

DAVID BIEDENBENDER

SHELL AND
WING

for soprano and mixed chamber ensemble

Text by ROBERT FANNING

BENT SPACE MUSIC

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Shell and Wing was commissioned by the Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble
and the American Composers Forum CONNECT Program.

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INSTRUMENTATION

Flute
B^b Clarinet / B^b Bass Clarinet

Violin
Violoncello

Percussion
Piano

Percussion List:

Vibraphone
Glockenspiel
[Optional] Toy Piano (with A5)

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Score in C

Duration: *ca.* 16:30

PROGRAM NOTES

My sons, Izaak and Declan, have profoundly changed and shaped the way I see the world. I initially set out to write a collection of vignettes about them, about childhood—a way to capture the beautiful, tender, and often silly and hilarious moments of their lives, but, my plans suddenly shifted after yet another all too common incidence of violence against children. In response to this violence, I felt compelled to respond in some way—to respond to my fear of sending my sons out into this violent world. *Shell and Wing* emerged as a collaboration and a response to these parental impulses with my friend and fellow father, poet Robert Fanning. Robert's response to our conversation—a poem in two stanzas—gave voice to the ambiguity, the conflict I feel as a parent—this profound longing to protect my children coupled with the knowledge that I must also let them go.

The first poem is in a parent's voice—my voice—and the second poem is in a child's voice—that of my sons. Musically, the first movement is a sort of fragmented lullaby interwoven with a distorted memory of Robert Schumann's *Träumerei* (Dreaming/Reverie) from *Kinderszenen* (Scenes from Childhood). Schumann's harmonies are pulled and stretched until they resemble only a distant echo of the original. The second movement begins with solo piano, distant and aching that transforms into a quiet, dream-like duet for the soprano and vibraphone. The child's song grows and builds, underpinned by a *chaconne*—a repeated chord progression—and eventually becomes the same song heard in the first movement, the parent's song.

SHELL AND WING

by Robert Fanning

I. SHELL

I hold you, breath beneath my skin, a nest of flesh. No world can break
you here. Shadows feather the shell. If you fly, you'll never go far.
I dream my body border and sky, my heart an aviary. In my sleep, you wake.
I hold you. Breathe a nest beneath my skin, flesh no world can break.
Now, the season's errant and astray; coiled rage hisses to strike. Hate leaks
into vine and branch, river and vein. So, song in me, rise. May death take no air
I hold. You, my breath beneath. My skin a nest of flesh. No world can break
you. Here, shadow. Feather, never go. I'm a shell if you fly. Fly far.

II. WING

You dream you hold me in your nest of breath. Before they lifted me
from mingled blood, I rose, a song within your feathered sleep
for centuries. Your veined branches mapped my lidded eyes. A tree
you dream you hold. In your nest of breaths before me. They lifted me
from you to veil the sky. I flew through your death in learning to fly.
No world bears us. Though we slip our nets of wing and flesh, may love keep
you, this dream you hold in your nest of breath, before they lift me
from mingled blood. I wrote your song within. My feathered sleep.

Score in C

for Lindsay Kesselman and the Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble

SHELL AND WING

for soprano, flute, clarinet, violin, violoncello, percussion, and piano

text by Robert Fanning

I. Shell

David Biedenbender

Slowly ♩ = 52

Soprano

Flute

(Bb) Clarinet

Violin

Violoncello

Glockenspiel

Vibraphone

Piano

pp

mp

f

mf

p

pp

mf

p

mp

arco

arco sul pont., no vib.

flz.

mp

mp

pp

p

f

mf

p

pp

mf

p

mp

hold,

thrown bow
throw bow forcefully onto the strings to produce indeterminate number of rebounds

ped.

ped.

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Shell and Wing

10 *mp* *mf*

S. a nest of flesh

Cl. *mp* *mf*

Vln. *mp* *pp* *pizz.* *f* *arco*

Vc. *mf* *f* *mf*

Glock. *p* *mp*

Vib. *mf* *f* *p*

Pno. *mf* *warm* *f* *p* *mf* *p*

16 Linger

14 *p* *p*

S. No, No world,

Vln. *arco, muted sul pont.* *p* *whispery, playful, slightly free like a distant echo of the soprano*

Vc. *pp*

Glock. *pp*

Vib. *pp*

Pno. *mf* *p* *mf* *3* *p* *pp* *tenderly*

Shell and Wing

18 *p* *p* *p* *p* *p* *p*

S. No, No world can, can No world No world No world can

Cl.

Vln. *p* *p* *p* *p* *p* *p* *mp*

Vc. arco *p*

Glock. *p*

Vib. *p*

Pno. *p*

24 *accel.* **Faster** ♩ = 66

23 *mp intensifying* *mf*

S. break you here. Sha - dows fea - ther the shell.

Cl. *mp espress.*

Vln. pizz.

Vc. *mf*

Glock. *mf* *mp*

Vib. *mf* *mp*

24 *accel.* **Faster** ♩ = 66

Pno. *mf* *mp*

Shell and Wing

37 Slowly again ♩ = 52

S. *ff* *rit.* *mp*
 sky my heart an a-vi-a-ry In my sleep, you

Fl. *ff* *p* *flz.*

Cl. *ff* *mp espr.*

Vln. *ff*

Vc. *ff* *p*

Vib. *ff* *sffz* *Ped.*

Pno. *ff* *sffz* *Ped.*

rit. *37* Slowly again ♩ = 52

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Shell and Wing

39 *p a lullaby*

S. wake. I hold you. I hold you. I hold you. Breathe a

Fl. *pp veiled*

Cl.

Glock.

Vib. *p* Red →

Pno. *p* Red.

43

S. nest be - neath my skin, flesh, flesh, flesh, flesh no world can break. Can break.

Glock.

Vib.

Pno.

Shell and Wing

48

pp waning *p* waxing

S. Can break, break, break, break, Now

Fl.

Cl. *pp* *p* *mf*

Glock. *mf*

Vib. *mf*

Pno. *mf*

48

The musical score is for the piece 'Shell and Wing', page 8. It features a vocal line (S.) and instrumental parts for Flute (Fl.), Clarinet (Cl.), Glockenspiel (Glock.), Vibraphone (Vib.), and Piano (Pno.). The vocal line begins at measure 48 with the lyrics 'Can break, break, break, break, Now'. The vocal line starts with a *pp* waning dynamic and ends with a *p* waxing dynamic. The instrumental parts include a Clarinet line with dynamics *pp*, *p*, and *mf*; a Glockenspiel line with *mf*; a Vibraphone line with *mf*; and a Piano line with *mf*. The score is marked with a large '48' at the beginning of the vocal line and another '48' at the start of the piano accompaniment.

Shell and Wing

S. *f* 3
Coiled _____ rage _____ hiss - es to

Fl.
Cl.

p _____ *mp*

Vln. *p* [continue bowing pattern]

Vc. (pizz.) arco *p cantabile* _____ *mp*

Glock. *mf* _____ *sim.*

Pno. *f* _____ *mf* _____ *sim.* 3

58 S. _____

Fl. strike. _____ with voice *pp*

Cl. _____ *mf* _____ *pp*

Vln. _____

Vc. _____ *fp*

Glock. _____ *p* _____ *f*

Vib. _____ *mp* _____ *f*

Pno. *p* 3 5 _____ *f*

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Shell and Wing

59

S. *Hate* _____ *leaks* _____ *in - to vine and branch,*

Fl. *ff*

Cl. *ff*

Vln. *fp*

Vc. *sffz*

Glock. *sfz* *mf* *sim.*

Vib. *sfz*

Pno. *sfz* *pp veiled, legato, swirling*



61

S. *in - to vine and branch,* _____ *vine and branch,* _____ *ri - ver and vein.*

Cl. *mp an echo of the soprano*

Vln.

Glock. *3*

Pno.

Shell and Wing

63 *increasingly frenetic*

S. *cresc.*

So, So, So, So, So, So, So, So, So, So, So, So, So, So, So, So,

Fl. tremolo: vary speed; overblow harmonics

Cl.

Vln. (sul pont.) *cresc.*

Vc. *p* sul pont. [continue bowing pattern] (sul pont.) *cresc.*

Glock. *p*

Vib. *mp* *ped.* with motor *cresc.*

Pno.

66 *ff*

S. So, So, So, So, So, So, So, So, So, So, So, So, So, Song,

Fl.

Vln.

Vc.

Vib. *3* *3* *3* *3* *5* *3* *3*

Pno.

14

Shell and Wing

71

S. Song in me, rise.

Fl. *mf* 3

Cl. *mf* 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6

Vln. 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6

Vc. *mf*

Pno.

72

S. Song.

Fl. 3 *f* 3

Cl. *f*

Vln. 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

Vc. 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

Glock. 3

Vib. 3

Pno.

Shell and Wing

73

S. Song in me, rise.

Fl. 3

Cl.

Vln. 6 6

Vc.

Glock.

Vib.

Pno.

musical score with lyrics and instrument parts

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Shell and Wing

S. Song.

Fl.

Cl.

Vln.

Vc.

Glock.

Vib.

Pno.

The musical score is for the piece 'Shell and Wing' on page 16. It is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The score includes a vocal line (S.) and instrumental parts for Flute (Fl.), Clarinet (Cl.), Violin (Vln.), Viola (Vc.), Glockenspiel (Glock.), Vibraphone (Vib.), and Piano (Pno.). The vocal line begins with the word 'Song.' and features a long melodic phrase. The Flute part has two triplet markings. The Clarinet part has a triplet marking. The Violin part has four sextuplet markings. The Viola part has a boxed-in triplet marking. The Glockenspiel and Vibraphone parts have triplet markings. The Piano part has a boxed-in sextuplet marking in the right hand and a triplet marking in the left hand. A large 'PERUSAL COPY' watermark is visible across the page.

Shell and Wing

77

S. Song in me, rise. Song in me, rise. rise._____

Fl. *f*

Cl. *f*

Vln. *sim.*

Vc. *sim.*

Vib. *f* *sim.*

Pno. *sim. sim.*

Shell and Wing

79 *fff*

S. *fff*
Song, rise.

Fl. *fff*

Cl. *fff*

Vln. *fff*

Vc. *fff*

Vib. *fff*

Pno. *fff*

let ring into silence

81

S.

Fl.

Cl.

Vln.

Vc.

Vib.

Pno.

84 Very slowly, still, quiet ♩ = 52

Glock. *p*

Vib. *p* [hold pedal until end]

Pno. *p* [hold pedal until end]

S. *mp*
 May death take no air I hold. I hold.

Vln.

Vc.

Glock. *sfz*

Vib. *mp*

Pno. *sfz* *mp*

Shell and Wing

104 *mf* *mp* *p* **108** *mp*

S. No world can break you... Here, Here, sha- dow

Cl. *pp lontano*

Glock.

Vib. *mp*

Pno. *mp* **108** *p*

==

109 **113** *p waning*

S. — Fea- ther, ne- ver go. I'm a

Vc. *pizz.* *p*

Glock. *p*

Vib. *p*

Pno. **113**

114

S. *pp* *ppp*
shell if you fly. Fly, far.

Glock. *pp*

Vib. *pp* (Ped.)

Pno. *pp* (Ped.)

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18 A dream, a distant memory (♩ = 48)

with motor (slow)

Vib. *pp* *lontano*

Pno. *ppp* *pppp*

una corda [let ring into silence]

Vib. *p*

26 With more motion, freely ♩ = 72

S. *p* ← ♩ = ♩. → *pulling back a bit* *p renewed, pushing forward*

You dream you hold me in your nest of breath. Be - fore they

Vib. *p*

S. *mp* *pulling back a bit*

lift - ed me from min - gled blood, I rose,

Vib. *mp*

S. **36** *p* *mp* *p*

a song with-in your fea-thered sleep for cen-tur-ies. for

Vib. *p*

S. **44**

cen-tur-ies. Your veined branch-es mapped my lidd-ed eyes. A tree you

Vib. *p*

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Shell and Wing

45

S. *dream you hold. dream you hold. dream you hold. dream you*

Vib. *dim.*

51 *molto rit.* *Slowly* ♩ = 48

S. *hold. dream you hold.*

Vib.

57 **Flowing, pulsing** ♩ = 72

S. *mp lingering*
Your veined branch-es mapped my lid-ded eyes.

Fl. *pp p pp p*

B. Cl. *B♭ Bass Clarinet*
p

Vln. *pp p p*
arco

Vc. *pp p*

Glock. *p*

Vib. *motor off*
p
(Ped.)

57 **Flowing, pulsing** ♩ = 72

Pno. *p mp warm*
(Ped.)

Shell and Wing

62

S. A tree you dream you hold. In your nest of breaths be - fore me

Fl. *p* *mp*

B. Cl. *b7*

Vln.

Vc.

Glock.

Vib.

Pno.

66

S. They lift - ed me from you to veil the sky. I

Fl. *mp* *mf* *p* *pp*

B. Cl. *b7*

Vln. *mp* *p*

Vc. *mp* *p*

Glock.

Vib.

Pno.

28

70

Shell and Wing

S. *mf*
 flew through your death in learn - ing to fly — No world bears us. Though we

Fl. *mf*

B. Cl. *mp*

Vln. *p* *mp* *mp*

Vc. *mp*

Glock.

Vib.

Pno. **70**

S. *mp*
 slip our nets of wing and flesh, may love keep — you, — this dream — you hold, —

Fl. *mp*

B. Cl. *mf* *p*

Vln.

Vc. *mf* *p*

Glock.

Vib.

Pno. *Red.*

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Shell and Wing

85 Faster ♩ = 80

S. *mf* ming- led blood. I _____ wrote _____ your song _____ with - *f*

Fl. *mf*

B. Cl. *mf*

Vln. *mf*

Vc. *mf*

Vib. *mf*

Pno. *f*

85 Faster ♩ = 80

Shell and Wing

92

ff

31

89

S. *-in. Your song. Your song. Your song.*

Fl. *mf* 6 *f* 5 3

B. Cl. *f*

Vln. *f*

Vc. *f*

Glock.

Vib. *f* *Red.*

Pno. *f* *Red.*

92

Shell and Wing

93

S. _____
Song. _____

Fl.

B. Cl.

Vln.

Vc.

Glock.

Vib.

Pno.

The musical score is for a piece titled "Shell and Wing" on page 32, starting at measure 93. It features a vocal line (S.) and several instrumental parts: Flute (Fl.), Bass Clarinet (B. Cl.), Violin (Vln.), Viola (Vc.), Glockenspiel (Glock.), Vibraphone (Vib.), and Piano (Pno.). The vocal line begins with a rest followed by the word "Song." and a long horizontal line. The instrumental parts are written in 3/4 and 2/4 time signatures. The score includes various musical notations such as triplets, slurs, and dynamic markings like *mf* and *f*. A large, faint watermark "PRACTICE COPY" is visible across the page.

96

S. *fff*
Song.

Fl. *ff*

B. Cl. *ff*

Vln. *ff*

Vc. *ff*

Vib. *f* *ff*

Pno. *f* *ff*

Shell and Wing

99 rit.

S.

Fl.

B. Cl.

Vln.

Vc.

Vib.

Pno.

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Shell and Wing

107

S. *p*
 My fea-thered sleep.. My fea-thered sleep. My fea-thered sleep. My

Fl.

Vln.

Vc.

Vib.

111

S. *pp* *ppp*
 My_ My_ fea-thered sleep. fea-thered sleep. fea-thered sleep. (toy piano)

Vib.