James Cave

Returns
An opera in one act, based on the play 'Returns' by Joshua Casteel

Score: James Cave
Libretto: Bethan Ellis

In memory of Joshua Casteel (1979-2012)

Characters:

James (baritone)
Jonathan (high tenor)
Mark (low countertenor)
Sgt Patrick (mezzo-soprano)
Ahmed (bass-baritone)
Dhahur: (treble)

Ensemble:

Clarinet in B Flat (doubling Bass Clarinet in B Flat)
Trumpet in B flat (doubling Cornet in B flat, Piccolo Trumpet in B flat, Flugelhorn)
Horn in F
Percussion (2 players): timpani, bass drum, tam-tam, water gong, medium gong, snare drum, timbales, dumbek, claves, temple blocks, vibraphone, marimba)
Harp
Piano
Oud (doubling mandolin and banjo)
Violin
Viola
Violoncello
Double Bass

Duration: c. 80 mins

Score in C

Text from 'Returns' by Joshua Casteel is used by kind permission of the Joshua Casteel Foundation.

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Performance note:

In this score, both natural and artificial harmonics are indicated by a diamond-shape notehead. (In early workshops, it was determined that this was the easiest way of enabling players to decide how best to voice lengthy passages of harmonics.) All harmonics are therefore written at pitch.

Normal conventions have been observed with regards to accidentals. However, in instances where the score may be ambiguous, and in passages where accurate reading at speed is required, additional accidentals have been used for convenience.

All vocal parts are written at pitch, including Jonathan, the tenor part.

Dhahur should ideally be played by a boy treble. If a treble is not available, the part may be taken by a young tenor: in this case, the part should be transposed down an octave.
Suddenly more tranquil

You don’t try to come back it comes back

Guess it’s best you try to make sense of it all. But you can’t really ask what was it like? It still is as it was.

like a sarangi
like a Purcellian ground bass...
James chuckles, turns towards Mark

Mark: Why, said

Jonathan: I can’t Mark I can’t

James: 

Mark: I can’t Mark I can’t

It’s not that am pin These things are slow
The whirlwind returns
PP

Sg. Patrick

Spe here, sir! Are you all right? Jones

Vous être bien gentil

Voix

Perc. 1.

JAMES:

Riding in convoy; quicker; urgent

SGT PATRICK:

Don't get too close to the road, sir. You have to drive your self, or the car may run away. If you want to see the road, you must ride over it.

Voice

PP
That's a lie we need no proof
but not supposed to say how
were kind of things
That you're keep to me is so neat
till I thought people for me in the

SGT PATRICK:

(Soldier in uniform, standing at attention)

Music:...
No flood there's going to be a flood y flood. The Lord said to Noah there's going to be a flood y flood.

The Lord said to Noah there's going to be a flood y flood.

Get these chil...
MARK: I'm just trying to help you. I want you to get out of your head. I can do it.

JAMES: My mind is made up! Why don't you just leave me alone!

MARK: It's not just your mind, J. It's your whole system. You're stuck in this rut, and I want to help you.

JAMES: I don't need your help! I'm fine.

MARK: I'm not trying to change you. I'm just trying to help you see your options.

JAMES: (calmly) I appreciate your concern, but I can handle this on my own.

MARK: I know you can, J. That's why I'm here. I want to make sure you're making the right decision.

JAMES: (shakes his head) I'm fine. I just need some time to think.

MARK: If you need me, I'll be here. Let me know when you're ready to talk.

JAMES: (smiles) Thanks, Mark. I appreciate it.

MARK: Of course, J. I'm here for you.

JAMES: (smiling) I know. And I appreciate it.
We were so proud, he and I
So as I grew up and
Sometimes he'd start his feet
At first, I feared it was the same
But he could see things a short time
I wanted him to

And the way the west was just to lose
A thing I don't know how to sit in the light
When the sun goes down, I'm just theushman
But by ten, parts sure feel
g

James

We made them fast, in that cold
The snow would just as a train
Like the vastness of the vast bar
Carrying me to the bar
The bar
The bar

Perc.

To Bass Drum

Perc.

Perc.

James

Guitar

Vo.

Vo.

Ob.
Jonathan

Vln. 1

B. Cl.

Oud

Pno.

Vla.

Db.

Hp.

MARK: sfpp towards sul pont

were once required
Jonathan: Helped them to pray

James: Pray for what?
When I crossed the border.

Reflection: evoking a vast open space.

Bass Drum

When

When I crossed the border.

naturale

When

When

When

When

When
Unquestionably, Ahmed had been there. He knew the place like the back of his hand. The halls were familiar, the doors were old, the furniture was checked, like the ones at home. But this place was not the same. It was different, somehow. The memories of his childhood came rushing back, but they were gone. Suddenly, bare; desolate.
I'd been believing the lies.
I must have passed the mark.
With forward movement as if in pain.
Dahur:

Vln. 1

Tpt.

Db.

Cl.

Cl.

James:

Why are you here?
Why?
I don't want to ask you here!

Vls.

Vla.

Vc.

D§

C§

To piccolo Trumpet

show you my face

Let you see it from with in

I'm not sure if you like

just let me walk away now.
To Cornet

DHAHUR:

JAMES:

Jonathan:

I will wash my hands Among thee in me
And will come相近 theAlternative Lord

The panted de ser air wrap around your face and hands Like a stone breaken

JAMES:

Jonathan:
SGT PATRICK:

[Music notation and lyrics]

MARK and SGT PATRICK (sung):

[Musical notation and lyrics]

MARK: For his

Jonathan: Then the lights

Alex: One the lights! Then the air

[Music notation and lyrics]
DHAJUR approaches JAMES, lowers before him as if to pray (like a Russian Orthodox priest; hurried) (suddenly breaking off)

DHAJUR:

James:

No! have you lost your 

DHAJUR: your 

James: these aren't your words.

DHAJUR: Those aren't your words.

James: those aren't your words.

DHAJUR: those aren't your words.

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DHAJUR: those aren't your words
JAMES holds the M16 to his head.

James: Those are my hands. My hands are faggot tips dust in my clothing.

DHAHUR: Why did you want to see me?

JAMES: Because it was.

DHAHUR: (half-spoken; sotto voce) Why did you want to see me?

JAMES: Because it was.