

**Dan
Welcher**

Prairie Light

**THREE TEXAS WATERCOLORS
OF GEORGIA O'KEEFE
for Orchestra**

PROGRAM NOTE BY THE COMPOSER

This work for full orchestra was inspired by three paintings of the noted American artist Georgia O’Keeffe. These three watercolors were done in 1917 while the artist was living in Canyon, Texas (near Amarillo), and deal primarily with color and shape. Consequently, the music is primarily concerned with broad lines and shapes rather than rhythms, with subtle washes of color rather than constant harmonic movement, and with arching melody instead of linear counterpoint.

The first movement, *Light Coming on the Plains*, is an elliptical-shaped painting, deep blue to indigo with a “horizon” at the bottom that seems flat and unchanging. The sun hasn’t risen yet, although it does in the course of this movement, but it seems instead to be providing light from behind the canvas. The music is unmoving in terms of rhythm or harmony (although there is a modulation midway through), a color-infused mantra of sound that is almost Eastern.

At the height of the sun, we proceed to the second movement, entitled *Canyon with Crows*. The canyon is red-orange, with black crows circling above friendly unfolding hills. The music is gentle but lively and more rhythmic, with the birds represented by solo oboe, clarinet, and sometimes flute. Halfway through, the brass have a chorale version of the opening motive, played very slowly, over the unending triplets of woodwinds and strings. At the end of the movement, the birds return for a duo-cadenza, accompanied by the dying rays of the sun in muted strings and the ongoing triplets of the solo quartet.

The stage is set for the final movement, *Starlight Night*. In O’Keeffe’s painting, the stars are represented by regularly-spaced rectangles of bright pale yellow on a blue-black sky, with the same shape to the field of vision and the horizon that is found in *Light Coming on the Plains*. The stars become audible: harp, celesta, glockenspiel, and string pizzicati all lend a sparkle while a solo flute introduces a slowly unfolding theme. After this theme has been heard twice and the sky has begun to really brighten, there is a sudden interruption: a xylophone and a piano begin another “mantra” in brittle staccato chords. This is the same mechanical eternity as O’Keeffe’s regularly-spaced square stars, and it continues on its own as the night progresses. The music builds and grows as the moon rises and arcs, then falls as the pre-dawn light that opened the work returns to bring it to a close. A cycle of light, changing with the movements of sun, moon, and stars, appearing differently from various points of view.

INSTRUMENTATION

Piccolo
2 Flutes
2 Oboes
2 Clarinets in B \flat
2 Bassoons

4 Horns in F
3 Trumpets in C
2 Trombones
Bass Trombone
Tuba

Timpani (3-4)

Percussion (2-3 players):

Glockenspiel, Xylophone, Vibraphone
2 Triangles, Sizzle Cymbal (with rivets)
2 Suspended Cymbals (large and small)
Temple Blocks, Woodblock, 4 Tomtoms
Tam Tam, Large Bass Drum with loosened head
Castanets

Piano and Celesta (one player)
Harp


Strings (minimum 10-8-6-6-4)

SYMBOLS USED IN THE SCORE



denotes suspension of meter (*senza misura*)



indicates coordinated downbeat (left hand cancels )



(strings) rapid tremolo or trill (left hand), bow legato



continue previous music in tempo



continue until barline (stop at arrowhead)



indicates a rhythmic link between different parts

Duration: c. 14'

Prairie Light

*Transposed Score

Three Texas Watercolors of Georgia O'Keeffe

DAN WELCHER

1. Light Coming on the Plains 10

Moderate ♩ = 66

The score is arranged in systems. The first system includes Piccolo, Flute (1/2), Oboe (1/2), *Clarinet in B♭ (1/2), Bassoon (1/2), *Horn in F (1/2), *Horn in F (3/4), Trumpet in C (1/2), Trumpet 3 in C, Trombone (1/2), Bass Trombone, Tuba, Timpani, Sizzle Cymbal, Percussion 1 (Vibraphone), Percussion 2 (Bass Drum), Percussion 3, Piano/Celesta, and Harp. The second system includes Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, and Contrabass.

Key performance instructions include: *pp non vibrato! (static, without expression)* for Flute; *1. solo (beaming)* for Clarinet; *pp static, without expression (poco vibrato)* for Violin I; and *pp trem. (con sord.)* for Violin II. Dynamic markings like *pp*, *p*, and *pp sempre* are used throughout. A rehearsal mark 10 is placed above measures 10 and 11.

Picc.

Fl. 1
2

Ob. 1
2

Cl. 1
2

Bsn. 1
2

Hn. 1
2

Hn. 3
4

C Tpt. 1
2

C Tpt. 3

Tbn. 1
2

B. Tbn.

Tba.

Timp.

Perc. 3

Pno./Cel.

Hp.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

pp

pp *p* *pp*

ppp non cresc.

pp *ppp*

p *mp*

pp sempre

1. solo *very broad, sustained*

p espress.

p *mp*

(div.) (free bowing)

div. sul tasto

pp *p* *pp*

ppp non cresc.

pp *ppp*

p *mp*

(con sord.) (free bowing)

pp sempre

(div.) (free bowing)

20

30

Picc. *mp* ⁵ *pp* *n*
 Fl. 1 2
 Ob. 1 2 *mf* lively *f* *p* 1. solo
 Cl. 1 *pp* *mp* *pp* *mp* *pp*
 Cl. 2 *pp* *mp* *pp* 1. solo
 Bsn. 1 2 *mf*
 Hn. 1 2 *mp* *mf* *mp* *p*
 Hn. 3 4 *p* 4.
 C Tpt. 1 2 *p* *mf* st. mute
 C Tpt. 3
 Tbn. 1 2
 B. Tbn.
 Tba. mute *p* l. v.
 Timp. l. v.
 Perc. 3 Bass Drum (w/loose head, soft sticks) *pp*
 Pno./Cel.
 Hp. *mp* l. v.
 DCB EF#G#A
 30 1. solo senza sord. *mf* lively *f* dim. *pp*
 Vln. I *pp* *mf*
 Vln. II *pp* *mp* *pp* *ppp* *p* *mf*
 Vla. *mp* *mf*
 Vc. *mf* senza sord. div. a2
 Cb.

Musical score for measures 39-40, part 1. The score includes parts for Piccolo, Flutes 1 & 2, Oboes 1 & 2, Clarinets 1 & 2, Bassoons 1 & 2, Horns 1-4, Trumpets 1-3, Trombones 1-2, Tuba, Timpani, Percussion 2 & 3, and Harp. Dynamics include *pp*, *mf*, *mp*, *p*, *n*, *dim.*, and *ppp*. Performance instructions include *1. solo*, *3*, *5*, *1.*, *2.*, *4.*, *(mute)*, *l.v.*, and *(DCB EF#G#A)*.

Musical score for measures 39-40, part 2. The score includes parts for Violins I & II, Viola, Violoncello, and Contrabass. Dynamics include *p*, *pp*, *mf*, *n*, *ppp*, *dim.*, and *p*. Performance instructions include *(div.) loco*, *trem.*, *senza sord. sul tasto*, *unis. (senza sord.)*, *(con sord.)*, *lower div. senza sord.*, and *1. solo*. A *poco a poco cresc.* instruction is at the bottom.

Picc.

Fl. 1
2

Ob. 1
2

Cl. 1

Cl. 2

Bsn. 1
2

Hn. 1
2

Hn. 3
4

C Tpt. 1
2

Tbn. 1
2

B. Tbn.

Tba.

Timp.

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

Hp.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

solo
mp
p
non vibrato!
poco cresc.
p cresc.
pp
mf
mf
p
pp
poco cresc.
mp
p
poco cresc.
open
(mf)
p
poco cresc.
mp
p
Vibraphone (motor off)
mf
non cresc.!
solo
poco f
p
cresc.
C#

50

(s)
(solo)
mf
cresc.
loco trem.
*gradually senza sord.**
p
cresc.
1. solo (senza sord.)
mf espr.
mf
cresc.
unis.
mp
cresc.
pizz.
mp
(pizz.)
arco
mp
mp
arco
mp
mp

(p)

*Remove mutes in a staggered fashion.

This page of a musical score contains the following parts and markings:

- Picc.**: Piccolo part with *mf* dynamics and a 5-measure rest.
- Fl. 1, 2**: Flute parts with *mf* dynamics and *p cresc.* markings.
- Ob. 1, 2**: Oboe parts with *fp* dynamics and *p cresc.* markings.
- Cl. 1, 2**: Clarinet parts with *fp* dynamics and *p cresc.* markings.
- Bsn. 1, 2**: Bassoon parts with *mf* and *f* dynamics, including a *soli* section.
- Hn. 1, 2, 3, 4**: Horn parts with *fp* and *pp* dynamics.
- C Tpt. 1, 2, 3**: Trumpet parts, mostly marked as *open*.
- Tba.**: Trombone part with *mf* dynamics.
- Timp.**: Timpani part with *p* dynamics and *gliss.* markings.
- Perc. 1, 2, 3**: Percussion parts, including a *Large Suspended Cymbal* with *f* and *p* dynamics.
- Hp.**: Harp part with *f* dynamics and *mf gliss.* markings.
- Vln. I, II**: Violin parts with *f* and *fp* dynamics, including *div. trem.* and *loco* markings.
- Vla.**: Viola part with *f* and *fp* dynamics, including *div. trem.* markings.
- Vc.**: Violoncello part with *f* dynamics and *cresc.* markings.
- Cb.**: Contrabass part with *fp* dynamics and *gliss. cresc.* markings.

Tempo markings include *Rit.* (Ritardando) and *loco* (Ad libitum).

Picc. *f* *ff* *f*

Fl. 1 *f* *ff* *mf* *p* *mf* *cresc.* *f* *dim.*

Fl. 2 *f* *ff* *mf* *p* *mf* *cresc.* *f* *dim.*

Ob. 1 *f* *ff* *mf* *p* *mf* *f*

Ob. 2 *f* *ff* *mf* *p* *mf* *f*

Cl. 1 *f* *ff* *mf* *f*

Cl. 2 *f* *ff* *mf* *f*

Bsn. 1 *f* *ff* *mf* *dim.* *p*

Bsn. 2 *f* *ff* *mf* *dim.* *p*

Hn. 1 *f* *ff*

Hn. 2 *f* *ff*

Hn. 3 *f* *ff*

Hn. 4 *f* *ff*

C Tpt. 1 *mf* *ff*

C Tpt. 2 *mf* *ff*

C Tpt. 3 *mf* *ff*

Tbn. 1 *f* *ff* *soli* *f* *very warmly*

Tbn. 2 *f* *ff* *soli* *f* *very warmly*

Tuba *f* *ff* *soli* *f* *very warmly*

B. Tbn./Tba. *f* *ff* *soli* *f* *very warmly*

Timp. *f* *dim.* *mf* *p* *(sempre p)*

Perc. 1 *mf* *f* *mf* *(Lg. Sus. Cym.)*

Perc. 2 *f* *mf* *mp* *mp*

Hp. *ff* *D: C: B: F:* *f* *mf*

Vln. I *f* *ff* *mf* *p* *poco f* *p*

Vln. II *f* *ff* *mf* *p* *poco f* *p*

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

Vc. *ff* *f* *mf* *p* *murmuring* *(sempre p)*

Cb. *ff* *f* *mf* *p* *murmuring* *(sempre p)*

(free bowing) *tutti div., trem.*

div. sul C. *v* *gliss.*

mf *p* *(sempre p)*

Picc. *mf*

Fl. 1 *p* *p* *f* *p*

Fl. 2 *p* *p* *f* *p*

Ob. 1 *p* *mf* *f* *p* *mf*

Ob. 2 *p* *mf* *f* *p* *mf*

Cl. 1 *p* *poco f lively* *solo* *f*

Cl. 2 *p* *mf* *f*

Bsn. 1 *poco f lively* *solo* *f*

Bsn. 2 *mf* *f*

Hn. 1 *mf* *f* *(mf)* *f*

Hn. 2 *mf* *f* *(mf)* *f*

Hn. 3 *mf* *f* *(mf)* *f*

Hn. 4 *mf* *f* *(mf)* *f*

C Tpt. 1 *mf* *f* *(mf)* *f*

C Tpt. 2 *mf* *f* *(mf)* *f*

C Tpt. 3 *mf* *f* *(mf)* *f*

Tbn. 1 *p* *(p)*

Tbn. 2 *p* *(p)*

B. Tbn./Tba. *p* *(p)*

Timp. *p* *mf* *(p)* *mf*

Perc. 1 *p* *mf* *(p)* *mf*

Perc. 2 *p* *mf* *(p)* *mf*

Harp *mp* *f* *mp*

Vln. I *mf* *f* *p*

Vln. II *mf* *f* *p*

Vla. *f lively* *unis. soli* *f*

Vc. *mf* *f*

Cb. *mf* *f*

70 *tr*

Picc. *mf* *f* *p*

Fl. 1 *p* *mf* 5 5 5

Fl. 2 *p* *mf* 5 5 5

Ob. 1 *mf* *p* *mf* 6 3 3 3 3

Ob. 2 *mf* *p* *mf* 6 3 3 3 3

Cl. 1 *poco f* *f* *p* *mf*

Cl. 2 *poco f* *f* *p* *mf*

Bsn. 1 *poco f* *f* *p* *mf*

Bsn. 2 *mf*

Hn. 1 *p*

Hn. 3 *p*

Hn. 4 *p*

C Tpt. 1 *p*

C Tpt. 2 *p*

C Tpt. 3 *p*

Tbn. 1 *poco f*

Tbn. 2 *poco f*

B. Tbn./Tba. *poco f*

Timp.

Perc. 1 *f* *p* *L.v.*

Perc. 2 *p* *mf* (L.g. Sus. Cym.)

Hp. *mf* *f* *p* *pp*

70

Vln. I *mf* *f* *p* *pp* *sim.*

Vln. II *mf* *f* *p* *pp* *sim.*

Vla. *pp* *sim.*

Vc. *poco f* *f* *mp* *div.*

Cb. *poco f* *f* *mp* *div.*

80

FL. 1 *ff* *p*

FL. 2 *ff* *p*

Ob. 1 *ff* *p*

Ob. 2 *ff* *p*

Cl. 1 *ff* *p* (solo) *poco f* *sim.* (solo)

Cl. 2 *ff* *p* (solo) *poco f* (solo) *poco f*

Bsn. 1 *poco f* (solo)

Bsn. 2 (solo) *poco f*

Hn. 1, 2 *mf* *ff* *p* to mute

Hn. 3, 4 *mf* *ff* *p*

C Tpt. 1, 2 *mf* *ff* *p* to st. mute

C Tpt. 3 *mf* *ff* *p* to st. mute

Tbn. 1, 2 *p*

B. Tbn./Tba. *p*

Timp. *p* *morendo* *(niente)*

Perc. 1 (Sizz. Cym.) *mf* *ff* *pp* to Triangle

Perc. 2 Lv take brushes *p* (L.g. Sus. Cym.) *pp (non cresc.)*

Hp. *f* *mp*
D# B: G# G#

Vln. I *cresc.* (div.) *ff* *p* *pp sotto voce*

Vln. II *cresc.* (div.) *ff* *p* *pp sotto voce*

Vla. *cresc.* (div.) *ff* *poco f lively*

Vc. *cresc.* *ff* *unis. lively* *poco f*

Cb. *ff* *pp morendo*

80

Cl. 1 2 *mf* *dim.* *p* rhythmic and steady (*sempre p*)

Bsn. 1 2 *mf* *dim.* *pp* *a2 brutal!* *sfz*

Hn. 1 2 *p* (*sempre*) *mute* rhythmic and steady

Perc. 2 (free bowing)

Vln. I (free bowing) *sempre pp*

Vln. II (free bowing) *sempre pp*

Vla. *mf* *dim.* *pp* *brutal!*

Vc. *mf* *dim.* *pp* *sub. sfz* *brutal!*

Cb. *niente* *sub. sfz*



90

Cl. 1 2 *mp* *mf*

Bsn. 1 2 *a2 sfz* *sim.*

Hn. 1 2 *mp* *mf* *solì (st. mute)* *fp*

C Tpt. 1 2 *p* *distant, but clear* *pp*

C Tpt. 3 *p* *distant, but clear* *pp*

Timp. *brutal!* *2 wood sticks* *sfz* *sim.*

Perc. 2 *morendo*

Pno./Cel. *brutal!* *sfz* *sim.* *8^{va}* *morendo*

Vln. I *morendo* *90*

Vln. II *morendo* *morendo* *div.* *mf*

Vla. *morendo*

Vc. *sfz* *sim.*

Cb. *sfz* *sim.*

