

INSTRUMENTATION

Flute (doubling Piccolo, Melodica)
Clarinet in B \flat (doubling Bass Clarinet)
Violin
Cello
Piano
Conductor

Transposed Score

Duration: c. 14'

Ground Truthing was commissioned by Hard Rain SoloistEnsemble with funds from the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, and was premiered by them, conducted by Siniad Hayes, on 17th February 2019, in the Susic Lab of The Queen's University of Belfast.

PROGRAMME NOTE

Ground Truthing was commissioned by Hard Rain SoloistEnsemble with funds from the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, and was premiered by them on 17th February 2019, in the Harty Room of The Queen's University of Belfast.

The work's structure presents a meditation on the contemplation of material from different distances. We are all familiar with how a human figure, building or landscape changes in our perception if we view it from very far away, or from some way away, or when face-to-face. The three pieces of this set view a single musical terrain from these standpoints; the close-up view is the most detailed and thus the longest, while the distant view is a miniature. Between stands an intermediate view, at around 3.5 minutes. The ordering of the three views is 'distant – intermediate – close', descriptions which were in fact used initially as titles for the pieces, but removed before publication.

The process of gleaning empirical data from surface analysis is sometimes called 'ground truthing'; my imagination supplements that close-up analysis with two more distant, views – less detailed but perhaps more sharply drawn. What is the effect of encountering the same musical landscape very close up, or from a distance? This concept unites a family of my recent works featuring 'Russian Doll' structures, multi-sized views of a single musical material; this in turn has evolved within my interest over three decades in the dramatic design of multi-movement works in many shapes and sizes.

The title is of course a pun, since the core musical material of all three pieces is a two-part 'ground', a recurrent set of chords that I term an Escalator Series (since its pitches move up a step each time). Probing the potential (or 'truth') latent in variation of these ground sets has been a key engine of musical development for me since 2005 – drawing on a technique that has strong overtones of Baroque structures such as chaconne and chorale variation.

Piers Hellowell

Ground Truthing

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Peter Hallward

Violins $\text{♩} = 152$

Pizzolo

Bass Clarinet in Bb

Viola

Vibraphone

Piano

Violins $\text{♩} = 152$

Picc.

B. Cl.

Vc.

Vc.

Picc.

Opport. entry

non cresc.

