

Wingspan

For String Sextet

2010/2017

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The title of this two-movement string sextet alludes to images from two of my favorite poems, Walt Whitman's "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry" and Hart Crane's *The Bridge*. The passages from which the images come describe two different crossings of the East River from Brooklyn to Manhattan, one via the ferry and the other via the famous bridge that replaced it. In each case the act of crossing is imaginative as well as physical; it symbolizes the blending of a multitude of sights and sounds into a coherent act of perception--a process that has increasingly come to interest me as a composer. In each case, too, the figure that embodies this possibility of this synthesis is a seagull on the wing: hence my title.

Crane's and Whitman's gulls embody two complementary versions of the flight of sensory fullness: for Crane the tracing of a curve in the air that echoes the curvature of the bridge and the curve of the earth, the other a hovering in place that gathers the lines of perception to itself. The first takes place at sunrise, the second at sunset.

The two movements of *Wingspan* (composed, respectively, in 2017 and 2010/17), evoke these crossings in the order of occurrence rather than of chronology: Crane precedes Whitman. The first movement (7 minutes), lively in tempo after a slow introduction, traces the way in which emergent events exceed the premises from which they arise. The slow second movement (14 minutes), essentially a set of variations, traces the way in which the implications of a single perception may be unraveled. It consists of eight 21-measure segments, to be played without pause, followed by an extended coda. Each segment (including the coda) is based on a single triad; the coda lifts passages from the preceding segments, transforms them, and weaves them into a single continuous utterance.

Here are the passages invoked by the titles of the individual movements ("Dip and Pivot," "Floating High"):

How many dawns, chill from his rippling rest
The seagull's wings shall dip and pivot him,
Shedding white rings of tumult, building high
Over the chained bay waters Liberty—

Crane, "To Brooklyn Bridge"

I too many and many a time cross'd the river of old,
Watched the Twelfth-month sea-gulls, saw them high in the air floating
with motionless wings, oscillating their bodies,
Saw how the glistening yellow lit up parts of their bodies and left the rest
in strong shadow,
Saw the slow-wheeling circles and the gradual edging toward the south.

Whitman, "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry"

Wingspan I: Dip and Pivot

♩ = 48

Violin I

Violin II

Viola I

Viola II

Cello I

Cello II

col leg. tratt.
wood + hair

pp

ppp
col leg. tratt.
wood + hair

ppp
Con sord.
sul tasto

ppp
Con sord.
sul tasto

ppp

pochiss.

pochiss.

7

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla. I

Vla. II

Vc. I

Vc. II

pp

ppp

ppp

piu

piu

ordin.

pp

pp
sul tasto
(normal bow)

pp
sul tasto
(normal bow)

ordin.

pp

pp

Wingspan

4
13

accel. poco a poco

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla. I

ordin.
p

ordin.
p

Vla. II

mp

pp

Vc. I

Mute off

Vc. II

Mute off

p

18

$\text{♩} = 84$

Vln. I

p

pp

p

Vln. II

Vla. I

p

Vla. II

pizz.

arco

Vc. I

3

3

p

pizz.

Vc. II

p

Wingspan

5

22

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla. I

Vla. II

Vc. I

Vc. II

p

mp

arco

26

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla. I

Vla. II

Vc. I

Vc. II

mp

p

p

mp

Wingspan

6
29

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla. I

Vla. II

Vc. I

Vc. II

mp

p

p

pizz.

p

34

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla. I

Vla. II

Vc. I

Vc. II

p

mp

p

pizz.

arco

p

pizz.

39

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla. I

Vla. II

Vc. I

Vc. II

mp

mp pizz.

arco

mf

mp

arco

mf

44

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla. I

Vla. II

Vc. I

Vc. II

p

cresc.

mf

p *cresc.*

mf

p

p

Wingspan

8
49

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla. I

Vla. II

Vc. I

Vc. II

mp

mp

pizz.

arco

mf

pizz.

53

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla. I

Vla. II

Vc. I

Vc. II

f

mf

mf

mf

mf

arco

p

p

p

Wingspan

9

57

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla. I

Vla. II

Vc. I

Vc. II

p

p

60

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla. I

Vla. II

Vc. I

Vc. II

mp

mp

Wingspan

10
63

Vln. I

mf

p

solo

rit.

Vln. II

p

Vla. I

mp

p

Vla. II

Vc. I

Vc. II

Wingspan

11

72

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla. I

Vla. II

Vc. I

Vc. II

75

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla. I

Vla. II

Vc. I

Vc. II

mf

p

rit.

mp

mf

p

mf

p

Wingspan

12
81

a tempo

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla. I

Vla. II

Vc. I

Vc. II

f

mf

f

mf

mf

mf

85

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla. I

Vla. II

Vc. I

Vc. II

sul tasto

ordin.

p

mf

p

mf

sf

mp

p

p

sf

p

ordin.

p

Wingspan

13

88

Vln. I

cresc. *sf* *sf* *cresc.* *f* *sf*

Vln. II

cresc. *sf* *sf* *cresc.* *f* *sf*

Vla. I

ff

Vla. II

cresc.

Vc. I

cresc.

Vc. II

cresc. *f*

91

Vln. I

f *sfz*

Vln. II

f *sfz*

Vla. I

f *arco*

Vla. II

f

Vc. I

f

Vc. II

Wingspan

Violins I and II, Violas I and II, and Violas I and II, measures 14-16. The score shows complex rhythmic patterns with triplets and accents, and dynamic markings like *ff* and *pizz.*

97 *rit.* *a tempo*

Vln. I *p* *mf* *cresc.*

Vln. II *p*

Vla. I *p*

Vla. II *p*

Vc. I *fp*

Vc. II *fp* *mf*

101

Vln. I *fp*

Vln. II

Vla. I *mf*

Vla. II *mf*

Vc. I

Vc. II *f*

106 *rit.*

Vln. I *mf*

Vln. II *mp*

Vla. I *mp*

Vla. II

Vc. I

Vc. II *p*

cresc.

p

p

mf

p

mf

Wingspan

17

[illegible]

125

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla. I

Vla. II

Vc. I

Vc. II

espress.

mf

p

espress.

mf

p

Wingspan II: Floating High

A

♩ = 60

Tempo is flexible. The movement should be played without pauses between segments.

Violin I

pp *smoothly*

Violin II

pp *smoothly*

Viola I

pp *smoothly*

Viola II

pp *smoothly*

Cello I

pp *smoothly*

Cello II

pp

pizz.

arco

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla. I

Vla. II

Vc. I

Vc. II

17

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla. I

Vla. II

Vc. I

Vc. II

B

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla. I

Vla. II

Vc. I

Vc. II

30

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla. I

Vla. II

Vc. I

Vc. II

p

37

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla. I

Vla. II

Vc. I

Vc. II

pp

p

pp

The musical score is for a piece titled "Wingspan". It consists of two systems of staves. The first system (measures 30-36) includes staves for Violin I, Violin II, Viola I, Viola II, Cello I, and Cello II. The key signature has three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat), and the time signature is 12/8. The Violin I part has a melodic line with a long note at measure 30 and a half-note rest at measure 31. The Violin II part has a more active line, ending with a half-note rest at measure 36. The Viola parts play a steady eighth-note pattern. The Cello parts have a more rhythmic line, with the Cello II part having a half-note rest at measure 31. The second system (measures 37-43) continues the same instrumentation. The Violin I part has a melodic line with a half-note rest at measure 37 and a half-note rest at measure 38. The Violin II part has a more active line, ending with a half-note rest at measure 43. The Viola parts play a steady eighth-note pattern. The Cello parts have a more rhythmic line, with the Cello II part having a half-note rest at measure 38. The score includes dynamic markings such as *p* (piano) and *pp* (pianissimo). The piece concludes with a final chord in measure 43.

[illegible]

58

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla. I

Vla. II

Vc. I

Vc. II

pp

pp

sul tasto

pp

sul tasto

pp

sul tasto

pp

pp

65

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla. I

Vla. II

Vc. I

Vc. II

sul tasto

ordin.

sul tasto

ordin.

ordin.

ordin.

ordin.

ordin.

pp

72

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla. I

Vla. II

Vc. I

Vc. II

fp

p

p

p

p

p

79

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla. I

Vla. II

Vc. I

Vc. II

pp

pp

pp

pp

pp

pp

pizz.

arco

p

mf

pp

Score for Wingspan, measures 91-98.

Measures 91-98:

- Vln. I:** Starts with a whole rest, then plays a half note G4, a half note A4, and a half note B4. Dynamics: *cresc.*, *mf*, *p*, *sf*.
- Vln. II:** Starts with a whole rest, then plays a half note G4, a half note A4, and a half note B4. Dynamics: *cresc.*, *mf*, *p*.
- Vla. I:** Starts with a half note G2, a half note A2, and a half note B2. Dynamics: *cresc.*, *mf*, *p*.
- Vla. II:** Starts with a half note G2, a half note A2, and a half note B2. Dynamics: *cresc.*, *mf*, *p*.
- Vc. I:** Starts with a half note G2, a half note A2, and a half note B2. Dynamics: *cresc.*, *mf*, *p*.
- Vc. II:** Starts with a half note G2, a half note A2, and a half note B2. Dynamics: *cresc.*, *mf*, *p*.

Measures 99-106:

- Vln. I:** Starts with a half note G4, a half note A4, and a half note B4. Dynamics: *sf*, *f*, *p*.
- Vln. II:** Starts with a half note G4, a half note A4, and a half note B4. Dynamics: *f*, *mp*, *p*.
- Vla. I:** Starts with a half note G2, a half note A2, and a half note B2. Dynamics: *f*, *p*.
- Vla. II:** Starts with a half note G2, a half note A2, and a half note B2. Dynamics: *f*, *p*.
- Vc. I:** Starts with a half note G2, a half note A2, and a half note B2. Dynamics: *f*, *p*.
- Vc. II:** Starts with a half note G2, a half note A2, and a half note B2. Dynamics: *f*, *p*.

99

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla. I

Vla. II

Vc. I

Vc. II

The image shows a musical score for six instruments: Violins I and II, Violas I and II, and Violas I and II. The score is written in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The measures are numbered 99 to 104. The Violin I part features a melodic line with a crescendo and decrescendo. The Violin II part provides a harmonic accompaniment. The Viola I and II parts have a more active role, with the Viola II part featuring a melodic line. The Violoncello I and II parts provide a steady bass line. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

[illegible]

111

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla. I

Vla. II

Vc. I

Vc. II

pizz.

pizz.

arco

p

pizz.

117

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla. I

Vla. II

Vc. I

Vc. II

arco

pp

pp

pp

pp

pp

p arco

pp

p

123

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla. I

Vla. II

Vc. I

Vc. II

pizz.

pp

arco

pp

G

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla. I

Vla. II

Vc. I

Vc. II

fp

fp

fp

fp

fp

fp

fp

fp

137

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla. I

Vla. II

Vc. I

Vc. II

cresc.

cresc.

cresc.

cresc.

cresc.

cresc.

144

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla. I

Vla. II

Vc. I

Vc. II

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

f **p** **pp**

f **p** **pp**

f **p** **pp**

f **p** **pp**

f **p** **pp**

H

151

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla. I

Vla. II

Vc. I

Vc. II

p

p

p

fp

fp

p

158

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla. I

Vla. II

Vc. I

Vc. II

pizz. arco

pizz. arco

Detailed description: This is a page of a musical score for a string quartet, titled 'Wingspan'. The page contains measures 151 through 158. The instrumentation consists of Violin I, Violin II, Viola I, Viola II, Violoncello I, and Violoncello II. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). Measures 151-157 are grouped together, and measure 158 is on a new line. In measures 151-157, the Violins and Violas play a melodic line with a crescendo leading to a piano (*p*) dynamic. The Violoncellos play a rhythmic pattern with a fortissimo-piano (*fp*) dynamic. In measure 158, the Violins and Violas continue their melodic line. The Viola II and Violoncello I parts include a section marked 'pizz.' (pizzicato) and 'arco' (arco). The Violoncello II part also includes a 'pizz.' marking. The page number '29' is in the top right corner.

I

[illegible]

177

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla. I

Vla. II

Vc. I

Vc. II

p

f

f

f

f

f

183

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla. I

Vla. II

Vc. I

Vc. II

p

mp

p

p

p

p

189

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla. I

Vla. II

Vc. I

Vc. II

p

p

p

pizz.

p

p

arco

194

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla. I

Vla. II

Vc. I

Vc. II

cresc.

cresc.

cresc.

cresc.

cresc.

cresc.

arco

200

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla. I

Vla. II

Vc. I

Vc. II

f

f

f

f

f

f

204

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla. I

Vla. II

Vc. I

Vc. II

fp

fp

fp

fp

fp

fp

pp

pp

pp

pp

pp

pp

allarg.

f