

I Have Seen

Music: Michael Strand © 1986, 1994, 2024

Lyrics: Neville Potter © 1984, 1994, 2002

"I Have Seen" (IHS) is an approximately 48 minutes long word- and sound-painting — an audio-visual epic and an ode to the folly and hope of mankind.

The composition incorporates 23 verses of Neville Potter's poem by the same name, an overture in two parts called "*Dawnings*", and two instrumental transitional pieces, called "*Premonition*" and "*The Battlefield Elegy*".

Two earlier versions had 17 and 19 verses.

The composition consists of twelve parts:

Part	Title	Length approx.
1.	Dawnings (overture with verse 1)	7:49
2.	Hope and Despair (verses 2–4)	4:06
3.	Lifting a Spell (verse 5)	1:42
4.	Premonition (instr. transition from verse 5–6)	2:48
5.	What Was It For (Verses 6–9)	6:06
6.	The Battlefield Elegy (instr. Transition from verse 9–10)	4:04
7.	You Sit and Wonder (verses 10–13)	4:56
8.	Why Do Empires Die? (verse 14)	1:25
9.	Power Failure (verses 15–17)	5:12
10.	Hopes and Love (verses 18–19)	2:42
11.	Look Beyond This World (verses 20–21)	3:14
12.	Search and Find (verses 22–23)	3:35

There could be, but does not have to be, a short break of one to two bars between part 1 ("*Dawnings*"/overture) and part 2 ("*Hope and Despair*").

Parts 2, 3, and 4 are played consecutively, and there first is a short break after "*Premonition*".

There is a short break after verse 9 between part 5 and 6 ("*The Battlefield Elegy*"), and again after part 6.

Parts 7, 8, and 9 are played without a break.

Verse 17 in part 9 is about the atomic bomb, with the lyrics spoken over a soundscape, which ends with a transitional soundscape to verse 18.

Part 10 starts with the soundscape of life coming back, and its ending smoothly moves over into part 11, connecting the verses both lyrically and musically.

Between part 11 and the final part 12 is a short break.

"I Have Seen" can be performed in a small setting with just a band of about 7–8 musicians.

In its greatest extent it could be a full-fledged multi-media stage performance with orchestra, band, singers, dancers, lightshow, videos, animations, etc.

2 ½ of the 23 verses are spoken (verse 1, 17, and half of verse 4).

All of the other verses are sung by 2 tenors with a wide range, or alternatively by one tenor and one female singer (alto/soprano). In addition to the second voice in verses 2, 3, 5, 14, and 23 the female singer could also sing lead in the verses 10, (maybe 11), 12, and 19.

When I wrote the music to each verse or group of verses, I tried to create an epic audio-visual landscape, which was both emotional and pictorial.

Although a singer's vocal ability is greatly appreciated, he/she should not try to merely be impressive or recite like a disengaged newsreader.

Especially the singer(s), but also all of the other musicians, could benefit from trying to assess how they feel about what is described in the lyrics, which emotions the lines evoke, and they should try to express these feelings in their performance.

There could for example be (gaping, wide-eyed) admiration, (wondering) amazement, being impressed and moved, compassion, hope/hopefulness, (unyielding) determination, suppressed anger, despair, wrath, pride, joy, honesty, etc.

The instrumentation laid out here is for band and (chamber) orchestra, and uses numerous sound effects and samples, which can be played from a MIDI controller keyboard.

Instrumentation

This is the *instrumentation for the whole piece* with the maximum number of different instruments applied.

(The number of musicians per group, e.g. strings or brass section, is not yet determined.)

Instructions and the specific instrumentation for each of the twelve parts of “I Have Seen” are listed in front of the respective score.

2 Vocals (as specified above)

2 Keyboard- / Grand Piano-players

with MIDI keyboards/synthesizers analog and/or virtual (specified further below)

2 guitar players – Acoustic steel string guitar, Nylon strings guitar, Electric Guitar

1 Electric bass / Upright bass

1 Drum set

Woodwinds

- Flute(s)
- Oboe(s)
- Core Anglais (English Horn)
- Clarinet(s)
- Bassoon(s)

Brass

- French Horns
- Trumpets
- Trombones
- Bass trombone
- Tuba

Percussion / Timpani (some from keyboard)

- Vibraphone (maybe keyboard)
- Bandoneon (or Accordion, maybe keyboard)
- Church Organ (maybe keyboard)

Strings

- Violins I (divisi)
- Violins II (divisi)
- Viola (divisi)
- Violoncellos
- Contrabass

Synthesizers

- Roland *JX-8P* or *JX-10* or virtual *ML-VST PG-8X*
- Roland *MKS-80* (Super Jupiter)
- Roland *Juno 106* or Cherry Audio *DCO-106*
- A Moog type sound as lead synthesizer

Other virtual synthesizers

- Spitfire Audio: LABS > Frozen Strings: Arctic Swell – Decay
- Sonic Academy ANA 2: Bandpass Rise & Sonora

Roland synthesizer sounds/patches are specified in the 12 parts of the score, and their parameters also exist in separate documents. * ROLAND JX-8P_10_Patch-Tone_Parameter.docx and document for the patches of the Roland MKS-80.

The three Roland synthesizers I used in this composition are from the 1980s; they are nowadays rather expensive, might be faulty, and can be hard to come by.

The patches I used and consider essential for “*I Have Seen*” can partly be substituted by virtual synthesizers, which in many cases can be just as good as the “real thing”, and I got samples of them.

The *Roland JX-8P* can be replaced by the virtual synthesizer *ML-VST PG-8X*, downloadable from <https://sites.google.com/site/mlvst0/>. But this one will only work on Macs up to and including macOS 10.15 (Catalina), but do not work on Apple M1 or M2 machines. The *PG-8X* will also work on 32- and 64-bit Windows PCs.

The *Roland Juno 106* can be replaced by the virtual synthesizer *DCO-106* from Cherry Audio <https://cherryaudio.com/products/dco-106>.

As far as I know as of 2023-08-01, there are no virtual replacements for the *Roland MKS-80 Super Jupiter* rack mount sound module, which is by no means identical to the Roland Jupiter 8 or 6. I sampled the patches I needed, and these will be played from a MIDI keyboard.

About half of the patches from the Roland synthesizers *JX-8P* and *MKS-80* are factory presets. Patches marked with ‡ are programmed or altered. The patches used in the 12 parts are named and documented at the end of each part's performance instructions.

Patches from the *Juno 106* are factory presets.

Synthesizer Patches by instrument

In order of appearance

<p>Roland JX-8P / JX-10 or virtual ML-VST PG-8X</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salamand • Bubbles • Fat Wobble • Tone Echo ‡ • Rise-Shine ‡ • Octave Fat ‡ • Poly Fat ‡ • Fat Freddy ‡ • Overtones • Steel Drums • Logdrum 	<p>Roland JX-8P / JX-10 or virtual ML-VST PG-8X</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poly Brass 3 ‡ • Wave Aura • Fat Fifth ‡ • Soundtrack • Soundtrack 2 IHS ‡ • Mira HIS ‡ • Vibes • Rise-Shine • Hollow Pad • Filt Flow • Synk Pluk
<p>Roland MKS-80 (Super Jupiter)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital Rise • Slave drums • Synth Bass 2 • Choppers • Digital Reso(nance) • Soft Pad • High Tension Wire • Stereo Boom • Soft Pad/Digital Rise • Poly Synth 1 	<p>Roland Juno 106 or Cherry Audio DCO-106</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chorus Vibes • B32 Helicopter • B72 Melodic Taps (=“Crutches”)

Playing the patches

Several of the synthesizer patches/sounds have a long attack time, meaning the sound kind of fades in and gets louder; others have a long release time, where the tones evolve and change over time. If one would notate and play these patches, e.g. one from the Roland MKS-80 called “*Digital Rise*”, like they are sounding, one would hold down the keys way too long.

Also, these synthesizers had 6 or 8 voices polyphony, meaning that some notes would first stop sounding, when the maximum number of simultaneous voices were exceeded, and would then be superseded by new tones/sounds from a particular patch, which also evolve.

Therefore, one has to play these patches way shorter and as written, and keyboard players will have to get familiar with these sounds before a group rehearsal.

Because of practical reasons, there are also longer, one-shot samples of several audio-sources combined, assigned to one particular key on a MIDI controller keyboard, which are triggered by just one keystroke.