För levande och döda

A Dissertation Presented

by

Ellen Sherry Lindquist

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in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements

for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Music

(Composition)

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The Graduate School

Ellen Sherry Lindquist

We, the dissertation committee for the above candidate for the Doctor of Philosophy degree, hereby recommend acceptance of this dissertation.

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This dissertation is accepted by the Graduate School.

Lawrence Martin
Dean of the Graduate School
Abstract of the Dissertation

**För levande och döda**

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2008

För levande och döda (For the Living and the Dead) is a set of five pieces for soprano, bass, and chamber orchestra based on texts of contemporary Swedish poet Tomas Tranströmer; the title is taken from his 1989 collection of the same name. The chamber orchestra consists of flute/alto flute, oboe/English horn, clarinet, bass clarinet, French horn, trombone, harp, piano, percussion, violin, cello, and double bass. Some pieces use the full ensemble, while others focus on smaller combinations of instruments and voices.

The five poems, which span the years 1973-1989, are Madrigal, Längre in, Eldklotter, Minnena ser mig, and Romanska Bågar. The poems and their settings represent vastly different emotional spaces, although common themes wend their way through both Tranströmer’s work and my music. Most apparent is his focus on dualities, through which he explores the spaces between real and unreal worlds, between conscious and dream states. Some settings use only the original Swedish, while others mix the original with Robin Fulton’s English translation (with permission).

För levande och döda is a concert suite of works derived from a theatrical work by the same name, which I am developing together with a full creative team of director, choreographer, set/costume designer, and lighting designer. Using a unique improvisational workshop environment, the raw musical material for this set of compositions has come in part from the players themselves. The initial workshop was held at Stony Brook University in January 2006; since then, twice the entire ensemble of 20 artists (15 musicians plus the creative team) has met to work together: at the Gateway Theatre on Long Island in January 2007, and at Engsö Castle in Sweden in June 2007. During these weeklong workshops we used a feedback process. The director, the choreographer, and I designed improvisational exercises stemming both from the poetry and from our structural ideas for the overall piece. All sessions were recorded in audio and video formats; I used ideas inspired by the recorded material in the generation of new music for the subsequent workshop, and of course for the development of the finished piece.
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FÖR LEVANDE OCH DÖDA
(FOR THE LIVING AND THE DEAD)
FIVE SONGS WITH CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

POETRY BY
TOMAS TRANSTRÖMER

MUSIC BY
ELLEN LINDQUIST

ENSEMBLE:
SOPRANO VOCALIST
BASS VOCALIST
FLUTE/ALTO FLUTE
OBUE/ENGLISH HORN
CLARINET
BASS CLARINET
FRENCH HORN
TROMBONE
HARP
PIANO
PERCUSSION
VIOLIN
VIOLONCELLO
CONTRABASS

SCORE IS IN C

FÖR LEVANDE OCH DÖDA

I. MADRIGAL
CA. 7 MIN.

II. LÄNGRE IN (FURTHER IN)
CA. 6 MIN.

III. ELDKLOTTER (FIRE-JOTTINGS)
CA. 10 MIN.

IV. MINNENA SER MIG (MEMORIES LOOK AT ME)
CA. 5 MIN.

V. ROMANESKA BÄGAR (ROMANESQUE ARCHES)
CA. 11 MIN.

TOTAL DURATION:
CA. 39 MIN.

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V
I. MADRIGAL


II. LÅNGRE IN


III. ELDKLOTTER

Under de dystra månaderna gnistrade mitt liv till bara när jag älskade med dig. Som elflugan tänds och locknar, tänds och locknar — glimtvis kan man följa dess väg i nattmörkret mellan olivträden.


III. FIRE-JOTTINGS

Throughout the dismal months my life sparkled alive only when I made love with you. As the firefly ignites and fades out, ignites and fades out — in glimpses we can trace it’s flight in the dark among the olive trees.

Throughout the dismal months the soul lay shrunken, lifeless, but the body went straight to you. The night sky bellowed. Stealthily we milked the cosmos and survived.
IV. MINNENA SER MIG

En junimorgon då det är för tidigt
att vakna men för sent att somna om.

Jag måste ut i grönskan som är fullsatt
av minnen, och de följer mig med blicken.

De syns inte, de småler helt ihop
med bakgrunden, perfekta kameleonter.

De är så nära att jag hör dem andas
fast fågelsången är bedövande.

V. ROMANSKA BÅGAR

Inne i den väldiga romanska kyrkan trängdes turisterna i halvmörkret.
Valv gapande bakom valv och ingen överblick.
Några ljuslägor fladdrade.

En ängel utan ansikte omfamnade mig
och vissade genom hela kroppen:
"Skäms inte för att du är människa, var stolt!
Inne i dig öppnar sig valv bakom valv oändligt.
Du blir aldrig färdig, och det är som det skall!"

Jag var blind av tårar
och föstes ut på den solsjudande piazzan
tillsammans med Mr och Mrs Jones, Herr Tanaka och Signora Sabatini
och inne i dem alla öppnade sig valv bakom valv oändligt.

V. ROMANESQUE ARCHES

Inside the huge romanesque church the tourists jostled in the half darkness.
Vault gaped behind vault, no complete view.
A few candle flames flickered.
An angel with no face embraced me
and whispered through my whole body:
“Don’t be ashamed of being human, be proud!
Inside you vault opens behind vault endlessly.
You will never be complete, that’s how it’s meant to be.”

Blind with tears
I was pushed out on the sun-seething piazza
together with Mr. and Mrs. Jones, Herr Tanaka, and Signora Sabatini,
and inside each of them vault opened behind vault endlessly.

All poems are used with permission from Tomas Tranströmer and his publisher, Albert Bonniers Förlag AB. All English translations are by Robin Fulton, and are used with his permission. The dates of each poem are listed below.

Madrigal and Romanska bågar, 1989
Eldklotter and Minnena ser mig, 1983
Längre in, 1973
Notes

Percussion:
Five-octave marimba
Vibraphone
Crotales
Gong
Woodblock
Bass Drum
Bass bow for vibraphone, crotales, and gong

Accidentals:
Each occurrence of a note with an accidental is printed with the accidental, even when found more than once within the same measure, unless repeated consecutively. If the affected note is used non-consecutively more than twice in the same measure, it is marked with the accidental in parentheses to indicate that the accidental holds through the entire measure.

Harp:
Pedal diagrams are used in the score. In addition, the names of the specific pedals being changed are indicated below the diagram.

Transpositions:
This score is in C. All instruments are notated at pitch with the exception of contrabass, which sounds one octave lower than written, and crotales, which sound two octaves higher.

Notes for individual movements:
1. Madrigal
Much of Madrigal is built on a “background” tapestry of freely repeating gestures, over which is laid a “foreground” texture (metered and in a specific tempo). Sometimes an instrument that is part of the background is asked to join the foreground. (This will be well-cued in the parts.) In the score, the wavy line indicating repetition of a background texture usually runs through the measure(s) in the foreground texture; players need not do both at once, but should rather take whatever time is necessary out of the background texture to prepare for the foreground gesture, then return to the background texture as soon as the gesture is complete.

II. Längre in
Madrigal moves attaca into Längre in. As individual instruments interact in Madrigal, so groups of instruments interact later in Längre in, beginning at rehearsal letter F. By rehearsal letter I, four groups of 2 or 3 instruments each work as individual units. It is desirable that, while the members of a group remain locked together in their repeated gesture, the tempo of each group diverges slightly (both from the foreground and from the other groups) as each group finds its natural tempo. This forms a texture of compound gestures, which is background to the metered foreground material.

After rehearsal letter J, there is an indication to “gradually lengthen the time between group gestures”. It means exactly that: without changing the tempo of the gesture itself, the time between the occurrences of the gesture should increase. This thins the overall texture without changing the energy of each gesture.

As in Madrigal, for foreground in-time events notated concurrently with the wavy lines of repeated material, players should simply leave the background texture, play the foreground gestures, then re-enter (with group, of course) background texture.

III. Eldklotter
A central element in this movement is the drone, which consists of harp, contrabass, and often cello. I think of it as a “living” drone: while staying true to the character of its role as a drone, there is improvisational flexibility for the players to create interesting timbres, changes in dynamics, and shifts in intensity. Thanks to Felix Pastór for his explanation of the overtone tremolo on the contrabass (see note on first page of Eldklotter).
IV. MINNENA SER MIG

An important element of Minnena is also a “living” drone, this time for 4-hands piano in the upper registers. Within the tremolo, plenty of variation is encouraged. The indication to for the violin to “follow” the soprano at rehearsal A is quite free—the violinist is free to interpret the soprano’s line and “follow” it in any way s/he chooses, beginning and ending on the pitches indicated. Close following is most effective.

In Minnena, there is a gradual layering of textures in different tempi. There is a single tempo for the 4-hands piano texture at the opening; when the soprano and violin enter in a new tempo at rehearsal A, they become foreground, moving the piano texture to the background. Just after rehearsal B, the fl./ob./cl. trio enters at yet another tempo, although this texture (as well as that of the hn/trbn., bass cl., and vc./cb. groups which enter shortly afterward) remains always a background texture.

There are times when the piano plays a gesture (quarter note = 120) which intersects with the foreground texture (quarter note = 56). The first time this occurs is in m. 28; in the right hand of the piano primo part there is a small box around a gesture which is marked quarter note = 120. Time is flowing according to the foreground texture (quarter note = 56); the starting point for the material in the box begins in time with the foreground texture, although the gesture itself is played at quarter note = 120. In other words, the starting points for material in boxes are locked into the foreground tempo, while the gestures themselves are played at the tempo indicated.

V. ROMANSKA BÅGAR

In m. 70, Romanska Bågar makes use of the “tempo in a box” described in Minnena. Romanska Bågar also includes one section which creates the background tapestry which opens Madrigal, in m. 103.

MEMBERS OF THE ENSEMBLE:

KATHLEEN FLYNN, SOPRANO VOCALIST (CANADA)
MICHAEL DOUGLAS JONES, BASS VOCALIST (USA)
MALIN TRÄST, FLUTE/ALTO FLUTE (SWEDEN)
LAURA KARNEY, OBOE/ENGLISH HORN (USA)
ROBERT EK, CLARINET/BASS CLARINET (SWEDEN)
CHRISTA VANALSTINE, CLARINET (CANADA)
ANGELA WILMOT, FRENCH HORN (USA)
BENJAMIN LANZ, TROMBONE (USA)
NICOLAS TULLIEZ, HARP (FRANCE)
LAURA BÄRGER, PIANO (USA)
STAFFAN SANDSTRÖM, PIANO (SWEDEN)
MICHAEL McCURDY, PERCUSSION (USA)
AARON PACKARD, VIOLIN (USA)
WILL MARTINA, CELLO (AUSTRALIA)
FELIX PASTOR, CONTRABASS (SPAIN)
Acknowledgements

Michael Douglas Jones, for introducing me to Tomas Tanströmer’s magical poetry in 2000, and for asking me to set it for him in the form of a song cycle for bass and piano. Most importantly, for inspiring me to stretch myself and explore new artistic territory and new ways of making work.

Companion Star, Inc., for organizing and funding the workshop sessions in January 2006 (Stony Brook University), January 2007 (The Gateway Theatre, Bellport, Long Island), June 2007 (Engsö Castle, Sweden), and January 2008 (Bellport, Long Island), which have made it possible to explore and develop an effective way of creating material using improvisation, feedback, and equal artist involvement.

The musicians in the ensemble, for their openness to exploring new ways of creating work, their ideas, their dedication, their enthusiasm, and their beautiful musicianship. I have learned much from them.

The American Music Center, for granting me funding through the Composer Assistance Fund to help pay for music preparation costs for the work-in-progress performance of För levande och döda at Engsö Castle in Sweden on June 15, 2007.

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Tomas och Monica Tranströmer, for their support of this project, and for their generous involvement in the process of its development.

Daniel Weymouth, my advisor for the past four years, and an inspiration, both musical and philosophical.

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Kathleen Flynn, for asking if she could play too.

Henny Linn Kjellberg and Staffan Sandström, my Swedish partners in this project from its beginnings.

Anton, for taking me sailing in Denmark.

My family, for their constant support and love.
FÖR LEVANDE OCH DÖDA
BASED ON FIVE POEMS BY TOMAS TRANSTRÖMER
MUSIC BY
ELLEN LINDQUIST
SCORE IS IN C

I. MADRIGAL

LIVELY, GENTLE, GREEN

ALTO FLUTE

CLARINET 1

VIOLIN

HP

PNO (INSIDE)

PERC. Vibes/Marimba: introduce gradually, but then play in any order

VN

VC.

CB.

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Soprano (Sop.)
Bass
Alto Flute (Alto Fl.)
Clarinet 1 (Cl. 1)
Clarinet 2/Bass Clarinet (Cl. 2/Bass Cl.)
Harmonium (HP)
Piano (Pno)
Piano (Inside)
Percussion (Perc.)
Violin (Vn)
Cello (VC)
Continuo (CB)

Madrigal • Lindquist
Instrumentalists other than percussion and clarinet 2 divide into two roughly equal sections. Group 1 responds in Swedish to Cl. 1, Group 2 in English to the percussionist. Languages other than Swedish and English may be used as well. Each individual "responds" in a softer voice than the leader, and using a repeated word, two words, even the whole phrase. Repeat until speaker begins the next phrase, although there is never a need to cut a phrase short; overlap here is fine. At end, diminuendo to piano during soprano's line "På samma sätt finns någonstans".
The most serious crimes will remain unsolved.
Madrigal • Lindquist

**SOP.**

**BASS**

**ALTO**
**(spoken text)**

**FL.**
**(spoken text)**

**CL. I**

**CL. II/BASS CL.**

**HP**
**(spoken text)**

**PNO**
**(spoken text)**

**PNO (INSIDE)**
**(RHY)**

**PERC.**

**VN**
**(spoken text)**

**VC.**
**(spoken text)**

**CB.**
**(spoken text)**

in spite of the efforts of many police-men.
Pa samma ställ finns någon stora i våra liv en stor.
madrigal lindquist

sop. mf
gir jag en annan slog den lugna.

bass mf
gir jag en annan slog den lugna.

alto

fl.

cl. 1

cl. 2/ bass cl. mf

hp

pno mf

pno (inside)

perc. mf

vn

vc.

cb.
improvise freely, any order

inside piano.
II. LÄNGRE IN
(FURTHER IN)

- Alto Flute
- Oboe/English Horn
- Clarinet 1
- Bass Clarinet
- Horn
- Trombone
- Harp
- Piano
- Inside Piano
- Percussion
- Violin
- Cello
- Bass

slowing...
Den är en trög dröka som glittrar
Jag är en av de klara fjäll.

Den är ett kärt ljust gyllinge
Jag är en av de klara fjäll.
SLIGHTLY FASTER

\above \text{Slightly faster}

35

\above \text{Alto Fl.}

\above \text{Ob./Eng. Hn}

\above \text{Cl. 1}

\above \text{Bass Cl.}

\above \text{Hn}

\above \text{Trbn.}

\above \text{Pno}

\above \text{Inside Pno}

\above \text{Perc.}

\above \text{Vn}

"X=damp string"
Keep tempo together within group, but allow group tempo to diverge from singer and all other instrumental groups.
gradually lengthen time between group events

gradually lengthen time between group events

gradually lengthen time between group events

gradually lengthen time between group events

gradually lengthen time between group events

gradually lengthen time between group events

gradually lengthen time between group events

gradually lengthen time between group events

gradually lengthen time between group events

gradually lengthen time between group events

gradually lengthen time between group events
III. ELDKLOTTER
(FIRE-JOTTINGS)

NOTE FOR BASS AND CELLO: Vary drone occasionally by playing overtone tremolo. The diamond-shaped notehead indicates the location of the node to be fingered. (Considering that the effectiveness of some harmonics is unpredictable, in case the given pitch does not sound performers should simulate the effect by bowing the notated pitch sul ponticello.) A more interesting overtone series can be produced by moving the bow slightly up and down the strings.
SOP.

CL. 2

HP

PERC.

VC.

CB.

see m. 4 for note about overtone tremolo
My life sparkled on by when...

my life sparkled on by when

My life sparkled on by when

my life sparkled on by when

My life sparkled on by when

my life sparkled on by when

My life sparkled on by when

my life sparkled on by when

My life sparkled on by when

my life sparkled on by when

My life sparkled on by when

my life sparkled on by when

My life sparkled on by when

my life sparkled on by when

My life sparkled on by when

my life sparkled on by when

My life sparkled on by when

my life sparkled on by when

My life sparkled on by when

my life sparkled on by when
spar-kled on-ly when I made love with you.

*poco più mosso*

spar-kled on-ly when I made love with you.

*my life spar-kled*
Vibes
partly damped, hard mallets

Vibes
bowed
As the fire ignites, fades out

As the fire ignites, fades out
BASS
\[ p \]
\[ \text{fades out} \]
\[ \text{in} \]

HP
\[ p \]
\[ \text{mp} \]
\[ \text{pp} \]

PERC.
\[ \text{Vibes partially damped, hard mallets} \]
\[ \text{n} \]
\[ \text{mp} \]

VN
\[ \text{mp} \]
\[ \text{nf} \]
\[ \text{n} \]

VC.
\[ p \]
\[ \text{mp} \]
\[ \text{n} \]

CB.
\[ \text{mp} \]
\[ \text{n} \]

Glimpses we can trace in flight in the
release E pedal up slightly to create an intense buzzing vibration (indicated by wavy line).

To avoid an intense buzzing vibration, release E pedal up slightly.

Gradual pedal glissando with buzzing.

Gradual pedal glissando with buzzing.

Through-out the dis-mal months.

The real lay shrun-ken life-less.

Gradual pedal glissando with buzzing.

Gradual pedal glissando with buzzing.

More box presence.

Gradual pedal glissando with buzzing.
Throughout the dismal months

the soul lay shrunken

life less

the soul lay shrunken

life less

life less

life less

life less
Throughout the dismal months, the soul

rit.}

\(\ldots\)
move on these pitches:
short, quick gestures

soul
lay
shrunken:
life
less,

soul
lay
shrunken:
life
less,

slow --> fast

but
The
night
sky

body went straight to you.

moving in these pitches:
short, quick gestures

poco piu mosso

rit.

accel.

beloved, The night sky beloved,
Soprano: poco più mosso

(Notation and musical expressions are shown in the image.)

Eldeklotter - Lindquist

Page 62
IV. MINNENA SER MIG
(MEMORIES LOOK AT ME)

Tremoli should be fast and furious, with some variation, i.e. quick trem. bursts.

NOTE:
Tremoli should be fast and furious, with some variation, i.e. quick trem. bursts.
Walk to different location offstage, as far as easily possible from floor.

Ah...

Follow soprano...

Follow soprano...
Crotales

bowed

~

follow violin...

~

morbide

~

harm. gliss.

~

follow violin...

~

harm. gliss.

~

irregular, varying in length along the string and can be irregular, varying in length and range.
Enter in time. As long as the group entrances are together, the temps of each group may diverge from that of the others.

**NOTE FOR BREATHING TEXTURES:**

- (load out-breath sound through instrument)
- (load out-breath sound through instrument)
- (load out-breath sound through instrument)
V. ROMANSKA BÅGAR
(ROMANESQUE ARCHES)

FLUTE/ALTO FLUTE

OBEO

CLARINET 1

CLARINET 2

HARP

PIANO PRIMO

PIANO SECONDO

PERC.

VIOLIN

CELLO

BASS

SPACIOUS AND STILL

Flute/Alto Flute

Oboe

Clarinet 1

Clarinet 2

Harp

Piano Primo

Piano Secondo

Perc.

Violin

Cello

Bass

(p pedal unless otherwise indicated)

(V. Romanska Bågar)
Alto Fl.
Vibes/Marimba
Hovering, Green

Alto Flute

\( \text{pizz.} \)

Vibes/Marimba
Introductively, then play in any order

\( \text{pizz.} \)

Vibes/Marimba
Introductively, then play in any order

\( \text{pizz.} \)
4. tempo: slowing tempo gradually (mezzo only)

Sing once through, in order, phrases 1, 2, 3.
Note:
Sing once through, in order, phrases 1, 2, 3.

CUE: mezzo: "Herr Tanaka, Herr Tanaka, Herr Tanaka, och cement Schmitt" - sam sam
CUE: long harp gliss. down; interrupt!

end during piano's rolled chord
FL./
ALTO FL.

CL. 1

CL. 2

HP

PNO

PERC.

VN

VC.

CB.

rit.

January 2006-March 2008

Mount Sinai, New York

Ängsö Island, Sweden

Someren, the Netherlands

Dalton Mountain, New Hampshire

Easton, Connecticut
Bibliography

All poems and translations have been taken from the following two volumes of Tranströmer’s work, the first in Swedish and the second in English: