

Testimonies of the Unseen

(2023)

Mathias Coppens

Commissioned by Arte Amanti

The first performance by David Poskin (cello) and Barbara Baltussen (piano) during the Arte Amanti Festival on May 5, 2023.

Recorded by Justus Grimm (cello) and Barbara Baltussen (piano) at Concertgebouw Brugge on October 3, 2023.

In December 2022 the beloved composer Wim Henderickx suddenly died. The piece is dedicated to him.

Duration: *c.*17 minutes

Instrumentation

For Cello and Piano

CONCERT SCORE

Program notes

I. De Dijk, Lichtreflecties (1908)

II. La Bataille de l'Argonne (1964)

III. De Intrige (1890)

I have always been attracted to the inexplicable. Perhaps the unspeakable is an inner reality, a phantom of the brain, a spiritual deception. But what if it concerns an undercurrent that we are all part of and that we can only experience in its effect? Perhaps there is a phenomenon that, just as light makes reality tangible, can demonstrate a deeper reality?

That is the mystery of the symbolist work of Leon Spilliaert. The beauty and technical mastery of *Sea Wall*, *Light Reflections* take on a sense of loss, of melancholy, of isolation. I tried to express that paradoxical atmosphere of fulfillment and existential emptiness, of repressed serenity, in music.

In René Magritte's *Battle of the Argonne* we see a huge boulder hanging in the air opposite a fluffy cloud. Magritte's surrealism combines recognizable elements in a strange way: what is the deeper meaning? Perhaps the carelessness of the ever-changing cloud symbolizes the imagination, while the rock represents the unyielding un-breakability of our existence, the struggle of our imagination with daily obligations?

For the last part I was inspired by the ambiguous work of the magical realist James Ensor. In his work, *The Intrigue*, the sinister protagonists wear masks, and through their colorful disguise we get to know their true nature. What does all this exuberant celebration mean in the appearance of impending death? The contradiction of fear and pleasure is the basis for the last part.

Léon Spilliaert

De Dijk, Lichtreflecties (1908)



René Magritte

La Bataille de l'Argonne (1964)



James Ensor

De Intrige (1890)



In loving memory of Wim Henderickx

Testimonies of the Unseen

I. De Dijk, Lichtreflecties (1908)

Misterioso

Mathias Coppens

♩ = 92

poco vib. (sul tasto)

Violoncello

pp

Piano

pp

Red.

Detailed description: This system contains the first three measures of the piece. The Violoncello part (top staff) is in treble clef and features a long, sustained note in the second measure, marked *pp*. The Piano part (bottom two staves) is in treble and bass clefs, playing a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with triplets in the second and third measures, also marked *pp*. A 'Red.' (Reduction) symbol is located below the piano part.

Vc.

p

pp

Pno.

Detailed description: This system contains measures 4 through 6. The Violoncello part (top staff) has a melodic line with a slur over measures 4 and 5, marked *p*, and a final note in measure 6 marked *pp*. The Piano part (bottom two staves) continues the rhythmic pattern with triplets in measures 4, 5, and 6.

Vc.

p

pp

Pno.

Red.

Detailed description: This system contains measures 7 through 9. The Violoncello part (top staff) has a melodic line with a slur over measures 7 and 8, marked *p*, and a final note in measure 9 marked *pp*. The Piano part (bottom two staves) continues the rhythmic pattern with quintuplets in measures 7, 8, and 9. A 'Red.' (Reduction) symbol is located below the piano part.

10

Vc. *p* *pp*

Pno.

13

Vc. *p*

Pno.

17

Vc. *mp* *8va*

Pno.

20

Vc. *fp* *mp* *8va*

Pno. *pp* *mp* 5 5 6 6

23

Vc. pizz. arco *mf* *p* *pp* *mp* molto vib.

Pno. *pp* 3 3 3 5 3 3 3

26

Vc. *mf* *p* s.p.

Pno. *mp* *pp* 5 5 5 5 3 3 3 5

29 *senza vib.*

Vc. *pp* *mp* IV

Pno. *mp* 3 3 5 5

32 *pizz.* *arco*

Vc. IV III (•) IV *mf* *p* *mp*

Pno. *pp* *mp* 5 5 3 3 3 5 6 6

35 *s.p.* → *ord.*

Vc. *fp* *pp*

Pno. *p* 6 5 5 3 3

wide vib. (non oscillating)

37

Vc.

Pno.

pp 3 3 5 3 3 3

40

Vc.

Pno.

mp *p*

5 5 3 3 5 3

43

Vc.

Pno.

pp

p *pp*

3 5 5 3 3 3 5

46

Vc. *mp* *p*

Pno. *p* *pp*

49

Vc. *pp*

Pno. *pp*

52

Vc. *p* *pp*

Pno. *p* *pp*

55

Vc. *ppp*

Pno. *ppp*

3 5 5 6 6

5 3 3 5

ped.

58

Vc. vib. ord. *pp* *mp*

Pno. *senza ped.*

6 6 6 6 6 6 7 7 6 6 6 6 6 6

senza ped.

61

Vc. *ppp*

Pno. *p*

6 7 6 6 5 5

6 6 7 7 6 6

p

63 *vib.* *molto vib.*

Vc. *mf* *f*

Pno. *mf*

65 *vib. ord.*

Vc. *sfp*

Pno. *mp* *f* *mp*

67 *s.p.* *ord.*

Vc. *pp* *f* *pp* *f*

Pno. *p* *mf* *p*

senza ped.

70 *flautando*

Vc. *p mp pp fp fp*

Pno. *f p*

senza ped.

73

Vc. *fp mp f*

ord. → m.s.p.

Pno. *f p*

senza ped.

75

Vc. *p pp mp*

ord.

Pno. *pp*

10

III

77

Vc.

pp *mp*

Pno.

pp *mp* *ppp*

6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6

6 7 7 6 6 6 6 6

Red.

79

Vc.

jeté gliss. trem. gliss. jeté

f *p* *f* *p* *f* *p*

Pno.

f *p* *f* *p* *f* *p*

5 6 6 7 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6

8^{vb} Red. 8^{vb} Red. 8^{vb} senza ped.

82

Vc.

p *pp*

IV III II I I III IV

Pno.

pp

6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6

6 6 7 6 6 6 6 6

Red.

84

Vc. *mp*

Pno. *mp*

86

Vc. *f* *molto vib.* *pizz.* *arco*

Pno. *f* *p* *f* *p*

88

Vc. *mf* *f*

Pno. *f* *mp* *ff*

12

wild gesture,
as fast as possible

90

Vc.

sfz *mf* *ff* *sfz* *mf* *ff*

Pno.

sub. mp *ff* *sub. mp* *ff*

8^{vb}]

Red.

92

Vc.

molto vib. \longrightarrow senza vib.

sfz *ff* *mf*

Pno.

f *f* *p*

8^{vb}]

Red.

94

Vc.

con vib. \longrightarrow senza vib.

mp *f* *ff* *mf*

Pno.

f *p* *f* *p*

8^{vb}]

Red.

96 *con vib. port.* *rit.*

Vc. *f* 3 3

Pno. *f* 7 *p* 6 6 *f* 7 *p* 5 *rit.* 6 5

8^{vb} | 8^{vb} | 8^{vb} |

99 **A Tempo**

Vc. *ff* *mp* *fff*

Pno. *f* 3 3 3 3 3 3 *ff* 3

8^{vb} | 8^{vb} | 8^{vb} |

102

Vc. *f* *ff* *f* 3 3

Pno. *f* 3 3 3 *mf* 3 3 *f* 3

8^{vb} | 8^{vb} |

105

Vc. *ff* *f* *ff*

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

108

Vc. *mf* *ff* *mf* *f* *ff*

con vib.

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

111

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

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

114

Vc. *p* *mf* *f*

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

117 *poco rit.*

Vc. *s.p.* *m.s.t.* *p* *f* *p* *pp* *IV*

Pno. *p* *pp*

A Tempo

120

Vc. *ppp*

Pno. *pp*

16

123

Vc.

pp

Pno.

126

Vc.

Pno.

129

Vc.

pp

Pno.

132

Vc.

Ppp

Pno.

Ppp

135

Vc.

Pno.

rit.

138

Vc.

Pppp

Pno.

II. La Bataille de l'Argonne (1964)

Lontano

♩ = 84

141

Vc.

Pno.

pp

145

Vc.

Pno.

con rubato

f

s.p.

147

Vc.

Pno.

ord.

s.p.

pp

149

Vc.

Pno.

f

3

Ped.

152

Vc.

Pno.

p *sfz* *p*

s.p.

trm

3

Ped.

154

Vc.

Pno.

f *sub. p* *f*

punta d'arco

trm

20

155 *tr* *jeté*

Vc. *ff* *tr* *mp* *pizz.* *p* 3

Pno.

158 III

Vc. 3 5 7 7

Pno. *mp* 3 3 3

161

Vc. 5 3 3

Pno. 3 3 3

164 *ppp* *pp*

Vc.

Pno.

169 *arco* *f* *mf* *ff* *mf* *f* *mf*

Vc.

Pno.

171 *f* *mf* *f* *ff* *mf* *ff*

Vc.

Pno.

173

Vc.

Pno.

175

Vc.

mf \longleftarrow *ff* *mf* \longleftarrow *ff* *fff*

jeté

pizz.

Pno.

strike the strings up and down,
from fast to slow, random amount

pizz. (plectrum)



178

Vc.

fff \longleftarrow *mp*

sempre *pp*

Pno.

182

Vc. *pizz. (plectrum)* ↓ ↑ ↓ ↑ *fff* *mp* *fff* *mp*

Pno.

186

Vc. *pizz. (plectrum)* ↓ ↑ ↓ ↑ *fff* *mp*

Pno.

189

Vc. *pizz. (plectrum)* ↓ ↑ ↓ ↑ *fff* *mp* *pizz.* *p*

Pno. *mp*

192

Vc.

Pno.

197

Vc.

Pno.

ppp

pp

200

Vc.

Pno.

pppp

III. De Intrige (1890)

Pesante

♩ = 68

203

Vc.

Pno.

ff

arco. | arco. | arco. | arco. | arco. | arco. | arco. | simile

209

Vc.

Pno.

mp

215

Vc.

Pno.

pp

p

espressivo
arco, flautando

26

Vc. 220

p

Pno.

Vc. 226 ord.

pp *p* *mp*

Pno.

Vc. 232

mf *p*

Pno. *mp* *p*

236

Vc.

Pno.

mp

mf

239

Vc.

Pno.

mf

f

6

242

Vc.

Pno.

f

ff

6

244

Vc.

ff

Pno.

246

Vc.

Pno.

248


Vc.

Pno.

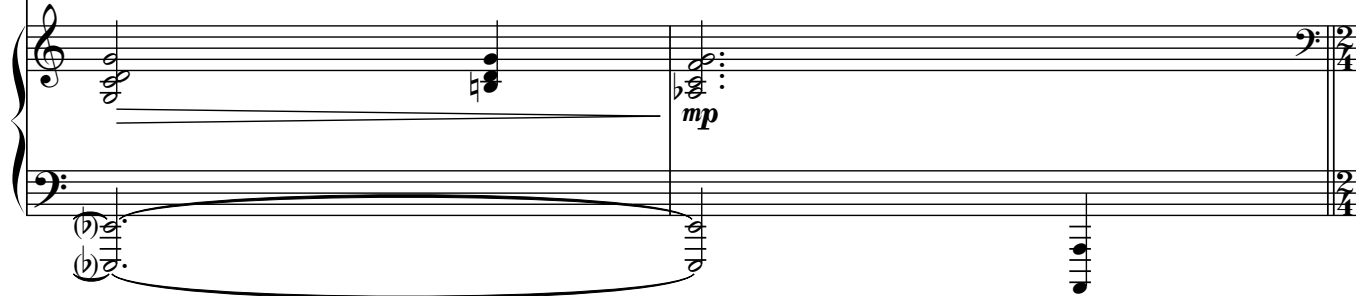
poco accel.

250

Vc.



Pno.



mp

Agitato

♩ = 84

252

Vc.



Pno.



f *mf* *f*

255

Vc.

pizz.



f *sfz* *ff*

col legno

Pno.



sub. p *sub. mf*

30

258

Vc.

arco

III II I

p

Pno.

f

sub. p

261

Vc.

IV III II

Pno.

f

p

f

264

Vc.

ff

sub. mf

Pno.

ff

267

Vc. *p*

Pno. *mp* *f* *sub. p*

II I

31

269

Vc. *f* *pizz.*

Pno.

IV III II

272

Vc. *sfz* *ff* *col legno*

Pno. *sub. mf* *f* *p*

6

275 arco

Vc. *mp* *mf* *mp* *mf* *mp* *mf* *mf*

Pno. *mf* *p* *mf* *p* *mf* *p* *mf* *p*

278

Vc. *p* *f* *p* *f*

Pno. *mf* *p*

280

Vc. *f* pizz.

Pno. *ff* *f*

8th

283

Vc.

Pno.

ff

ff

(8)

286

Vc.

Pno.

ff

mp

289

Vc.

Pno.

ff

ff ∇ *mp*

ff *mp*

8vb

col legno

292

Vc.

ff \rightrightarrows *mp* *f*

Pno.

(8)

pizz.

295

Vc.

f

ff

Pno.

f

(8)

298

Vc.

ff

Pno.

ff

Red.

8vb

col legno

pizz.

301

Vc. *f* *ff* *mp*

Pno. *mp*

(8)

304

Vc. *ff* *mp*

Pno. *f* *fz*

(8)

arco

307

Vc. *f*

Pno. *mf*

(8)

309

Vc.

Pno.

f

6

6

311

Vc.

Pno.

p

p

3

3

3

3

3

rit.

s.t.

8^{vb}

♩ = 68

○ circular bowing

313 punta d'arco, almost no bow pressure

Vc.

Pno.

ppp

p

ppp

IV (o) III IV (o) III (o)

Vc. *pp* *ppp*

Pno.

(8)

rit. III (o)

Vc. *p* *pp* *ppp*

Pno. *pp*

(8)

Mesto ♩ = 42 espressivo

Vc. *p*

Pno. *p*

Red. simile Red.

324

Vc.

mp

Pno.

mp

329

Vc.

p *mp* *mf* *p*

molto accel.

Pno.

p *mp* *mf* *p*

335

Vc.

ff

Pno.

ff

♩ = 68

accel.

A Tempo

accel.

39

Vc. 341

sempre ff

3 6 3 6

Pno.

7

Red.

A Tempo

accel.

A Tempo

accel.

Vc. 343

3 6 3 6

Pno.

7

Red.

A Tempo

accel.

A Tempo

accel.

rit.

Vc. 345

3 6 3

Pno.

7

Red.

40 **Maestoso**

♩ = 84

347 *molto espressivo* port.

Vc. *sempre ff*

Pno. *f*

349

Vc.

Pno.

8^{vb}

351

Vc. *f*

Pno.

353

Vc. *ff*

Pno.

355

Vc.

Pno.

357

Vc.

Pno.

359 rit.

♩ = 68

accel.

mp poco a poco cresc.

Vc.

Pno.

Violin (Vc.) part: A single note with a fermata.

Piano (Pno.) part: Sixteenth-note runs with triplets and sextuplets. Dynamics include *mp* and *poco a poco cresc.*

361

Vc.

Pno.

Violin (Vc.) part: Sixteenth-note runs with sextuplets.

Piano (Pno.) part: Sixteenth-note runs with sextuplets.

363

rit.

Vc.

Pno.

Violin (Vc.) part: Sixteenth-note runs with sextuplets. Dynamics include *ff* and *fff*.

Piano (Pno.) part: Sixteenth-note runs with sextuplets. Dynamics include *f*.

Finale

365 ♩ = 68

Vc. *f* *fff* *f* *fff*

Pno. *ff*

367 (tr) *f* *fff* *ff* *fff*

Pno. *ff*

369 (tr) *fff*

wide vib. (oscillations)

Pno. *fff*

44

poco accel. rit.

Vc. 371

Pno.

♩ = 84 poco accel.

Vc. 373

Pno.

A Tempo

Vc. 375

Pno.