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Six Blake Songs

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Graduate Program in Music

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree in Master of Music

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Whiting, Wilyln, "Six Blake Songs" (2018). *Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Repository*. 5337.
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Abstract

Six Blake Songs is a song cycle for Soprano and mixed chamber ensemble (Flute, Clarinet, Saxophone, Violin and Viola). The work sets several texts by the English poet William Blake (1757-1827), which all share the central theme of Time. Nearly all of these texts are excerpts from larger works, with the exception of the poem *Ah, Sunflower*, which is presented at the work's conclusion. Discrete collections of frequencies, which are derived from either the frequency modulation of two notes or from the overtones of a single fundamental, provide the pitch content for the entire piece. In addition, many of the durations of notes, gestures, and phrases, are designed to fluctuate in size systematically.

Keywords

chamber music, vocal music, song cycle, William Blake, Spectralism, frequency modulation, overtones

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Dr. Paul Frehner for fulfilling the role of advisor for this thesis and for his continuing guidance and support. I would also like to thank Dr. David Myska for acting as the second reader of this thesis.

Lastly, I would like to thank the performers that made the premiere of this work possible: Susan Dworkin, Monique Aubé, Jossée MacInnis, Pascal Bard, Francisco Barradas, Sarah DeNiverville, and conductor Baptiste Boiron.

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Wilyn Whiting

SIX BLAKE SONGS

for Soprano and Ensemble

Words by William Blake

(2018)

Text

I - .Prologue

'The morning comes, the night decays, the watchmen leave their stations;

The grave is burst, the spires shed, the linen wrapped up;

The bones of death, the covering clay, the sinews shrunk & dried.

Reviving shake, aspiring move, breathing, awakening,

(*America 1793*: Plate 6; lines 37 - 40)

II - Three Proverbs in Canon

The eyes of fire, the nostrils of air, the mouth of water, the beard of earth.

The head Sublime, the heart Pathos, the genitals Beauty, the hands and feet Proportion.

The roaring of lions, the howling of wolves, the raging of the stormy sea, and the destructive sword are portions of eternity too great for the eye of man.

(‘III - Proverbs of Hell’ from *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell 1790*: Pl.9; ln.48, Pl.10; ln.61, and Pl.8; ln.27)

III - Two Slow Proverbs

Eternity is in love with the productions of Time... but of wisdom, no clock can measure.

(‘III - Proverbs of Hell’ from *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell 1790*: Pl.7; ln.10 and 12)

IV – Dialogue

Every night and every morn

Some to misery are born;

Every morn and every night

Some are born to sweet delight.

Some are born to sweet delight,

Some are born to endless night.

(‘VIII - Auguries of Innocence’ from *The Pickering Manuscript’ 1803*: ln.119 - 124)

'Does spring hide its joy
 When buds and blossoms grow?
 Does the sower
 Sow by night,
 Or the ploughman in darkness plough?
 ('II - Earth's Answer' from *Songs of Experience 1794*:ln.16 - 20)

V - The Caverns of the Grave I've Seen
 Re-engraved time after time,
 Ever in their youthful prime,
 My designs unchanged remain;
 Time may rage but rage in vain.
 For above Time's troubled fountains
 On the great Atlantic mountains,
 In my golden house on high,
 There they shine eternally.
 ('XXXIV' from *Miscellaneous Verses 1809-1812*: ln.13 - 20)

VI - Ah, Sunflower
 Ah, Sunflower, weary of time,
 Who countest the steps of the sun,
 Seeking after that gilden clime
 Where the traveller's journey is done;
 Where the youth pined away with desire
 And the pale virgin shrouded in snow
 Arise from their graves and aspire
 Where my sunflower wishes to go.
 ('XX - Ah, Sunflower' from *Songs of Experience 1794*: ln.1 - 8)

Instrumentation

Flute (also Piccolo)

Clarinet in Bb (also Bass Clarinet)

Alto Saxophone (also Tenor Sax)

Soprano

Violin

Viola*

* String IV is tuned, down a semitone,
to B2. Scordatura is notated at sounding
pitch in this score.

Duration: c. 21 minutes

This is a Concert Score

Program Note

Six Blake Songs is a setting of various poems, excerpts and proverbs written by William Blake throughout his lifetime. A general open-endedness and an overt mysticism surround these texts and associations can easily be drawn between them. The concept of time is common to all the texts I have chosen to set.

William Blake (1757-1827) was an English poet; painter and printmaker closely associated with the Romantic art movements of the 19th century. He made his living as a commercial engraver in London and also produced illuminated manuscripts of his own poetry. He strove to create a mythology that could encode his own spiritual and political ideals into a prophetic message.

Performance Note

\sharp = $\frac{3}{4}$ tones sharp

\sharp = $\frac{1}{4}$ tone sharp

$\flat \flat \sharp$ = slightly raised

$\flat \flat \sharp$ = slightly lowered

\flat = $\frac{1}{4}$ tone flat

\flat = $\frac{3}{4}$ tones flat

Six Blake Songs

Willyn Whiting

I - Prologue

Grave $\text{♩} = 60$

Flute

Bass Clarinet

Tenor Sax

Soprano

Violin

Viola (Scordatura IV = B)

molto S.T.

pp *mf* *pp* *f*

mf *f*

pp *mf* *pp* *f*

pp *mf* *pp* *f*

Detailed description: This system contains the first three measures of the Prologue. The Flute part is silent. The Bass Clarinet and Tenor Sax parts feature melodic lines with dynamic markings of *pp*, *mf*, *pp*, and *f*. The Tenor Sax part includes triplet markings. The Violin and Viola parts are marked *molto S.T.* and play a similar melodic line with dynamics *pp*, *mf*, *pp*, and *f*.



Fl.

B. Cl.

T. Sx.

Vln.

Vla.

p *to Bb*

pp *ff* *ff* *mf*

ff *ff* *mf* *mf*

pp *ff* *mf*

pp *ff* *mf*

Detailed description: This system contains measures 4-6. The Flute part enters in measure 4 with a dynamic of *p*. The Bass Clarinet part has a dynamic of *pp* in measure 4, *ff* in measure 5, and a key signature change to Bb in measure 6. The Tenor Sax part has dynamics of *ff* and *ff*. The Violin and Viola parts have dynamics of *pp*, *ff*, and *mf*.

8

Fl. *p* *mp* *mf*

B♭ Cl. *pp* *mf*

T. Sx. *pp* *mp* *ff*³

Vln. *mp* *mf* *f* *ff*

Vla. *pp* *mp* *mf* *f* *ff*

(sing the upper voice)

11

Fl. *pp* *p* *mp* *p* *mp* *p* *pp* *mp*

B♭ Cl. *mf* *pp*

T. Sx. *ff* *pp* *p* *mf*

S. *mp* niente *mp*
The morn - ing comes, the night

Vln. *ff* *mf* *mp*

Vla. *ff* *pp* *mp* *pp* *mf* *mp*

Bisb.

S.T.

14

Fl. *pp* *mp* *pp*

B♭ Cl. *pp* *p* *mp* *ff*

T. Sx. *f* *pp* *p*

S. 14 *mp* *f* *mp* *mf*
de cays, the watch

Vln. *mp* *pp* *f*

Vla. *mp* *p* *pp* *f* *ord.* *pp*

16

Fl. *p* *f* *f* *p*

B♭ Cl. *p* *f* *p* *f* *pp*

T. Sx. *f* *p* *f*

S. 16 *mp* *fp*
men leave

Vln. *f* *p* *f* *f* *pp* *IV*

Vla. *p* *mp* *f*

18

Fl. *f* *pp* *mp* *ff*

B♭ Cl. *p* *mf* *pp* *mp* *mf* **to Bass**

T. Sx. *p* *f* *f* *pp* *mp* *ff*

S. *mp* *fp* *mp* *pp*
their sta - tions, their sta - tions;

Vln. *mf* *ff* *pp* *mp* *ff*

Vla. *p* *ff* *ff* *p* *ff*



C

18

Fl. *p* *mf* *p* *mf* *p* *mf* *pp*

B. Cl. *ppp* *pp* *p* *mp*

T. Sx. *p* *mp* *pp* *p*

Vln. *pp* *mp* *mf* *ff* *S.P.*

Vla. *pp* *p* *mp* *mf* *ff* *S.P.*

D *(blend with soprano)*

Fl. *ff* *p* *mp* *mf*

B. Cl. *ff* *ff* *p* *f* *ff* *p* *ff*

T. Sx. *ff* *ff* *p* *f* *ff* *p* *ff* *subito p*

27 *ff* *mp*

S The grave is burst, the spires shed, the lin - en

Vln. *subito p* *fp* *fp* *fp* *p* *fp* *pp* *p* *mp*

Vla. *ff* *subito p* *mp*

molto S.P.

molto S.P.

E Brillante

32

Fl. *f* *ff* *ff* *p*

B. Cl. *ff*

T. Sx. *ff* *ff*

S *mf* *f* *ff*

wrapped up

Vln. *mf* *ff* *p* *(molto S.P.)*

Vla. *f* *ff* *(molto S.P.)* 6 5 7

34

Fl.

B. Cl.

T. Sx.

S

Vln.

Vla.

mp *ff* *f*

mp *ff* *ff* *subito p*

The bones of death

ord. *ord.*

36

Fl.

B. Cl.

T. Sx.

S

Vln.

Vla.

p *ff* *p* *p* *ff* *p*

ff *mp* *ff* *ff*

ff *mp* *ff* *ff*

mp *ff* *mp* *ff* *f* *mf*

the cov - ring clay the sin - ews shrunk and dry'd

ff *p* *p* *ff* *p*

ff *mp* *ff* *subito p* *ff*

F

Fl. *p*

B. Cl. *mp* *ff* *ff* *mp*

T. Sx. *mp* *ff* *ff* *mp*

S. 40 *mp* *mf* *f* *ff*
re - viv - ing - shake

Vln. *p* *ff* *p*

Vla. *mp* *ff* *subito p* *ff* *mp*

G

Fl. *p* *ff* *subito p* *p*

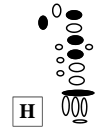
B. Cl. *ff* *ff* *mp* *ff*

T. Sx. *ff* *ff* *mp* *ff*

S. 43 *mf*
in - spir -

Vln. *p* *ff* *subito p* *p*

Vla. *ff* *p* *ff* *mp* *ff* *subito p*



47

Fl. *ff* > *p* *p* *ff* > *p*

B. Cl. *ff* *mp* *ff* *ff*

T. Sx. *ff* *mp* *ff* *ff*

S *f* *ff* *p* *mp*
ing move breath ing

Vln. *ff* *subito p* *ff* > *p*

Vla. *ff* *mp* *ff* *subito p* *ff*

51

Fl. *p* *ff*

B. Cl. *mp* *ff* *fff* *fff* to Bb

T. Sx. *mp* *ff* *ff* *fff* to Alto

S *mf* *f* *ff*
a wa ken ing

Vln. *p* *ff*

Vla. *mp* *ff* *subito p* *ff* *fff* *attacca*

II - Three Proverbs in Canon

Giacoso (♩ = 60)

54

Vln. *ff* *p* *ff* *p* *ff* *p* *ff* *p*

Vla. *ff* *p*

molto vib. *non vib.*

III

IV



I

S

mf

The eyes of fire the nostrils of air the

59

Vln. *ff* *p* *mf* *p* *mf*

Vla. *p* *p* *p*

III



S

mouth of water the beard of earth

63

Vln. *p* *mf* *p*

Vla. *p*

III

J *poco agitato*

Fl. *p* *ff* *p* *f* *mp* *p* *f*

S. *mp*
The _____ head sub - lime the _____ heart pa - thos _____

Vln. *p* *mp* *f* *mp* *pp* *ord.* *f*

Vla. *ff* *pp*

molto vib. *non vib.*

Fl. *p* *p* *mf* *pp* *ord.*

B♭ Cl. *pp* *mp* *pp*

S. *pp*
the gen - i - tals beau - ty _____ the _____ hands and feet pro - por - tion

Vln. *pp* *ord.*

Vla. *pp*

molto vib. *non vib.*

K

77

Fl. *mf* *pp* *mp* *molto vib*

B♭ Cl. *pp* *mp* *pp*

A. Sx. *f* *p* *f* *p* *f*

S *f* *mf*

the roaring of lions the howling of

77

Vln. *mf* *pp* *molto vib*

Vla. *f* *p* *pp* *f* *p* *pp* *f* *p* *pp* *f*

|||

→ non vib

84

Fl. *pp* *ord.* *mp* *pp*

B♭ Cl. *ppp*

A. Sx. *p* *f* *p* *mf*

S *mp*

wolves the raging of the storm -

84

Vln. *pp* *ord.* *mp* *p* *pp* *mf*

Vla. *pp* *mf* *p* *pp* *mf*

88

Fl. *pp*

B♭ Cl. *ppp*

A. Sx. *pp* *mp* *p*

S *mp*
y sea and

Vln. *ppp* *non vib*

Vla. *pp* *mp*



Rallentando

91

Fl. *non vib* *molto vib* *to Picc* *f*

B♭ Cl. *pp* *f*

A. Sx. *pp* *pp* *f*

S *p* *f*
the de - struc - tive sword are por - tions of e - ter - ni - ty too great for the eyes of man

Vln. *f* *molto vib*

Vla. *pp* *p* *pp* *attacca*

III - Two Slow Proverbs

Cantabile (♩ = 60)

(grace notes occur on the beat)

94

A. Sx. *ppp* n. *pp* n.

S. *mf* *pp* *pp* *p*
e - ter - ni - ty is in

Vln. *ppp* *mf* *ppp* II

Vla. III *pp*



103

A. Sx. *p* n. L

S. *mp* *f*
love

Vln. *pp* *p* *f* *pp* *f* I II I

Vla. *f* *pp* *f* II III

110

Picc. *ppp* *p* *mp*

B♭ Cl. *ppp* *p* *mp*

A. Sx. *ppp* *mp* *ppp* *p* *mp*

air sound

S *pp* [th] *p* *mp*
with _____ the _____ pro -

Vln. *pp* *ppp* *p* *mp*

Vla. *pp* *p* *mp*

M *molto agitato*

117

Picc. *mf* *f* *ff* *mp*

B♭ Cl. *mf* *f* *mp*

A. Sx. *mf* *f* n. *mp* *ff*

S *mf* *f* *mp* *p*
duc-tions _____ of _____ time but _____ of _____ wis-

Vln. *mf* *f* *mf* *ff*

Vla. *mf* *f* *ff* *p*

126

Picc. *n.* *pp*

B \flat Cl. *ff* *ppp*

A. Sx. *pp*

S *ppp* *p* *n.* *f*
dom no clock

Vln. *p* *ppp* *f*

Vla. *ff* *ppp* *pp*



133

Picc. *f* *pp* **N**

A. Sx. *f* *ppp*

S *ppp* *ppp* *n.*
can

Vln. *pp* *ppp* *f*

Vla. *f* *ppp*

140

Picc. *ff* *p*

B♭ Cl. *ppp* *mf* *ff*

A. Sx. *ff*

S *ff*
mea - sure

Vln. II *pp* *f* *ff* *pp*

Vla. *f* *pp* *ff*

149

Picc. *ppp* *mf* to Flute

B♭ Cl. *ppp* *mf* to Bass

A. Sx. *ppp* *mf* to Tenor

S *f* *mf* *mp* *p*
no clock can mea - sure

Vln. *ppp* *mf*

Vla. *ppp* *mf*

attacca

IV - Dialogue

Misterioso (♩ = 60)

158 *con sord.* *pizz.* *arco*
 Vln. *ppp* *p* *n.* *p* *ppp* *ppp*

164 *p*
 S Eve - ry night and eve -
 Vln. *pizz.* *arco* *S.P.*
p *mp* *ppp*

169 *pp* *p* (whispered)
 S - ry morn some to mis - er - y are born Does the
 Vln. *con sord.* *ppp*
 Vln. *ord.* *pizz.*
p *ppp* *p* *n.*

174
 S spring hide its joy
 Vln. *S.P.* *ord.*
ppp *p* *ppp*
 Vln. *pizz.*
mp *n.* *p*

179

Vln. *pizz.* *p* *pp* *ppp* *arco*

Vla. *arco S.P.* *ord.* *pizz.* *arco*

ppp *p* *ppp* *pp* *ppp*



183

S *pp*
eve - ry morn and eve - ry night

Vln. 183

Vla. *pizz.* *arco S.P.* *ord.* *arco*

mp *p* *pp* *mp* *mf*



189

S *p* *mp*
— when buds and blos - soms grow? some are born to sweet de - light

Vln. 189 *ppp* *mf* *mf*

Vla. *ppp* *I* *II* *pp* *p*

194 R *sotto voce*

Fl. *ppp*

B. Cl. *ppp*

T. Sx. *ppp*

S. *ppp*
Does the sow - er?

Vln. *pp* *mf* *pp* *mf* n.

Vla. III *mp* IV *mf* S.P. *p* *ord.* *mf* *ppp*

200

Fl. *ppp*

B. Cl. *ppp*

T. Sx. *pp*

S. *pp*
Some are born to _____ sow by

S

Fl. *ppp* *pp*

B. Cl. *ppp* *ppp*

T. Sx. *ppp* *ppp*

S *pp*
 208
 night? sweet de - light



T

Fl. *ppp* *ppp* *p*

B. Cl. *ppp* *ppp*

T. Sx. *ppp* *p* *ppp* *p*

S
 214
 or the some are born to plough - man

U

Fl. *ppp* *p* *ppp* *mp*

B. Cl. *ppp* *p* *ppp* *mp*

T. Sx. *ppp* *p* *ppp* *mp*

S. 221
in end - less night — dark - ness plough?



V - The Caverns of the Grave I've Seen

Espressivo (♩ = 60)

V

Fl. 226 *pp*

B. Cl. *pp* *mp*

T. Sx. *pp* *mp*

S. 226 *p*
Re - en - graved time af - ter time ev - er in their

Vln. 226 *pp* *mp* *pp*

Vla. *pp* *mp* *pp*

232 W

Fl. *ppp*

S *p*
 youth - ful prime my de - signs un - changed re - main time

Vln. *mp > ppp* *mp* *pp*

Vla. *pp* IV III



237 X *non vib*

Fl. *ppp*

B. Cl. *ppp*

T. Sx. *ppp*

S
 may rage but rage in vain

Vln. *pp*

Vla. III IV *mp > ppp* *mp > ppp* *non vib.*

0

ord.

243

ad lib...

Y con brio

Fl. *pp* *ff*

B. Cl. *pp* *ff* *mp*

T. Sx. *pp* *ff* *mp*

Vln. *non vib* *molto vib* *ff*

Vla. *ff* *mp*

248

Fl. *p* *non vib*

B. Cl. *ff* *mp*

T. Sx. *ff* *mp* *ff*

Vln. *p*

Vla. *ff* *mp* *ff* *non vib* *p*

Z

Fl. *non vib.*
pp

B. Cl. *ff*
6

T. Sx. *pp*

S. *pp*
252
For a - bove time's trou - bled four tains

Vln. *ppp*
252

Vla. *non vib.*
ppp
3

AA

Fl. *ord.*
ppp
257

T. Sx. *ppp*
257

S. *p*
257
on the great At - lan - tic moun -

Vln. *ppp*
non vib.
mp *pp*
257

Vla. *ppp*
mp *pp*
257

263 *non vib.* **BB** *ord.*

Fl. *ppp*

B. Cl. *pp* *mp*

T. Sx. *ppp* *mp*

263 *mp*

S tains _____ In _____ my _____

Vln. *mp* *pp*

Vla. *mp* *pp* *mf*

267 *ff* *to Bb* *to Alto* *ff*

Fl. *ff*

B. Cl. *ff*

T. Sx. *ff*

267 *mf* *pp* *mf*

S gold - - - en - - - house - - - on

Vln. *mf* *pp*

Vla. *pp* *mf* *pp* *ord.*

271 to Picc Picc. *ff*

Fl. *ff*

B \flat Cl. *pp* *ff*

A. Sx. *pp* *ff*

S *f* *pp* *ff*

high there they shine e - ter - nal - ly

Vln. *mf* *pp* *ff*

Vla. *ff*

non vib *molto vib*

attacca

VI - Ah, Sunflower

Risoluto (♩ = 60)

275 *ff*

Picc. *ff*

B \flat Cl. *ff*

A. Sx. *ff*

S *ff*

Ah! Sun - flower wear - y of time who count -

Vln. *ord.* *ff*

Vla. *ord.* *fff*

279 CC

Picc. *f* *mf*

B \flat Cl. *f* *mf*

A. Sx. *f* *mf*

S
est the steps of the sun

Vln. *f* *mf* II III

Vla. *f* *mf*

283

Picc. *mf* *mp* *p*

B \flat Cl. *mf* *mp* *p*

A. Sx. *mf* *mp* *p*

Vln. *mf* *mp* *p* (II) (III)

Vla. *mf* *mp* *p*

288 DD

Picc. *ff*

B \flat Cl. *ff*

A. Sx. *ff*

S *ff*
Seek - ing af - ter that

Vln. *ff*

Vla. *ff*

294

Picc. *f* *mf*

B \flat Cl. *f* *mf*

A. Sx. *f* *mf*

S *f* *mf*
gil - den clime when the

Vln. *f* *mf*

Vla. *f* *mf*

297

Picc. *mp*

B♭ Cl. *mp*

A. Sx. *mp*

S
trav - el - ers jour

Vln. *mp*

Vla. *mp*



300

Picc. EE

B♭ Cl.

A. Sx.

S
ney is done

Vln.

Vla. III I

303

Picc. *mp*

B♭ Cl. *mp*

A. Sx. *mp*

Vln. *mp*

Vla. *mp* I sim. II



306

Picc. *p*

B♭ Cl. *p*

A. Sx. *p*

Vln. *p*

Vla. *p* I sim. II

FF

Picc. *ff* *f*

B♭ Cl. *ff* *f*

A. Sx. *ff* *ff*

308 S
Where the youth pined a way

Vln. *ff* *f*
S.P.

Vla. *ff* *f*

311 Picc. *f* *mf*

B♭ Cl. *f* *mf*

A. Sx. *f* *mf*

311 S
with de - sire and the pale vir -

Vln. *f* *mf*

Vla. *f* *mf*

* harmonic gliss

315 *mf*

Picc.

B♭ Cl.

A. Sx.

315 *mf*

S

gin shroud ed in

Vln.

Vla.

I

II

GG

318 *mp*

Picc.

B♭ Cl.

A. Sx.

318 *mp*

S

snow

Vln.

Vla.

mp

p

321

Picc. *pp* **to Flute**

B♭ Cl. *pp* **to Bass**

A. Sx. *pp*

Vln. *pp*

Vla. *pp*



325

Fl. *ppp* *mp*

B. Cl. *ppp* *mp*

A. Sx. *pp*

Vln. *ppp* *mp*

Vla. *ppp* *mp*

Fl. **HH**

B. Cl.

A. Sx.

S

Vln.

Vla.

330 *f* *pp*

330 *f* *pp*

330 *f* *pp*

330 *f* *pp*

330 *f* *pp*

330 *f* *pp*

molto S.P. ... to end

molto S.P. ... to end

a - - - - - rise - - - - - from - - - - -

Fl.

B. Cl.

A. Sx.

S

Vln.

Vla.

336 *pp* *mf pp*

336 *pp* *mf pp*

336 *pp* *mf pp*

336 *pp* *mf pp*

336 *pp* *mf pp*

336 *pp* *mf pp*

the - - - - - graves - - - - - and - - - - - as -



340

Fl. *pp* *mf pp* *sim.*

B. Cl. *pp* *mf pp*

A. Sx. *pp* *mf pp*

S. *pp* *mf pp*

340

S. *pp* *mf pp*

Vln. *pp* *mf pp*

Vla.

pire where my sun -



344

Fl. *mf pp*

B. Cl. *mf pp* *mf pp*

A. Sx. *mf pp* *pp*

S. *mf pp* *pp*

344

S. *mf pp* *pp*

Vln. *mf pp* *mf pp*

Vla.

flow er wish es to go

II

Fl. *pp* *ppp* *mp ppp* *mp ppp*

B. Cl. *pp* *mp pp* *ppp* *mp ppp*

A. Sx. *pp* *mp pp* *ppp* *mp ppp*

S 348 *pp* n.

Vln. 348 *pp* *ppp*

Vla. *pp* *ppp*

Fl. *mp ppp*

B. Cl. *mp ppp*

A. Sx. *mp ppp*

Vln. 352 *mp* *ppp*

Vla. *mp*

Vln. 356 *ppp*

Vla. *ppp*

Curriculum Vitae

Name: Willyn Whiting

Post-Secondary Education and Degrees: University of Western Ontario
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2016-2018 M.Mus. (Music Composition)

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