

John Oliver

Raven's Cry

*for one or more voices (high, medium, and/or low), piano,
and prerecorded sounds on compact disque*

VERSION FOR MEDIUM VOICE

Identical to the medium voice part in the Full Score.
Use this score for ensemble version only.
To sing solo with piano and tape, consult
"VERSION FOR SOLO MEDIUM VOICE"

Text by the composer with additional text from
The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Commissioned by the Eckhardt-Gramatté National Competition
with financial assistance from the Canada Council for the Arts



THE CANADA COUNCIL | LE CONSEIL DES ARTS
FOR THE ARTS | DU CANADA
SINCE 1957 | DEPUIS 1957

About the music

Raven's Cry was commissioned by the Eckhardt-Gramatté National Competition and first performed by finalists in the competition on April 30, 1999 in Brandon, Manitoba, Canada. The performance materials for this piece include this score plus a compact disque titled *Raven's Cry Performance CD*.

LANGUAGE OF THE SCORE

The score was written to be sung in both of the official languages of Canada, English and French; Spanish has also been added in several places, though the rhythms have not always been completely notated due to space restrictions. When a soloist sings the piece, the story told at the centre of the piece should be spoken in the majority language of the audience. (See page iii of this Introduction for the complete text of this story in English, French, and Spanish.) The rest of the piece may be sung in any of the three notated languages (English, French, or Spanish), the three languages of the Americas, with the following two exceptions:

1] Since the story's original language is English, there are some phrases that must be sung in English; these are notated in English only in the score.

2] The sections that feature Articles from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights [UDHR] (from bars 99 to 183) appear in the score in the two official Languages of Canada, French and English, as well as Spanish where possible. However, these passages may be sung in any language for which a translation of the UDHR exists. Translations of the UDHR in more than 40 languages can be downloaded from the "50th Anniversary" internet web site <<http://www.unhchr.ch/udhr/index.htm>> and used instead of or in addition to the text as it appears in the score. The performers would then have to adapt the notes and rhythms to fit the text to the score. A highly creative rendition of this section of the score would present a mixture of languages for each of the musical phrases.

NOTATION

PRERECORDED PART

The salient features of the prerecorded part are notated to help the performers to cue with the prepared compact disque. Several features should be mentioned.

All "instruments" labeled on the left side of each system below the piano part within square brackets are sounds on tape.

- [∞] refers generally to any sounds on tape
- [drum] = any drums sounds
- [pno~] = wobbly piano
- [pno<] = reverse piano sounds
- [chant] = chant sounds
- [orch] = orchestral sounds

Within the tape notation parts:

- italicized *text* is text you hear spoken
- regular text [in square brackets] describes what you hear
- [accent] over italicized text indicates where the beat should fall in coordination with the performers.
- |:text:| means the text or sound clip is repeated rapidly. (See bar 185.)

The voices that appear on the prepared CD include those of Joseph Gosnell, Grand Chief of the Nisga'a Nation, and Gordon Wilson, politician from British Columbia, both voices used with permission.

VOCAL PARTS

This is tonal music and so there are no special rules for accidentals: accidentals apply to all similar notes within any bar and are automatically canceled in the next bar.

Coordination with the prepared music on compact disque

The prepared compact disque has **two versions** of the accompaniment. Due to the nature of prerecorded music (the timing is fixed), the musicians must follow the tempo set in the recording. However, I have a section in the middle that gives the musicians more freedom.

Bars 105-183 have very little material on CD and so here the interpretation can be freer than other parts of the score. However, there are drums sounds and text that come in at each iteration of the story to warn the musicians about synchronisation. Do not worry about whether or not you are synchronized in the middle of this passage, but do note how far off you are and make adjustments. At the end of this section there are various cuing sounds on CD (from bar 174 onward) that will allow

the musicians to realign themselves with the CD properly. Both versions has seven cue points:

Version 1 - **Performance Tempo**: the tracks used for performance.

Version 2 - **Demo with piano**: is identical to Version 1 but an unusually loud piano part has been added (performed on a sampled piano with interpretive nuance missing) to approximate what might be heard by the singer in performance.

In both versions the cue points on CD are found at identical places in the score (except cue 7 as noted), as follows

	VERSION 1	VERSION 2	
	Performance	Demo with	
	Tempo	Piano (loud)	
BAR #	CUE #	CUE #	Text in voice or tape
1	1	8	
32	2	9	All human beings
66	3	10	At the same time....It was made illegal
103	4	11	Before Story 1 "Those that went before us (second time)"
131	5	12	Story 2 "The taking away of their children"
157	6	13	Story 3 "The taking away of their children"
176	7	14 (note cue is at 174)	Freedom of opinion (medium voice part)

Special Remarks on Style and Interpretation

The score presents the challenge of mixing storytelling with some dramatic singing and acting. Singers of various backgrounds will come up with different renditions of the score. Only one style of singing needs special mention: The Nisga'a Chant Style is straight forward and variations on the basic form found in this score between bars 50 - 58 are heard often in Nisga'a ceremonies. The style should not be confused with the perhaps more familiar prairie style where the tempo, rhythm and register of singing are quite different.

Thanks

I would like to thank Chief Joseph Gosnell for his patience and perseverance, Gordon Wilson for his support of the Nisga'a treaty, and to both for the elegance and conviction of their words and deeds. I would also like to thank Damián Keller for the Spanish translation of the story and Catherine Merlin for the French version, and the Eckhardt-Gramatté National Competition for asking me to write this piece.

About the composer

John Oliver came to international attention in 1988 when he won the "City of Varese Prize" at the 1988 Luigi Russolo Competition, and the Canada Council's Grand Prize at the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's 8th National Competition for Young Composers for his live electroacoustic work *El Reposo del Fuego*. Based on the success of this work, the Canadian Opera Company commissioned Oliver's first opera, *Guacamayo's Old Song and Dance* which they produced in Toronto and at the Banff Centre in 1991.

Oliver went on to win two prizes at the 1989 PROCAN (now SOCAN) Young Composers' Competition and other awards, and has been commissioned by numerous Canadian performers and concert music societies, among them the National Arts Centre Orchestra, the CBC Vancouver Orchestra, Vancouver New Music, and La Société de musique contemporaine du Québec.

Oliver's recent music increasingly combines familiar musical materials or techniques with new inventions, with a view to creating a new listening experience. Master classes with I. Xenakis and Roger Reynolds, along with personal studies in perception, psychoacoustics, and social theory have contributed to this direction. Oliver's formal training with John Adams, Stephen Chatman, John Rea, Bruce Mather, and Philippe Boesmans also contributed to Oliver's formation. He holds a doctorate in composition from McGill University.

John Oliver's music has been presented at major international festivals, including the International Society for Contemporary Music *World Music Days* in Oslo, New Music Across America, Budapest Spring Festival, Ars Musica Festival (Brussels), Rendezvous Festival (London, England), En torno a los sonidos electrónicos (Mexico City), Subtropics III Music Festival (Miami, Florida), and the Juilliard School of Music *Pacific Rim* Festival. His works have been heard throughout North America and Europe in concert and on radio, in performances by The Borromeo String Quartet, Camerata Transsylvanica, Canadian Opera Company, CBC Vancouver Orchestra, New Music Concerts, Nouvelle Ensemble Moderne, L'Orchestre Métropolitain de Montréal, National Arts Centre Orchestra, Pierrot Ensemble, Saint Lawrence String Quartet, Société de musique contemporaine du Québec, Vancouver New Music, Vancouver Opera, and others.

THE STORY FROM BARS 105-182

The story told in the three different voice types between bars 105-182 is notated in English in the score. However, the story may also be read in French or Spanish, preferably in the language of the majority of the audience so that its message will be heard and understood.

ENGLISH

I am going to tell you a story now.

It is a very old story now, one told to me by my grandmother. My Grandma tells how when she was growing up she was taken away from her family every year since she was six years old and put in a residential school for most of the year. She was punished and whipped whenever she tried to speak to her brother in their language. She was separated from her brother too and they weren't allowed to speak their language. Slowly they learned the white man's tongue and ways, and every summer they would come back home but they couldn't remember much of their mother's tongue any more and they felt ashamed at the way their parents lived. One day, she saw her brother speak to another Indian boy who was their cousin. They spoke some words in our language and thought they would not be heard, but they got caught and taken away. They had their mouths pried open and sewing needles driven through their tongues into the bottoms of the mouths. Grandma says that her brother didn't speak at all for two years. Then a few years later he disappeared from school and nobody ever saw him again. Some say they've seen him in Vancouver but he's in a bad way and doesn't know anybody from home anymore.

AS SUNG

At the age of six she was taken to a white man's school to have her Indianness cleansed from her. It worked. She was ashamed to come home in summertime. At school some classmates who spoke their own language had their mouths pried open and sewing needles driven through their tongues into the bottoms of the mouths. So now they cannot speak any language at all.

FRENCH

Et maintenant je vais vous raconter une histoire.

C'est une vieille histoire que m'a racontée ma grand-mère. Grand-maman raconte comment elle a été retiré de sa famille tous les ans depuis l'âge de 6 ans et placé dans une école résidentielle pendant la plupart de l'année. Elle était punie et fouettée à chaque fois qu'elle essayait de parler à son frère dans sa propre langue. Elle a aussi été séparée de son frère et ils n'avaient pas le droit de parler leur langue. Peu à peu ils ont appris la langue et les coutumes de l'homme blanc et à chaque fois qu'ils revenaient chez eux ils se souvenaient moins bien de la langue de leur mère, et se sentaient honteux des coutumes de leurs parents. Un jour, elle a vu son frère parler avec un cousin quelques mots dans notre langue, pensant qu'ils ne seraient pas entendus. Mais ils ont été pris et on les a enlevé. On leur a ouvert la bouche de force et on leur a planté des aiguilles au travers de la langue dans le fond de la bouche. Grand-maman dit que son frère n'a plus parlé du tout pendant deux ans. Plusieurs années plus tard, il a disparu de l'école et on ne l'a pas revu. On dit qu'il a été vu à Vancouver, mais il n'allait pas bien et ne reconnaît personne de chez lui.

La chanson

A l'âge de six ans, elle a été emmené à l'école de l'homme blanc dans le but de dépurifier sa culture indigène. Ça a bien marché. En été, elle avait honte de revenir chez elle. A l'école, des amis qui ont parler notre langue ont eu leur bouche ouverte de force, et des aiguilles planter dans leur langue, dans le fond de la bouche. Alors maintenant ils ne peuvent plus parler aucune langue.

SPANISH

Te voy a contar un cuento.

Es un cuento muy antiguo que me contó mi abuela. Dice mi abuela que cuando era chica, se pasaba casi todo el año en una escuela pupila, lejos de su familia. En esa escuela, la castigaban a latigazos cada vez que trataba de hablar con su hermano en su lengua nativa. La mantenían separada de su hermano y ni él, ni ella, podían hablar en su idioma. De a poco, fueron aprendiendo las costumbres y el idioma del hombre blanco. Todos los veranos volvían a casa, pero ya no se acordaban de la lengua de sus padres y tenían vergüenza de la forma en que vivía su familia. Un día, mi abuela vio a su hermano hablando con su primo. Los dos chicos intercambiaron algunas palabras en su idioma pensando que nadie los oía. Pero los agarraron y se los llevaron. Les abrieron la boca por la fuerza y les cosieron la lengua al fondo de la boca. Mi abuela dice que su hermano no pronunció una palabra por dos años. Varios años más tarde se fue de la escuela y nadie lo vio más. Alguien dijo que lo vio en Vancouver pero parece que está muy mal y que ya no reconoce a nadie.

THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

The score also contains excerpts from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights [UDHR]. The melodic line may be adapted to fit the words of any language for which a translation exists of this text. Translations of the UDHR in more than 40 languages can be downloaded from the "50th Anniversary" internet web site <<http://www.unhchr.ch/udhr/index.htm>> and used instead of or in addition to the text as it appears in the score. The United Nations may also be contacted by regular mail or other means to obtain other translations. I include at the end of the score the full translations in English, French and Spanish to give the musicians more background about the meaning and inspiration for the music.