

Alec Roth – **OLD EARTH** – text by Samuel Beckett

stage work for actor and an unaccompanied choir of eight voices
commissioned jointly by the Spitalfields Festival and The Sixteen

first performed by The Sixteen, Harry Christophers (conductor), Alan Howard (actor), Jonathan Holmes (director), Lucy Wilkinson (designer),
Village Underground, London EC2 (Spitalfields Festival), 15/16 June 2012

The music of *Old Earth* consists of five wordless movements for eight unaccompanied voices, to be performed in conjunction with four monologues (texts taken from *Fizzles*) by Samuel Beckett, spoken by an actor.

I PRELUDE

TEXT 1 beginning: *“Ruinstrewn land, he has trodden it all night long . . .”*
ending: *“ . . . ruinstrewn land, little panic steps.”*

II SCHERZO I (“Step Dance”)

TEXT 2: beginning: *“I gave up before birth, it is not possible otherwise . . .”*
ending: *“ . . . there is nothing left in his head, I’ll feed it all it needs.”*

III LENTO (“Closed Space”)

TEXT 3: beginning: *“Closed place. All needed to be known for say is known . . .”*
ending: *“ . . . Just wide enough for one. On it no two ever meet.”*

IV SCHERZO II (“Cockchafer Dance”)

TEXT 4: beginning: *“Old Earth, no more lies, I’ve seen you . . .”*
ending: *“ . . . a childhood sea, other skies, another body.”*

V POSTLUDE

DURATION

total duration (music and text) ca. 50 minutes (of which texts = ca. 20’; music = ca. 30’)

FORCES REQUIRED

actor (for the Beckett texts)

eight unaccompanied voices divided into two choirs of SATB

PERFORMANCE MATERIALS

Score

REVIEWS

“ . . . an experience of spellbinding poetic unity” (The Independent)

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