

Nicolas Chuaqui

Apocalyptic Visions

song cycle for tenor and piano | 22'

2018

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These songs are “apocalyptic” in different senses of the word. None of the poems relate to “the apocalypse” in a religious sense, except for 2, though only by virtue of the fact that it is a paraphrase of a recitative text from one of Bach’s cantatas (BWV 198, a secular cantata written for the funeral of a princess). Rather, each moment presented is viewed as an apocalypse, or an end of something, whether that is a person, the planet, or an idea, such as a painful past that has been “blocked out” in movement 5. Additionally, an “end” can be said to start very early on, and the “seeds” of the end can be present in the thing from the very beginning.

1

The sky burns red
with the unquenchable fire of a thousand suns
just like the blood in us all

2

The trembling sound of the bell awakens us with fear and loathing piercing flesh and bone
the eternal sapphire house
draws, o princess, your gaze
the blinding light of one thousand suns turns our day to midnight
and surrounds your transfigured head

3

In this desert you are an oasis
your skin is purer than the dunes of sand
your mouth is a fountain
your lips pour out water
but I, the parched ground, drink it up so completely that nothing remains.

4

At noon the sun lags darkness covers the land the ground freezes
birds fall from the sky
Memories for cello, piano and electronics
and everywhere people are covered in ice the silence is unlike anything

5

Now some doors are closed that will never open again I used to hear them swing open behind me
but now they’re all boarded shut
will I ever see inside again?

6

The trees, tall, noble and green
have been accomplices in our crimes
only by feigning lifelessness have they escaped the punishment of the law.

through the years and the steady passing of time they have witnessed unspeakable things
they watched it all
but they just stood there.

when the oceans rise, and the last rain falls
still it won’t be enough to wash the blood from their branches
and still, still, the rivers of red blood will reach the seas and fill them completely.

Am I saying this out of envy?

I want nothing more than what a tree wants. To wrap myself in the forest, hidden
and to chase the sun.

PERFORMANCE NOTES:

- Where there are fast leaps in the piano part, it is expected that there will be a delay in the music, and this should add weight to the dramatic interpretation of the piece, rather than hinder it.
- Relatedly, tempi are expected to ebb and flow.

APOCALYPTIC VISIONS

for tenor and piano

Nicolas Chuaqui
2018

1

Grandiose; broad ♩ = 80

the sky

aggressive; marcatisimo

f

f *f* *f*

fpp

p

pp

f

This system contains the first three measures of the piece. The vocal line begins with a rest, followed by a quarter note 'the' and a half note 'sky'. The piano accompaniment features a complex texture with multiple staves. The right hand has a melodic line with a triplet and a fermata. The left hand has a bass line with a triplet and a fermata. Dynamics include *f*, *fpp*, *p*, and *pp*. A tempo marking of ♩ = 80 is present.

burns

like strings snapping in a burning piano

red

f *ppp* *fff* *p* *ppp* *f* *ppp* *f*

ff *pp*

ff

This system contains measures 4 through 7. The vocal line continues with 'burns' and 'red'. The piano accompaniment is highly rhythmic and dynamic. The right hand features a triplet and a fermata. The left hand has a bass line with a fermata. Dynamics include *f*, *ppp*, *fff*, *p*, *ppp*, *f*, *ppp*, *f*, *ff*, *pp*, and *ff*. A tempo marking of ♩ = 80 is present.

8

with the unquench-a - ble fire

Dynamic: *f*

Articulation: *tr*

11

of a thou - sand_ suns

Dynamic: *f*, *fff*

Articulation: *tr*

Tempo: *marcato*

13

mp *mf* *f*

just like the blood in us all

mp *molto cresc.* *ff*

18

non dim.

ff *pp* *molto rit.* *fff*

Text after Johann Christoph Gottsched

Anxious; marcatissimo $\text{♩} = 80$

f

the trem - bling sound of the

f mp

non ped.

3

bell a-wak ens us with

tr

f mp

prestissimo possibile

mf

5

fear and loath - ing pier-cing flesh and

mf

N.B: tenuto/accents marks in RH are on starting notes only (not each iteration of the first note of the tremolo).

9

bone

ff

3

13

ff

pp molto legato

3

pedal each chord *ped.*

8vb

15

f

pp

3

8vb

6 16

Musical score for measures 16-17. The vocal line is mostly silent. The piano accompaniment features a continuous eighth-note triplet pattern in the right hand and a sustained bass line in the left hand.

17

legatissimo

the e - ter - - - - - nal

(p)
dynamics colla voce

Musical score for measures 17-18. The vocal line enters in measure 17 with the lyrics "the e - ter - - - - - nal". The piano accompaniment continues with the triplet pattern. A dynamic marking of *(p)* and the instruction *dynamics colla voce* are present.

18

sap - phi - re house

Musical score for measures 18-19. The vocal line has a melodic phrase "sap - phi - re house" with a slur over it. The piano accompaniment continues with the triplet pattern. A key signature change to one sharp (F#) is indicated.

20

draws,

Musical score for measures 20-21. The vocal line has a melodic phrase "draws," with a slur over it. The piano accompaniment continues with the triplet pattern. A key signature change to one sharp (F#) is indicated.

22

8 prin - cess, your

p

24

8 gaze

26

p the blind - ing light

p

28

mf of one - thou - sand suns

mf

30 *f*

turns our day to

32

mid - night

8vb
pp

34 *pp*

and sur - rounds your trans -

(simile)

pp

36 *dim.* **p**

fi - - gured head

38

40 *rit.*

pp *ppp*

pause a normal amount of time before the next song

3

Languid and vague ♩ = 80

p
in this

pp
8vb
ped. (pedal down until m. 26)

5
de - sert you are an o -

cresc.
pp
8vb

8

a - - - - sis

mf

(8) 1 3 8vb

11

your skin is pur - er than the dunes of

pp

8vb *pp*

14

sand your drops of water

f *p*

(8) *f* *ppp* *sempre*

16 *f*

mouth is a foun - - - - tain

f

(8)

18

your lips

(8)

20

pour out wa - - - - ter

dim.

23

mp dry

but I, the parched

p

pp

pedal ends

8va

*

27

nat.

mf

ground drink it up so complete-ly that no-thing re-

pp

pp

8va

Red.

31

mains

pp

pp

Red.

34

8vb
pp

March 15-17

Eerie and with innermost feeling ♩ = 36

p At noon the sun lags *mf*

pp *sim.* *f* *mp* (*p*)

ped. *pedal simile, except where notated* *ped.*

5

(pp) *f* *pp* *mf* *p subito* *pp*

*This symbol denotes a "pochissimo rit.", followed by a slight hesitation before the next beat, followed by a gradual return to the original tempo.

8^{vb} pp

8

legato

dark-ness co- vers the land the ground

pp

8^{vb} pp

11

free- zes_ *f* birds_ fall_ *(pp)*

(p) *f* *pp* *ppp*

8vb
mf

15

_ from the sky *f*

(p) *ppp*

8vb
mf

17

and eve-ry-where *con licenza* peo- ple_ are cov- ered in ice_ *colla voce*

(pp) *pp subito* *f* *pp*

8vb
mf

19

rit. Poco meno mosso

the si - lence is un-like a - ny - thing

22

rit. rit. Meno mosso

ppp *poco* *ppp* *poco* *ppp* *leggerissimo*

(con pedale)

25

pppp

ppp *ppp*

28

Musical score for measures 28-29. The score is written for piano and includes a treble clef staff with a 3/8 time signature. The piano part features a complex rhythmic pattern with eighth and sixteenth notes, including a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand and a triplet of sixteenth notes in the left hand. A dynamic marking of *ppp* is present. A large watermark 'FOR PERUSAL US ONLY' is overlaid on the page.

30

Musical score for measures 30-31. The piano part continues with a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. A dynamic marking of *ppp* is present. A large watermark 'FOR PERUSAL US ONLY' is overlaid on the page.

32 -

Musical score for measures 32-33. The piano part features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. A dynamic marking of *ppp* is present. A large watermark 'FOR PERUSAL US ONLY' is overlaid on the page.

Heavy and dramatic ♩ = 108-112

rit. A tempo

rit. .

mf

Now some doors are closed

pesante - each note arduous, never simply an accompaniment

rit. A tempo

rit. .

mp aggressive

cresc. simile (marcato)

f

ff

Red.

5 - A tempo

rit. . A tempo

rit. . . . A tempo

that will ne - ver o - pen a - gain

- A tempo

rit. . A tempo

rit. . . . A tempo

mf

mp

ppp

rit. . . .

rit. . . .

Musical score for measures 9-12. The system includes a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The piano part features a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. Dynamics include *f* and *p*. A triplet of eighth notes is marked with a '3' in the left hand. The tempo is marked *rit.* (ritardando).

13 A tempo

p sempre

I used to hear them swing o - pen

A tempo

ppp

Musical score for measures 13-16. The system includes a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The piano part features a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. Dynamics include *ppp*. The tempo is marked *A tempo*.

17 *pp* sempre

be - hind me

(*pp*)

pp

f

Musical score for measures 17-20. The system includes a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The piano part features a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. Dynamics include *pp* and *f*. A triplet of eighth notes is marked with a '3' in the left hand. The tempo is marked *pp* sempre.

21

but now they're all board - ed

intense

pp

mf

pp

25

shut

pp

Moltissimo rit.

p marcato

f

29

will I e - ver

A tempo

p

(it should feel like it is going to end here)

A tempo

pp

sim.

33

see in - side a - gain?

37

a - gain?

40

rit. a - gain? rit.

6

♩ = ca. 60

rit.

A tempo

mp legato

The trees

pp distant

dim.

ppp

Red.

with pedal (unless otherwise marked)

5

molto legato

tall no-ble and green have been ac - com - pli-ces in our crimes

10

on - ly by feign - ing

Red.

Red.

15

8

life - less-ness have they es - caped the pu-nish- ment of the

p

3

19

8

law

intense

cresc. molto

f

pp

ff

sed.

24

8

through the years and the stead - y pass - ing of

pp

pp

8vb

3

3

8vb

lurking

sotto voce

time they have wit-nessed un-speak-

p
8va

p *mp* *8vb mp*

poco rit...

- a-ble things

p

poco rit...

colla voce *p* *ppp*

mf

Slow rit. ad lib. **Faster** ♩ = 80

they watched it all but they just stood there!

f

mf
8vb

44

f

but they just stood there!

f

ff

(8)

8vb

50

f

but they just stood there!

*poco rit...
slight hesitation
before downbeat*

(8)

8vb

54

A tempo

f

when the oceans rise and the last rain

rit.

ff stringendo

ff pesante

*poco rit,
slight
hesitation*

(8)

8vb

58

8 falls_ still, still_____ it won't be e nough_ to wash the

8va

ff

8vb

63

8 blood from their bran - ches and still, still,

8va

8vb

66

8 still,_____ the ri - vers of red

cresc. molto

♩ = ♩ (♩ = 80)

28⁶⁸

8

blood will reach the

fff *fffz*

8^{va}

Detailed description: This system covers measures 28 to 68. The vocal line starts with a whole note G4, followed by a half rest, and then a half note G4. The piano accompaniment is in 4/4 time. It features a complex texture with many chords and triplets. An 8va marking is present above the right hand. Dynamics include *fff* and *fffz*.

71

8

seas and fi -

fff *fffz*

8^{va}

accel.

Detailed description: This system covers measures 71 to 80. The vocal line has a whole note G4, followed by a half rest, and then a half note G4. The piano accompaniment continues with complex textures and triplets. An 8va marking is present above the right hand. Dynamics include *fff* and *fffz*. An 'accel.' marking is placed above the vocal line.

74

8

fffz

m.s.

m.d.

Detailed description: This system covers measures 74 to 83. The vocal line has a whole note G4, followed by a half rest, and then a half note G4. The piano accompaniment continues with complex textures and triplets. An 8va marking is present above the right hand. Dynamics include *fffz*. Markings 'm.s.' and 'm.d.' are present in the piano part.

76

(i) (i)

(8)

3 5 3

78

(i)

rit.

fffz

3

80

molto rit.

(fill them com -

fffz *ffff*

m.s.

m.d.

8va

8vb

3 3 3

82 **A tempo**

plete - ly

fff *p* *fff* *p* *fff* *fff*

8^{vb} pedal down until m. 123

86

fff *fff* *fff* *f*

(8)

90

mf *mf* (*p*) *mp* *dim.* *p*

(8)

97 *p legato* *poco rit., ad lib* *mp*

am I say-ing this out of en - vy?

p *pp*

rall... *accel. back to tempo*

8va

at each of these moments, a slowing down of the pattern, followed by a slight hesitation, with the downbeat emphasized in length, followed by a gradual return to original speed of the pattern.

104

I want no-thing more than what a tree wants

ppp *rall.*

8va

109

to wrap my - self in the fo- rest hid-den

p *p*

accel...

113 *ad lib.*

and to chase the

rall... accel... rall... accel...

p

118

sun

rall...

119

accel...

120

8

rall...

5

121

8

accel... rit. molto rit. Slow ♩ = 66-72

gva

dim.

p dolce

125

8

espress.

and to chase the sun and to chase the sun

gva

gva

Λ (continuing with pedal)

130

cresc. toward m. 133

and to chase the sun _____ and to chase the sun _____

p

8va

137

poco f *p*

141 **Tempo primo (slower)** ♩ = 60

pp dolcissimo *poco rit...*

8vb

144

rit.

The musical score consists of three staves. The top staff is a vocal line in 3/2 time, starting with a whole note G4 and a half note G4. The middle staff is the piano accompaniment, starting with a half note G3 and a half note G3, followed by a half note F3 and a half note F3. The piano part includes dynamic markings *ppp* and *pppp*, and articulation marks like *poco rit...*. The bottom staff is a bass line with notes G2, F2, and G2, with an *8vb* marking. The score concludes with a double bar line.

March/August

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