

Desperate Messages

for Baritone, Piano and Cello

Tom Baker
(1999)

Frog Peak Music

Desperate Message #1 (History)

When the jets crowd close to the house tops,
and the thunder of their passing shakes
the droplets from the leaves of the chestnut tree,
and they fall in dull groups, punctuating the dust,
and when there is time to consider the cool, gray sky,
to wake to its many hues and its sway,
its hovering, fluorescent mood that seems right,
in the way the past is right, or unalterable-
then see how the days are full of false modesty,
how they fall neatly one on top the other,
the shadow coming full circle around the tree,
and see how they vanish and then add up to you,
in a chair, in an empty room, in a house...

Desperate Message #2 (Interlude)

Desperate Message #3 (The end of the world)

Not the end of the world,
but a mouthful of salt water
sends you shuttling against the slope.
against the difficult pull of the surf.
Not the buried wish, rocketed forth, at last,
but seven sleek mackerel,
together in a flash before your eyes,
leap from their pursuer.
No private end, no melodrama
by cartridge or clip, the fine smell of bluing,
the slip of the knot that stops the neck-
none of that. Against the coast line, that roar
is the oceans steady method,
hammering the pinnacles with a vengeance
that knows nothing is ever finished,
neither erosion, nor hope
nor the endless harvest of speech.

Desperate Message #4 (Desire)

Their hands have found in each other
the impossibility of bodies.
They gather what they can.
Here, and here, in the tangled turn,
in the soft, suede taper of the neck,
in desire, they are wise
to the body's overflowing reticence:
nothing is ever enough is the joke
that keeps giving itself to us,
the air calm, the trees lime-colored,
the hands, like tourists without visas,
cameras without film, busily, purposefully,
taking picture after picture after picture.

Desperate Messages

Commissioned by and dedicated to Will Dean IV

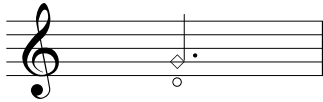
Special Thanks to Mark and Toni Radonich

Music by Tom Baker
Poetry by Mark Senvold

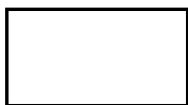
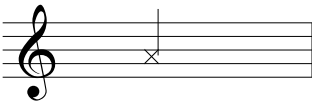
Performance Notes:

All accidentals last throughout the measure.
AFAP = As fast as possible.

Natural harmonics sound as written:



Pitches are approximate.



Musical figures in boxes are to be repeated until a rest or a new box.

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Desperate Message No. 1 (History)

Baritone

10 sec. 20 sec.

Whisper: When the jets crowd close to the housetops,
and the thunder of their passing shakes the
droplets from the leaves of the chestnut tree,
and they fall in dull groups, punctuating the dust,
and when there is time to consider the cool, grey sky,
to wake to its many hues and its sway,
its hovering, flourescent mood that seems right,
in the way the past is right, or unalterable...(repeat)

(continue whispering)

Whisper: When the jets crowd close to the housetops,
and the thunder of their passing shakes the
droplets from the leaves of the chestnut tree,
and when there is time to consider the cool, grey sky,
to wake to its many hues and its sway,
its hovering, flourescent mood that seems right,
in the way the past is right, or unalterable...(repeat)

(continue whispering)

Piano (Spoken) 10 sec.

♩ = 92 *P*

Bar. 8

When the jets crowd close to the house tops, and the thun-der of their pas-sing shake the

Cello (continue whispering)

Piano (continue whispering)

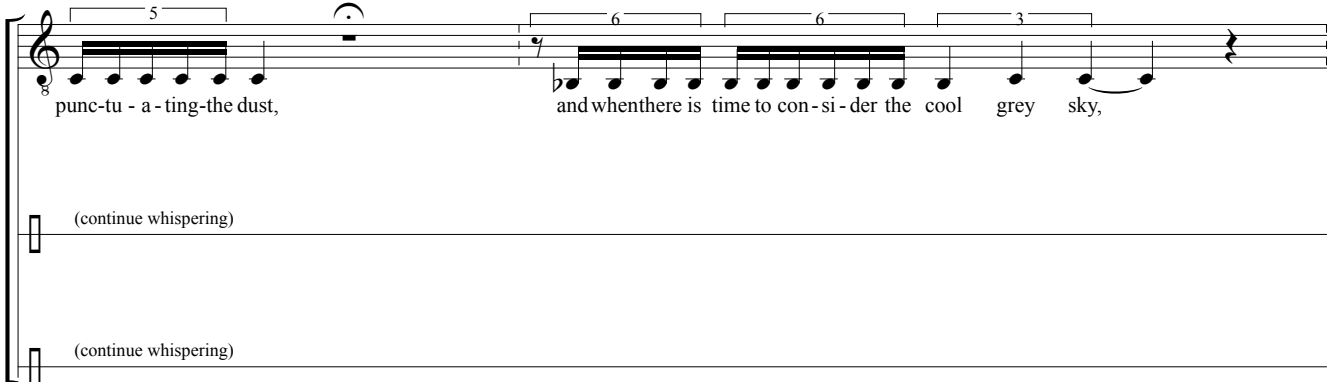
Bar. 8

drop - lets from the leaves of the chest - nut tree, and they fall in dull groups,

Cello (continue whispering)

Piano (continue whispering)

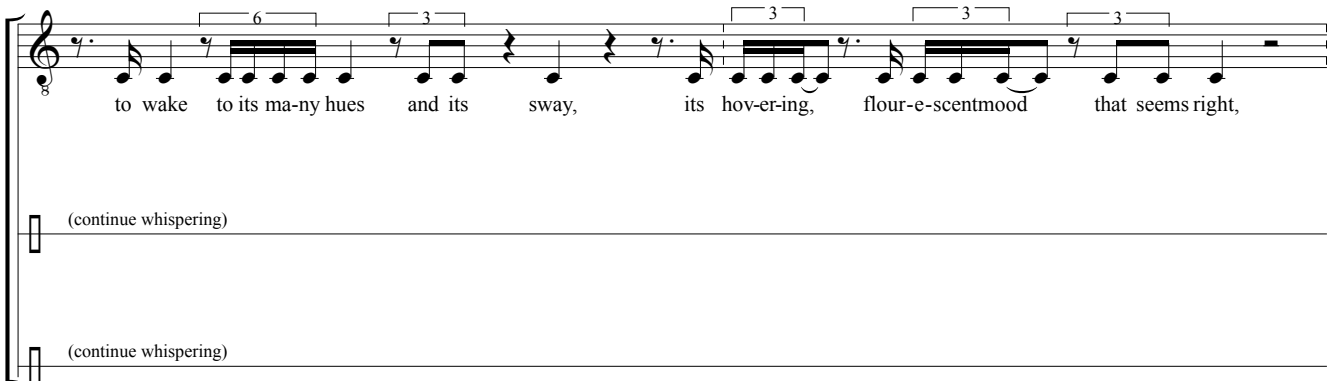
$\text{♩} = 69$

Bar. 

punc-tu - a - ting-the dust,
and when there is time to con - si - der the cool grey sky,

Cello (continue whispering)

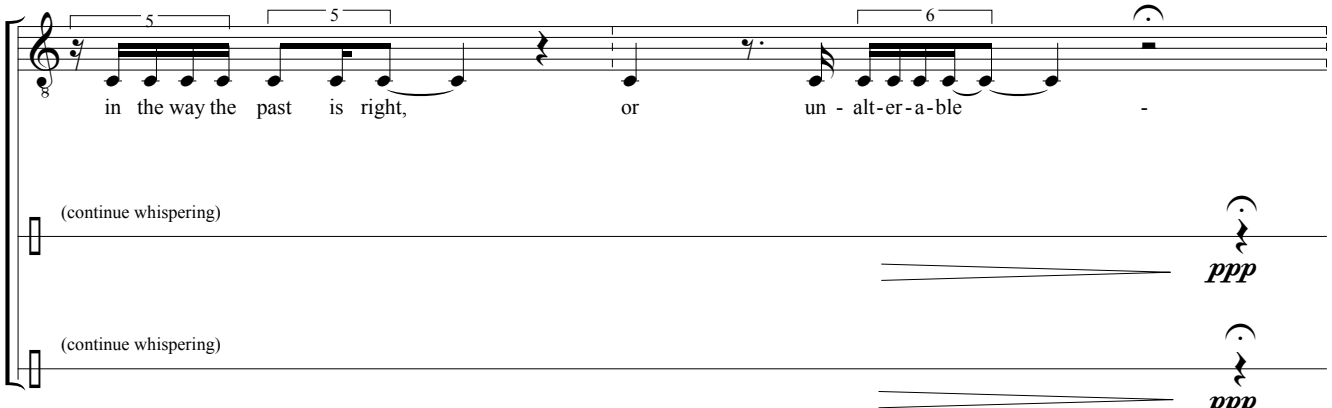
Piano (continue whispering)

Bar. 

to wake to its ma - ny hues and its sway,
its hov - er - ing, flour - e - scent mood that seems right,

Cello (continue whispering)

Piano (continue whispering)

Bar. 

in the way the past is right, or un - alt - er - a - ble -

Cello (continue whispering) *ppp*

Piano (continue whispering) *ppp*

♩ = 60 *freely*

Bar. *p* *mp* *p* *mp* *pp* *p* *mp* *pp*
then see how the days are full of false mo-de-ty,

Bar. *p* *mp* *p* *p* *p*
how they fall neat - ly one on top the o - ther, the

Bar. *mp* *p* *pp* *p* *mp*
sha-dow co-ming full cir - cle a - round the tree, and see

Bar. *mp* *p*
see how they van-ish and then add up to you,

Bar. *p* *p* *pp*
in a chair in an emp - ty room in a house

Desperate Message No. 2 (Interlude)

$\text{♩} = 60$

intensely

Cello *ff* *mp* *f* *mf* *pp* *mf* *p* *pizz.*

Cello *arco* *pp* *mf* *pp* *ff* *pp* *mp* *pizz.*

Cello *arco* *ff* *mf* *mp* *mf* *ff*

A

$\text{♩} = 30$

Piano *15^{ma}* (until letter B) *5* *5* *5* *mp* *5*

Cello *pizz.* *arco* *pont.* *f* *p* *p* *ord.* *30* *mf* *pp*

Piano

Cello

pp

Piano

Cello

mf

p

Piano

Cello

mp

ff

pizz.

mp

Piano

Cello

f *mp*

3 arco

B (end 15ma)

Piano

Cello

pp *mp* *f* *p*

♩ = 60

Piano

Cello

mf *f* *mp* *pp*

6 5

Piano

p *mf* *f* *mp* *pp*

Red.

Cello

pp

Piano

mf *f* *mp* *pp* *mf*

Red.

Cello

mf *f* *mp*

Piano

f

pp *mp* *pp*

Cello

Piano

mf *f*

mp *pp*

Red.

Cello

Piano

mf *f* *p* *mf*

Red.

Cello

Piano

mp *pp*

pp *p*

Cello

Piano

Cello

pp *pp* *mp*

pp *p*

Piano

Cello

p *pp* *ppp* *mp*

Piano

Cello

p *p* *ppp*

Desperate Message No. 3 (Not the end of the world)

The score is divided into two systems. The first system features a Baritone part with a whole note and a half note, both marked with a 5" fermata. The Piano part has a boxed-in section with a tempo marking of ♩ = AFAP, dynamics of *pp*, and triplets. The Cello part has a boxed-in section with a tempo marking of ♩ = AFAP, dynamics of *pp*, and quintuplets. The second system features a Baritone part with lyrics: "Not the end of the world," with dynamics of *p*, *f*, and *mp*. The Piano and Cello parts have dynamics of *f* and a wavy line indicating tremolo.

Baritone

Piano

Cello

Bar.

Pno.

Cello

♩ = 5"

♩ = AFAP

pp

p

♩ = 92

p *f* *mp*

Not the end of the world,

f

Bar. $\text{♩} = 92$ *mp*

but a mouth-ful of salt - wa-ter sends you shut-tl-ing a-gainst the slope

Pno. $\text{♩} = \text{AFAP}$ *mp*

Cello $\text{♩} = \text{AFAP}$ *mp*

Bar. $\text{♩} = 92$ *mp*

a - gainst the dif - fi - cult pull of the surf.

Pno. $\text{♩} = \text{AFAP}$ *mp*

Cello $\text{♩} = \text{AFAP}$ *mp*

Bar. *p* *f* *mp* 3

Not the bur - ied wish,

Pno. *f*

Cello *f*

Bar. *mp* *mf* *mp* 3

roc - ket - ed forth at last, but sev - en sleek mack - erel

Pno. *mp* *mf*

Cello *mp* *mf*

Bar. *mf* *p*

to-gether in a flash be-fore your eyes leap from their pur-su-er.

Pno.

Cello *p*

Bar. *p* *mp*

No pri - vate

Pno. *pp*

Cello *pp* *pp* *pppp*

$\text{♩} = 80$

$\text{♩} = 80$
sul tasto

Bar. *mp* *mf* *mp* 3

end, no mel - o - dra - ma by cart - ridge or

Pno.

Cello *pp*

Bar. *p* 3 3

clip. the fine smell of blu - ing

Pno.

Cello *pp* *mp* *p*

Bar. *p* *mp*

the slip of the knot that stops the neck

Pno.

Cello

Bar. *pp*

none of that.

ord.

ppp

Bar. $\text{♩} = 92$ *mp*

a-against the coast line that roar is the oc - eans stea - dy meth - od

mp

$\text{♩} = \text{AFAP}$

mp

$\text{♩} = \text{AFAP}$

mp

Bar. $\text{♩} = 92$ *mp*

hammer-ing the pin-na-cles with a veng-eance that knows no - thing is ev - er fin-ished

mp

$\text{♩} = \text{AFAP}$

Bar. *p*

neither - ro - sion nor hope

nor the end - less har - vest of speech.

Pno. *p* *ppp*

Cello *p* *ppp*

The image shows a musical score for three instruments: Baritone (Bar.), Piano (Pno.), and Cello. The Baritone part is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat and a 4/4 time signature. It features lyrics: "neither - ro - sion nor hope" and "nor the end - less har - vest of speech." The Piano and Cello parts are in treble and bass clefs respectively, both playing a wavy, tremolo-like texture. Dynamic markings include *p* (piano) and *ppp* (pianissimo) for both Piano and Cello. A triplet of eighth notes is marked with a *p* dynamic in the Baritone part.

Desperate Message No. 4 (Desire)

♩ = 80

Baritone

Piano

ppp

ppp

ppp

15^{ma} - - - ,

ppp

ℳ. (until end)

Cello

5

Bar.

Pno.

Cello

15^{ma} - - - ,

ppp

Bar.

Pno.

Cello

10

Bar.

Pno.

Cello

Bar.

Pno.

Cello

non-vib.
pont.

ppp

ppp

ppp

pp

ppp

Bar.

Pno.

Cello

ppp

pp

ppp

20

Bar.

Pno.

pp

ppp

15^{ma}-----

(vib.)

pp

Bar.

Pno.

pp

p

15^{ma}-----

pp

non-vib

pp

25 *p*

Bar. *p*

8 Their hands have found in each o - ther

15^{ma} *pp*

Pno. *p*

Cello *pp*

p

Bar. *p*

5 3 3 30


the im - po - si - bi - li - ty of bo - dies.

15^{ma} *pp*

Pno. *p*

Cello (vib.) *pp*

pp


Bar. 

They gat - her

what they can.

15^{ma} ----- ,

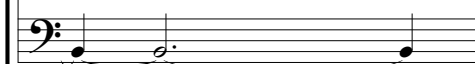
pp

Pno. 

p

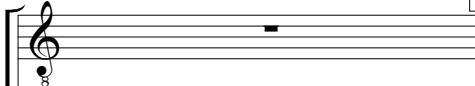
non-vib.

pp

Cello 

35

p

Bar. 

Here

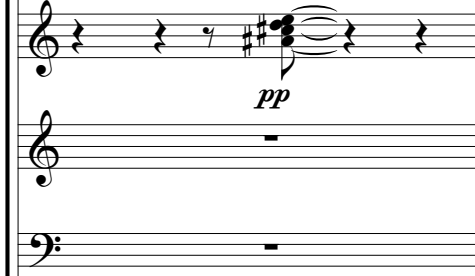
15^{ma} ----- ,

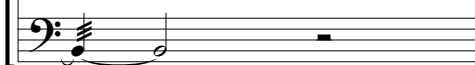
15^{ma} and here

pp

p

pp

Pno. 

Cello 

Bar. *pp* *p*

in the tang- led turn in the soft suede ta - per

Pno. *pp* *p*

Cello (vib.) non-vib. *pp*

40 *pp* *p*

of the neck in de - sire they are

Pno. *pp* *p*

Cello (vib.) non-vib. *pp*

Bar. *p* [3] [3] 45

wise to the bo-dy's ov - er flow - ing re - ti - cence:

15^{ma}

Pno. *pp* *p* [3] [3]

Cello (vib.) ord. *p*

Bar.

Pno.

Cello

50

Bar.

15^{ma}

Pno. *pp*

p

Cello non-vib. pont. *pp*

Bar.

p

no-thing is ev-er e-nough that's the joke

15^{ma}

Pno. *pp*

p

Cello (vib.) *pp*

55 *p*

Bar. *pp*

that keeps giv-ing it - self to us, the air

15^{ma}

Pno. *pp* *p*

Cello non-vib. *pp*

60 *p* *pp* *p* *p*

Bar. calm the trees lime co-ored the

15^{ma}

Pno. *pp* *p*

Cello *p*

Bar. *p*
hands like tou - rists with - out vi - sas cam-eras with-out film

Pno. *pp* *p*

Cello (vib.) *pp*

Bar. *pp*
bu-si-ly purpose-ful-ly 65 tak-ing pic-ture af-ter pic-ture af - ter pic-ture
15^{ma}

Pno. *p* *pp*

Cello non-vib. *pp*

Bar.

Pno.

Cello

pp

pp

70

Bar.

Pno.

Cello

15^{ma} - - - - -

ppp