

James Whittle

# nothing new

text for solo bass clarinet

**Performance Note**

The aim for a performance of this piece should be to convey a persona that is an interpretation of the selected text, one example of an imaginary speaker reciting the text in a particular way and notated as such.

The performer should first imagine and experiment with finding a natural tempo and pacing for a recitation of the whole text, and so find a natural, comfortable tempo for and pacing of the music. Rhythms are written to imitate speech, the words and their phrasing, but not always as one would read normally (silently or aloud). The piece is notated conventionally to facilitate the learning of a natural pace, which should incorporate the performer's choices of rubato that characterise the text and its interpretation (the performer should add in as much as possible).

The performer should then imagine this natural pace exaggerated and intensified to the maximum extent: the overall tempo changes should be as different as possible, the nuances of rubato become events that occur far quicker in time and change more dramatically.

It is therefore likely that on balance, some faster passages will go at a speed that would be impossible to speak or read: this effect is desired. While it is easier to speak or read any text at an unusually slow pace, the effect is again desired conversely so that slower passages are played unnaturally slowly compared to the natural reading pace.

The opening note features a notehead that signals a breath noise: where this notehead occurs the performer should make an audible breath, in the notated rhythm. These breaths are part of the imagined persona's interpretation and characterisation, so must be performed and should be accentuated accordingly. They are notated with relative subdivisions of a crochet beat to show where they should be longer or shorter. The performer may also breathe naturally and silently (inconspicuously) at other moments, such as in the pauses at the end of sentences.

**Duration: c.12 minutes**

for Sarah Watts,

# nothing new

Samuel Beckett (1906 - 1989)  
'10', *Texts for Nothing* (1950-52)  
Translated by the author.

James Whittle (b. 1989)  
May-June 2012

[Tempo should always be flexibly in flux, given the player's delivery of the text.]

accel. . . . . rit. . . . .

*vehemently exasperated to incessantly manic* *cynically subdued...* *and nostalgic of a loss...*

*ff f < ff > mf < ff sf mf < f > mf f = ff mf fff*  
*f < pp sub. p mp = p ppp*

(breath in)

Bass Clarinet in B $\flat$

GIVE UP, but it's all gi-ven up, it's no - thing — new, I'm — no-thing — new. Ah so there was some-thing once, I had some-thing once.

rit. . . . .

*a melancholic murmur* *slightly resentful* *matter-of-factly* *broadly*

*ppp p mp p mf ppp p = mp p f sf p sub. mp sub. mf*

3 5 5 3

It may be thought there was, so long as it's known there was not, nev-er an-y-thing, but giv-ing up. But let us sup-pose there was not, that is to say, let us sup-pose there was some-thing once,

*a whisper* *sombre, drawn-out* *instantly bold and formal, but cynical* *defiantly*

*p sub. ppp pp p p mp ppp mf > mp f sf p f rf sfp ff*

3 5 3

in a head, in a heart, in a hand, be-fore all o-pened, emp-tied, shut a-gain and froze. This is most re-a-ssu-ring, af-ter such a fright, and em-bol-dens me to go on once a - gain.

*shocked - saddened* *brooding* *suddenly chatty* *wavering*

*f* *p* *pp* *p* *mp* *mf* *sf f* *pp* *sf - mf* *f* *mp* *pp*

slap

But there is not si-lence. No, there is ut-te-rance, some-where some-one is ut-te-ring. In-an-i-ties, a-greed, but is that e-nough, is that e-nough, to make sense?

*wearily* *bored* *annoyed - increasingly with disgust* *accel.*

*pp* *sf* *f* *ff rf mp sub.* *p* *mf*

I see what it is, the head has fall-en be-hind, all the rest has gone on, the head and its a-nus the mouth, or else it has gone on a-lone, all a-lone on its

*f* *ff* *fff* *tr* *(fff)* *emptily* *trailing off, blankly*

*pp* *mp* *pp*

old prowl, slob-be-ring its shit and la-pping it back off the lips like in the days when it fan-cied it-self. But the heart's not in it an-y more, nor is the ap-pe-tite what it was.

[Tempo should always be flexibly in flux, given the player's delivery of the text.  
Rhythm is free and should be based on the implied notated lengths notated and the performer's interpretation of the text.]

*irritated, put out* *brim with resentment* *wearisome* *sneering*

So home to roost it comes a-mong my o-ther as-sets, home yet a-gain, and no trick-e-ry in-volved, that old past e-ver new, e-ver end-ing, e-ver end-ed, with all its hid-den trea-sures of

*resignedly wistful* *buoyantly* *perturbed* *chatty* *absurd exclamation* *morbidly*

pro-mise for to-mor-row, and of con-so-la-tion for to-day. And I'm in good hands a-gain, they hold my head from be-hind, in-tri-guing de-tail, as at the hair-dress-er's, the fore-fin-gers close my eyes, the

*a bit disgusted* *vacantly* *arguing* *vacantly* *increasingly frightened*

mid-dle fin-gers my nos-trils, the thumbs stop up my ears, but im-per-fect-ly, to en-a-ble me to hear, but im-per-fect-ly, while the four re-main-ing make mer-ry with my jaws and tongue,

*oppressive* *vacantly* *preach* *sweetly* *gradually becoming more grandiose, aristocratic and profound*

to en-a-ble me to suf-fo-cate, but im-per-fect-ly, and to ut-ter, for my good, what I must ut-ter, for my fu-ture good, well known dit-ty, and in par-ti-cu-lar to ob-serve with-out de-lay,

*breathlessly relieved* *suddenly fearful*

speak-ing of the pre-sent mo-ment, that worse have been known to pass, that it will pass in time, a mere mo-ment of res-pite which but for this first aid might have proved fa-tal,

*humble* *pp* *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *p* *mp* *p* *f* *p* *sf* *mf* *f* *pp* *selfish* *(pp)* *mp* *sf* *mf*

and that one day I shall know a gain that I once was, and rough - ly who, and how to go on, and speak un-aid-ed, nice - ly, a-bout num-ber one and his pale im - i - ta - tions. And it is poss-i-ble, just, for I must not be too af

timbral trill

*f* *mf* *p* *mf* *f* *mp* *mf* *ff* *and repulsive* *mp* *f* *ff* *mf* *forceful*

firm-a-tive at this stage, it would not be in my in - te - rest, that o - ther fin - gers, quite a diff - e - rent gang, o - ther ten - ta - cles, that's more like it, o - ther cha - ri - ta - ble suck - ers, waste no more timetry - ing to get it right, will take down my

*f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *mp* *f* *ff* *mp* *mf* *p* *impatient* *proud*

dec - la - ra - tions. so that at the close of the in - ter - mi - na - ble de - li - ri - um, should it e - ver re - sume, I may not be re - proached with hav - ing fal - tered.

*pp* *sf* *f* *mp* *p* *mf* *mf* *sf* *f* *crestfallen* *cynical* *mellifluously enchanting* *mischievous*

This is aw - ful, aw - ful, at least there's that to be thank ful for. And per - haps be - side me, and all a - round, o - ther souls are be - ing licked in - to shape,

*p* *mf* *sf* *pp* *mp* *p* *mf* *f* *sf* *mf* *f* *sf* *p sub.* *pp* *sentimental* *obstinate* *grievous* *optimistic*

souls swooned a - way, or sick with o - ver - use, or be - cause no use could be found for them, but still fit for use, or fit on - ly to be cast a - way, pale im - i - ta - tions of mine.

[Tempo should always be flexibly in flux, given the player's delivery of the text.  
Pitch is free and should be based on the implications of the notated contours, and the performer's interpretation of the text.]

*suddenly angered* *delirious* *pious* *ludicrous*

*fff f* *sff mf* *sff mf* *sff sff p sub.* *f sub.* *mp* *f*

Or has it knelled here at last for our com - mit-tal to flesh, as the dead are com-mitt-ed to the ground, in the ho - ur of their death at last, and at the place where they die, to keep the ex - pen - ses down or for our re - as - sign - ment

*grim* *scathing* *chirpy* *scathing*

*mp* *fp* *pp* *f* *mp* *f* *p* *f*

souls of the still - born, or dead be - fore the bo - dy, or still young in the midst of the ru - ins, or nev - er come to life through in - ca - pa - ci - ty or for some o ther rea son, or the im - mor - tal type, there must be a few of them too, whose bod - ies were

*chirpy* *grim* *obstinate*

*sff* *mp fmp* *p* *mf* *p* *mf* *ff*

al - ways wrong but pa - ti - ence there's a true one in pick - le, a - mong the un - born hordes, the true se - pul - chral bo - dy, for the liv - ing have no room for a se - cond.

*lament* *disparaging*

*mp* *pp* *mf*

No, no souls, or bod - ies, or birth, or life, or death, you've got to go on with - out an - y of that junk, that's all dead with words, with ex - cess of words, they can say no - thing else, they say there is no - thing

*mocking* *jeering* *manipulative*

*ff* *mp* *f* *p* *mp* *pp* *p*

else, that here it's that and no - thing else, but they won't say it e - ter - nal - ly, they'll find some o - ther non - sense, no mat - ter what, and I'll be a - ble to go on, no, I'll be a - ble to stop, or

*carefully*

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

start, a - noth - er guzz - le of lies but pip - ing hot, it will last my time, it will last my time and place, my voice and si - lence, a voice and si - lence, the voice of my si - lence.

[Tempo should always be flexibly in flux, given the player's delivery of the text.]

Pitch and rhythm are free and should be based on the implications of the notated contours, and the performer's interpretation of the text.]

*cautionary* *mumbling*

It's with such pros - pects they ex - hort you to have pa - tience, where - as you are pa - tient, and calm, some - how some - where calm, what calm here, ah that's an i -

*burbling* *wittering*

dea, say how calm it is here, and how fine I feel, and how si - lent I am, I'll start right a - way, I'll say what calm and si - lence, which no -

*prattling*

thing has e - ver bro - ken, no - thing will e - ver break, which say - ing I don't break, or sa - ying I'll be sa - ying, yes, I'll say all that to - mor - row, yes, to - mor - row eve - ning, some

*gibbering* *blethering*

o - ther eve - ning, not this eve - ning, this eve - ning it's too late, too late to get things right, I'll go to sleep, so that I may say, hear my - self

*jabbering* *gabbling*

say, a lit - tle la - ter, I've slept, he's slept, but he won't have slept, or else he's slee - ping now, he'll have done no - thing, no - thing but go on, do -

*blustering*

ing what, do - ing what he does, that is to say, I don't know, gi - ving up, that's it, I'll have gone on gi - ving up, ha - ving had no - thing, not be - ing there.