

Oliver Knussen

*Océan de Terre*

*for soprano and chamber ensemble*

Op. 10

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to Gunther Schuller



in gratitude and admiration.

*Océan de Terre* was written for the ensemble "Collage"  
who gave the first performance of the original version in Jordan Hall, Boston on 2nd February 1973,  
directed by Jerome Rosen with Joan Heller, soprano.


The revised version was first performed by the Fires of London,  
directed by Peter Maxwell Davies, with Mary Thomas, soprano,  
at a BBC Henry Wood Promenade Concert in the Round House on 26th July, 1976.

Duration approximately 12 minutes

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## INSTRUMENTATION

Soprano voice<sup>1</sup> 

Flute (doubling Alto Flute)

B $\flat$  Clarinet (doubling B $\flat$  Bass-clarinet)

Percussion (1 or 2 players):<sup>4</sup>

Vibraphone, Glockenspiel, Tubular Bells  
Suspended Cymbal, Smallish Gong, 2 Tam-tams (large and very large)  
Xylophone, Small Woodblock, Medium-size Temple Block<sup>3</sup>, Claves  
Whip, Maracas, 2 Small Tom-toms

Piano/Celesta<sup>2</sup> (1 or 2 players)  
(doubling extra Percussion: small Temple Block<sup>3</sup> and Maracas)

Violin

Violoncello

Doublebass

## PERFORMANCE NOTES

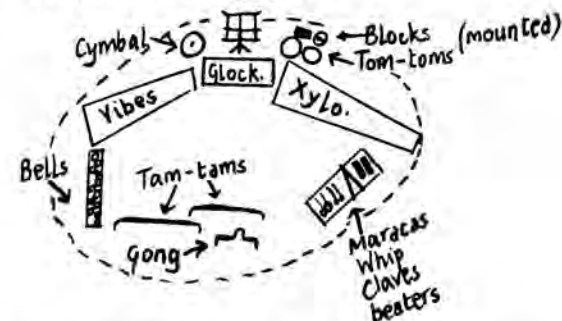
1. Metronome marks always indicate the *slowest* desirable tempo – e.g. at the  $\text{♩} = 50$  of (195),  $\text{♩} = 54$  would be quite acceptable, but  $\text{♩} = 46$  would not.
2. Throughout section I (bars ① – ⑤4), the slow progress of chords and sustained pitches underlying the music must be measured (as if inexorable). The rapid figuration which emerges from these sustained parts should be played with a degree of freedom, and not strait-jacketed to the beats.
3. Between ③7 and ④5 the melismatic melodies (indicated by  $\Gamma$   $\neg$ ) should have a “cool”, effortless quality. This should be carried over into the figuration of section II (bars ⑥8 – ①94).
4. At bar ①40, the pause should be as long as it takes for the atmosphere to clear, and the sustained B $\flat$  in the piano part to reach *p*.
5. At bar ①88, the pause should be just long enough to ensure that the resonances of the Tam-tam crash (which is the real resolution of the climax approached in bar ⑤4) do not completely cover the entrance of the soprano.

<sup>1</sup> The voice part, while essential, is not to be predominant: there are certain places (in the first section especially) where the ensemble will appear to be covering the voice, which should always be *audible*, but not necessarily given *soloistic* prominence.

<sup>2</sup> The Celesta should be amplified, if possible: a written *f* in the celesta should sound roughly equivalent to the *mp* of the other instruments.

<sup>3</sup> The percussionists Temple Block should be considerably larger than the Celesta player's block.

<sup>4</sup> Layout for Percussion if one player:



If the two-player option is taken, then the layout is ad lib.

## OCEAN DE TERRE

*A G. de Chirico*

J'ai bâti une maison au milieu de l'Océan  
Ses fenêtres sont les fleuves qui s'écoulent de mes yeux  
Des poulpes grouillent partout où se tiennent les murailles  
Entendez baatter leur triple cœur et leur bec cogner aux vitres  
    Maison humide  
    Maison ardente  
    Saison rapide  
    Saison qui chante  
    Les avions pondent des œufs  
    Attention on va jeter l'ancre  
Attention à l'encre que l'on jette  
Il serait bon que vous vinssiez du ciel  
Le chèvrefeuille du ciel grimpe  
Les poulpes terrestres palpitent  
Et puis nous sommes tant et tant à être nos propres fossoyeurs  
Pâles poulpes des vagues crayeuses ô poulpes aux becs pâles  
Autour de la maison il y a cet océan que tu connais  
Et qui ne se repose jamais

from "*Caligrammes*"  
Guillaume Apollinaire

## OCEAN OF EARTH

*To G. de Chirico*

I built a house in the middle of the ocean  
Its windows are rivers which flow out of my eyes  
Octopus stir all around its walls  
Listen to the triple beat of their hearts and their beaks  
    which tap on the window panes  
    Humid house  
    Burning house  
    Rapid season  
    Season which sings  
    Airplanes drop eggs  
    Watch out for the anchor  
Watch out for the ink which they squirt  
It's a good thing you came from the sky  
The honeysuckle of the sky climbs up  
The earthly octopus throb  
And then we are closer and closer to being our own gravediggers  
Pale octopus of chalky waves O octopus with pale beaks  
Around the house there is this ocean which you know  
And which is never still

from Guillaume Apollinaire, *SELECTED WRITINGS*.  
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# Océan de Terre

(Apollinaire)

OLIVER KNUSSEN

**I** *misurato* 156c.

alto-fl. (concert pitch)  
bs.-c. (concert pitch)  
perc.  
pno.  
vln.  
vlc.  
db.

**IMPORTANT RHYTHMIC UNISONS.**

ped. discreetly throughout this section, but keep harmonies clear.

Vibraphone MOTOR OFF!!

5

5

alt. fl. *pp* *pp* *pp* *ppp* *sfz*

bs-cl. *pp* *pp* *p* *ppp* *p* *pp*

perc. *p* *pp*

pno. *p* *p* *p* *pp*

vln.

vlc. *p* *pp* *p* *p* *pp*

db. *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *sfz*

(pochiss accel.)

Vibraphone *p*

Tam-tams

tr. *p* *pp*

ped.

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IMPORTANT RHYTHMIC UNISONS: