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## Grandad's Letters

For 5 Instrumentalists and Recorded Voice

(2009)

# Grandad's Letters

A composition as part of a portfolio submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

By

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# Performance Notes

Bassoon  
Trumpet in Bflat  
Viola  
Piano  
Percussion  
Recorded Voice

Duration: c.14-15 minutes

Score in C

This score illustrates how the parts relate to one another through the use of aural cues. Therefore, it should not be seen as an exact representation of how the parts will overlap one another in performance. Each performer should choose their metronome marking from within the stated range, which should be adhered to for the whole piece.

All of the parts should be equally audible throughout and amplification may be used to achieve this. If so, then all of the parts should be amplified and mixed (so of equal volume) and routed to two speakers on stage (one either side of the ensemble). The volume of the ensemble should always be just below that of the recorded voice, which is only played back on the portable tape machine (not through the speakers with the rest of the ensemble). See the diagram on the opposite page for the ideal disposition of performers on stage.

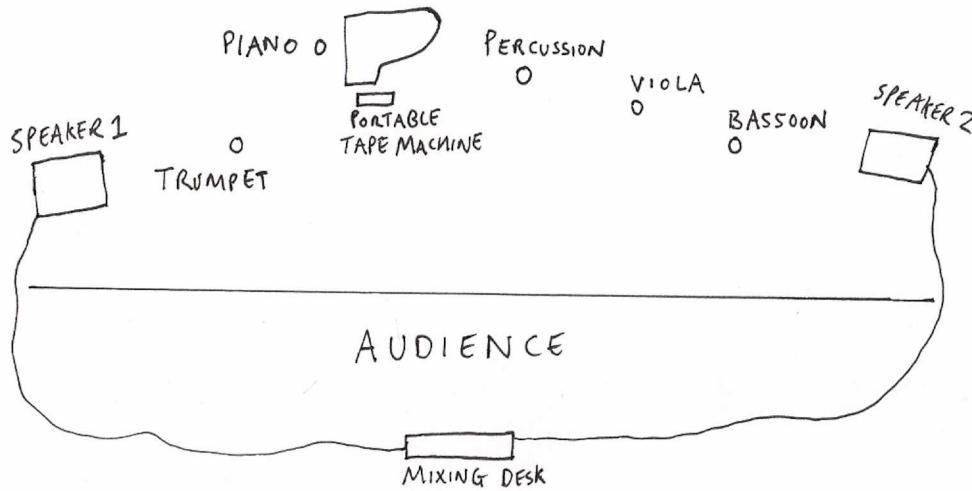
The Letters spoken by Gerald Scantlebury should be played back on a portable tape machine on stage, situated near the pianist.

The Bassoon and Trumpet parts should feel free to breathe momentarily outside of their instrument at any point of the piece, if required.

Commas used from Page 9 indicate audible breathing points (both inhale and exhale); these should sound natural and as similar as possible to the breathing on the recording. The dynamic of these breaths should be slightly quieter than the recorded voice.

**Grandad's Letters** is dedicated to my Grandad, Gerald Scantlebury.

Nicholas Peters, June 2009



### Programme Text

**Grandad's Letters** uses letters of an ancestor of mine called John Edward Pearn, who ran away from his home in Plymouth Dock (now named Devonport), via Liverpool, to Brazil in the year 1822. There were four letters that he sent home spanning a period from 1822 to 1840, only the third and fourth letters survive and these are the ones used in this piece. My Grandad introduced me to these letters, hence the title, which he has photocopies of as well as an article about the letters from a Plymouth newspaper that interviewed his Mother (who inherited the letters from her Mother). I transcribed the text from my Grandad's photocopies of the originals and the idea of transcription of material is explored throughout the piece. The recorded voice belongs to my Grandad, Gerald Scantlebury, and was recorded at his home in Okehampton in May 2009. The piece is dedicated to Gerald Scantlebury and lasts around 14 – 15 minutes.

**Bassoon** The staff consists of three lines, each represent a fingering chosen by the performer in the middle to upper register. Number three should be the lowest pitch and number one should be the highest. The performer should breathe through the instrument (with reed) to create a 'wheezy' continuous sound. The rhythms mark changes from inhaling to exhaling, the performer may start with whichever they wish.

**Trumpet** The staff consists of three lines, each represent the three valves on the instrument. The performer should breathe through the instrument to create a 'wheezy' continuous sound. The rhythms mark changes from inhaling to exhaling, the performer may start with whichever they wish.

**Viola** The staff consists of five lines, from the top to bottom line they represent the: I, II, III and IV string and finally the body of instrument. The viola should be placed flat on the performers lap and the right hand should be positioned so that the thumb can strike the body of the instrument and the other fingers can each 'hammer' an individual string on the fingerboard. The left hand should be used to steady the instrument and must not be used in the conventional manner.

**Piano** The staff is conventional throughout. From Page 1 – 10 the left hand should be used to mute the relevant string completely so that when the right hand plays the key, barely any pitch sounds at all. For Page 11 – 19 (the end), prior to performance blue tak should be attached firmly to the strings of the specified pitches directly in front of the hammer on the keyboard side. This is so that if by accident the performer presses the key down fully, instead of halfway as notated, then no clear pitch will sound.

**Percussion** The staff consists of five lines for both hands. Each line represents a finger to be used to strike the requested surface.

- From the top to bottom line for the right hand they represent the: 5<sup>th</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> finger.
- From the top to bottom line for the left hand they represent the: 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> finger.

# Grandad's Letters

c. ♩ = 56-59

Nicholas Peters

1  
2  
3

Bassoon

[1 second after TPT INHALE ends]

Breathe through instrument (Inhale and Exhale)

[1 second after VLA ends]

1  
2  
3

Trumpet in B $\flat$

Inhale

[3-5 seconds after PNO begins]

Breathe through instrument (Inhale and Exhale)

Inhale

I  
II  
III  
IV

Viola

Body of vln

[3-5 seconds after TPT begins]

'Hammer' strings using right hand fingers

[3-5 seconds after PERC begins]

Piano

Muted with Left Hand, barely any pitch

[3-5 seconds after BSN begins]

5  
4  
2  
3  
1

Right Hand Percussion [Resonant Surface]

5  
4  
2  
3  
1

Left Hand Percussion [Non-Resonant Surface]

[3-5 seconds after TPT begins]

Bsn.

[1 second after PNO ends]

[3-5 seconds after PERC begins]

Tpt.

Inhale

[3-5 seconds after BSN begins]

Vla.

[3-5 seconds after VLA begins]

Pno.

[1 second after TPT INHALE ends]

5  
4  
2  
3  
1

RH Perc.

5  
4  
2  
3  
1

LH Perc.

[2-4 seconds after PNO begins]

[1 second after TPT INHALE ends]

[2-4 seconds after TPT begins]

[2-4 seconds after PERC begins]

[2-4 seconds after VLA begins]

5:4

5:4

5:4

5:4

[1 second after BSN ends]

Inhale

Bsn.

Tpt.

Vla.

Pno.

RH Perc.

LH Perc.



[2-4 seconds after VLA begins]

[2-4 seconds after PNO begins]

[2-4 seconds after TPT begins]

[2-4 seconds after PERC begins]

[1 second after TPT INHALE ends]

5:4

5:4

5:4

5:4

[1 second after BSN ends]

Inhale

Bsn.

Tpt.

Vla.

Pno.

RH Perc.

LH Perc.

[2-4 seconds after VLA begins]

[3-5 seconds after PNO begins]

[1 second after TPT INHALE ends]

[3-5 seconds after BSN begins]

[2-4 seconds after TPT begins]

5:4 5:4 5:4 5:4

Bsn.

Tpt.

Vla.

Pno.

RH Perc.

LH Perc.

[1 second after PERC ends]

Inhale



[2-4 seconds after VLA begins]

[2-4 seconds after PERC begins]

[3-5 seconds after PNO begins]

[1 second after TPT INHALE ends]

[3-5 seconds after BSN begins]

5:4 5:4 5:4 5:4

Bsn.

Tpt.

Vla.

Pno.

RH Perc.

LH Perc.

[1 second after TPT ends]

Inhale



[2-4 seconds after PNO begins]

[3-5 seconds after VLA begins]

[1 second after TPT INHALE ends]

[3-5 seconds after TPT begins]

[3-5 seconds after BSN begins]

[1 second after PERC ends]

Inhale

5:4

5:4

5:4

5:4



[2-4 seconds after PNO begins]

[2-4 seconds after VLA begins]

[4-6 seconds after BSN begins]

[1 second after TPT INHALE ends]

[3-5 seconds after TPT begins]

[1 second after PERC ends]

Inhale

5:4

5:4

5:4

5:4

[3-5 seconds after PERC begins]

[1 second after TPT INHALE ends]

[4-6 seconds after BSN begins]

[3-5 seconds after VLA begins]

[3-5 seconds after TPT begins]

5:4

5:4

5:4

5:4

[1 second after PNO ends]

Inhale

Bsn.

Tpt.

Vla.

Pno.

RH Perc.

LH Perc.



[3-5 seconds after PNO begins]

[2-4 seconds after PERC begins]

[2-4 seconds after BSN begins]

[3-5 seconds after TPT begins]

[1 second after TPT INHALE ends]

5:4

5:4

5:4

5:4

[1 second after VLA ends]

Inhale

Bsn.

Tpt.

Vla.

Pno.

RH Perc.

LH Perc.

[1 second after TPT INHALE ends]

[3-5 seconds after VLA begins]

[2-4 seconds after PERC begins]

[3-5 seconds after BSN begins]

[2-4 seconds after PNO begins]

5:4 5:4 5:4 5:4

[1 second after TPT ends]

Inhale

Bsn.

Tpt.

Vla.

Pno.

RH Perc.

LH Perc.

[3-5 seconds after PERC begins]

[4-6 seconds after VLA begins]

[2-4 seconds after BSN begins]

[3-5 seconds after TPT begins]

[1 second after TPT INHALE ends]

5:4 5:4 5:4 5:4

[1 second after PNO ends]

Inhale

Bsn.

Tpt.

Vla.

Pno.

RH Perc.

LH Perc.

7th of May 1829 For Father and Mother I have now taken this favourable opportunity of

Bsn.

Tpt.

Vla.

Pno. { [1 second after TPT INHALE ends] }  
Press 'Play' for 1st Letter

RH Perc.

LH Perc. [Begin at the same time as 'Mother']

writing to you at this time. The first and second letters I have not received an answer,

LH Perc.

which makes me very uneasy in my mind. The first time which I wrote to you since I left England,

Vla. [Begin at the same time as 'which']

LH Perc. [Stop at the end of the next phrase after 'since']

I was in Rio de Janeiro Brazil on board of a man of war frigate called the Wetheroy,

Vla.

under the command of Lord Cochrane, in the year 1822. That second time I wrote to you I was in

[Stop at the end of the next phrase after 'was']

Vla.

[Begin at the same time as 'under']

Pno.

the taking of Pernambuco where I got rounded in my right foot by a musket ball and a cut of the sword

Pno.

in my left leg but thank God Almighty I got cured of my wounds in six months and after this I sailed for

[Begin at the same time as 'got']

Bsn.

[Stop at the end of the next phrase after 'sailed']

Pno.

Maranhao, for Para, for Surra, for Portugal, turned for Maranuco, where I ran away from a frigate

Bsn.

called the Peranga, which I am now living in a village called Anagatuba in the Brazil, about 40 miles

Bsn.

from Maranhao, I have got a little cottage house, likewise a plantation where I plant tobacco,

Bsn.

cotton, rice, and thank God Almighty I am going very well. This comes with my kind love to you

Bsn.

RH Perc.

[Begin at the same time as 'rice']

[Stop at the end of the next phrase after 'you!']

brothers and sisters, uncles, aunts, grandmother is living likewise my cousins and nephews

RH Perc.

because I think my sisters have got children. Dear Father I hope you will not forget to write to me

Tpt.

RH Perc.

[Begin at the same time as 'because']

[Stop at the end of the next phrase after 'write']

for my ingratitude which I have shown you. My honourable Father and Mother do not remember

Tpt.

nothing of this that is gone and past, but write to me as quick as possible, give me all particulars of

Tpt.

England and please my remembrances to all friends. Please to excuse my letter if it is not right because

Tpt.

[Stop at the end of the next phrase after 'right']

[Begin at the same time as 'England']

LH Perc.

[drag fingers across surface]

I speak Portuguese better than English, I am forgetting of my country tongue. So no more at

LH Perc.

present from your undutiful son and humble servant, John Edward Pearn

LH Perc.

[3-5 seconds after 'Pearn' ends]

Bsn.

[3-5 seconds after 'Pearn' ends]

[same time as BSN]

Vla.

[drag fingers along string]

[2-4 seconds after 'Pearn' ends]

Pno.

Press 'Stop' on playback for 1st Letter

[Stop at end of next phrase after BSN/VLA begin]

LH Perc.

[4-6 seconds after BSN/VLA end]

Tpt.

[Same time as TPT]

RH Perc.

[drag fingers across surface]

[3-5 seconds after TPT/RH PERC end]

Vla.

[Same time as VLA]

LH Perc.

[Same time as RH PERC]

Bsn.

[Same time as RH PERC]

Pno.

[Blue tak pitches]

[depress halfway, no pitch, then release]

[3-5 seconds after VLA/LH PERC end]

RH Perc.

[3-5 seconds after BSN/PNO/RH PERC end]

Tpt.

[Same time as TPT]

Vla.



[4-6 seconds after TPT/VLA end]

Bsn.

Tpt.

[Same time as BSN]

[4-6 seconds after BSN/TPT end]

Vla.

RH Perc.

[Same time as VLA]

5:4

[Same time as LH PERC]

Tpt.

Pno.

[Same time as LH PERC]

LH Perc.

[3-5 seconds after VLA/RH PERC end]

[3-5 seconds after TPT/PNO/LH PERC end]

Vla.

Pno.

[Same time as VLA]

LH Perc.

[Same time as VLA]

[4-6 seconds after TPT/VLA end]

Bsn.

Tpt. [Same time as BSN]

Pno. [Same time as BSN]

This system contains three staves. The Bsn. staff has a melodic line with a slur and a fermata. The Tpt. staff has a complex rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with slurs and accents. The Pno. staff has a simple eighth-note accompaniment. All parts are aligned to start 4-6 seconds after the TPT/VLA end.

[Same time as VLA]

Tpt.

Vla. [4-6 seconds after BSN/TPT/PNO end]

Pno. [Same time as VLA]

This system contains three staves. The Tpt. staff has a complex rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with slurs and accents. The Vla. staff has a complex rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with slurs and accents, starting 4-6 seconds after the BSN/TPT/PNO end. The Pno. staff has a simple eighth-note accompaniment. All parts are aligned to start at the same time as the VLA.

[3-5 seconds after TPT/VLA/PNO end]

Bsn.

Pno. [Same time as BSN]

LH Perc. [Same time as BSN]

This system contains three staves. The Bsn. staff has a melodic line with a slur and a fermata. The Pno. staff has a simple eighth-note accompaniment. The LH Perc. staff has a simple eighth-note accompaniment with slurs and accents. All parts are aligned to start 3-5 seconds after the TPT/VLA/PNO end.

9th of July 1840 For Father and Mother I have now taken this favourable opportunity of writing to you hoping to find you all in good health as it leaves me at present.

[Begin at the same time as '9th of July'] [Repeat until 'present', then stop immediately]

Tpt.

[3-5 seconds after BSN/PNO/LH PERC end]

Pno. Press 'Play' on playback for 2nd Letter

[Same time as TPT] [Repeat until 'present', then stop immediately]

LH Perc.

This is to give you some satisfaction of my life.

[Begin at the same time as 'This is'] [Repeat until 'Life', then stop immediately]

Bsn.

[Same time as 'BSN'] [Repeat until 'Life', then stop immediately]

RH Perc.

This makes four letters that I have written to you, which makes me very uneasy in my mind.

[Repeat until 'mind', then stop immediately]

[Same time as VLA]

Tpt.

[Begin at the same time as 'This makes'] [Repeat until 'mind', then stop immediately]

Vla.

It is true that I have been a very undutiful son to you but I now beg your pardon for all what

I have done and I hope you will forgive me.

[Same time as LH PERC] [Repeat until 'forgive me', then stop immediately]

Bsn.

[Begin at the same time as 'It is true'] [Repeat until 'forgive me', then stop immediately]

LH Perc.

Dear Mother and Father it was a very good thing that I done of leaving old England,

[Begin at the same time as 'Dear Mother'] [Repeat until 'England', then stop immediately]

Tpt.

[Same time as TPT] [Repeat until 'England', then stop immediately]

RH Perc.

when I left my country it was in the month of April in the year 1822 and I sailed in a Brig called

the Alice, arrived in this country in the month of June 1822

[Begin at the same time as 'when I left'] [Repeat until 'of June 1822', then stop immediately]

Vla.

[Same time as VLA] [Repeat until 'of June 1822', then stop immediately]

LH Perc.

I then went on board a man of war 74 Gunship commanded by the noble Lord Cochrane  
in this services of Brazil

[Same time as BSN] [Repeat until 'services of Brazil', then stop immediately]

Bsn.

[Begin at the same time as 'I then went'] [Repeat until 'services of Brazil', then stop immediately]

Tpt.

I sailed five years, then ran away up the country in the woods on the cotton plantations.

[Begin at the same time as 'I sailed five'] [Repeat until 'cotton plantations', then stop immediately]

RH Perc.

5:4

[Begin at the same time as 'I sailed five'] [Repeat until 'cotton plantations', then stop immediately]

LH Perc.

I am now overseer of the slaves in one plantation, belonging to a Joaquin Antonio Pinto Lisboa  
I am doing very well thank God.

[Begin at the same time as 'I am now'] [Repeat until 'well thank God', then stop immediately]

Bsn.

[Same time as 'BSN'] [Repeat until 'well thank God', then stop immediately]

Vla.

Dear Mother and Father I've almost forgotten the old English tongue I knows more better

the language Portugese.

[Begin at the same time as 'Dear Mother'] [Repeat until 'Language Portugese', then stop immediately]

Tpt.

[Same time as 'TPT'] [Repeat until 'Language Portugese', then stop immediately]

Pno.

Remember me to all friends and relatives uncles, aunts, brothers, sisters and cousins.

[Begin at the same time as 'Remember me'] [Repeat until 'and cousins', then stop immediately]

Bsn.

[Same time as 'BSN'] [Repeat until 'and cousins', then stop immediately]

Pno.

I hope you will not forget to write to me when you write to me direct in this manner,

[Same time as 'RH PERC'] [Repeat until 'in this manner', then stop immediately]

Pno.

[Begin at the same time as 'I hope you'] [Repeat until 'in this manner', then stop immediately]

RH Perc.

No more at present, Your most obedient son John Edward Pearn

[Same time as 'LH PERC'] [After 'John Edward Pearn', continue without a break to the next section]

Pno.

[Begin at the same time as 'No more at'] [Repeat until 'John Edward Pearn', then stop immediately]

LH Perc.

Vla. [Unison with PNO]

Pno. [Unison with VLA]

The first system of music consists of two staves. The top staff is labeled 'Vla.' and the bottom staff is labeled 'Pno.'. Both staves contain a melodic line of eighth notes with slurs, indicating a unison performance. Above the top staff is the instruction '[Unison with PNO]' and above the bottom staff is '[Unison with VLA]'. The music is in a major key and 4/4 time.

Vla.

Pno.

The second system of music continues the unison between the Viola and Piano staves. It features the same melodic line of eighth notes with slurs as the first system.

Tell my brothers and sisters I shall like to hear from them all

Vla.

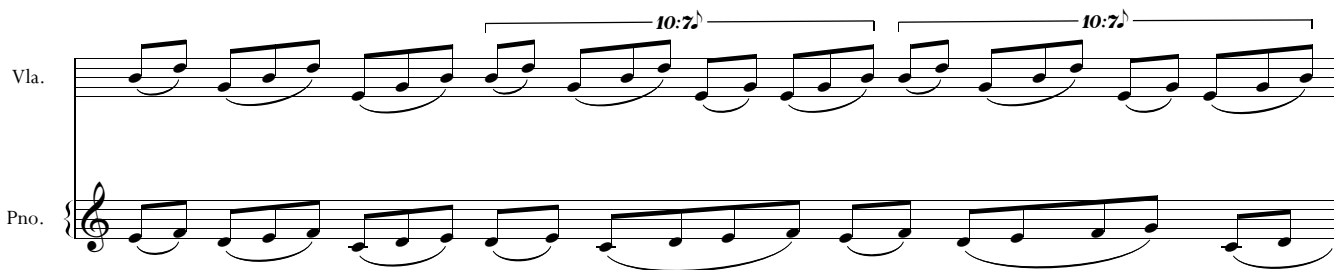
Pno.

The third system of music includes vocal lyrics. The lyrics 'Tell my brothers and sisters I shall like to hear from them all' are written above the top staff, which is labeled 'Vla.'. The bottom staff, labeled 'Pno.', continues the unison melodic line. The lyrics are positioned between the two staves.

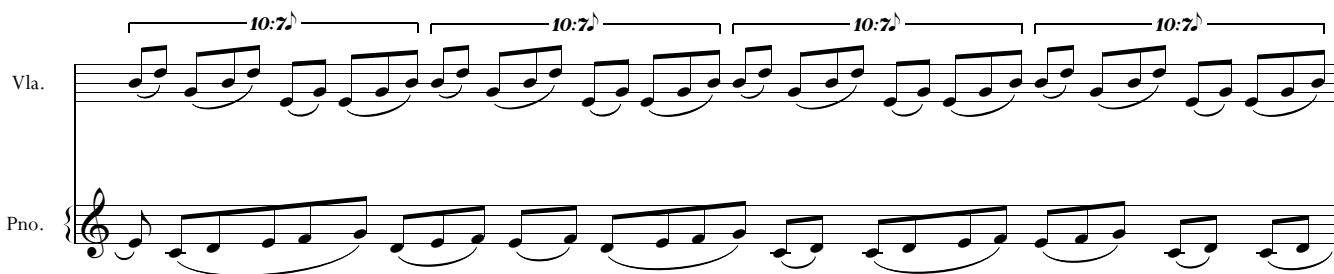
Vla.

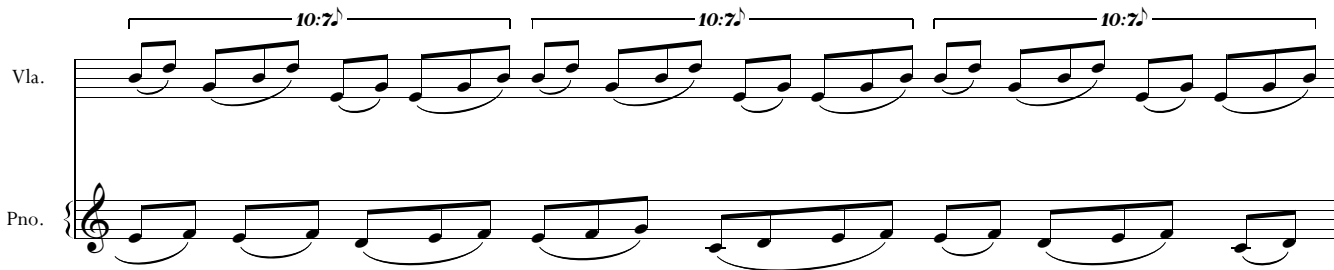
Pno.

The fourth system of music continues the unison between the Viola and Piano staves with the same melodic line of eighth notes with slurs.

Vla. 

The reason I put Taos Francisco is because of the Frigate I run away

Vla. 

Vla. 

Vla. 