

Into the Little Hill

A Lyric Tale in Two Parts

Text for music by
MARTIN CRIMP

Set to music by
GEORGE BENJAMIN

LIBRETTO

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T & M, Ensemble Modern, Opera Frankfurt, Lincoln Center Festival,
Wienerfestwochen, Holland Festival and
Liverpool, European Capital City of Culture 2008

The first performance was given by Anu Komsu and Hilary Summers,
with Ensemble Modern, conducted by Franck Ollu,
Daniel Jeanneteau (director and designer) in the Amphitheatre of the Opéra Bastille,
as part of the Festival d'Automne à Paris, on 22 November 2006

The writer and composer would like to express their gratitude to Joséphine Markovits
who played a central role in the gestation and performance of this work

Duration: c.40 minutes

CHARACTERS (2 singers)

<i>Soprano:</i>	The Crowd Narrator The Stranger The Minister's Child
<i>Contralto:</i>	The Crowd Narrator The Minister The Minister's Wife

ENSEMBLE (15 players)

bass flute (doubling flute + piccolo)

2 basset horns

contrabass clarinet

2 cornets

tenor trombone

cimbalom doubling percussion (1 player)

large pair of cymbals, guiro, 2 crotales, whip

2 violins (2nd doubling mandolin)

2 violas (2nd doubling banjo)

2 cellos

double bass

NOTE

Passages within brackets thus: [] are not included in the musical work itself.

Into the Little Hill

Part One

I The Crowd

1 + 2 Kill them they bite
kill them they steal
kill them they take bread take rice
take—bite—steal—foul and infect—
damage our property
burrow under our property
rattle and rattle the black sacks.
Kill and you have our vote.

II The Minister and the Crowd

1 The minister greets the crowd
selects a baby to kiss in the green April light
for the black eye of the camera
smiles, grips the baby, thinks:
We have no enemies.
We live peacefully
in the shadow of the Little Hill.
[On the horizon of our city
are banks and steeples, the quarter-moons of minarets.]
We accept all faiths
because we believe—intelligently believe
in nothing.
And what's wrong—thinks the minister—
with a rat?

A rat knows its place
—avoids light—clings as a rat should
to the walls
and only steals from the stacked-up plastic sacks
what we have no appetite to eat.

The minister passes back the baby
says to the electorate: please—think—
the rat is our friend.

My own child is in her element
feeding her black rat and cutting its claws.
Even this baby—who knows?—may owe its life
to a rat in an experiment.

But the people spit
back over the metal fence:

III The Crowd

- 1 + 2 Kill them they bite
kill them they steal
kill them they take bread take rice
take—bite—steal—foul and infect—
[damage our property
burrow under our property
rattle and rattle the black sacks.
We want the rats dead.]
- 1 But no animal—not one animal—must suffer
neither must our children
brave and intelligent
with bright clear eyes
ever see blood.