

*Spinning Silence
in the Possible Blue*

for String Quartet

by Jon Christopher Nelson

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Spinning Silence in the Possible Blue (2016, dur. circa 10:00”) was written for the Lydian String Quartet. The work is inspired by flocking birds, using both images of flocks and flocking algorithms as a means of creating fundamental temporal and registral materials. The musical surface imitates flocking behavior by using gestures that imitate one another while never precisely replicating behavior, creating a dense and active counterpoint. Similarly, images of flocks of birds provide the structural underpinnings of the composition. Though the resultant score is not *augenmusik*, it does represent a sonification of visual information. In some cases, this sonification is achieved through “transcribing” visual images while in other instances the visual images provide time and pitch constraints for a flocking algorithm. Indeed, an alternate score could consist of the series of images that provided the impetus for the work.

Jon Christopher Nelson (b. 1960) is currently a Professor at the University of North Texas where he serves as an associate of CEMI (Center for Experimental Music and Intermedia) and also the Associate Dean for Operations. Nelson’s electroacoustic music compositions have been performed widely throughout the United States, Europe, Asia, and Latin America. He has been honored with numerous awards including fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Fulbright Commission. He is the recipient of Luigi Russolo and Bourges Prizes (including the Euphonies d'Or prize) and recently was recognized as the recipient of the International Computer Music Association's 2012 Americas Regional Award. In addition to his electro-acoustic works, Nelson has composed a variety of acoustic compositions that have been performed by ensembles such as the New World Symphony, the Memphis Symphony, the Brazos Valley Symphony Orchestra, ALEA III, and others. He has composed in residence at Sweden's national Electronic Music Studios, the Visby International Composers Center and at IMEB in Bourges, France. His works can be heard on the Bourges, Russolo Pratella, Innova, CDCM, NEUMA, ICMC, and SEAMUS labels.

Notes for the performers: As per the program note above, the counterpoint in this work is imitative but almost never includes any direct repetition. In every instance, there are minor changes and differences and the resultant counterpoint almost never results in tutti sections. Though the resultant rhythms tend toward complexity, some flexibility is intended in performance. Many of the lines are intended to be fluid while avoiding tutti attacks. The score follows standard principles regarding the treatment of accidentals in that they apply only in their specific register throughout the measure.

Spinning Silence in the Possible Blue

Jon Christopher Nelson
approximate duration 10:00-12:00

A

♩ = 120 ♩ = 76

Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Cello

B

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

C

17

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

mf

mf

mf

p sul pont.

21

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

f *mf*

f *mf*

mp

f *mf*

mp *mf*

mf *f* *mf*

ord.

mf *f* *mf*

sul pont.

24

Vln. I *fp* *mf* *f* *mp*

Vln. II *fp* *mf* *f* *mf*

Vla. *f* *mp* *mf*

Vc. *p* *mf* *mp*

(b) (b) (b) (b)

ord. ord. ord.

sul pont. sul pont. sul pont.

3 5 6 6 6

27

Vln. I *f* *mp* *mf* *f* *mf*

Vln. II *f* *p* *f* *mf* *f*

Vla. *f* *f* *mf* *f*

Vc. *sfz* *mp* *f* *f* *f*

pizz. arco

ord. arco

arco sul pont. pizz.

(D)

(o.) (o.) (o.)

3 3 3 3 3

30

Vln. I *mf* *f* *f* *fp* *f*

Vln. II *mf* *f* *fp* *f*

Vla. *pizz.* *arco* *pizz.* *arco* *sul pont.*

Vc. *pizz.* *mf* *sfz* *mf* *f* *mf*

33

Vln. I *mp* *f*

Vln. II *mp* *f*

Vla. *pizz.* *arco* *sul pont.* *pizz.* *arco*

Vc. *p* *mp* *arco*

jete *ord.* *ord.* *pizz.* *arco*

36

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

f

f

f

f

ff

pizz.

arco

F

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

p

p

p

p

mf

mf

mf

mf

mp

mp

mf

mf

mf

mf

42

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

f

p

ord.

sul pont.

f

p

ord.

sul pont.

f

mp

ord.

sul tasto

p

sul pont.

mp

pizz.

sfz

poco accel.

45

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

p

mp

mf

f

ff

p

mp

mf

f

ff

ord.

mp

mf

f

ff

arco

p

mp

mf

f

ff

strepitoso
pizz.

Vln. I *fff* 3 5 arco pizz. *ff*

Vln. II *fff* pizz. 3 arco pizz. *ff* *sffz* *ff*

Vla. *fff* pizz. *sffz* 3 arco pizz. arco *f* *ff* *sffz* *ff* arco *fff*

Vc. *fff* 3 pizz. *sffz* 5 *sfz* arco 3 pizz. *sfz* *ff* *sffz*

51

Vln. I arco pizz. *fff* *ff* *fff* *ff*

Vln. II arco pizz. *fff* *ff* *sffz* *f*

Vla. pizz. *f* *ff* arco pizz. *f* *sffz* *f*

Vc. *sffz* *sfz* *fff* *mf* *sffz* *sfz* *f*

54

Vln. I *f* *mf* *mp* *ff* *sfz* *mf*

Vln. II *mf* *sfz* *mf* *mp* *ff* *sfz* *mf*

Vla. *mf* *mf* *sfz* *mp* *ff* *sfz* *mf*

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

arco pizz. arco pizz. arco pizz. arco pizz.

I

Vln. I *p* *mf* *f*

Vln. II *p* *mf* *f*

Vla. *p* *mf* *f*

Vc. *mf*

arco

rhapsodic

$\text{♩} = 76$

62

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

J

mf

f

mf

ff

f

mf

pizz.

sfz

arco

ff

f

66

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

ff

mf

f

mf

f

ff

f

ff

f

ff

pizz.

arco

mf

69 K

Vln. I *ff* pizz.

Vln. II *ff* pizz. arco

Vla. *f* pizz. arco

Vc. *f* pizz. *ff* agitato arco

72

Vln. I *f* arco

Vln. II *sfz* arco *f* pizz. arco

Vla. *f* arco

Vc. *mp* *mf* *f*

75

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

pizz.

arco

78

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

ff

ff

ff

L

Vln. I *leggiere* *mp* 3 7 7 6 3

Vln. II *leggiere* *mp* 5 6 7 7 7

Vla. *leggiere* *mp* 3 6 5 5 *espress.* *mf* 3

Vc. *pizz.* *sfz* *arco sul pont. leggiere* *mp* 3 3

83

Vln. I *f* *mp* 3 7 7 7 7

Vln. II 5 7 3 6 3 6

Vla. *f* *mp* *leggiere* 6 5 5 3 *espress.* *mf* 3 *leggiere* *mp*

Vc. *f* *mf* *pizz.* 5 3

85 *espress.* *leggiere* **M**

Vln. I *mf* *mp* *ppp*

Vln. II *mf* *mp* *ppp* *dolce* *mp*

Vla. *espress.* *mf* *f* *ppp* *dolce* *mp*

Vc. *p* *sfz* *ff* *agitato* *arco*

89 *dolce* *mp* *mf* *mf* *f* *8va*

Vln. I *mp* *mf* *mf* *mf* *f*

Vln. II *mf* *mf* *mf* *mf* *f*

Vla. *mf* *mf* *mf* *mf* *mf*

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

94 (8va) N

Vln. I *pp* *mf* *agitato*

Vln. II *mp* *pp* *f* *fp*

Vla. *mp* *pp* *f* *fp*

Vc. *pp* *f* *fp*

97 dolce

Vln. I *fp* *mf* *mp* *pp*

Vln. II *f* *mp* *pp*

Vla. *mf* *f* *mp* *pizz.* *sfz*

Vc. *mf* *agitato* *f* *mp* *dolce*

poco accel.

102

O

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

p

mf mp

mf

f

arco

pp

p

mf mp

mf

f

poco rit.

108

P

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

ff

mp

p

pp

ff

mp

p

mp

mp

p

mp

114

Vln. I *p* *mp* *p*

Vln. II *mp* *p* *mp*

Vla. *espress.* *mf*

Vc. *con brio* *mf* *f* *ff*

119

Vln. I *pizz.* *mf* *arco* *espress.* *f*

Vln. II *pizz.* *arco* *espress.* *f* *ff*

Vla. *f*

Vc. *mf* *pizz.* *sfz*

123

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

ff

f

ff

ff

f

ff

arco espress.

Q

8va

127

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

molto espress.

molto espress.

molto espress.

molto espress.

ff

f

mf

R

132

Vln. I *mf* *f* *mf* *f*

Vln. II *mf* *f*

Vla. *mf*

Vc. *f* *f* *mf*

137

Vln. I *mf* *mp* *p* *mp*

Vln. II *mp* *p* *mp*

Vla. *mp* *p* *mp* *mf*

Vc. *mp* *p* *mp*

S calma *p* *mp*

calma *p* *mp*

calma dolce *mp* *mf*

calma *p* *mp*

143 *3*

Vln. I *mp* *leggiero* *poco accel.*

Vln. II *mp* *mf*

Vla. *f* *p*

Vc. *mf* *f* *p*

dolce *8va* *8va*

T

148

Vln. I *mp* *p* *pp* *8va*

Vln. II *mp* *p* *pp* *8va*

Vla. *pp* *8va* *leggiero*

Vc. *espress.* *pp* *mp*

U

poco rit. V ♩ = 60

Vln. I ¹⁵¹ (8va)

Vln. II (8va)

Vla. (8va)

Vc.

f *mf* *mp* *p*

||

Vln. I ¹⁵⁶ (8va)

Vln. II (8va)

Vla. (8va)

Vc.

pp *p* *pp*