

I am about eight years old, standing in the darkroom at my father's office in County Hall. A countdown is in progress. A piece of paper is floating in the pungent-smelling liquid of the developing-tray. As the seconds tick by, an image begins to form on the paper. If extracted too quickly from the liquid this image will not be fully and clearly visible, if left too long it will be spoiled — obliterated by a relentlessly creeping chemical twilight. These moments have an urgency and mystery that I cannot locate in the too speedy, too limited, and appallingly irrevocable click of the shutter across the lens.

Fifty or so years on, and I am looking at the vacant paper on my desk. The clocks tick, my hand moves, sounds appear. Eye to 'eidos'.

Photographs have generally been most valued, or perhaps de-valued, as documentation. They are treated as memoranda, relics, anecdotes, supposedly objective evidence, emblematic of singular arrested moments in time. In most photography, unlike painting or drawing, the view is disconcertingly blinkered, directly ahead. Everything is completely still. The camera and its lens (its eye) do not move. This fixed-perspective immobility is haunting and unnatural. In writing music, both my ears, and their accompanying brain and hand, have to remain mobile, alive. Acknowledging the fluidity, movement and characteristics of sound, discovering and exploring, getting the hands dirty and relishing it. Not putting 'already musical' sounds on a pedestal, and admiring them from a safe or discreet distance. Teaching my inner ear to newly recognise and listen.

The ear is not a camera, nor is my music-writing hand neutrally mechanical. My title uses the word 'photography', and its plethora of associations, to convey a certain kind of musical material: documentary — snipped out from different periods in the past, and different locations across the world — a collection of exterior facts. These refugee facts are then situated, more or less provocatively, in the eventual composition. They are exchanged for, disrupted, and transformed by composing (imagining, transcribing, analytically mis-reading) into other facts. The whole piece is outlining a type of musical composition using the analogue of an idealised 'photography' instead of painting, sculpting, writing novels or poems. Although I have lifted phrases from Roland Barthes for the opening two sections of the work, my feeling is that the emphasis he places on implied or covert 'narratives' is excessively literary. Many other writers interpret photographs this way. One can, as in a still rarer than 'normal' cinema, witness a more fluid and active camera and non-figurative photography. In the wildly cavorting camcorder of some of Chris Newman's videos, in the weaving and dripping trails of light across Maarten Vanvolsem's panoramic photographs, in the 'joiners' and collages of David Hockney. Teaching our eyes to look more closely.

'History' in the title conveys 'remembered or invented past and present'; or 'a chronological continuum'; or 'the appearance and stylistic attributes of previous and current eras'. 'Sound' is the raw magma of music, before what Baudrillard calls 'obscene formulæ' intrude.

Etched bright with sunlight

Michael Finnissy *The History of Photography in Sound* (1997-2000)

Mark Knoop piano
John Ford lighting

The musical 'documents' (=photographs) or materials used in this piece are:

(i) A 'motivo fondamentale' — the plainsong *Te Deum laudamus*, or the Lutheran version harmonised by J. S. Bach, *Herr Gott, dich loben wir* (BWV 328). This is, in effect, a pitch reservoir, a *grundgestalt* (alternate minor thirds and whole tones). It functions as the Aristotelian unifying factor, subsuming the following 'variations'...

(ii) A reference to Wagner's *Götterdämmerung* 2.i. Hagen's question "Der Ewigen Macht, wer erbt sie?" ("Who shall inherit the might of the immortals?") — a rhythmic and harmonic leitmotif including rhetorical silence. Offset by...

(iii) A reference to Berlioz's *Romeo et Juliette* Scene d'amour, a melodic and textural *idée fixe*. And then, more localised...

(iv) Short quotations from, or allusions to, canonical musical personalities: most prominently Beethoven and Busoni, also Alkan, Mozart, Paganini, Grieg, and...

(v) Short quotations from, or allusions to, musical genres: fugal (diatonic/harmonically directional or functional) counterpoint, minuets, 18th and 19th century hymnody, ragtime, 'exotic' or 'primitive' folkmusics (African and Black American, Sicilian, Inuit, Norwegian hardanger-fiddle etc.), popular dance-band music of the 1930s and 1940s.

The piece, lasting around five and a half hours, is divided into eleven sections. The fifth and ninth are quite short in duration (between 10 and 15 minutes), the eighth is long (between 75 and 80 minutes) the others average half an hour. The composition was begun in 1995 and completed in 2001. Ian Pace gave the first complete (recital) performance at the Royal Academy of Music in London, on 28th January 2001. The eleventh section of the cycle (first performed by Nicolas Hodges with slide projections by Ken Scott and Steyning Camera Club) was commissioned by Steyning Music Society. The Academic Board of the Royal Academy of Music generously supported the writing of the later stages of the composition (the *Bachsche Nachdichtungen* suggested by Carlo Grante, sections 9, 2 and finally 1). *The History...* was designed to be performed, in whole or part, either as a solo piano 'recital' or as an 'installation' with video, slides and film.

Michael Finnissy

Further notes by Michael Finnissy are included below, as well as a listing of musical and literary source material for each section. This material is rarely explicitly stated, but does inform an understanding of the overall program of the work.

This is the first Australian performance, and the first performance of the recently revised version of section nine.

1:00pm Part I

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|--|---------------|
| 1. <i>Le démon de l'analogie</i> | (2000) 28' |
| 2. <i>Le réveil de l'intraitable réalité</i> | (1999) 16' |
| <hr/> | |
| 3. <i>North American Spirituals</i> | (1997-98) 20' |
| 4. <i>My parents' generation thought War meant something</i> | (1999) 39' |

Le démon de l'analogie

The devil of the analogy

for Carlo Grante

(1) Analogy — (Copy) — Homology. “No sooner is a form seen than it must resemble something.”

Le réveil de l'intraitable réalité

The awakening of inflexible reality

for Marc Couroux

(2) Reality — (Image) — Illusion. “We translate...as if the universalised image were producing a world that is without difference.”

North American Spirituals

for Marilyn Nonken

Billings — Ives — Cowell — Nancarrow. Confronting Afro-American spiritual responses to slavery: *Nobody knows the trouble I see; By and by; Go down, Moses; Steal away*. Appropriated by Michael Tippett in *A Child of our Time* to signify the voices of defiance and hope everywhere and at any period of history.

My parents' generation thought War meant something

for my mother, April 1922-October 2000

Six verses, each introduced by increasingly brief fragments of the opening bars of Debussy's *Berceuse Héroïque*, drawing on vernacular sources between Arthur Sullivan (his hymn-tune *Gertrude* (Onward Christian Soldiers), also more pervasively *Whatever you are* from the operetta *Utopia Limited*) and the Soviet song (by Blanter) *Sacred War*.

motivo fondamentale: *Herr Gott, dich loben wir*
(BWV328) — J. S. Bach
Berceuse Héroïque — Debussy
S. Gertrude (Onward Christian Soldiers) — Arthur Sullivan
motivo fondamentale: *Te Deum laudamus*
Alkan/Paganini
Orphée aux Enfers (Choeur Infernal) — Offenbach
Pezzo serioso (Concerto Op. 39) — Busoni
1st movement (Symphony No 5 Op. 67) — Beethoven
Scène d'amour (*Roméo et Juliette* Op. 17) — Berlioz
Allein Gott in der Höh' sei Ehr' (BWV717) — J. S. Bach

Herr Gott, dich loben wir (BWV725) — J. S. Bach

Sacred War — words V. Lebedev-Kumach, music Blanter
La lugubre gondola I — Liszt
Onward Christian Soldiers — words S. Baring-Gould,
music (*S. Gertrude*) Sullivan
Whatever you are (Utopia Ltd.) — Arthur Sullivan

4:00pm Part II

| | |
|---|-----------------|
| 5. <i>Alkan — Paganini</i> | (1997) 11' |
| 6. <i>Seventeen Immortal Homosexual Poets</i> | (1997) 33' |
| 7. <i>Eadweard Muybridge — Edvard Munch</i> | (1997) 23' |
| <hr/> | |
| 8. <i>Kapitalistisch Realisme (met Sizilianische Männerakte en Bachsche Nachdichtungen)</i> | (1999-2000) 65' |

Alkan — Paganini

for, and commissioned by, Nicolas Hodges

Jean qui rit — Ch V Alkan
Capriccio Op 1 Nr 12 — Nicolò Paganini

Virtuosic pan-demonium (another set of analogues to No.1). *Jean qui rit* — Alkan re-composes Mozart, Paganini's *Capriccio* Op.1 No.12, copied by Schumann (Op.10 No.1).

Seventeen Immortal Homosexual Poets

for Ian Pace

The central axis of the cycle and the first section to be completed and performed. The title recalls various albums of Japanese classical writing — *wakashu* — assembled between the tenth and nineteenth centuries. The poets appear in reverse chronological order.

Gregory Woods (1953–)
Mutsuo Takahashi (1937–)
Thom Gunn (1929–)
Allen Ginsberg (1926–)
Frank O'Hara (1926–)
Harold Norse (1926–)
Pier Paolo Pasolini (1922–)
James Kirkup (1918–)
Jean Genet (1910–)
Stephen Spender (1909–)
Federico García Lorca (1898–)
Ralph Chubb (1892–)
Jean Cocteau (1889–)
Konstantinos Kavafis (1863–)
Oscar Wilde (1854–)
Edward Carpenter (1844–)
John Addington Symonds (1840–)

Eadweard Muybridge — Edvard Munch

for James Clapperton

Balances and contradicts No.5. Abstract structuralism (scientific rationality) — Metaphysical expressionism (emotive irrationality).

Kapitalistisch Realisme (met Sizilianische Männerakte en Bachsche Nachdichtungen)

Capitalist realism (with Sicilian male nudes and Bachian paraphrases)

for Colin Symes

Three Bs. (i) Beethoven (grundgestalt thirds in Op.67, Op.18 No.5, Op.10 No.1). (ii) Bach (*Allein Gott in der Höh' sei Ehr'* BWV 717, 716, 662, 667). (iii) Busoni (retrograde of the *Pezzo serioso* from Op.39 with an overlay of Sicilian folk tunes collected by Meyerbeer). Counterpart to No.4.

Allein Gott in der Höh' sei Ehr' (BWV717) — J. S. Bach
Allein Gott in der Höh' sei Ehr' (BWV716) — J. S. Bach
• In Canone all' Ottavo
• *Alto modo* in Canone alla Quinta
• In Canone all' Ottavo per augmentationem
Allein Gott in der Höh' sei Ehr' (BWV662) — J. S. Bach
Lu Ruggeri — Sicilian Folk Dance
Chœur Infernal (Orphée aux Enfers) — Offenbach
'Nun hilf uns, Herr/Lass uns in Himmel/Hilf deinem Volk'
(*Herr Gott, dich loben wir* BWV725) — J. S. Bach
La Siciliana
Canzonetta Palermitana
• L'altra sorte del Canone al rovescio, alla Terza
• In Canone al rovescio (i) alla Seconda
• In Canone al rovescio (ii) alla Nona
Allein Gott in der Höh' sei Ehr' (BWV677) — J. S. Bach
Siciliana (Robert le Diable) — Meyerbeer
Der Ewigen Macht, wer erbte sie?

8:00pm Part III

9. *Wachtend op de volgende uitbarsting van repressie en censuur* (2000, revised 2002) 18'
10. *Unsere Afrikareise* (1998) 29'
11. *Etched bright with sunlight* (1999-2000) 25'

Wachtend op de volgende uitbarsting van repressie en censuur

Der Ewigen Macht, wer erbte sie?

Waiting for the next wave of repression and censorship

for Andrew Infanti

Opening almost identical to No.1. Thereafter the first half is loosely modelled on the Sarabande from Busoni's *Doktor Faust* (linked to material from No.8). The second half is a disordered atomising (censoring) of the first.

Unsere Afrikareise

Our travel in Africa

for Dr. Franz Eckert

Air: 'Ah! Pauvre nègre...'
(*Paul et Virginie* Act 1) – Victor Massé
Le Désert – Félicien David

Title from Peter Kubelka's film. Meditating on occidentalised 'African' materials (also finally from No.3). Most obviously Victor Masse's operatic version of Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's *Paul et Virginie*, and Felicien David's *Le Désert*. Sectionalised montage including 'ritornelli' (as No.2 but mostly less hectic).

Etched bright with sunlight

for Dr. Mark Signy

Title from Derek Jarman's unfilmed project *Sod 'em*. Reiterations of previous material, bringing chaos into order (Adorno's 'minima moralia'). Opening with Bach (BWV 328), then Wagner, North African folk music (related to No.10) and an excerpt from Kavafis (in No.6), Berlioz,... eventually 'disappearing' in 'mid-sentence'.

'Der Ewigen Macht, wer erbte sie?'
(*Götterdämmerung* 2.i) – Wagner
motivo fondamentale: *Herr Gott, dich loben wir*
(BWV328) – J. S. Bach

Fleshhold

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| Luciano Berio | <i>Sequenza X</i> (1984) |
| Matthew Bieniek | <i>Fleshhold: at the crossing over</i> (2000) |
| Chris Dench | <i>'atsiluth/shîn</i> (1991) |
| Pierre Boulez | <i>Sonatine</i> (1946) |
| György Ligeti | <i>Horn Trio</i> (1982) |
| Johannes Brahms | <i>Trio in E^b opus 40</i> (1865) |

Sunday 25th August
7:00pm pre-concert talk
8:00pm concert

Iwaki Auditorium
ABC Centre, Southbank

Elizabeth Barcan flute
Carl Rosman clarinet
Tristram Williams trumpet
Geoff Lierse horn
Mark Knoop piano
Elizabeth Sellars violin