

*For Beatrice Acland, Harry Baker, and the OSO's 'The House is Now Open' Project*

# The Smallest Changes

Joe Davies (2020)

Text by Jonny Danciger (2020)

## Performance Notes

My setting of Jonny's text explores musical and textual onomatopoeics, and the juxtaposition of the musical dynamic and the dynamic of the text. I've always loved a common line in many opera rehearsals: '*piano* music, *forte* text', meant to inspire a singer to sing quietly whilst still announcing the text to a high degree. I've since realised that a composer could, therefore, give a singer two dynamics: one 'textual' and one 'musical', and experiment by contrasting them in new and novel ways.

Without wanting to prohibit the freedom of the performers, this piece has a set of expanded notation as follows:

If a letter is in **bold and underlined**, it should be prolonged and emphasised: for example 'loudest' should be pronounced 'llllloudest', with the 'l' consonant taking a long time to develop.

An 'x' notehead denotes speaking: parts of the song which have a series of 'x' noteheads are therefore *Sprechstimme* (with places on the stave corresponding to approximate pitch).

A diamond notehead denotes whispering. This is almost always marked with the textual dynamic *forte*, so the power of the text should still come through even though the vocalist is using the quietest form of vocal production.

I marked in the score that bars 1-11 should be rhythmically precise: after bar 12, however, the performers can be slightly more free in their use of rubato.

### Joe Davies, 2020

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#### The Smallest Changes

The smallest changes are the loudest.

The tumble of a stream, once choked by preoccupation,  
Now trundles listlessly to open air,  
Stilled only on occasion by passing alarm.

The T.V. screen that hugged and dulled to welcome home  
Now oscillates fear and diversion for aching eyes,  
And windows supplant its pining embrace.

Friends that cried on open shoulders  
Now smile distantly in defiance,  
And soft hearts fight wars with their upper lips.

The chamber of sound - a church that once hummed music -  
Now screams silence,  
But will collect harmony, like nectar, when it finds its voice again.

So the air swallows relief,  
As the sky burns clear,  
And the nightingale squints in the sun.

### Jonny Danciger, 2020

# The Smallest Changes

Jonny Danciger (b. 1997)

For Beatrice Acland, Harry Baker, and the OSO's 'The House is Now Open' Project

Joe Davies (b. 1997)

$\text{♩} = 72$  Always Rhythmically Precise

Musical Dynamic *p* *pp* *pp*  
Soprano Solo  
Textual Dynamic

The smal-lest chan-ges are the lou-dest. The

*p* *ff* *mf*

Piano

5 M.D. *p* *p* like a choke *pp* *p*  
S. Solo  
T.D. *sf* *mf* *ff* *mf* *ff*

tum-mb-mb-mble of a strea - m, once cho - k'd by pre-oc-cu-pa-tion, Now

Pno. *pp* *pp*

8 M.D. *f* *p* *Breathy* *sempre p*  
S. Solo  
T.D. *f* *p* *Stilled* *sempre p*

tr - un - dles list - less - ly to o - pen air, Stilled

Pno. *pp* *p* *mf* *Ped.* *slow spread*

11 M.D. *f* *mp* *f*  
S. Solo  
T.D. *mf* *f textual intensity* *mf*

on-ly by pas-sing a - larm. The T-V screen that hugged and dulled to wel-come home Now

Pno. *mp* *f* *mf* *f* *mf* *f*

M.D.  
S. Solo  
T.D.

15 *f* 'die' pronunciation

o - scil-lates fear and di-ver-sion for ach-ing eyes and

Pno.

*mf* *ff* *mf*

R.H. L.H. *legato*

M.D.  
S. Solo  
T.D.

18

win - dows sup - plant

Pno.

*mf* *f*

R.H. L.H.

M.D.  
S. Solo  
T.D.

20

its pi - ning em - brace.

*pp* *ff*

Pno.

*mf* *sempre p*

*Improvised Response*

M.D.  
S. Solo  
T.D.

24

Friends that cry on o-pen shoul-ders. now smile dis-tan-tly in de-fi-ance,

*p* *f* *p* *f*

Pno.

*p* *mf* *Improvised Response* *p* *f*

*Improvised Response*

28 *sempre p* *p* *f*

M.D. *sempre f* *sf* *ff*

S. Solo  
T.D.

and soft hearts fight wars with their up-per lips. The cham-ber of sound, a church that once hummed mu - sic,

Pno. *mp* *f* *mf* *f*

31

M.D. *mf*

S. Solo  
T.D.

Now screams in si - lence

Pno. *mf* *f* *mf*

33

M.D.

S. Solo  
T.D.

but will find har - mo - ny like nec - tar,

Pno. *f*

R.H.  
L.H.

35  
M.D.  
S. Solo  
T.D.

when it finds its voice a - gain!

*p* *ff*

Ped. \_\_\_\_\_

39  
M.D.  
S. Solo  
T.D.

**Improvised Section** *Lasting 25-30 seconds and using these three bars as thematic ideas*

**Improvised Section** *Lasting 25-30 seconds and using these three bars as thematic ideas*

*p* *sempre p*

Ped. \_\_\_\_\_

43  
M.D.  
S. Solo  
T.D.

*p freely*

So the air swal - lows re - lief, as the sky burns

*mp* *dim.*

47  
M.D.  
S. Solo  
T.D.

clear, and the nigh - tin - gale squints in the sun.

*pp* *ppp* *mf*

*pp morendo*