpt. 1
C Tpt. 2, 3
Tbn. 1, 2
B. Tbn.
Tba.
Timp.
Perc. 4
Hp.
Pno.
Soprano
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
r

friends and neigh boers
Angry
Faster \( \text{L} = 92 \)

bragged the attention of our knives

we
Picc.
Fl. 1, 2
Ob. 1, 2
Eng. Hn.
Cl. 1
B. Cl.
Bsn. 1
Cbn.
F Hn. 1, 2
F Hn. 3, 4
C Tpt. 1, 2, 3
Tbn. 1, 2
B. Tbn.
Tba.
Timp.
Hp.
Pno.
Soprano
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vla. 2
Vc.
Vc. 2
Db.

\( \text{last} \)  
the neigh-
bor-hoods  
fell

\( j = 80 \)  

\( \text{rit.} \)
Picc.  
Fl. 1, 2  
Ob. 1, 2  
Eng. Hn.  
Cl. 1, 2  
B. Cl.  
Bsn. 1, 2  
Chsn.  
F Hn. 1, 2  
F Hn. 3, 4  
C Tpt. 1, 2, 3  
C Tpt. 2, 3  
Tbn. 1, 2  
B. Tbn.  
Tba.  
Timp.  
Vib. (Perc. 3)  
Hp.  
Pno.  
Soprano  
Vln. I  
Vln. II  
Vla.  
Vla. 2  
Vc.  
Vc. 2  
Db.  

88

look'd up on an earth that we had emp - tied

sul post.
Picc.
Fl. 1
Fl. 2
Ob. 1, 2
Eng. Hn.
Cl. 1, 2
B. Cl.
Bsn. 1, 2
Cbsn.
F Hn. 1, 2
F Hn. 3, 4
C Tpt. 1, 2, 3
Tbn. 1, 2
B. Tbn.
Tba.
Timp.
Hp.
Pno.
Soprano
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.

in that silence that was almost
Change to Flute
Growing calmer
Fl. 1  
Ob. 1, 2  
Eng. Hn.  
Cl. 1, 2  
B. Cl.  
Bsn. 1, 2  
Chsn.  
F Hn. 1, 2  
F Hn. 3, 4  
C Tpt. 1, 2, 3  
Tbn. 1, 2  
B. Tbn.  
Tba.  
Timp.  
Hp.  
Cel.  
Soprano  

Vln. I p  
Vln. II pizz.  
Vla. non-div.  
Vc. p  
Vc. 2  
Db.  

Sorrowful  
$J = 60$  

But even after we'd traveled to the nearby...
and we all knew this was coming.

We fell amongst another brother.

accel.

Fl. 1, 2
Ob. 1, 2
Eng. Hn.
Cl. 1, 2
B. Cl.
Bsn. 1, 2
Chsn.
F Hn. 1, 2
F Hn. 3, 4
C Tpt. 1, 2, 3
Tbn. 1, 2
B. Tbn.
Tba.
Timp.
Hp.
Cel.
Soprano
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vla. 2
Vc.
Vc. 2
Db.
tract ed of its skin and hair
and yet the sound of a voice
in the hold of a sinking ship