THE AGONY OF MODERN MUSIC

for chorus, soloists, and chamber ensemble

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to Stanley Cavell
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I. Polemic

Modern music is not modern and is rarely music.

That it continues to be composed, performed and discussed represents self-deception by an element of society that refuses to believe this is true.

The evolution of music continues in popular music.
(Henry Pleasants\textsuperscript{1})

In higher art, only that is worth being presented which has never before been presented. This is the code of honor of all the great in art.

(Arnold Schoenberg\textsuperscript{2})

II. Parable

This is what my father told me when I was five: a key signature is a king’s court in miniature.

It is ruled by a king (the first step) and his two right hand men (steps five and four). They have four other dignitaries at their command.

That is what my father told me. What follows is all my own. One day a great man determined that after a thousand years, the language of music had worn itself out and could do no more than rehash the same message. Abolishing the hierarchy of tones by revolutionary decree he made them all equal and subjected them to a strict discipline.

In the days when Arnold Schonberg founded his twelve tone empire, music was richer than ever before and intoxicated by its own freedom. No one ever dreamed the end was so near. Schonberg was audacious as only a youth can be. He was legitimately proud of having chosen the only road that led “onward.” The history of music came to an end in a burst of daring and desire.

(Milan Kundera\textsuperscript{3})

\textsuperscript{1} Adapted from \textit{The Agony of Modern Music} (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1967), back cover.


III. Prophesy

This music trains a new kind of human being, one that has never before existed on this planet. (Karlheinz Stockhausen⁴)

The public has its own music, its ubiquitous music: music to eat by, to read by, to dance by, and by impressed by. (Milton Babbitt⁵)

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⁴ Adapted from “Comes Awakening, Comes Time — About the Piano Pieces,” translated by Suzee Stephens on the website www.stockhausen.org. The essay originally appeared as liner notes to Ellen Corver’s recording of Stockhausen’s Klavierstücke I – XIV (Stockhausen-Verlag: Stockhausen 56 A-C).

IV. Prayer

TO ———

MUSIC, when soft voices die, 
Vibrates in the memory;

Odours when sweet violets sicken 
Live within the sense they quicken.

Rose leaves when the rose is dead, 
Are heap'd for the belovèd's bed; 
And so thy thoughts, when thou art gone, 
Love itself shall slumber on.

(Percy Bysshe Shelley)

The collapse of music is obvious 
Nor is anything to be gained by resisting it

The composer is a person who troubles himself to produce something for which there are no consumers. 
(Arthur Honegger⁶)

I confess, freely though unhappily, God forgive me, I take far more pleasure in Simon and Garfunkel than in the whole community of “avant garde” composers.

Popular music seems to be the only area where there is to be found unabashed vitality, the fun of invention, the feeling of fresh air.

(Leonard Bernstein⁷)

PERFORMANCE INSTRUCTIONS

VOICES

Soloists - The soloists may be lightly amplified, though an unamplified performance is preferred.

Chorus - Black boxes indicate unsynchronized passages. Boxes containing unstemmed notes without rhythmic values indicate that singers can choose freely from among the enclosed pitches. Boxes containing stemmed notes and rhythmic values indicate roughly what each singer should try to sing.

PERCUSSION

PLAYER 1

Movement 1
- Marimba
- Tam-tam
- Bass Drum

Movement 2
- Marimba
- 2 Low Toms
- Vibraphone
- Maracas

Movement 3
- Xylophone
- Tam-tam
- Asian Pitched Gongs (Ab3, Bb3, Db4)
- One 29” Timp. (F2, A2, C#3)
- Mark Tree

Movement 4
- Marimba
- Chimes
- Bass Drum

PLAYER 2

Movement 1
- Vibraphone
- Chimes

Movement 2
- 4 Triangles
- 2 Spring Coils
- 1 Low Cymbal
- Glockenspiel

Movement 3
- Glockenspiel
- Tim-tam
- 2 Cymbals (Low/High)
- Asian Pitched Gong (Eb4)
- Tambourine
- Snare Drum

Movement 4
- Vibraphone
- Tam-Tam
- 2 Cymbals (Low/High)
- Snare Drum
- Unpitched Gong (high)
KEYBOARD/PIANO

Player 1 plays synthesizer in movements 1 & 2; piano in movement 3 & 4. The synthesizer in movement 3 & 4 can be played by an extra player, or by Player 1. If it is to be played by Player 1, the keyboard must be placed on top of the piano so that both instruments can be played at the same time.

The keyboard should be an 88-key touch-sensitive MIDI-controller. It controls a Max patch that runs the MachFive software sampler. A brief description of the patches follows:

Movement 1 – church organ sounds
Movement 2 – percussive organ sounds, as well as various ringing-bell sounds
Movement 3 – resonant electronic sounds
Movement 4 – church organ sounds, as in Movement 1
I. Polemic

Peaceful \( \frac{\text{a.}}{\text{43}} \) \( \frac{\text{b.}}{\text{53}} \) \( \frac{\text{c.}}{\text{95}} \)

Soprano Solo

Alto Solo

Tenor Solo

Bass Solo

Soprano

Alto

Tenor

Bass

Percussion 1

Percussion 2

VIBRAPHONE
bowed, with an imperceptible attack — let each tone sustain until the next one sounds

PROGRAM 1
organ sounds with long attack and release

Keyboard

Piano

-1-
by an element of society
that refuses to believe this is true
represents self deception
represents self deception

repre...sents self deception

true s...c
trem...s...es to believe this is true

tam-tam

fu...ses to believe this is true

this is true

sic

f

Kbd.

Program 2

MF
S. (s)

A. (s)

T. (s)

B. (s)

MARIMBA

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Kbd.

Pno.

Ah cresc.

Ah cresc.

Ah cresc.

-9-
random chromatic neighbors around F-sharp
legato

La da ba da (etc.)

random chromatic neighbors around C-sharp
legato

La da ba da (etc.)

random chromatic neighbors around C-natural
legato

La da ba ba

Program 1
What is notated is what is heard, not what is played.

*CONDUCTOR:* to m. 210, the pitches heard do not exactly correspond to the keys depressed by the keyboardist.

What is notated is what is heard, not what is played.
code of honor
is the code of honor
Modern music
Modern music

of all the great in art

-20-
VIBRAPHONE
bowed and sustained as at the beginning (motor on)
and is rarely music
random chromatic descents between f and c-sharp

random chromatic descents from a to f

random chromatic descents from f to d

motor on - medium vibrato

in time
random chromatic descents from e to c
random chromatic descents from b to g
random chromatic descents from e to c
random chromatic descents from b to g
random chromatic neighbors around e

la ba da ba (etc.)

misterioso

misterioso
300
(Whispering noises)

random chromatic neighbors around e

la ba da ba (etc.)

random chromatic neighbors around e

la ba da ba (etc.)

attacca
II. Parable

Insistent \( \dot{\ }] \quad \text{f} \)

Soprano & Alto Solo

Tenor & Bass (solo)

Alto

Percussion 1

Percussion 2

Keyboard

Piano

\* the pitch of the bell sounds does not always correspond to the key depressed.
what is notated is what is played, not what sounds.

-34-
This is what my father told me when I was five.

A key signature is a kingdom.
That is what my father told me, what follows is all my own

That is what my father told me, what follows is all my own

One day a great man

One day a great man

One day a great man

One day a great man

One day a great man
Had worn it self out
language of music
Had worn it self out

language of music
Had worn it self out

language of music
Had worn it self out

Had worn it self out

worn it self

worn it self

worn it self

worn it self

had
had
had
do no more
Than re-hash the same message
And could do no more

TRIANGLES & SPRING COILS

bell sounds
bolishing the hierarchy of tones by revolutionary decree
DAH

He made them all equal and sub-

He made them all equal and sub-

He made them all equal and sub-

He made them all equal and sub-

and sub-

and sub-

and sub-

and sub-
jected them to a strict discipline

jected them to a strict discipline

jected them to a strict discipline

jected them to a strict discipline

jected them to a strict discipline
when Arnold Schoenberg founded his twelve-tone empire
And intox-i-ca-ted by its own free-dom

richer than ever be-fore

richer than ever be-fore.

And intox-i-ca-ted by its own free-dom

richer than ever be-fore.

And intox-i-ca-ted by its own free-dom
Freely, out of time

Schoenberg was audacious as only a youth can be
SOLO SOPRANO

parlando e misterioso

108

in time, but slower

pp

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Kbd.

Pno.

S. (s)

He was le-git-i-mate-ly proud of hav-ing cho-sen the on-ly road that led "onward" The his-to-ry of mu-sic came to an end

came to an end

came to an end

came to an end

-56-
a tempo

In a burst of daring and desire

Horns

In a burst of daring and desire

Separate breathing

DA (etc.)

HA

TRIANGLES & SPRING COILS

Bell

Pno.
III. Prophesy

Very Fast $\alpha = 92 \ (\alpha = 164)$

Soprano

Alto

Tenor

Bass

Percussion 1

Percussion 2

Keyboard

Piano 1

Piano 2

XYLOPHONE  very hard mallets

GLOCKENSPIEL  very hard mallets

PROGRAM 8  resonant electronic sounds

sempre  always sustained, either by hand or with the pedal

very resonant
Mysterious \( \frac{4}{6} \) (Tempo II)

always very even — bring out the contour of the line, rather than the 4-note groupings
molto rit.  . . . . . . .

Slowly and flexibly

This music trains
This music
This music

This music
as pure a tone as possible
This music
This music

TAM-TAM
TAM-TAM
SUSPENDED CYMBAL (LOW)

p as pure a tone as possible
p a blooming sound
p a blooming sound
ppp

SUSPENDED CYMBAL (LOW)
soft sticks

8th----
8th----

mf

p
always very even — bring out the contour of the line, rather than the 4-note groupings
This music

This music
This music trains

soft sticks
This music trains a new kind of human being.

One that has never before existed on this planet.
Tempo I  \( \frac{g}{g} \)

\( \text{GLOCKENSPIEL} \)

\( \text{XYLOPHONE} \)

very resonant
This music trains a new kind of human being. One that has Modern music

Music trains Modern music

Music trains Modern music

Music trains Modern music

Music trains Modern music

Music trains Modern music

Music trains Modern music

Music trains Modern music
never before existed on this planet

sic Modern music

sic Modern music TIMP.

SUSPENDED CYMBAL (HIGH) soft sticks TAMBOURINE

mp
K
103  Tempo I \( \dot{\text{c}} = 92 \)

S.

A.

T.

B.

XYLOPHONE

Perc. 1

GLOCKENSPIEL

Perc. 2

Pno. 1

Kbd.

Pno. 2

very resonant
132 Tempo II $\mathbf{\textit{j}=69 (\text{ } \mathbf{\textit{j}=128})}$

S.

A.

T.

B.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Pno. 1

Kbd.

Pno. 2

Sost.
The public has its own music
has its own music
The public has its own music
SUSPENDED CYMBAL (HIGH)
soft sticks

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Pno. 1

Kbd.

Pno. 2

-88-
rising broader
dance by

and be impressed

and be impressed

misterioso

and be impressed
This music by  
This music by  

165 pp  

perc. 1  
perc. 2  
pno. 1  
pno. 2  

(Sus)  
cresc.  

-93-
This music trains a new kind of human being

This music trains a new kind of human being

This music trains a new kind of human being
This music trains a new kind of human being.

This music trains a new kind of human being.

This music trains a new kind of human being.

This music trains a new kind of human being.

This music trains a new kind of human being.

This music trains a new kind of human being.

This music trains a new kind of human being.

This music trains a new kind of human being.
Quasi Tempo I \( \frac{1}{96} \) (one beat here approximately equals one bar in Tempo I)

SNARE DRUM

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Pno. 1

Kbd.

Pno. 2
sing approximately this (think B♭ major)

la da ba ba (etc.)
sing approximately this legato (think B♭ major)

la da ba ba (etc.)

pp

Kbd.

Pno. 2
molto rit. .............................
IV. Prayer

Solemn \( \frac{\dot{\downarrow}}{52} \)

*sempre* **pp**

Soprano

*sempre* **pp**

\[ \text{Ah} \]

Alto

*sempre* **pp**

\[ \text{Ah} \]

**MARIMBA**

soft mallets

\[ \text{dynamics sim.} \]

**VIBRAPHONE**

motor off soft mallets

\[ \text{dynamics sim.} \]

**PROGRAM 9 - celesta and organ**

**Keyboard**

\[ \text{p} \]

\[ \text{dynamics sim.} \]

**Piano 2**

\[ \text{mf} \]

\[ \text{dynamics sim.} \]
The collapse of music is obvious.
A. (s)  Nor is anything to be gained by resisting it
T. (s)  
S.  O dors when sweet viollets sick en
A.  O dors when sweet viollets sick en
T.  O - dors when sweet viollets sick en
B.  O - dors when sweet viollets sick en

Perc. 1  

Perc. 2  soft mallets

Pho. 1  

Kbd.  

Pho. 2  

The composer is a
somewhat freely

per- son who troubles himself to produce

Live with - in the sense they quick - - -

p Live with - in the sense they quick - - -

Live with - in the sense they

Live with - in the sense they

somewhat freely

to produce something for which there are no con - su - mers

something for which there are no con - su - mers

Live with - in the sense they quick - - -

Live with - in the sense they quick - - -
SOLO SOP. & ALTO: sing with choir through m. 44
SOLO TEN. & BASS: sing with choir through m. 48

A little slower

I confess

I confess

I confess

I confess

I confess

I confess

I confess

I confess

freely but unhappily

wooden sticks

soft sticks

hard sticks

GONG (HIGH)

TAM TAM (LOW)

SNARE DRUM

CYMBAL (HIGH)

pianos

-115-
God forgive me
I take much more pleasure
in
I confess God forgive me
I confess
I confess
I confess
f
SNARE DRUM
CYMBAL (LOW)
soft sticks
SNARE DRUM
hard sticks
CYMBAL (HIGH)
in Simon and Garfunkel

Si - mon and Gar - fun - kel

Simon and Gar - fun - kel

Than in the whole com - mu - ni - ty

I con - fess

I con - fess

I con - fess

I con - fess

CYMBAL (LOW)

SNARE DRUM
hard sticks

Gar - dif - fent

of a - vant garde com -
This page contains musical notation with various symbols and instructions. The notation includes:

- Textual elements indicating musical parts and instructions for performance.
- Specific instructions for percussion and piano, such as "po-sers" and "THIS NOTE TO BE HEAVILY MUTED".
- Musical symbols and notations typical of a classical score.

The text in the notation is not clearly legible due to the complexity of the musical notation. However, it appears to include instructions and symbols for performance, with specific emphasis on certain sections.
J

gradually to Tempo I  \( \frac{45}{42} \)  \( pp \)

Ah

Ah

Ah

Ah

I confess

I confess

I confess

I confess

MARIMBA  soft mallets

dynamics sim.

PROGRAM 9 - celesta and organ

Kbd.

Pno. 2
Ah Rose leaves when the rose is dead
so thy thoughts when thou art gone

Love itself shall slumber

so thy thoughts when thou art gone

Love itself shall slumber

so thy thoughts when thou art gone

Love itself shall slumber

so thy thoughts when thou art gone

Love itself shall slumber

so thy thoughts when thou art gone

Ah

Chimes
Ethereal, slow

S.  

A.  

T.  

B.  

Perc. 1  

Perc. 2  

Pno. 1  

Pno. 2  

-125-
P
71 a tempo

S. (s)

A. (s)

T. (s)

B. (s)

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Pno. 1

Pno. 2

a tempo

pp separate breathing

Ah

Ah

popular music

pop popular

* Pop popular

* Pop popular

* Pop popular

* Pop popular

* Pop popular

* Pop popular

* Pop popular

* Pop popular

* Pop popular

* Pop popular

* Pop popular

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* Pop popular

* Pop popular
Seems to be the only area

PROGRAM 10 - organ sound with a long attack

bowed slow vibrato
Seems to be the only area

lightly

ha ha (etc.)

haha haha (etc.)

And so thy thoughts when thou art gone.

MARIMBA soft mallets
where there is to be found

gradually growing a little more insistent

un-abashed vi -