

# Electra Perivolaris

The Islands  
in homage to Agnes Martin

for solo oboe



***The Islands*** for solo oboe.

A Royal Academy of Music '200 Pieces' Bicentenary Commission.

### **First Performance**

The premiere will be given by oboist, Fernando Gomis, at the Royal Academy of Music, London. Summer 2022, date TBC.

### **Duration**

5 minutes 30 seconds approximately.

### **Performance Note**

This piece uses three different kinds of fermata in order to create carefully paced silences, like the placement of blank space in the paintings of Agnes Martin.

The triangular fermata indicates a short pause, the box shaped fermata indicates a long pause, and the standard curved fermata indicates an average length pause.

### **Programme Note**

This piece takes its title from two works created by seminal American abstract painter Agnes Martin. The first of these is a hand drawn oil and graphite grid created in 1961 and part of Martin's lifelong exploration of the grid form as a stimulus for pure and abstracted emotions. The second of Martin's works, also titled *The Islands*, is much larger in scale. Painted in 1979, Martin creates a sense of immersion across twelve separate canvases through the use of pale strips of colour. Each painting in the set is connected to all of the others, although physically separate, like an archipelago. This sense of distance, immersion and connection resonated with my own notions of my dual Scottish and Greek island heritage and my experiences living on the Scottish Isle of Arran.

A particular quotation has influenced my composition of this piece. Agnes Martin stated that "Nature is like parting a curtain, you go into it. I want to draw a certain response like this ... that quality of response from people when they leave themselves behind, often experienced in nature. My paintings are about merging, about formlessness ... A world without objects, without interruption."

My solo oboe piece draws on this quotation, weaving together fluid horizontal musical lines with more vertical percussive lines into a grid like form. The contrasting directions and characters of the separate musical lines draw together through the work until they fuse together into one shape by the end of the piece. I have been inspired by the sense of intricacy, infinite variation, and precision which defines Martin's work. The way that she worked by hand in a state of concentration mirrors my own practice and the way that her work seems to suspend time and contain powerful energy within delicate structures is very closely linked to my musical imagination.



# The Islands

in homage to Agnes Martin

Electra Perivolaris

Oboe

c. ♩=66  
*Floating, pulsing, delicate, like a voice*

**ppp**  
*(as quiet as possible)*

**(ppp)** — **p > ppp**

5

**p** — **ppp** — **pp** — **ppp** — **f** — **pp** — **f**

8

**pp** — **f** — **pp**

## Più mosso

10

c. ♩=92  
*Wild, fluid but percussive*

**ff** — **p** — **ff** — **fff**

13

c. ♩=66  
*Floating, pulsing, delicate, like a voice*

**ppp** — **ff**

16

**p** — **f** — **pp**

19 **molto rit.**  
*trm*

**Più mosso**  
 c. ♩=92  
 Wild, fluid but percussive  
 22

26 **molto rit.**  
 like an echo

c. ♩=66  
 Floating, pulsing, delicate, like a voice  
 29  
*trm*

32

34

37

Più mosso

c. ♩=92

Wild, fluid but percussive

40

*ff* *pp* *ff* *pp* *ff* *pp*

44

*ff* *pp* *ff* *fff*

molto rit. . . . . c. ♩=66

48

*f* *ff* *f* *ff* *pp*

54

Singing, pure

*f* *pp*

58

*(pp)* *ff* *pp* *ff*

61

*pp* *ff* *pp* *ff* *pp*

molto accel. . . . .

64

c. ♩=92

*fff* *pp* *ff* *pp*

69

*ff* *f* *ff* *f*

*molto rit.*

c. ♩=66

72 *fff* *ppp* (as quiet as possible) *p*

77 *f* (*f sempre*)

*Singing, soaring to the end*

81 *mp*

83 (*mp sempre*)

85 *pp*

88 (*pp sempre*) *ppp* (as quiet as possible) (*ppp*)<

92 *p > ppp* *p* *ppp* *pp*

95

*fading away until almost inaudible by end*