

The text for *Epitaphs* is from *Design for Death* (André Deutsch, 1967), a book by the artist Barbara Jones (1912-1978), who was a close friend (and former wife) of my landlord in London, Clifford Barry, himself an artist. The words are genuine epitaphs from the graves of both humans and their pets.

Combining, as it does, bland euphemisms with the macabre, *Epitaphs* should be presented in an intensely serious, or even *grave*, manner.

The full score must be read in conjunction with the individual parts; both score and parts are interpreted visually. The text is spoken as indicated in the score.

The instruments are numbered to save space:

1. Bengal Flute
2. Indian bird warbler
3. Indian bird warbler
4. Woolworth's egg slicer (minus the plastic half), plucked with a plastic ball point pen top
5. Two bayonet cap incandescent light bulbs (the prongs held between thumb and index finger)
6. Egg whisk plus a glass jar for 6a
7. Six pieces of wood of increasing length, suspended on a string
8. Tin with nineteen tacks
9. Sainsbury's plastic egg container (cut in half) plus a comb and a 6d coin

Note: Since 1969, there have been many changes. Woolworth's has gone (other brands are available); Sainsbury's egg containers may now be cardboard (improvise with other brittle plastic containers); little wooden bird warblers are more difficult to find (plastic ones will do); incandescent tungsten light bulbs have been phased out, but some do still survive; following decimalisation, sixpenny pieces are probably best replaced with 20p coins. Please improvise as necessary to replicate the imagined sound of the original instruments!

Each instrument has two or three 'pieces' per part. The performer will play one of these (a, b, or c) as specified in the full score. Each line is a pictorial representation of the passing of time and so a space in the notation represents a rest. The detailed interpretation of a part and its precise timing is left to the musical judgement of each performer – taking into consideration the dynamic range of fellow performers (balance).

At the end of each 'piece', it is necessary to make a noticeable signal (e.g. a nod of the head) at the cued points (indicated by vertical broken lines) so that the appropriate performer will know when to commence his or her 'piece'.

David Byers 5 March 1969

EPITAPHS

a cantatette by David Byers

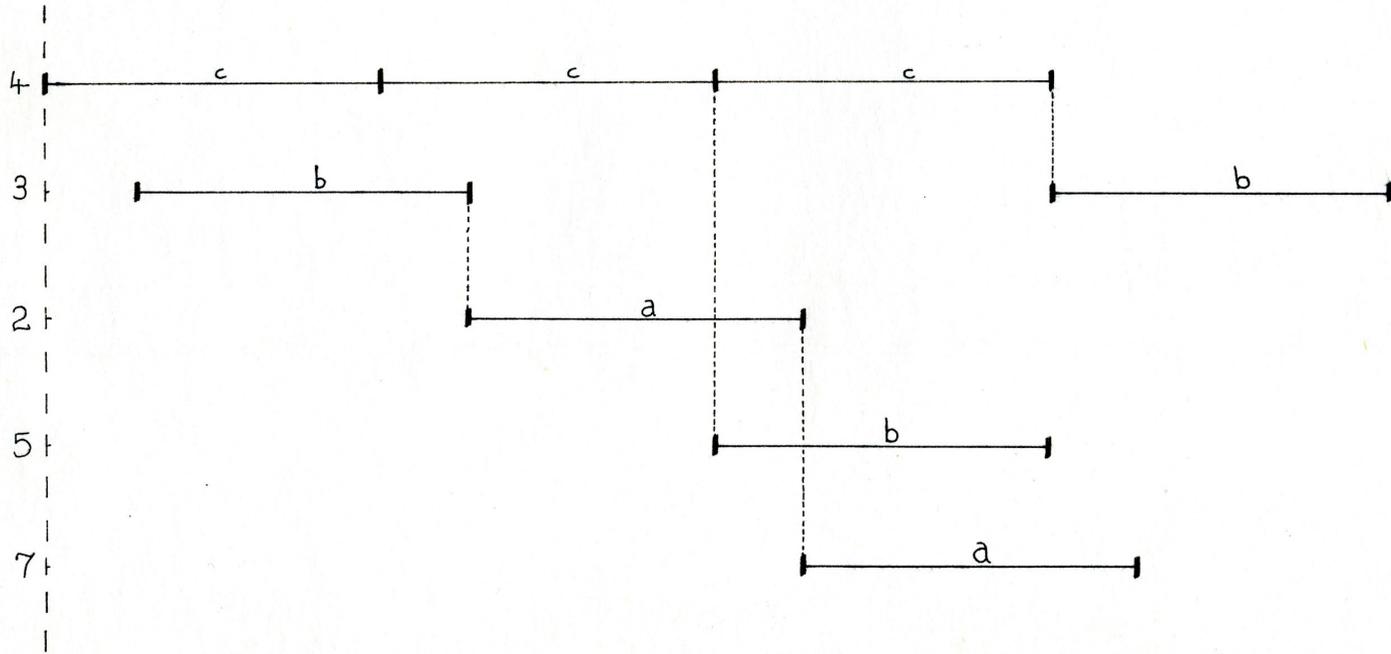
dedicated to Vietnam, Biafra & other wars.



"O DEATH, WHERE IS THY STING-A-LING-A-LING-A-LING?"

Prologue

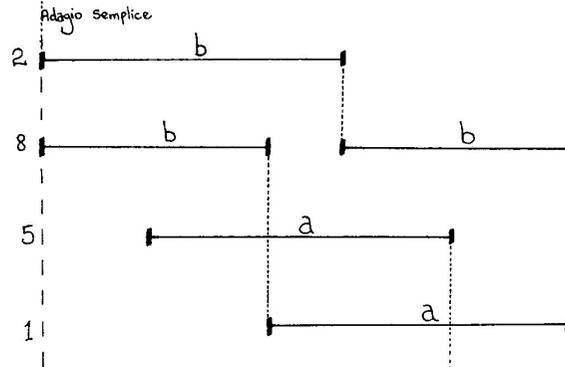
Andante



Everybody ~ in a ragged unison with an obvious rhyme ~ spoken

pianissimo e molto serio.

Passing years will never dim
The loving memories we have of him.
We are proud to know our little mate
Is resting peacefully among the great.



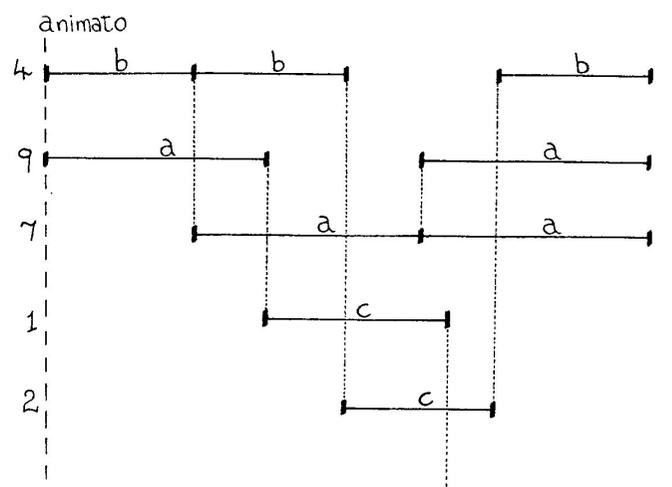
Individual speakers mezzoforte e adagio

Sneeeeeeezzzz

he was great-

-ly

be-loved. (attacca)



Individual speakers. allegro e forte

Piccolo I

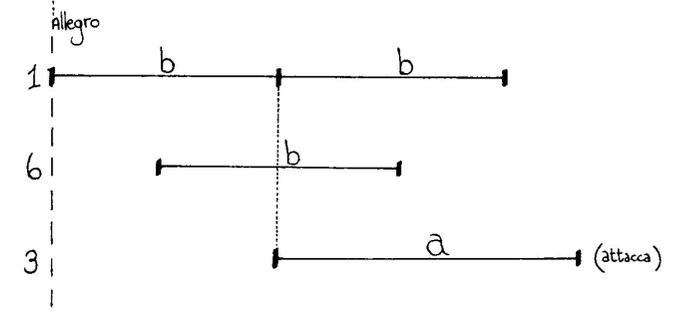
Piccolo II

Musica AND

Mopo

All four speakers.
con amore e mezzopiano

Are waiting here.

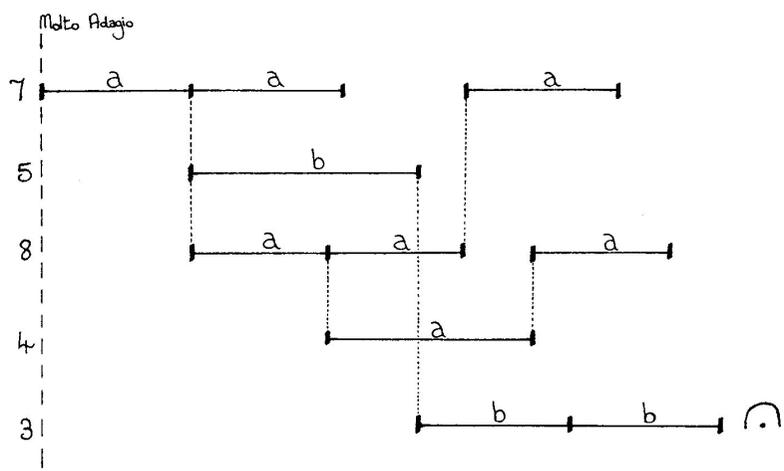


only one speaker.

molto adagio e pesante

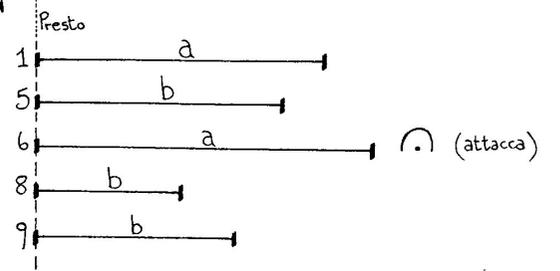
HERE rest the hopes and ASHES of John Clare. (attacca Caoine)

Caoine



Individual speakers (using everybody); changing for each word.
Presto

In love to
BESSIE BAM
Her Mummy, Daddy and Mi-Mi's
Dear good, little wuffin-muffin.



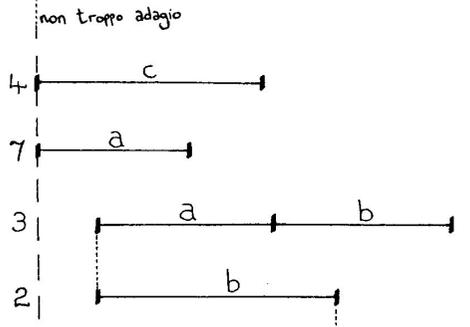
Two speakers, who alternate at each baseline.

grave e deliberamente

Remember me | as you | draw nigh. | As you | are now, | so once was | I. | As I | am now, | so must | you | be,

Everybody fortissimo e largo

Prepare for DEATH and follow me.

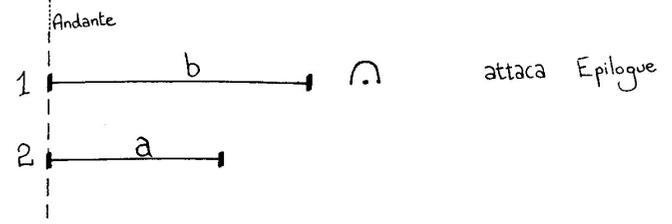


One speaker adagio e solenne

In loving memory of Susan ☺

Everybody mezzoforte con anima. (sempre adagio)

Our wee darling woolly monkey.



Epilogue

