

Les Diableries

François Dompierre
(b. 1943)

- I. Le Diable Boiteux (The Limping Devil)
- II. Le Diable Amoureux (The Amorous Devil)
- III. Le Diable Gigueux (The Dancing Devil)
- IV. Le Diable Heureux (The Happy Devil)
- V. Le Diable Grincheux (The Grumpy Devil)

Poème, op. 25, arr.

Ernest Chausson
(1855 - 1899)

INTERMISSION /// ENTRACTE

Sonata for Violin and Piano in G minor

Claude Debussy
(1862 - 1918)

- I. Allegro vivo
- II. Intermède: Fantasque et léger
- III. Finale: Très animé

Toi & Moi (You & I), a film-poem

Composed by Brent Wirth (1988-)
Film by James Carroll (1991-)
Poetry and narration by Meghan Ruel (1993-)

Poème I - VII

Poème II - Underwater Pulchritude

Poème III - Tomber

VII

C'est le temps au ralenti lors d'une
promenade
C'est l'image de sourires et d'yeux qui brillent
Le chaos de pigeons et d'étoiles qui scintillent

Time slowly slipping
Faces lit up with smiles, eyes shining
Pigeons flying like shooting stars

C'est le son d'une symphonie dans les oreilles
C'est une respiration profonde
Les heures, minutes et les secondes

Symphonies buzzing in your ear
Deep breaths
Like the hours, minutes and seconds

C'est la poésie, les rêves et les idées
C'est l'inquiétude et l'introspection,
La douleur, le bonheur et la création

Poems of dreams and notions
Restless introspection
Pain, relief and creation

C'est l'odeur du cerisier du japon
C'est la brume, la pluie et l'orage
Les rues, les forêts et la marée d'une plage

Mist of Japanese cherry trees
Rain, fog, thunder
Roads, forests, tide washing the beach

C'est la page de garde
C'est la tasse de larmes et de café
Les points-virgules, les tirets et les mots-clés

Flyleaf
Tears filling coffee cups
Semicolons, dashes, keywords

C'est la paupière lourde
C'est le silence dans le bruit
La lampe éteinte sur la table de nuit

Heavy eyelids
Loud silence
Dimming light on the night table

C'est l'anacrouse
C'est la durée d'un prélude
C'est l'esprit qui voyage en solitude

Empty barlines
A short prelude
Traveling souls of solitude

Underwater Pulchritude

Éponges malléables et corps mous
Âme torsadées qui pendent sous la surface
Cheveux de plancton noués qui chatouillent
Peaux pâles et diaphanes

Calme et silence qui s'étendent jusqu'au
plancher
Sourdines de l'eau, mouvements camouflés
Noirceur réconfortante d'une vie éloignée
Rubans de soie entremêlés

Rose et osmose, poumons noyés
Temps ramassé par les vagues agitées
Tambours synchronisés d'un tempo figé
Algues éthérées qui dansent sous les pieds

Voiles aigrement tombées
Écume empêchant lumières de percer
Le plafond liquide s'élargit
Tout bruits engloutis

Soft sponge bodies
Twisted souls suspended
Knotted plankton hair
Brushing pale diaphanous skins

Calm reaching into the deep floor
Muted water camouflaging movement
A distant life filling its darkness
Intertwined in silk ribbons

Osmosis, drowning lungs
Time swept by restless waves
Synchronized drums, fixed tempo
Ethereal seaweed dancing under feet

Sails fallen sharply
Light lost under spuming water
The liquid ceiling widens
Engulfing all sound

Tomber

Tire-moi la lune comme un cerf-volant
Illumine mon visage sous ton aile
Jeu d'acier chromé
Veloute et pastelles

Pull in the moon like a string kite
Shining under your wing
in a world of chrome and velvet pastels

Cache-toi dans ma feuille lignée,
Mes plumes et les lettres du clavier
Sois la lampe de poche
Qui illumine mes trésors cachés

Hide in my lined sheet of paper,
My pencil, the letters on my keyboard
Your bright light
Shinning into my hidden treasures

Mets-toi entre parenthèses
Nourris les fruits de mon arbre
Protège mon écorce
Et ma moelle épinière

Inserted between parentheses
Feeding the fruits of my tree
Protecting my shell,
The marrow of my spine

Laisse-moi tomber
Sur les accords de ta chanson
Laisse-moi tomber
Entre les fissures de ton béton

Let me fall
On the chords of your song
Let me fall
Between your fissures, cemented

Laisse-moi tomber
Entre les aiguilles du cadran
Laisse-moi tomber
Entre la misère et le temps

Let me fall
Between the hands of the clock
Let me fall
Between the misery of time

Laisse-moi tomber
Dans l'espace entre tes bras
Laisse-moi tomber
Et regarde moi droit dedans

Let me fall
In the space of your arms
Let me fall
And look straight into me

Toi & Moi // original film-poetry

Text: Meghan Ruel

Music: Brent Wirth

Film: James Carroll

Words: Notes by Meghan Ruel

You and I. You, the eyes and the ears. I, the music of walking fears.

This intimate braid marries image, sound and three texts which shed light on our most vulnerable experiences as human beings. You, the listener, ingests and interacts in a way that shapes its meaning. You are here to bring this to life.

When you are alone

When you feel the colours, shapes and textures that surround you

When you fall into the depths of love

These thoughts fueled my poems *VII*, *Underwater Pulchritude* and *Tomber*. Their translations are but a mere snapshot, a pixel; a pigment of what it is to be vulnerable.

VII

Associated with the seventh day of the week—or any day that feels as uneasy and uncomfortable as Sunday—this text is turbulent. The emotional landscape travels quickly, much like its score, only to dissipate while the hands of the clock keep tracking time.

Underwater Pulchritude

Some elements of life are best left observed and untouched. Debussy's *La Cathédrale Engloutie* is an otherworldly sonic experience which primed the canvas for this poem. Again, playing with time and texture, the words are suspended in an underwater dimension where gravity has no bearing on movement. There is no way to tell apart darkness from distance, skin from light, or sound from weight.

Tomber

Vulnerability: Falling into the depths of yourself or someone else.

A sigh of relief, an anxious breath, a risk, a secret, an open seam.

In some cases, falling has nothing to do with mass, velocity and acceleration. Falling is not only for the adrenaline junkie - it is the way in which we release from the very roots that tie us to the ground we hit.

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This budget-less project was made possible by the incredible hard work of everyone involved. Brent and James juggled multiple personal projects and freelance work during the production of *Toi & Moi*. Countless hours were spent editing, timing, testing, shooting, arranging, (eating, crying), and even flying back to Canada to finalize the arrangements. I would like to thank my collaborators tremendously for their passion, vision, love, empathy and sincerity in crafting this beautiful work. Preparing this performance certainly would not have been possible without the patience and undying energy of the very talented Juliana Witt. Finally, I would like to thank Dr. Jonathan Swartz for allowing me to express myself and take on this project with artistic freedom and confidence.

Sound: Notes by Brent Wirth

I. VII

The Pythagoreans considered all mathematical science to be divided into four parts: one half they marked off as concerned with quantity, the other half with magnitude; and each of these they posited as twofold. A quantity can be considered in regard to its character by itself or in its relation to another quantity, magnitudes as either stationary or in motion. Arithmetic, then, studies quantities as such, music the relations between quantities, geometry magnitude at rest, astronomy magnitude inherently moving. (Proclus, A commentary on the first book of Euclid's Elements, xii, trans. Glenn Raymond Morrow)

Ever since Pythagoras first observed the mathematical relationships between vibrating strings, math and music have been unequivocally linked; like star-crossed lovers whose eternal union is inevitably destined. This notion is very much at the heart of *VII*. Perhaps, it was the arithmophile conjuring within me, but the countless connections between music and the number seven specifically seemed impossible to ignore while imaging the musical trajectory of the piece. Scored in 7/8 time, an additive meter that is constructed by concatenating various series of two and three beat subdivisions, *VII* is centered around two alternating measures that break down into 2+2+3 and 2+3+2 subdivisions respectively and form an unrelenting rhythmic ostinato, which, ultimately, speaks to the restless chaos and incessant movement of the world that seems to be utterly inescapable in even our loneliest and most introspective moments. Much like the Pythagoreans studied the relationships between magnitudes at rest and in movement, *VII* examines this dichotomy through its harmonic and melodic dialogue. While the piece's harmony is largely stagnant, comprised mainly of a pulsing major second dyad, the melody, which is staunchly limited to the seven notes of the diatonic scale, is adventurous, sporadic and unremitting - a fitting analogy to life as we are but tiny strings vibrating in harmony within a sea of cacophonous melodies each and every day.

II. Underwater Pulchritude

*Water does not resist. Water flows. When you plunge your hand into it, all you feel is a caress. Water is not a solid wall, it will not stop you. But water always goes where it wants to go, and nothing in the end can stand against it. Water is patient. Dripping water wears away a stone. Remember that, my child. Remember you are half water. If you can't go through an obstacle, go around it. Water does. (Margaret Atwood, *The Penelopiad: The Myth of Penelope and Odysseus*)*

Water is formless. Water is shapeless. Water is still, yet constantly in motion. Water is a liquid chameleon camouflaging every movement it makes from the naked eye. Upon beginning to compose *Underwater Pulchritude*, it was immediately apparent to me that I had to channel the properties of the very element that I was setting out to encapsulate musically in my compositional approach. Like water, it was important for this piece to be void of form. As Atwood so eloquently points out in *The Penelopiad*, one cannot stand in the way of water: "it goes where it wants to go." Ultimately, I had to accept and subscribe to this notion musically. I had to release my protective grasp of each and every note in order to allow them to go where they wanted to go. While adopting a through-composed structure for the piece, that is, a continuously evolving structure that avoids direct repetition of sections, seemed like a logical starting point, I was once again fixated on the dichotomy between rest and motion and began pondering how that dichotomy could be reflected in form. The solution was a theme and variation structure in which the primary melodic motif would be constantly repeated and referenced throughout the course of the piece. However, with each statement, the central theme is either presented in an altered form or accompanied in a different manner; thus, establishing a sense of constant motion, while maintaining a sense of stillness.

The performers are instructed to play in a "deeply calm [manner] and sustained throughout (as if every note is eternally suspended underwater)." This calls for the pianist in particular to play the majority of the piece with the sustain pedal continuously depressed in order to allow each note to seamlessly bleed and flow both into and over/under each other. *Underwater Pulchritude* also features many passages with extreme registral distances; namely, the lowest and highest register of the piano are simultaneously employed to establish a sense of vastness and depth.

III. Tomber

You can't blame gravity for falling in love. (Albert Einstein)

Falling is an interesting concept. Falling can be seen to have many negative connotations. Certainly, no one likes falling down. Yet, falling in love is said to be the most profoundly positive feeling that one can experience in life. In the end, I suppose all we can do while desperately trying to avoid falling from grace is to have faith that the fates are smiling upon us and everything is falling into place as it should. Ultimately, *Tomber* explores the emotional complexities and seemingly paradoxical nature of "falling" and its many conflicting connotations.

Centered around a single melodic theme comprised equally of ascending disjunct leaps and gently descending steps, first introduced by the piano in its delicate high register, *Tomber* is written in a three-part song form (schematized as A-B-A). The piece's B section reprises musical material from the previous two movements/poems and features the violin accompanying the piano's fragmented restatement of the central theme with a flurry of descending sixteenth note passages. Following an abrupt interjection in 7/8 time, the piece returns to a recapitulation of the A section in which the arrangement is broadened by the presence of octave doubling in the left hand of the piano and a slight slowing of the tempo. The recapitulation is immediately followed by an extended cadence, which, once again, references musical material from the previous movements/poems and concludes with a final statement of the theme played on a scroll card music box and ornamented with delicate canonical counterpoint.

Image: Notes by filmmaker James Carroll

"I cannot speak to the music,
though the music speaks to me.
I do not see what you see,
nor do I see it any more clearly.
What I show is simply owed to those who have inspired me.
May ancient roots and branches calmly continue their stretch.
Thoughts like bones are scattered along the wavering water's edge."

I have been working in film and photo for years and mostly enjoy working on creative and collaborative projects such as this.

Meghan brought me an opportunity to do a film for some of her poetry that would simultaneously be transformed into music, and would later be introduced into her recital. After discussing the general ideas for the project I was eager to hear something to get me going on my visual research and planning.

Since we were working on this at the same time there weren't any indications of music or timing to go off of as a skeleton or an outline.

This was new to me, but I soon felt freedom in choice of shots and content and arrangement within each piece. This led me to relearn what I thought I knew about the poems, but also how I saw myself in relation to the words and images I was choosing.

The images are a compilation from some archival footage that I have done over the years that were mixed with new shots that were specifically chosen to accompany each poem. The film changed a few times, and upon discovering the relationship of the images Meghan and I were able to find something special that cannot be expressed in any other way.

When I first heard the music alongside the film, I was ecstatic. The meaning and symbolism and themes were solidified in a balanced harmony with the images and poems. I took a look at the finished product and wondered how it all came together so well. Needless to say I am very proud of this work.

A huge thanks to everyone involved in the project, and as always my friends and family who have helped me in my journey as an artist.

BRENT WIRTH

Brent Wirth is a multi-instrumentalist, composer, performer and pedagogue who holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts - Specialized Honours Music degree. While completing his degree at York University, Brent had the opportunity to study with several of Canada's leading music instructors, including William Beauvais, Art Levine and David Lidov, in the areas of classical guitar performance, theory and composition respectively. Despite his young age, he has already garnered international recognition for his musical efforts which include composing an original score for the independent short film "Meet May" that was selected for the 2006 Toronto International Film Festival. More recently, Brent has achieved considerable success with his former band Thought Beneath Film. After working with industry legends and multiple Grammy Award winners Tom Lord-Alge (U2, Weezer, Blink 182) and Bob Ludwig (Queen, Nirvana, Mumford and Sons), the band's single "If I Could Fix You", which Brent wrote, won the coveted \$50,000 grand prize of Slaight Music's "It's Your Shot" songwriting competition. Brent is currently working on his newest musical project Liteyears, which is set to release its debut five-song EP "American Towns" in the summer of 2016.

MEGHAN RUEL

French Canadian violinist Meghan Ruel is currently completing her Masters Degree in violin performance at the Herberger School of Music at Arizona State University as a scholarship student of Dr. Jonathan Swartz. As well as having competed in international chamber music festivals across Canada, she enjoys performing and recording with Canadian and American bands such as LITEYEARS and Phoenix-based Lydia. During her spare time, she enjoys producing film-poetry, arranging, playing steel pan and cooking up a storm.

JULIANA WITT

Juliana Witt is a Phoenix-based pianist who brings an imaginative mastery to her performing, collaborating and teaching artistry. Her recent activities include performances at Lincoln Center Education and concerts in Europe and the Eastern U.S. with Trio Dionysus, a contemporary ensemble for which she is the current pianist. She is also very passionate about educating audiences, developing community and promoting new music in ways that offer longevity and exposure for modern composers. To that end, she founded and directed the Thomasville Community Music Series, which facilitates a partnership between an arts college and a local underfunded public high school music program. In addition to performing and teaching, she is an organist and composer.

She is currently studying Piano in a DMA program with Dr. Andrew Cambell at Arizona State. She holds degrees in Piano Performance and Collaborative Piano and recently completed a Professional Artist's Certificate in Collaborative Piano at University of North Carolina School of the Arts. She has studied with Dr. Allison Gagnon, Dr. Karen Savage, Dr. Jeffrey Savage, Dr. Kenon Renfrow, David Lehman, and coached with Robert McDonald, Andreas Boyde, and Margo Garrett.

JAMES CARROLL

James Carroll is a freelance filmmaker and photographer living in Phoenix, Arizona. James has been involved in video production for six years, and for the past two years has been a successful freelance worker, traveling and doing local gigs for clients such as The Discovery Channel, Cox Communications, Relentless Inc., DEFY Products, and more. James has done commercial video work, television, live broadcast events, interviews, music videos, short films, and recently finished principle photography for a feature film. James enjoys traveling for work and for leisure, always with a camera and a pen and paper nearby to record his thoughts and expression. James wishes to grow his own business in hopes of providing a unique perspective and a highly collaborative product to his friends and clients who share his passion.