

# Brancusi

*for soprano and  
pre-recorded tape*  
(*musique concrete*)

by

F L Dunkin Wedd

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# Brancusi

The first Brancusi I saw was *Mademoiselle Pogany* in the Louvre on my first visit to Paris: I was thirteen and I was stunned.

Ever since then I have loved his work, and hoped to write some music related to it. For some years I propped a postcard of *Bird in Space* on my workbench hoping it would generate some inspiration. It did not.

What did, though, was reading the *New York Times'* review of mezzo extraordinaire Buddug Verona James: "*She sounds like a Brancusi*". It's true: she does. I had long promised to write a piece for her, and things came together.

Brancusi's period (1876-1957) was perhaps the high point of the machine age, and his work makes use both of naturalistic forms and machined surfaces. I saw that I could combine a floating soprano line with a pre-recorded *musique concrète* backing track. The piece speaks of where we have come from - and where we are going.

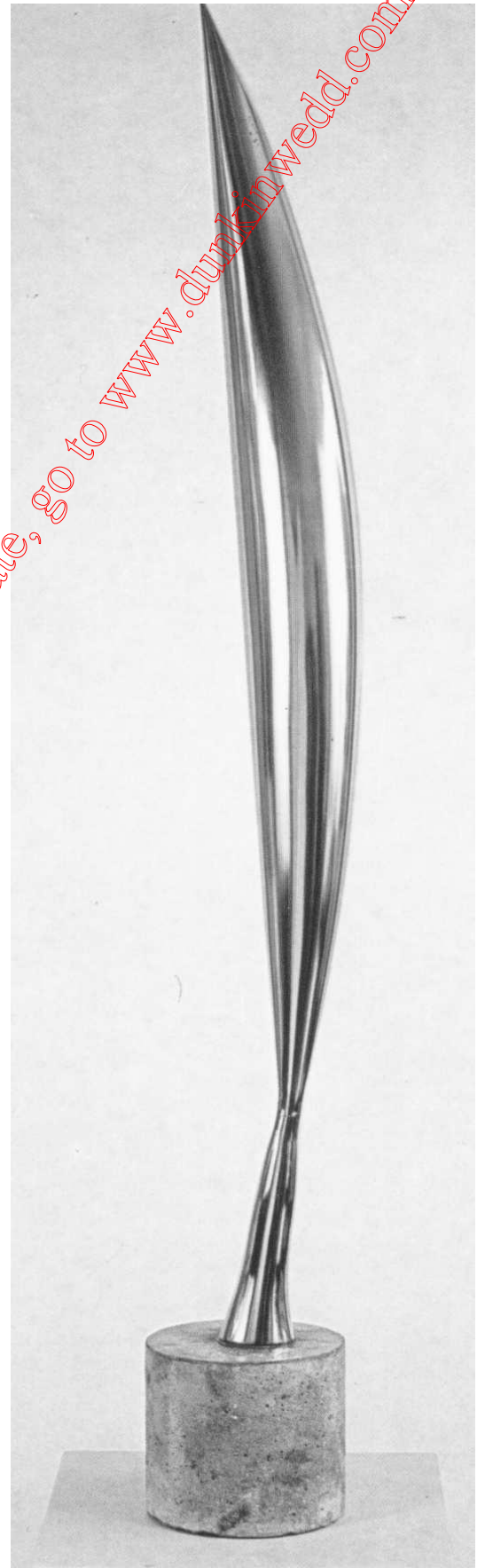
F L Dunkin Wedd  
Tonbridge, February 2008

"What is real is not the external form, but the essence of things... it is impossible for anyone to express anything essentially real by imitating its exterior surface."

Constantin Brancusi

"You talk when you cease to be at peace with your thoughts; and when you can no longer dwell in the solitude of your heart you live in your lips, and sound is a diversion and a pastime. And in much of your talking, thinking is half murdered. For thought is a bird in space, that in a cage of words may indeed unfold its wings but cannot fly."

Kahlil Gibran



Bird in Space

# Brancusi

*for soprano and pre-recorded tape (musique concrète)*

Written for Buddug Verona James

## Dedication

This piece is dedicated to Frances Hawken - who spurs me on to try new things.  
(I appreciate that I have only now caught up with what Pink Floyd were doing in 1967, but it's new for me and I have done it without mind-altering drugs...)

## Key signatures

Less attention has been paid to harmonic correctness than to readability. I apologise to pedants.

## Cues

A few orienting sample cues have been included in the vocal part above the stave. There is a one-minute introduction before the vocal line enters (entering with the third piledriver sample), and after the thunderclap a 90-second fade-out.

## Timing

Perversely, having used machine sounds, I didn't want them to sound too 'quantised'; so rhythms have been deliberately left ragged and sometimes slightly out of sync - as if being played *rubato*!

## Sounds

I started with all the notes sung to 'ah', but I needed more attack and added nonsense syllables. These are not important: the singer may use them, rearrange them or add any sounds she likes.

## Acknowledgments

As well as sounds I recorded myself, the backing track includes some from the very wonderful Freesound Project (<http://freesound.iua.upf.edu>).

*I am grateful to Freesound contributors for the use of the following files:*

2871	dozer sample.wav	by <b>Sonic</b>
11498	OKM 06.05.05 Birdsong Esbjerg.MP3	by <b>inchadney</b>
14772	jackhammer.aif	by <b>ignotus</b>
14854	Nightingale song.wav	by <b>reinsamba</b>
15559	drunks fighting.aif	by <b>tigersound</b>
21555	nmb01_maxed.wav	by <b>Pooleside</b>
28867	The Burn.WAV	by <b>inchadney</b>
34981	piledriver.wav	by <b>cognito perceptu</b>
38229	ringUK1965.wav	by <b>Charliefarley</b>
43807	WW2AirplaneFlyover.wav	by <b>daveincamas</b>
44205	The Burn.WAV	by <b>inchadney</b>

F L Dunkin Wedd  
Tonbridge, Kent  
February 2008

# Brancusi

for soprano and backing track

Thoughtfully

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♩ = 136

*Piledriver**f*

Wah

dee la pee oo

*Pneumatic drill**sim*

wi yah

nah

Kah

Kah di ma chee



mah yah

ma wa ti na

ka doo ee

pah wa me



ti mi nah

mi nah yah

pah ti mee

mah nee tah yah

kee

*mp*

tah

mee

ti nee ah

kee bah rah

kah

mah

wah ti nee

*f Piledriver**mp*

yah

Wah

wah ti nee

yah

tee kah pah lah

mee tah pee

*mf*

oh

dah

Wah

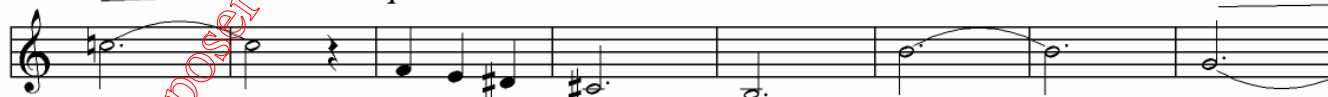
dee

lah

pee

oo

wi ya na

*p*

kah!

Ka di ma chee

mah

yah

wah

*pp**f Qwerk qwerk**mp*

Kah

dee

mah

Kah

dee

mah ti nee Ka di ma  
*Pneumatic drill* *ossia: 8va*  
 wa ti na kee bah Ka di ma wah tee  
*p* *f*  
 Ka di ma wa ti na chee yah koo Wa ta nah kee  
 lah Roo wa ti na ka gi ma di la pi oo wa ti ka gi ma  
*p*  
 pa ti ma wah Chee soo dah mee Ta gi ma  
*f*  
 wa ka na woo yah Ka ma Wa di la pee oo nah  
*Crowd noise*  
 Ka gi mah Tee ga mah Dee la pee oo wah Wee ah pee oo lah Choo wee  
*p* *f*  
 ra ma kay Ti ka pah mi ka  
 nah Fah roo ee wah nah kay Ta gi ma na kee La too ee na may Di la pee  
 wa ti nah Choo ee lah ka loo ee Ti mi nah wa ka ga mah!

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*fff* *f* *Phone*

Ti ga wa ta na wa, ti ga wa ta na wa choo ee

Ti ga wa ta na wa ti ga wa ta na wa choo ee Wa di la pi oo ee

ka gi ma ka loo ee Wa ta na bi ah mi lah

*p* *mf*

*f*

*gliss* *gliss*

*mf* *ff* *mf*

*cresc. al fortissimo*

*ff* *Thunder* *Tacet.*