

Ed Hughes

SKY RHYTHMS

2022

for voice and ensemble

Text after Marion Robinson
(from Mass Observation Archive 12 July 1937)
and William Blake

voice (mezzo-soprano)
flute (doubling piccolo)
clarinet (doubling bass clarinet)
electric guitar
piano or keyboard
cello

score in C

Duration: 5 mins

Sky Rhythms (2022)

This song was written for the Orchestra of Sound and Light's South Downs Songbook project (funded by the Arts Council England for touring to venues including colleges and universities in June 2022). Also in the first version of the songbook were compositions by Shirley Thompson, Evelyn Ficarra and Rowland Sutherland.

The South Downs Songbook project commissioned a series of works from composers that formed a diverse creative response to the environment of the South Downs National Park. Contributions also came from students and pupils in selected Sussex secondary schools where workshops took place. Free digital resources were developed to support composing in response to the South Downs by a broad range of pupils across the region. Composers were free to take text, poems, images, films and other materials as starting points for their work. We chose an ensemble that recalls Pierrot Lunaire by Schoenberg (one of the formative modern music line-ups) but is updated and varied with the inclusion of electric guitar and contemporary technologies (e.g. samples/guitar pedals).

In this piece, I selected words written by Marion Robinson for the Mass Observation Archive, on one of the first 'Day Surveys' (12 July 1937). Marion Robinson was a resident near Felpham, West Sussex, in the 1930s. Marion writes about everyday life, her political views and the way in which proximity to the South Downs raises her spirits. She also mentions the fact that William Blake lived in Felpham (in 1800-1803) and speculates that certain visual rhythms in his work from that period were influenced by the unique and beautiful effects of light and cloud over the Downs.

My thanks to Arts Council England, Create Music, West Sussex Music, South Downs National Park Authority, the Mass Observation Archive at Sussex University, Duncan Mackrill, Peter Davison, Jo Hatton (BHASVIC), John Sims (ESAM), Kym East (Hastings Academy), the students, composer colleagues, the musicians of the Orchestra of Sound and Light, and Liz Webb, for their support and interest in this project.

For further information about the South Downs Songbook, please see <https://www.orchsoundlight.org/southdownssongbook>

Ed Hughes
31.3.2022

SKY RHYTHMS

for the Orchestra of Sound and Light's South Downs Songbook project

Marion Robinson (1937), William Blake (1800)

ED HUGHES

♩ = 132
FLUTE

Flute

Clarinet in B♭

Electric Guitar

Use pick. A touch of reverb.

Voice

Piano

Violoncello

pp < > *pp* *pp* < > *pp*

pp < > *pp* *pp* < > *pp*

pp *mf*

pp *mp* *mf* *mp*

p *p*

Fl. *pp* *pp* *p* *f*

Cl. *pp* *pp* *p* *f*

E. Gtr. *pp* *mf* *p*

Voice *f*
I live in a sea - side bun - ga - low town,

Pno. *pp* *mp* *mf* *mp* *p*

Vc. *pp* *f*



Fl. *f* *pp* *f* *pp* *pp*

Cl. *pp* *mf* *mf* *pp*

E. Gtr. *pp*

Voice *mf*
Ve - ry small and draugh - ty, but for - tu - nate - ly

Pno. *pp*

Vc. *pp* *mf* *p*

14

Fl. *mf* *f*

Cl. *pp* *f*

E. Gtr. *mp* *f*

Voice *ff*
 loo-king out a-cross o-pen fields and coun-try to the South Downs.

Pno. *mp* *mp* *mf* *f*

Vc. *mf* *p* *mf*

18

Fl. *p* *mf* *pp*

Cl. *pp* *mf* *pp*

E. Gtr. *mf* *p* *pp*

Voice *mf* *f*
 The town is in-ha-bi-ted by

Pno. *ff*

Vc. *f* *p* *pp*

23

Fl. *p* *mf* *f* *pp*

Cl. *mf* *mf* *p*

E. Gtr. *f* *mp* *pp* *p*

Voice *ff* *f*

get-rich-quick bour-geoi-sie, Who all let their bun-ga-logs in sum-mer to

Pno. *f* *p*

Vc. *f* *p*

28

Fl. *p* *f*

Cl. *mf*

E. Gtr. *con vib.* *mf* *p*

Voice *ff*

come and go vi-si-tors in shorts, beach slacks, sun-ba-thing gar-ments

Pno. *pp* *f* *p*

Vc. *pp* *mf*

32

Fl.

Cl.

E. Gtr.

Voice

Pno.

Vc.

f *pp* *f* *pp* *f*

f *mf* *p* *mf* *p* *f*

f *ff*

and ba - thing suits. They rush in-to the sea, and most-ly burn bright pink

mp *mf* *f*

f *mf* *p*

36

Fl.

Cl.

E. Gtr.

Voice

Pno.

Vc.

A

p *p* *f* *pp* *f*

f *mf*

through trying to tan too fast. Day sur - vey.

p *pp* *mf*

A

f *p* *pp* *mp*

TO PICC

Pluck with fingers

41

Fl.

Cl.

E. Gtr.

Voice

Pno.

Vc.

Mon - day Ju - ly the twelfth, nine-teen thir-ty - se - ven. To the news' a - gents: Dai - ly

f *pp* *f* *pp*

f *p* *pp* *mf*

mf *p*

47

Picc.

Cl.

E. Gtr.

Voice

Pno.

Vc.

He - rald pla - card. Sta - lin might do some - thing to make our bread dear - er.

PICC

p *pp*

f *p* *f* *mp*

pp *f* *p*

p *f* *pp*

pizz.

53 TO FLUTE

Picc.

Cl.

E. Gtr.

Voice

Pno.

Vc.

58

FL.

Cl.

E. Gtr.

Voice

Pno.

Vc.

FLUTE TO BASS CL

B Outline of a mysterious/
sublime landscape

65 68 66

Fl. *ff* *p*

B. Cl. BASS CL *mf* *f* *p* *p* with pedal effects: more reverb and medium delay

E. Gtr. con vib. *f* *p*

Voice

Pno. *ff* *p*

Vc. **B**

68

Fl.

B. Cl.

E. Gtr. *mp*

Voice

Pno.

Vc.

73

Fl.

B. Cl.

p

E. Gtr.

mf

Voice

Pno.

Vc.

Perusal Score

79

Fl.

B. Cl.

E. Gtr.

Voice

Pno.

Vc.

Perusal Score

84

Fl.

B. Cl.

E. Gtr.

Voice

Pno.

Vc.

Perusal Score

Detailed description: This page of a musical score covers measures 84 through 88. The score is arranged in a system with six staves. The Flute (Fl.) staff is mostly empty, with a few notes in measure 84. The Bass Clarinet (B. Cl.) staff contains a melodic line with various intervals and accidentals. The Electric Guitar (E. Gtr.) staff features a series of chords in measures 85 and 86. The Voice staff is empty. The Piano (Pno.) staff has a complex melodic line with many accidentals and a large slur over measures 84 and 85. The Violoncello (Vc.) staff is empty. A large, semi-transparent watermark 'Perusal Score' is oriented diagonally across the center of the page.

Fl.

B. Cl.

E. Gtr.

Voice

Pno.

Vc.

The musical score consists of six staves. The Flute (Fl.) staff is empty. The Bass Clarinet (B. Cl.) staff contains a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, including rests. The Electric Guitar (E. Gtr.) staff is empty. The Voice staff is empty. The Piano (Pno.) staff has a right-hand part with a melodic line and a left-hand part with a rhythmic accompaniment. Dynamic markings *ff* and *f* are present. The Violoncello (Vc.) staff is empty. A large, diagonal watermark reading 'Perusal Score' is centered across the page.

C
98

94

Fl.

B. Cl.

E. Gtr.

Voice

Pno.

Vc.

f *p*

mf

Hus - band points

mf *mp* *pp*

mp

99

Fl.

B. Cl.

E. Gtr.

Voice

Pno.

Vc.

f *p*

f

out that things must get worse be - fore they can get

mp *mf* *pp* *p*

mf

103

Fl.

B. Cl.

E. Gtr.

Voice

Pno.

Vc.

mp

mf

mp

pp

p

mp

p

be - - - tter. I know this with my mind, but the i-

Perusal Score

107

Fl.

B. Cl.

E. Gtr.

Voice

Pno.

Vc.

f *p*

f *p*

[without pedals] *p*

f *mp*

mme - di - ate pro - spect weighs u - pon me. And I have an un -

mf *p* *pp*

112

Fl.

B. Cl.

E. Gtr.

Voice

Pno.

Vc.

ff *p*

ff *mf*

com - for - ta - ble fear that if things

116

Fl.

B. Cl.

E. Gtr.

Voice

Pno.

Vc.

come to a fight, I may not have the

f

120

Fl.

B. Cl.

E. Gtr.

Voice

Pno.

Vc.

guts to do all I should. I may not have the guts to do

pp

ff *p* *pp* *mf*

125

Fl. *mf* *p*

B. Cl.

E. Gtr. *pp*

Voice *p*
all I should.

Pno. *pp*

Vc. *mf* *p*

129

Fl. *pp* *p* *f*

Cl. TO CLARINET

B. Cl. *f*

E. Gtr. *pp* *mf*

Voice *mf*
I live in a sea - side bun - ga - low

Pno. *mf* *pp* *mp* *mf* *mp*

Vc. *p* *pp* *pp*

D

133

FL. CLARINET

CL.

B. Cl.

E. Gtr.

Voice

Pno.

Vc.

f *pp* *f* *pp*

p *f* *pp* *mf* *mf* *pp*

p *f* *mp*

town, Ve - ry small and draugh - ty, but

f *pp* *mf*

138

FL.

CL.

E. Gtr.

Voice

Pno.

Vc.

pp *mf*

pp *mp*

f *ff*

for - tu - nate - ly loo - king out a - cross o - pen fields and coun - try to the

pp *mp* *mp* *mf*

p *mf* *p*

142

Fl. *f* *p* *mf* *pp*

Cl. *f* *pp*

E. Gtr. *f* *mf* *p* *pp*

Voice *mf* *mp*
 South Downs, for - tu - nate - ly

Pno. *f* *ff* *fff*

Vc. *mf* *f* *p* *pp*

147

Fl. *p* *mf* *f* *pp*

Cl. *mf* *pp* *mf*

E. Gtr. *f* *mp* *pp*

Voice *f*
 loo - king out a - cross o - pen fields and coun - try to the

Pno. *f*

Vc. *f*

152

Fl.

Cl.

E. Gtr.

Voice

Pno.

Vc.

mf *p* *mf* *ff* *p* *p* *f* *p* *p*

South Downs.

156

Fl.

Cl.

E. Gtr.

Voice

Pno.

Vc.

f *pp* *f* *pp* *f* *mf* *p* *p* *mf* *mp* *mf* *p* *mf* *f* *mf*

E

160

Fl. *p* *f* *pp*

Cl. *f* *pp*

E. Gtr. *mf* *p* *f* *pp* [with pedal: dreamy sustained effect]

Voice *p* *f*
The air is splen - did,

Pno. *f* *pp* sim.

Vc. *p* *f* *pp*

E

166

Fl.

Cl.

E. Gtr.

Voice *mp* *mf*
We get what - e - ver. sun-shine is go - ing And wit - ness su - perb

Pno.

Vc.

173

Fl.

Cl.

[or alt. Fmin9]

E. Gtr.

Voice

f sky - scapes. Fel - pham, where Blake lived, *p* is near, *mp* and

Pno.

Vc.

||

180

Fl.

Cl.

E. Gtr.

Voice

mf one can of-ten see in cloud a-rrange-ments his ins-pi-ra - tion *f* for the rhy-thms of the lines

Pno.

Vc.

186

Fl.

Cl.

E. Gtr.

Voice

his pic-tures take - - - - - diff' rent from sky e-ffects no-ticed else -

Pno.

Vc.

ff *mf* *f*

193

Fl.

Cl.

E. Gtr.

Voice

where. "A - way to sweet Fel - pham, for

(Dreamily, as though remembering a song)

p *mf*

Pno.

Vc.

pp

198

Fl.

Cl.

E. Gtr.

Voice

Hea - ven is there; The la - dder of

Pno.

Vc.

p

f

p

p



203

Fl.

Cl.

E. Gtr.

Voice

An - - gels de - scends through the air,

Pno.

Vc.

mp

mp

ff *f* *mf* *f*

pizz.

f

208

Fl.

Cl.

E. Gtr.

Voice

Pno.

Vc.

p

mf

On the tu-rr-et its spi - ral does soft - ly de -

213

Fl.

Cl.

E. Gtr.

Voice

Pno.

Vc.

f

p

mp

scend, Through the vi - - - - llage then

arco

p

217

Fl.

Cl.

E. Gtr.

Voice

Pno.

Vc.

winds, at my cot it does end. A - way to sweet

f *p*

pp [without ped.]

pp

221

Fl.

Cl.

E. Gtr.

Voice

Pno.

Vc.

Fel - pham, A - way to sweet Fel - pham, A - way to sweet

f *p*

mf *p*

225

Fl.

Musical staff for Flute (Fl.) in treble clef. It contains a whole rest in the first measure, followed by a half note G4 with a slur over it, and a whole rest in the second measure. The third and fourth measures contain whole rests.

Cl.

Musical staff for Clarinet (Cl.) in treble clef. It contains a whole rest in the first measure, followed by a half note G4 with a slur over it, and a whole rest in the second measure. The third and fourth measures contain whole rests.

E. Gtr.

Musical staff for Electric Guitar (E. Gtr.) in treble clef. It contains a whole rest in the first measure, followed by a half note G4 with a slur over it, and a whole rest in the second measure. The third and fourth measures contain whole rests.

Voice

Musical staff for Voice in treble clef. The melody consists of a half note G4, a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, a half note C5, and a whole note B4. A dynamic marking of *f* is placed above the first measure. The lyrics "Fel - pham, for Hea - ven is there." are written below the notes.

Perusal Score

Pno.

Musical staff for Piano (Pno.) in grand staff. The right hand plays a sequence of eighth notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. The left hand plays a sequence of eighth notes: G3, A3, B3, C4, B3, A3, G3. The piece concludes with a whole note G4 in the right hand.

Vc.

Musical staff for Violoncello (Vc.) in bass clef. It contains a whole rest in the first measure, followed by a half note G2 with a slur over it, and a whole rest in the second measure. The third and fourth measures contain whole rests. Dynamic markings *f* and *pp* are placed below the first and second measures respectively.