STEVEN BRYANT

Ecstatic Waters

I. Ceremony of Innocence
II. Augurs
III. The Generous Wrath of Simple Men
IV. The Loving Machinery of Justice
V. Spiritus Mundi (epilogue)

PERUSAL SCORE
NOT FOR PERFORMANCE USE
Performance materials available from Steven Bryant:
rental@stevenbryant.com

Commissioned by:
Bowling Green State University Wind Symphony, Bruce Moss, conductor (lead commissioner)
Arizona State University Wind Symphony, Gary Hill, conductor
California State University Stanislaus Wind Ensemble, Stuart Sims, conductor
Eastern Illinois University Wind Symphony, Milton Allen, conductor
Illinois State University Wind Symphony, Stephen Steele, conductor
Michigan State University Wind Symphony, Kevin Sedatole, conductor
Ohio State University Symphonic Band, Richard Blatti, conductor
St. Charles East High School Wind Ensemble, Jim Kull, conductor
University of Miami Wind Ensemble, Gary Green, conductor
University of Michigan Symphony Band, Michael Haithcock, conductor
University of Minnesota Duluth Wind Ensemble, Mark Whitlock, conductor
University of North Texas Wind Symphony, Eugene Corporon, conductor
University of Texas Austin Wind Ensemble, Jerry Junkin, conductor
Valdosta State University Wind Ensemble, Joe Brasheir, conductor
Willowbrook High School Wind Ensemble, William Gilmer, conductor

Version 1.2 (October 2009)
NOTE: This is generally a one-player-per part instrumentation. If doubling is employed (such as in the Clarinet section), please pare the section down to one player per part where necessary (e.g. Mvt. V)

Flute I-II-III-IV (IV doubles Picc.)
Oboe I-II
Bassoon I-II
*Bassoon III-IV – OPTIONAL – see note below
Clarinet in Bb I-II-III-IV
Bs Clarinet I-II
Alto Saxophone I-II
Tenor Saxophone
Baritone Saxophone

Trumpet in Bb I-II-III-IV
Horn in F I-II-III-IV (all parts may be doubled for a maximum of 8 players)
Trombone I-II-III-IV
Euphonium I-II
Tuba I-II

Celesta
Contrabass
Timpani

Percussion
Mvt. I:
Crystal Glasses I, Chimes, Triangle
Crystal Glasses II, Tam-tam
Crystal Glasses III, Bass Drum
Crotale
Glockenspiel
Vibraphone

Mvt. II-III
Crystal Glasses I, Triangle, Sus. Cymbal, Tom-tom 1, Mahler Hammer
Crystal Glasses II, China Cymbal, Tom-tom 2
Crystal Glasses III, China Cymbal, Tam-tam
Glockenspiel, Marimba, Sus. Cymbal
Vibraphone, Thundersheet
Bass Drum

Mvt. IV-V
Chimes, Tambourine, Vibraphone
Marimba
Tam-tom
Bass Drum

*BASSOON III & IV: If you have four Bassoons, use the included optional parts for Bsns III and IV. NOTE: the Bs Clars. are tacet in mm. 410-441 if using four Bassoons. In the remainder of the work, these parts usually double Bassoon I-II, though are tacet in some quieter spots.
**PROGRAM NOTES**

Ecstatic Waters is music of dialectical tension – a juxtaposition of contradictory or opposing musical and extra-musical elements and an attempt to resolve them. The five connected movements hint at a narrative that touches upon naïveté, divination, fanaticism, anarchy, order, and post-human possibilities. Or: W.B. Yeats meets Ray Kurzweil in The Matrix.

The overall title, as well as “Ceremony of Innocence” and “Spiritus Mundi” are taken from poetry of Yeats, whose idiosyncratic personal mythology and symbolism of spiraling chaos and looming apocalypse figured prominently in the genesis of the work. Yet in a nod to the piece’s structural reality – as a hybrid of electronics and living players – Ecstatic Waters also references the confrontation of unruly humanity with the order of the machine, as well as the potential of a post-human synthesis, inspired by futurist thinkers such as Kurzweil.

The first movement, Ceremony of Innocence, begins as a pure expression of exuberant joy in unapologetic Bb Major in the Celesta and Vibraphone. The movement grows in momentum, becoming perhaps too exuberant - the initial simplicity evolves into a full-throated brashness bordering on dangerous arrogance and naïveté, though it retreats from the brink and ends by returning to the opening innocence.

In Mvt. II, Augurs, the unsustainable nature of the previous Ceremony becomes apparent, as the relentless tonic of Bb in the crystal water glasses slowly diffuses into a microtonal cluster, aided and abetted by the trumpets. Chorale-like fragments appear, foretelling the wrathful self-righteousness of Mvt. III. The movement grows inexorably, spiraling wider and wider, like Yeat’s gyre, until “the center cannot hold,” and it erupts with supreme force into The Generous Wrath of Simple Men.

Mvt. III is deceptive, musically contradicting what one might expect of its title. While it erupts at the outset with overwhelming wrath, it quickly collapses into a relentless rhythm of simmering 16th notes. Lyric lines and pyramids unfold around this, interrupted briefly by the forceful anger of a chorale, almost as if trying to drown out and deny anything but its own existence. A moment of delicate lucidity arrives amidst this back-and-forth struggle, but the chorale ultimately dominates, subsuming everything, spiraling out of control, and exploding.

The Loving Machinery of Justice brings machine-like clarity and judgment. Subtle, internal gyrations between pantonality and tonality underpin the dialogue between lyric melody (solo Clarinet and Oboe) and mechanized accompaniment (Bassoons). An emphatic resolution in Ab minor concludes the movement, floating seamlessly into the epilogue, Spiritus Mundi. Reprising music from Mvt. I, this short meditative movement reconciles and releases the earlier excesses.

Ecstatic Waters was commissioned by a consortium of American universities and high schools, administered by Bruce Moss at Bowling Green State University.

World premiere: October 23rd, 2008, Bowling Green State University Wind Symphony, Bruce Moss, conductor

**ABOUT THE COMPOSER**

Steven Bryant’s (b. 1972, Little Rock, Arkansas) musical interests span a variety of styles, and his catalog includes numerous works for wind ensemble, orchestra, electronic and electro-acoustic creations, chamber music, and music for the Web. He studied composition with John Corigliano at The Juilliard School, Cindy McTee at the University of North Texas, and Francis McBeth at Ouachita University. More detailed and current information is available at www.stevenbryant.com.

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www.stevenbryant.com
TECHNICAL INFORMATION and REQUIREMENTS

NOTE: Always check www.stevenbryant.com for the latest information on this piece

The technical setup for Ecstatic Waters is designed to be as simple, robust, and reliable as possible. More detailed information, including HOW-TO videos, can be found at stevenbryant.com. If you bring me out for a residency, I can provide a laptop and audio interface. I will still need a score-follower assistant (see below), and a second, backup computer and audio interface will also be required.

IN PERFORMANCE: you will need one person to trigger the cues on the computer (i.e. press the keys), one person to sit next to him/her, following the score. A third person monitoring the sound levels at the mixer is helpful, but not absolutely required. All will be seated in the audience, at the soundboard (preferably in the center of the hall).

CLICK TRACK: The conductor will wear a single earpiece with click tracks for each of the cues beginning 2-3 bars before the actual entrance of electronic sound. These clicks are notated in the score in the electronics staff. These will only be audible to the conductor, NOT to the band or the audience (if they are, something’s wrong!). An optional monitor placed on the stage, facing up toward the conductor, will allow him/her to hear the actual electronic tracks. Only the click will be audible in the earpiece.

IN REHEARSAL: you may start at any rehearsal number, and the electronics will be able to begin with you at that point.

SOUND MIX: The electronic and acoustic sounds must mesh seamlessly throughout the work. Do whatever is necessary with the speaker placement for your particular hall to achieve this mix. The speakers should NOT be very far from the band (i.e. don’t use a house PA system with speakers for above, or far to the left and right of, the stage).

2.1 SPEAKERS
Stereo high-quality speakers and subwoofer(s) (Class A amps) placed onstage on either side of the ensemble (Left and Right). Depending on the hall, the speakers may work better behind or in front of the ensemble - wherever the best mix between the band and the electronics can be obtained. DO NOT use a built-in house PA system - the speakers tend to be placed high above the stage, or too far to the sides, and result in stark separation of the electronic sounds from the band. The piece is predicated on a seamless mix of these two elements, so the speakers should be as close to the band as possible. Also note that the subwoofer is NOT optional.

ONSTAGE MONITORS:
OPTIONAL: 1 for conductor, and 1 for the percussion section (generally placed facing across the section). These are up to the conductor’s discretion, but in practice I’ve found having a monitor for the percussion section to be immensely helpful with rhythmic alignment.

IN-EAR MONITOR (typically wireless) for the conductor. This is fed a separate, mono channel (from the LAPTOP AUDIO INTERFACE). This is a click-track, and must NOT be audible in the main speakers or normal monitors, ONLY in the IN-EAR. Conductors typically wear it in just one ear - if a stereo headset/earbuds are used, make sure the unused side is taped off or muted somehow - if not, the click will be audible to the audience in the quiet sections.

OPTIONAL: A second earpiece/earbud headphone for the Bass player may be helpful at measures 438-442.

1 MICROPHONE
Mic for solo clarinet (sitting in section) - this should be very directional to block out surrounding instruments, and placed as close to the barrel of the clarinet as is comfortable for the player.

MIXER (4 channels is sufficient)
Mic into the mixer. Send 1 line-level output (direct feed from the Clarinet mic) from the mixer to the Laptop’s audio interface. Though not strictly necessary, I recommend the stereo and the subwoofer output from the audio interface run into the mixer so levels can be easily controlled.

LAPTOP/DESKTOP COMPUTER (provided by composer for the duration of his residency, if hired to run the electronics)
Any Macintosh computer with 1 GB of free HD space, 1.5 GHz+ processor, 2Gb+ RAM, and appropriate port for audio interface below (i.e. Firewire 400 or USB2) should work. Software: Ableton Live 8 or later (the demo version will work fine - you do NOT need to purchase this). The required FX plugs-ins are included with the package provided with the parts, along with detailed instructions. I use a MacBook Pro with a MOTU Ultralite Firewire interface.

I STRONGLY RECOMMEND you have a second computer running the same software as a backup in performance. If I’m in residence, and even if I bring my own setup, I will require you to have a second computer available and setup, along with a second interface. Usually, this will be the machine you’ve been using in rehearsals. This may seem like overkill, but trust me, it’s worth it. There are additional “best practices” included in the electronics documentation (i.e. always restart the computer before rehearsal and the performance). Please pay close attention to that information.

AUDIO INTERFACE (provided by composer if hired to run the electronics)
Any 4-channel FIREWIRE interface should work. Must be compatible with Ableton Live (almost all are). I use a MOTU Ultralite, though any MOTU, M-AUDIO, etc. should work. I use FIREWIRE, though a USB2 interface will also work fine.

IN: 1 line-level send from MIXER above (in my case, I’d need Balanced TRS ¼”)
OUT: 4 channels: 3-channel mix (L, R, sub) to mixer/amplifier (in my case, I’d send Balanced TRS ¼”); 4th channel to IN-EAR monitor
Contrabass - optional amplification (only if necessary for balance). If so, this should be a separate amp NOT connected to the PA system.
Ecstatic Waters
- Score -
Ecstatic Waters
The sound should be quiet and sparse—don't let any figures "pop" out of the texture.
Play the notated figures approximately as written. Don't synchronize.
Improvise rapidly in this manner (these pitches only)

don’t mask Horns and Euph.

Cresc. poco a poco

Cresc. poco a poco
Improvise rapidly in this manner (these pitches only)
Improvise rapidly in this manner (these pitches only)
III. The Generous Wrath of Simple Men

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ca. 15-18"

fluttertongue

Highest note possible

Almost to nothing before beginning Mvtn. IV)

Highest note possible

SWINGING SWINGING

Highest note possible

Highest note possible

Almost to nothing before ending Mvtn. IV)

Highest note possible

Highest note possible

Highest note possible

Highest note possible

Highest note possible

Almost to nothing before ending Mvtn. IV)

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Highest note possible
IV. The Loving Machinery of Justice

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**PERUSAL SCORE**

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**NOTE:** If using 4 Bsns, the Bn. Clars. do NOT play mm. 410-441

"Echo" slightly softer than Bsn. 1

"Echo" slightly softer than Bsn. 2

Mm. 415-441: Mimic phrasing and articulation of Cl. 1,
IV. The Loving Machinery of Justice
Quirky, quasi-funk 'groove' begins.

Playback establishes and maintains time through m. 479