

the event horizon

a signal silence / the gathered knot of
amplified quiet after the tuning up and
the last cough / every qualia poised
and set at the starting line of the
opening bar / moments cued to a
noiseless threshold / atoms tensed for
the first contact of horsehair and gut /
all instruments tempered and torqued
as the planet spins on the tapered nib
of a white wand and a note bubbles up
in the singer's throat / till that
greenflash of sound / the yaw and roll
as we're pitched into music / tipped to
where raw music comes pitching
into the soul

Simon Armitage

Commissioned for the 2019 opening of Hallé St Peters, the new recording, rehearsal, education and performance venue for the Hallé Orchestra in Ancoats, Manchester, UK. The poem is incorporated into the physical structure of the building in the form of a letter-cut steel plate situated in the entrance to the auditorium, the “event horizon”.