

# *The Witness*

*from*

# *Disappearances*

*duration ca. 7:00*

music by Christopher Coleman  
poem by Mary Ann Coleman

### ***The Witness***

Blood bruises my veins as I breathe  
this difficult element,  
A shell thin air curved around the world.  
My dresser gives back the simple wood  
surfacing gently from the dark.  
Dogwoods roll and boil  
in a generous breeze my open window captures.  
I turn to you, clothed in my smooth skin,  
and feel my breathing tighten;  
witness your face that will last in a pattern  
meshed in my brain when this furniture has fallen  
toward ruin.

-- *Mary Ann Coleman*

### **Program note**

*The Witness* is the central movement of a five song cycle based on poetry by my mother, Mary Ann Coleman. The poetry is all intensely personal. The outer songs, *Thoughts in a Jewelry Store* and *Descent*, are about family and heritage; the second and fourth, *After Seeing Lucia di Lammermoor* and *Focal Point*, concern my grandmother's mental illness, and, in the context of the other songs, provide a sense of foreboding for my mother and I. But this central song is a simple love poem from my mother to my father and it provides an oasis of calm in the midst of the surrounding trauma.

### **Instrumentation:**

Mezzo-soprano

Bb Clarinet

Violin

Cello

Piano\*

Percussion (1 player): bass drum, marimba, vibraphone\*\*, 3 suspended cymbals\*\*, tam-tam\*\*, chime (D), water chime (F)\*\*\*

### **Performance notes**

\* If possible, the piano is to be muted as noted in the score. The mute should be a windshield wiper ("squeegee") with a 14 inch rubber blade and a metal handle (as can be purchased at most hardware stores). The mute is to be placed on the strings as closely as possible to the keyboard. The page turner should be responsible for placing and removing the mute where indicated in the score, and from m. 67-75 the page turner should press down on the mute, applying heavy pressure and creating a more significant muted effect than elsewhere.

\*\* If *The Witness* is performed independently from the rest of the song cycle, it may be necessary to reduce the percussion, in which case the vibraphone part can be played on the marimba, and the three suspended cymbals and tam-tam played on only a single, large suspended cymbal.

\*\*\* The water chime effect is made by lowering the chime tube into a tub of water, thereby lowering the pitch.

The sizzle effect in m. 47 is created by holding the triangle beater vertically and loosely and striking the side of the edge of the cymbal so that beater and cymbal are perpendicular with one another; the beater will rattle against the cymbal. In m. 66, the beater should be held similarly and stuck against the middle of the cymbal; if held loosely it will rattle in a similar manner.

Score in C

# The Witness

from Disappearances

Christopher Coleman  
Poem by Mary Ann Coleman

Adagio, ma sempre rubato ♩ = ca. 66

Mezzo-Soprano

Clarinet in B $\flat$

Violin

Cello

Piano

Marimba

Percussion

*con sord.*

*ppp*

*pp*

*con sord.*

*pp*

Mute\*

Bass drum  
Hard mallets L.V. *sempre*

*ppp*

*pp*

\* See performance instructions

The Witness

7

Mezzo

7

B♭ Cl.

*poco rit.*

*poco cresc.*

*pp*

*dim.*

*ppp*

7

Vln.

*poco cresc.*

*dim.*

*ppp senza sord.*

7

Vc.

*poco cresc.*

*dim.*

*ppp senza sord.*

*poco rit.*

7

Pno.

7

Mrb.

7

Perc.

*(non cresc.)*

*ppp*

Detailed description: This is a page of a musical score for 'The Witness', page 2. It features seven staves: Mezzo, B♭ Clarinet, Violin, Viola, Piano, Maracas, and Percussion. The Mezzo staff is mostly silent with a few rests. The B♭ Clarinet staff begins with a rest, then enters with a melodic line starting at measure 7, marked *pp* and *poco cresc.*, with a *dim.* instruction at measure 11. The Violin and Viola staves have melodic lines starting at measure 7, both marked *poco cresc.* and *dim.* at measure 11. The Viola part ends with *ppp senza sord.* The Piano staff is silent. The Maracas and Percussion staves have rhythmic patterns starting at measure 7, with the Percussion part marked *(non cresc.)* and *ppp* at the end. Performance markings include *poco rit.* at the top, *poco cresc.* and *dim.* for the woodwinds and strings, and *ppp* for the woodwinds and percussion.

The Witness

Poco meno mosso ♩ = ca. 60

Mezzo

B♭ Cl.

Vln.

Vc.

Poco meno mosso ♩ = ca. 60

Quietly rippling

*p*

*pp*

*p*

*pp*

*Ped. una corda*

*Ped.*

Mrb.

Perc.

(L.V. sempre)

*ppp*

At this point both the sustain pedal and the *una corda* pedal are depressed. The notation for release of the sustain pedal is as usual, \*.  
 The notation for release of the *una corda* pedal is *tre corda*.

The Witness

*Molto espressivo, e con grande sentimento*

*pp* \_\_\_\_\_ *p*

Mezzo

18

Blood \_\_\_\_\_ bruis - es \_\_\_\_\_

B $\flat$  Cl.

18

Vln.

18

Vc.

18

Pno.

18

Mrb.

18

Perc.

18 Always at an almost subliminal level of perception

The Witness

22

Mezzo

my \_\_\_\_\_ veins \_\_\_\_\_ as \_\_\_\_\_ I \_\_\_\_\_ breathe \_\_\_\_\_

B♭ Cl.

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

Mrb.

Perc.

*Ped.*

The Witness

6

26 Mezzo *mp* This dif - fi - cult e - - - - le -

26 B♭ Cl.

26 Vln.

Vc.

26 Pno.

26 Mrb.

26 Perc.

The musical score is arranged in a system of seven staves. The vocal line (Mezzo) is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 6/8 time signature. It begins at measure 26 with a half note G4, followed by a quarter rest, then a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, and a quarter note C5. The lyrics 'This dif - fi - cult e - - - - le -' are aligned with the notes. A dynamic marking of *mp* is placed above the vocal line at measure 29. The piano accompaniment (Pno.) is in grand staff (treble and bass clefs) with the same key signature and time signature. It features a complex rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes with various accidentals (sharps, naturals, flats) and slurs. The other instruments (B♭ Cl., Vln., Vc., Mrb., Perc.) have rests in all measures shown.



The Witness

30

Mezzo

ment,

B♭ Cl.

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

Mrb.

Perc.

The musical score for 'The Witness' on page 7 features seven staves. The Mezzo staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat, starting at measure 30 with a half note G2. The lyrics 'ment,' are written below the staff. The B♭ Cl., Vln., and Vc. staves are currently empty. The Pno. staff is filled with a complex melodic line in the right hand and a more rhythmic accompaniment in the left hand, both starting at measure 30. The Mrb. staff is empty. The Perc. staff shows a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes and rests. A double bar line is located at the end of the Pno. part.

The Witness

8

34 *pp* (*sotto voce*)

Mezzo

a shell thin air curved

B $\flat$  Cl.

Vln.

Vc. *pp* Throbbing *flautando* come sopra

Pno. *p* Mute off

Mrb.

Perc. med. sus. cym.; soft mallet

Detailed description of the musical score: The score is for a piece titled 'The Witness'. It features seven staves: Mezzo (voice), B $\flat$  Cl. (clarinet), Vln. (violin), Vc. (viola), Pno. (piano), Mrb. (maracas), and Perc. (percussion). The Mezzo part has lyrics: 'a shell thin air curved'. The Vc. part is marked 'pp' and 'Throbbing flautando', with the instruction 'come sopra' appearing later. The Pno. part is marked 'p' and 'Mute off', with multiple 'Ped.' markings. The Perc. part is marked 'med. sus. cym.; soft mallet'. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings.

The Witness

*Like a series of cresting waves*

37

Mezzo

a - round the world.

37

B $\flat$  Cl.

*pp*

37

Vln.

*flautando* gradually move to *normale*

37

Vc.

*normale* *pizz. pp* (*pizz. L. V. sempre*) *arco*

37

Pno.

*Ped.* *\* Ped.* *tre corde* *\* Ped.* *non accentato* *p*

37

Mrb.

37

Perc.

*p*

The Witness

10

*accel.poco a poco*

Mezzo

B $\flat$  Cl.

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

Mrb.

Perc.

The musical score for 'The Witness' is arranged in a standard orchestral format. It includes parts for Mezzo, B $\flat$  Clarinet, Violin, Viola, Piano, Mallet Percussion, and Percussion. The score begins at measure 42. The Mezzo part is mostly silent, with a few notes in the final measures. The B $\flat$  Clarinet part starts with a *mf* dynamic and a *p* dynamic later. The Violin part is marked *flautando* and *p*, with a *gradually move to normale* instruction. The Viola part starts with *mf* and *p*. The Piano part features a *sf* dynamic and a *ped.* instruction. The Mallet Percussion part is silent. The Percussion part includes a *small sus. cym.; tri beater on dome* instruction. The score is marked with various dynamics and performance instructions.

47

Mezzo

B $\flat$  Cl.

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

Mrb.

Perc.

*mp*

*flautando* *gradually move to normale*

*sf* *sf* *sf* *mp* *Ped.*

large sus. cym.;  
tri beater sizzle\* *sf*  
on edge

small sus. cym.;  
tri beater on edge

*mp*

\* see performance notes





14

# The Witness

60 *semplice* ***p***

Mezzo

My dress - er gives back the sim - ple wood

60 ***pp***

B♭ Cl.

60

Vln.

Vc.

***pp***

60 ***p***

Pno.

60

Mrb.

60

Perc.

Detailed description of the musical score: The score is for a piece titled 'The Witness'. It features a vocal line (Mezzo) and instrumental accompaniment for B♭ Clarinet, Violin, Viola, Piano, Mallets, and Percussion. The tempo is marked '60' and the mood is 'semplice'. The vocal line starts with a fermata and then sings 'My dress - er gives back the simple wood'. The piano accompaniment is in a simple harmonic style, with the left hand playing chords and the right hand playing a melodic line. The mallets and percussion parts are mostly silent, indicated by rests.



The Witness

63

Mezzo

63

B $\flat$  Cl.

63

Vln.

Vc.

63

Pno.

63

Mrb.

63

Perc.

Sur - fac - ing gent - ly from the

*Ped.*

66

Mezzo

66 dark.

B♭ Cl.

mf

14

Vln.

pizz.

f

arco

mf

14

Vc.

mf

normale

Pno.

66

mf

Mute on,  
heavy pressure

7

Ped.  
tre corde

Mrb.

66

mf

7

7

Perc.

66

mf

large sus. cym.;  
tri beater sizzle\*  
> at middle

68

Mezzo

*mf*

Dog - - - woods

68

B♭ Cl.

14

68

Vln.

pizz. L.V.

68

Vc.

pizz. *mf* L.V.

68

Pno.

*mp*

6

Ped.

68

Mrb.

68

Perc.

Detailed description of the musical score: This page of the score, titled 'The Witness', is page 17. It features seven staves: Mezzo, B♭ Clarinet, Violin, Viola, Piano, Maracas, and Percussion. The Mezzo staff begins with a rest, followed by a melodic line starting at measure 68 with the lyrics 'Dog - - - woods'. The B♭ Clarinet staff has a complex melodic line with a 14-measure slur. The Violin and Viola staves have pizzicato passages with 'L.V.' markings. The Piano staff features a 7-measure slur in the left hand and a 6-measure slur in the right hand, with a 'Ped.' marking. The Maracas and Percussion staves have rests.

70

Mezzo

roll and boil a gen - er -

B♭ Cl.

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

Mrb.

Perc.

*f*

The Witness

73 Mezzo  
ous breeze my o - - - pen win - - - dow cap -

73 B♭ Cl.

73 Vln.

Vc.

73 Pno.  
8 8 7 8  
Ped. \* Ped. \* Ped. \*

73 Mrb.  
7 7 7  
to Chime

73 Perc.  
to Bass drum, Tam-tam

Mezzo  
76 tures. \_\_\_\_\_

B♭ Cl.  
76 *p*

Vln.  
76 arco *mf* arco *p* *espressivo* *mp*

Vc.  
76 *p*

Pno.  
76 *mf* Mute off *mp* *p*

Mrb.  
76 Chime *mf* *mp*

Perc.  
76 Bass drum *mf* Tam-tam *pp* *mf* *pp* *mf*

82

Mezzo

82

B♭ Cl. *espressivo*  
*p*

82

Vln. *p*

Vc. *espressivo*  
*p*

82

Pno.

82

Mrb. *to Marimba*

82

Perc.

Detailed description: This page of a musical score, titled 'The Witness', page 21, contains seven staves. The Mezzo staff (top) shows a vocal line with rests. The B♭ Clarinet staff features a melodic line starting at measure 82 with a *p* dynamic and *espressivo* marking. The Violin and Violoncello staves have corresponding parts, with the Vc. staff also marked *p* and *espressivo*. The Piano staff shows a complex texture with multiple voices. The Marimba staff has a melodic line in the upper voice and rests in the lower voice, with the instruction 'to Marimba' written below. The Percussion staff has rests throughout. The page number '82' is written above the first measure of each staff.

88

Mezzo

B $\flat$  Cl.

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

Mrb.

Perc.

*pp*

*pp*

*p*

*Ped. una corda*

*\* Ped.*

*\* Ped.*

*\* Ped.*

*\* Ped.*

(ped dim--release, ped, release, ped, release while holding key down)



93

Mezzo *p*  
I turn to you clothed in

B♭ Cl.

Vln. *pp*

Vc. *pp*

Pno. *pp* *p*

Mrb. *pp*

Perc. 93

97

Mezzo

my smooth skin \_\_\_\_\_ and feel \_\_\_\_\_ my brea - thing tight - en; \_\_\_\_\_ wit - ness \_\_\_\_\_ your face \_\_\_\_\_

B♭ Cl.

*mf*

*ff*

Vln.

*ff*

Vc.

*ff*

Pno.

*ff*

Mrb.

*ff*

Perc.

97

101

Mezzo

that will last in a pat - tern meshed in my

B♭ Cl.

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

\* Ped. \* Ped. \* Ped. \* Ped. \*

Mrb.

Perc.

101

*flautando*

105 *molto* *mp* *poco*

Mezzo  
brain when this fur - ni - ture has fal - len

B♭ Cl. *mp* *ppp*

Vln. *mp*

Vc. *molto* *p*

Pno. *Ped.* \* *Ped.* \* *Ped.* \* *Ped.* \*

Mrb. to Vibraphone, slow vibrato

Perc. 105 to Water Chime

The Witness

109 *p* *pp* *rit. e dim al fine*

Mezzo  
toward — ru - in. —

B $\flat$  Cl.  
*p* *pp*

Vln.  
*normale* *p* *pp* *espressivo, ma lontano* *poco*

Vc.  
*Throbbing* *come sopra* *pp*

Pno.  
*p* *crystalline* *pp* *rit. e dim al fine*  
\* *Ped.* \* *Ped.*

Mrb.  
*Ped.* *p* *Ped.*

Perc.  
*L.V.* *p* *L.V.*

