Edward Nesbit

The Burial of the Stars
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THE BURIAL OF THE STARS

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The Burial of the Stars was commissioned by Cellophony with funds provided by the Britten-Pears Foundation.

Duration c. 15'

INSTRUMENTATION

soprano

8 violoncelli

PERFORMANCE NOTE

Grace notes should be played before the beat.

Celli 5 and 6: in bars 11-25, the harmonics moving in 5ths should be played by changing string rather than by changing the position of the left hand, as indicated.

PROGRAMME NOTE

The Burial of the Stars is a setting of Walt Whitman's poem 'On the Beach at Night'. In the poem a father and daughter contemplate the night sky. The child, initially upset that the clouds appear to be devouring the stars, is comforted by her father, who assures her that the stars are immortal, and are destroyed 'only in apparition'. The father ends with the enigmatic suggestion that there is something 'more immortal even than the stars'. The music is for the most part brooding and reflective in character, and attempts to capture both the calm majesty of the natural scene depicted in the poem and the more turbulent emotions of the father and daughter.
On the Beach at Night

On the beach at night,
Stands a child with her father,
Watching the east, the autumn sky.

Up through the darkness,
While ravening clouds, the burial clouds, in black masses spreading,
Lower sullen and fast athwart and down the sky,
Amid a transparent clear belt of ether yet left in the east,
Ascends large and calm the lord-star Jupiter,
And nigh at hand, only a very little above,
Swim the delicate sisters, the Pleiades.

From the beach the child holding the hand of her father,
Those burial-clouds that lower victorious soon to devour all,
Watching, silently weeps.

Weep not, child,
Weep not, my darling,
With these kisses let me remove your tears,
The ravening clouds shall not long be victorious,
They shall not long possess the sky, they devour the stars only in apparition,
Jupiter shall emerge, be patient, watch again another night, the Pleiades shall emerge,
They are immortal, all those stars both silvery and golden shall shine out again,
The great stars and the little ones shall shine out again, they endure,
The vast immortal suns and the long-enduring pensive moons shall again shine.

Then dearest child mournest thou only for Jupiter?
Considerest thou alone the burial of the stars?

Something there is,
(With my lips soothing thee, adding I whisper,
I give thee the first suggestion, the problem and indirection,)
Something there is more immortal even than the stars,
(Many the burials, many the days and nights, passing away,)
Something that shall endure longer even than lustrous Jupiter,
Longer than sun or any revolving satellite,
Or the radiant sisters the Pleiades.

Walt Whitman
The Burial of the Stars

Soprano

On, the beach at night, Stands a child with her father, Watching the east, the

autumn sky Up through the darkness while rising clouds,

the burial clouds in black masses spreading
low er sul-ten and fast a-thwart and down the sky, A-mid a trans-pa-ent clear belt of e - ther, yet

left in the east,

As-cends large and calm the lord-star
Jupiter,

And nigh at hand, only a ve-ry lit-tle above,

Swim the de-li-ca-te sis-ters.

the Plei-a-des.
From the beach the child holding the hand of her father.

Those burial clouds that lower victorious soon to devour all.
Watching silently weeps.
Weep not, child, Weep not, my darling, -

With these kisses let me remove your tears.
The ravening clouds shall not long be victorious, they shall not long possess the sky, they de-
S. vor the stars  only in appr.:

Ju • pi • ter shall e • merge, be pa • tient

Poco più mosso = 63

Poco più mosso = 63
watch another night, the Pleiades—

shall meet, they are immortal,

(muted, pizz.)
all those stars both sil - ve - ry and gol - den shall shine out.

The great stars and the lit - tle ones shall shine.
out again, they endure, The vast immortal suns and the long-enduring pens...
Then dearest child mournest thou only for Jupiter?

Considerest thou alone the burial of the stars?
Some thing there

(Wish my lips sooth ing thee, add ing 1 whis per, -)
I give thee the first suggestion, the problem and direction.

Some thing there is more immortal even than the stars.
(Many the buried, many the days and nights, passing away.)

Some thing that shall endure longer even

(pizz.)

(muted)

(muted)

(muted)

(muted)

(muted)

(muted)

(muted)
sun or any revolving satellite, or the radiant sisters, the Pleiades.