

Michael Finnissy

The History of Photography in Sound



Ian Pace piano

MICHAEL FINNISSY (b. 1946)

THE HISTORY OF PHOTOGRAPHY IN SOUND

CD1:

1	Le démon de l'analogie	[28.29]	
2	Le réveil de l'intraitable réalité	[20.39]	
Total duration			[49.11]

CD2:

1	North American Spirituals	[23.41]	
2	My parents' generation thought War meant something	[35.49]	
Total duration			[59.32]

CD3:

1	Alkan-Paganini	[13.37]	
2	Seventeen Immortal Homosexual Poets	[34.11]	
3	Eadweard Muybridge-Edvard Munch	[26.29]	
Total duration			[74.18]

CD4:

1	Kapitalistisch Realisme (met Sizilianische Männerakte en Bachsche Nachdichtungen)		[67.42]
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CD5:

1	Wachtend op de volgende uitbarsting van repressie en censuur	[17.00]	
2	Unsere Afrikareise	[30.35]	
3	Etched bright with sunlight	[28.40]	
Total duration			[76.18]

IAN PACE, piano

IAN PACE

Ian Pace is a pianist of long-established reputation, specialising in the farthest reaches of musical modernism and transcendental virtuosity, as well as a writer and musicologist focusing on issues of performance, music and society and the avant-garde. He was born in Hartlepool, England in 1968, and studied at Chetham's School of Music, The Queen's College, Oxford and, as a Fulbright Scholar, at the Juilliard School in New York. His main teacher, and a major influence upon his work, was the Hungarian pianist György Sándor, a student of Bartók.

Based in London since 1993, he has pursued an active international career, performing in 24 countries and at most major European venues and festivals. His absolutely vast repertoire of all periods focuses particularly upon music of the 20th and 21st Century. He has given world premieres of over 150 pieces for solo piano, including works by Julian Anderson, Richard Barrett, James Clarke, James Dillon, Pascal Dusapin, Brian Ferneyhough, Michael Finnissy (whose complete piano works he performed in a landmark 6-concert series in 1996), Christopher Fox, Volker Heyn, Hilda Paredes, Horatiu Radulescu, Frederic Rzewski, Howard Skempton, Gerhard Stäbler and Walter Zimmermann. He has presented cycles of works including Stockhausen's *Klavierstücke I-X*, and the piano works of Ferneyhough, Fox, Kagel, Ligeti, Lachenmann, Messiaen, Radulescu, Rihm, Rzewski and Skempton. He has played with orchestras including the Orchestre de Paris under Christoph Eschenbach (with whom he premiered and recorded Dusapin's piano concerto *À Quia*), the SWF Orchestra in Stuttgart under Rupert Huber, and the Dortmund Philharmonic under Bernhard Kontarsky.

He is Lecturer in Music and Head of Performance at City University, London, having previously held positions at the University of Southampton and Dartington College of Arts. His areas of academic expertise include 19th century performance practice (especially the work of Liszt and Brahms), issues of music and society (with particular reference to the work of Theodor Adorno, the Frankfurt School, and their followers), contemporary performance practice and issues, music and culture under fascism, and the post-1945 avant-garde, in particular in West Germany, upon which he is currently completing a large-scale research project.

INTRODUCTION

Note: A greatly extended version of this booklet with detailed essays on the work and musical examples may be found and downloaded as a free PDF file at www.divineartrecords.com/CD/HOPIS.htm

For a period of over 20 years prior to writing the programme notes for this CD (in 2013), Michael Finnissy's music has played a prominent role in my own life; its presence has sometimes been dangerously close to overwhelming, and my attempts to maintain my own distinct identity and priorities both when playing and writing about it have often been fraught, sometimes to the point of exasperation. But it is music whose importance I have never seriously doubted, nor has my continuing fascination with each new work (and not just those for solo piano) dimmed.

I came across Finnissy's work at a relatively advanced point in my own early musical development. Whilst in the sixth form at Chetham's School of Music, I recall my then piano teacher, Peter Lawson, mentioning the names of both Finnissy and Brian Ferneyhough as two composers whose work operated on the boundaries of pianistic possibility, this very fact being tied into the nature of the musical experience. Soon afterwards, my then composition teacher Colin Touchin lent me a tape of Ferneyhough's Second String Quartet; but it would not be until a year or two later I would first see or hear any music of Finnissy. This would be when I was a student at Oxford, where I spent many a happy hour investigating what were then extremely rare scores of works 19th and early 20th century composers for piano (Liszt, Tausig, Rubinstein, Thalberg, Busoni, Godowsky and others) simultaneously with those of the post-1945 avant-garde, all facilitated by Peter McMullin, pianist, flautist, and all-purpose encyclopedia of information, who worked at Blackwell's Music Shop. At this time, I was equally enthusiastically sharing information and perspectives (and rare scores) of such earlier piano repertoire with friends such as pianist and musicologist Kenneth Hamilton (now one of the world's leading authorities on Liszt) and composer Francis Pott (now Chair of Composition at the University of West London), and on avant-garde music with fellow students, such as conductor Mikel Toms and composers and musicologists Pwyll Ap Sïon and David Maw.

McMullin, familiar with my interests, lent me copies of scores of Finnissy's *Jazz* (1976) and *all.fall.down* (1977), which I found quite incredible from the outset, and seemed to bring together both my pianistic and avant-garde interests. Soon afterwards, I purchased the score of *English Country-Tunes* (1977, rev. 1982-85), which more than any music I had previously encountered seemed to epitomise an 'England' which I could recognise – a ravaged post-industrial landscape and a modern culture still predicated upon visions of some idealised Arcadian past, a long way from conventional English pastoralism. I dreamed of playing this some day (this would not occur until some eight years later, since when it has become a staple of my repertoire). I also met Finnissy for the first time in 1988 when he came to give a presentation on his work at Oxford, playing some of the *Gershwin Arrangements*. Playing any of Finnissy's work (and that of other composers who have been associated with the so-called 'New Complexity') remained however a daunting prospect at this stage; it was not until several years later, when studying in New York at the Juilliard School, that I finally decided to find the resolve to do so. The first work I played was the first volume of the *Verdi Transcriptions*, of which I gave the US premiere. I led from this to shorter pieces, each one continuously fascinating, and after



settling in London in 1993 played several recitals featuring a range of Finnissey's music. Eventually I felt an urge to tackle the totality of Finnissey's pianistic output, and presented a series of six long recitals in London in 1996 featuring his then complete piano works to celebrate his 50th birthday year (at the time of writing, in 2013, I know that an equivalent series today would be between two and three times the length of that in 1996). Since then Finnissey's work has played a central role in my own work as a performer, though my approaches to it have hopefully developed and matured in the intervening period.

Some early ideas for the *History of Photography in Sound* were first conceived in 1995, the year before my complete piano works series, but composition of the work began properly in 1997, perhaps in part motivated by the sort of self-awareness that could be engendered through hearing his complete output up until that time, perceiving its boundaries, and thus being able to apprehend clearly areas for future development. It was first conceived as a somewhat smaller work than eventually resulted, originally to be in nine chapters; it appears as such – in projected form – in the work list of *Uncommon Ground*, the monograph on Finnissey's work published in 1998¹. These were structured in five books:

Book 1: *Le démon de l'analogie*

Book 2: *Landscapes*

2.1 *The wakening of intractable reality*

2.2 *North American Spirituals*

Book 3: *Portraiture*

3.1 *Alkan-Paganini*

3.2 *Seventeen Immortal Homosexual Poets*

3.3 *Eadweard Muybridge – Edvard Munch*

Book 4: *Documentation*

4.1 *Unsere Afrikareise*

4.2 *Click!*

Book 5: *Etched bright with sunlight*

Chapter 2.1 was also at one point to be entitled *Canada: From its origins to the present day*, but this title was soon dropped. It was to be a Canadian counterpart to *North American Spirituals*, featuring a wide range of materials collected by the Canadian pianist Marc Couroux. In the end few of these were used, only appearing in the final section of *Le réveil*, and buried within *North American Spirituals*.

The piece *Click!* only ever existed as an idea, which probably did not really correspond to either *Kapitalistisch Realisme* or *Wachtend*. Finnissy first composed all the pieces in Book 3 in 1997 (in order *Poets*, *Alkan-Paganini*, *Muybridge-Munch*), followed by the *Spirituals* in the same year. I premiered the *Poets* in the British Music Information Centre on May 1st, 1997 (the same day as the General Election which ushered in a landslide Labour victory after 18 years of Conservative rule), having earlier in the year performed excerpted sections of the work. *Unsere Afrikareise*, which I also premiered in a concert in Cheltenham, followed in 1998. It was at this point that Finnissy decided to add an extra two chapters, stemming from the motivation to compose *My parents' generation* in 1999, which necessitated a long counterpart later on in the cycle. This was to be, of course *Kapitalistisch Realisme*. From here onwards, the remaining chapters were worked on simultaneously (some had been part sketched already). *Le réveil* was completed in 1999, *Bachsche Nachdichtungen* and *Etched bright with sunlight* were both completed early in 2000, and the remainder of *Kapitalistisch Realisme*, then *Wachtend* and finally *Le démon*, all followed in a flood of productivity from that year. The cycle was finished in Autumn 2000, before my first complete performance at the Royal Academy of Music, London on January 28th, 2001. I have subsequently performed the cycle complete in Leuven, Glasgow, Montréal and Southampton, as well as continuing often to play individual chapters.

In the version presented in the world premiere, the cycle had a different order to the final version, and was still structured into 'books'. The last four pieces then were, in order: *Wachtend*; *Unsere Afrikareise*; *Kapitalistisch Realisme*; *Etched*. *Le démon* and *Etched* both formed self-contained books (under the titles above), whilst the other pieces were formed into books with the titles from above, each book containing three pieces. However, this order proved unsatisfactory, mostly because of the relative position of the last two pieces. Coming after the colossal *Kapitalistisch Realisme*, *Etched* felt something of an incidental epilogue, even a bagatelle, thus diminishing its impact. Finnissy decided upon a new order of performance, and also removed the 'books', describing it simply as in eleven chapters, before the second complete performance, which I gave in Leuven, Belgium. In 2002, Finnissy made some further modifications to *Wachtend*, which was given a new beginning and a comprehensive re-composition of the last section. The resulting version is final and definitive. *Le démon* is dedicated to Carlo Grante, *Le réveil* to Marc Couroux, *North American Spirituals* to Marilyn Nonken, *My parents' generation* to Finnissy's mother, *Alkan-Paganini* to Nicolas Hodges, *Seventeen Immortal Homosexual Poets* to Ian Pace, *Muybridge-Munch* to James Clapperton, *Kapitalistisch Realisme* to Colin Symes, *Wachtend* to Andrew Infanti, *Unsere Afrikareise* to Dr. Franz Eckert, and *Etched bright with sunlight* to Dr. Mark Signy.

The title remains enigmatic and polysemic: 'History' can be understood as referring to musical history, wider social and political history, and Finnissy's own personal 'history' (especially in *My parents' generation*), as well as a particular mode of historical consciousness which acts upon the present; 'Photography' refers obviously to the medium, and in particular the thought of three intellectuals whose ideas informed the composition of the work – Walter Benjamin, Susan Sontag and Roland Barthes². Benjamin's famed essay 'The Work of Art in the Age of its Technological Reproducibility' is concerned with how the principal of reproducibility, fundamental to both photography and film, removes the 'aura' of the unique artwork, noting:

In even the most perfect reproduction, *one* thing is lacking: the here and now of the work of art – its unique existence in a particular place. It is this unique existence – and nothing else – that bears the mark of the history to which the work has

been subject. This history includes changes to the physical structure of the work over time, together with any changes in ownership.³

Finnissy's work investigates quite exhaustively the possibility of removing something from a unique existence in a particular context; his musical materials become flexible 'texts' which assume different meanings depending on the circumstances in which they are presented.

Sontag argues that photography's effect is almost always corrosive, writing that:

To photograph is to appropriate the thing photographed. It means putting oneself into a certain relation to the world that feels like knowledge -- and, therefore, like power. A now notorious first fall into alienation, habituating people to abstract the world into printed words, is supposed to have engendered that surplus of Faustian energy and psychic damage needed to build modern, inorganic societies. But print seems a less treacherous form of leaching out the world, of turning it into a mental object, than photographic images, which now provide most of the knowledge people have about the look of the past and the reach of the present. What is written about a person or an event is frankly an interpretation, as are handmade visual statements, like paintings and drawings. Photographed images do not seem to be statements about the world so much as pieces of it, miniatures of reality that anyone can make or acquire.⁴

Finnissy's work continuously tries to navigate this aspect of his musical 'photographs', especially when employing materials so politically loaded as African-American spirituals or folk music from both North and sub-Saharan Africa. Sontag also includes in her book 'A Brief Anthology of Quotations' in homage to Benjamin, who imagined a form of criticism entirely made up of quotations⁵, which is paralleled in the many passages of the *History* featuring strings of clearly referential material.

Barthes takes a more positive view of still photography, which maybe comes closest to encapsulating Finnissy's attitude towards the many musics he encounters and 'photographs':

I decided then to take as a guide for my new analysis the attraction I felt for certain photographs. For of this attraction, at least, I was certain. What to call it? Fascination? No, this photograph which I pick out and which I love has nothing in common with the shiny point which sways before your eyes and makes your head swim; what it produces in me is the very opposite of hebetude; something more like an internal agitation, an excitement, a certain labor too, the pressure of the unspeakable which wants to be spoken. Well, then? Interest? Of brief duration; I have no need to question my feelings in order to list the various reasons to be interested in a photograph; one can either desire the object, the landscape, the body it represents; or love or have loved the being it permits us to recognize; or be astonished by what one sees; or else admire or dispute the photographer's performance, etc.; but these interests are slight, heterogeneous; a certain photograph can satisfy one of them and interest me slightly; and if another photograph interests me powerfully, I should like to know what there is in it that sets me off.⁶

The essays presented here form part of a forthcoming larger monograph on the work, during the preparation of which I have been privileged to have had access to all of Finnissy's sketches for the work, enabling me to reconstruct a good deal of the compositional processes involved. In most pieces he will generate the basic categories of material first of all, then cut them up into sections and work on the montage that is thus created, very much like a film editor. Longer expanses of material usually contain 'inserts' of other material (by no means obviously so from the final score – some such inserts are connected seamlessly to their surrounding music). Often there will be left-over pieces of material, like cinematic 'rushes' which are either discarded, used elsewhere in the cycle, or even used in a later piece (and similarly some rushes from earlier pieces find their way into the *History*).

In the case of the various chapters that are made up in large part from references to other chapters (in particular *Le démon*, *Le réveil*, *Wachtend* and *Etched*) one will sometimes (but again, by no means always) find in the sketches collections of pages that are divided up with a red pen into numbered fragments, from which Finnissy selects. Other times one will find simply the name of the chapter, section, or reference that Finnissy uses, and some time has to be spent searching through the source for the particular short excerpt used (a good example of this would be the passages from Grieg's *Slåtter* used in *Muybridge-Munch*). In either case, one will encounter lists of numbers at the tops of pages, some of them crossed through with lines. These usually indicate random selections, crossed through when they have been used. Sometimes these numbers are crossed out to the point of near-illegibility; other times it is by no means clear what source they refer to (for example the tiny selections from Alkan's *Études* Op. 39 in *Alkan-Paganini*, which educated guesswork led me toward).

Finnissy's approach to composition in successive stages also becomes instantly apparent from these or other sketches. Rarely does he start composing a piece from the passage with which it will eventually begin then proceed onwards in linear succession. Rather, he more commonly works first on the most important types of material, then on other longer passages which frequently cross reference other places, then on a selection of the 'inserts'. One will find lots of workings, re-workings, deletions of material, sometimes in separate smaller oblong sheets of manuscript paper, then various manuscript books which have some of the large scale sections of the work more or less in order (though sometimes he omits this stage before copying out the score neatly), and lots of sheets with numbered or lettered pages of the inserts. The manuscript books contain indicators for where the inserts will be included (frequently some of them are omitted from the final version). Reading through the sketches illuminates very clearly how much the act of composition is, for Finnissy, akin to shooting and then editing a film.

From Finnissy's ad hoc modifications of his basic material (which are numerous and constitute a key stage of mediation), one realises certain consistencies of preference, such as for wide contours and spread chords, for constantly mutating pulses and tonalities, and for a general extravagance of result. When dealing with references, he will tend to extract fragments in ways that blur the sense of key or metre, for example taking out a group of five quavers that cross the barline in a pair of 4/4 bars. One way of describing his compositional work would be as a combination of two metaphors: *discovery* on one hand and *appropriation* on the other. The techniques and references provide the discovery, they throw up all sorts of material, ideas, possibilities; the editing and fine-tuning provide the appropriation, in the sense of Finnissy's 'making the music his own'. This is a simplification, of

course; the former processes constitute appropriation as well in other senses. Nonetheless, it does provide a reasonably vivid picture of how such composition is enacted.

Studying the sketches also opens one's eyes to the other types of techniques Finnissy uses for manipulating pitches and rhythms, frequently using the classic serial techniques of inversion, retrograde and retrograde inversion. These will often be used to produce charts of unstemmed pitches, sometimes written down very loosely or scattered amongst different pages. But they can often be deciphered with some work.

To this day *The History of Photography in Sound* remains the most important pianistic project which I have undertaken, and it is a great joy to me that this recording, supported first through an AHRC research fellowship at Southampton University, and with editing and pressing supported by City University London, where I now lecture, is being finally released. I would like to thank various people: Nicholas Cook and Mark Everist for first encouraging and supporting me with the AHRC fellowship application, David Lefeber, producer for all of my Finnissy recordings, whose patience in the recording studio is second to none, Stephen Sutton of Divine Art Records for giving such support to this project, Adam Binks for editing, Gail Marsom at City for supporting the project from the institution's end.

Without the conversations and exchanges I have had with many people over a long period I do not believe I would have arrived at the same understanding of Finnissy, contemporary performance, and many wider musical and other issues, all of which inform this production: Pavlos Antoniadis, Pwyll Ap Sïon, Richard Barrett, Mark Delaere, James Dillon, Richard Emsley, Christopher Fox, Roddy Hawkins, Björn Heile, Wieland Hoban, Martin Iddon, Mark Knoop, Ross Lorraine, David Maw, Neil McBride, Peter McMullin, Paul Obermayer, David Prior, Mark R. Taylor, Philip Thomas, Mikel Toms, John Wall, Arnold Whittall & Trevor Wiggins.

And above all I wish to give the warmest of thanks to Michael Finnissy for everything, and to my wife Lindsay Edkins, the most important person in my life, who will know what I mean when I say I appreciate her patience when I 'bury' myself in this type of work!

Ian Pace, August 2013

¹ Henrietta Brougham, Christopher Fox and Ian Pace (eds), *Uncommon Ground: The Music of Michael Finnissy* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), p. 397.

² Specifically Walter Benjamin's essay 'The Work of Art in the Age of its Technological Reproducibility', which exists in three versions, the last (and most commonly known) of which can be found in English in Benjamin, *Selected Writings: Volume 4, 1938-1940* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), pp. 250-283 – I refer subsequently to this version; Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (London: Allen Lane, 1978); and Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, translated by Richard Howard (New York: The Noonday Press, 1981).

³ Benjamin, 'The Work of Art', third version, p. 253.

⁴ Sontag, *On Photography*, p. 4.

⁵ Benjamin, 'Program for Literary Criticism', in *Selected Writings: Volume 2, Part 1, 1927-1930* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), p. 294

⁶ Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, pp. 18-19.

MICHAEL FINNISSY

Born in London's Tulse Hill in 1946, Michael Finnissy began composing very early in life. Formal study at the Royal College of Music in London with Bernard Stevens and Humphrey Searle (composition) and Edwin Benbow and Ian Lake (piano) was followed by study in Italy with Roman Vlad. His role as teacher has encompassed the Dartington International Summer School, Winchester College, the junior department at the Royal College of Music, Chelsea College of Art and many universities as guest lecturer, then moving to Sussex University as a Research Fellow, and to the Royal Academy of Music; he is currently Professor and Chair of Composition at Southampton University.

As composer, he has been recognised in numerous festivals, including Huddersfield and Almeida. His music is increasingly receiving the attention of broadcasters and record companies, including NMC, BML and ETC as well as Divine Art and the numerous releases in the Metier Finnissy series.

In 1990 Michael Finnissy was appointed President of the International Society of Contemporary Music. He was re-elected in 1993, and in 1998 was made an honorary member of the ISCM. In 1999 he was appointed Senior Fellow of the KBC-chair in New Music at the Catholic University of Leuven in Belgium for two years. A book on the music of Michael Finnissy - *Uncommon Ground* - edited by Henrietta Brougham, Christopher Fox and Ian Pace, is published by Ashgate.

Performing *The History of Photography in Sound*

That *The History of Photography in Sound* presents formidable pianistic challenges is almost so obvious as not to require mentioning. However, on balance the sort of transcendental virtuosity associated with earlier Finnissy piano works (such as *Song 9*, *English Country-Tunes*, the Third and Fourth Piano Concertos or *all.fall.down*) frequently involving rapid traversal of the whole compass of the instrument or obsessively detailed and frenetic activity in the extreme registers, occurs only at relatively select moments, most notably in the ‘Compression’ passages, the longest of which occurs in the *Poets*, with a shorter version in *Etched bright with sunlight* and more fragmentary allusions in *Le démon*, *Le réveil*, *My parents’ generation*, *Muybridge-Munch* and *Kapitalistisch Realisme*. Otherwise, Finnissy’s most original contributions to pianistic possibility contained within the cycle can be found in the manic gnarled dotted rhythms (a little reminiscent of some of Schumann’s finales) growing out of the imaginary 1940s popular music in *My parents’ generation*, and the particular take on writing for a single hand in *Alkan-Paganini* (especially in the ferociously difficult and physically tortuous section for the right hand alone, which transforms the piano into a type of mega-violin, sometimes overstepping the boundaries of the register of such an instrument).

But most of these challenges are not insurmountable to those who have managed to navigate a range of Finnissy’s other output; nor the employment of the widest dynamic and textural range, detailed and imaginative phrasing and articulation, and use of a wide variety of pianistic touch. What to my own mind is more daunting is to find successful solutions to particular aesthetic and interpretive issues which are at play almost throughout the whole cycle, anticipated in earlier works such as the *Verdi Transcriptions*, *Gershwin Arrangements* and *Yvaroperas*, above all how to make musical sense of that writing which combines two or more types of disparate musical materials, especially when one or other of these is more obviously ‘accessible’: clearly allusive, with strong tonal implications, melodically expansive, or simply evocative of known genres and idioms. Obvious examples of this would include the Berlioz quotations in the first and last chapters, the free arrangements of the chosen African-American spirituals in the third, or the imaginary Sicilian folk tunes in *Sizilianische Männerakte*.

In works such as the *Gershwin Arrangements*, the extent to which one foregrounds other aspects of the music as well as the melodic line obviously taken from Gershwin, especially some of the more angular lines, unsettled harmonic progressions, or unstable rhythms, can profoundly affect the whole manner in which the music is perceived. This is not just a matter of relative dynamics; the extent to which one lends shape or rhythmic freedom to any one part can lead to its becoming foregrounded, especially when it exhibits clear tonal properties. Related issues occur in some of the *Verdi Transcriptions* featuring recognisably tonal material in the lower parts with disconnected atonal lines in the treble register, depending upon how the pianist negotiates the relationship between the two. The latter may assume an essentially decorative role, featuring local dissonances leading ultimately to resolution, or conversely serve to defamiliarise, perhaps even undermine, the tonal material, producing in the process types of ‘interference’ which accumulate. There are of course a wide range of musical strategies which can be employed in response to these issues. If my own attitudes towards them are today perhaps a little less didactic than when earlier performing (and recording) these works, the issues remain alive and problematic with every performance of these, and as much if not more so when playing the *History*.

It would be disingenuous to suggest that Finnissy's music does not indulge some elements which might be politically or ideologically questionable or at least antiquated, including nostalgia for an idealised past, evoked through the use of auratic devices, exoticism and orientalism sometimes involving stock musical attributes which could be seen as stereotypical, or the use of programmatic or narrative structures in the ultimately abstract medium of music. Yet the problems entailed in these approaches are certainly not lost on Finnissy, and he finds ways of embodying in the fabric of the music a sense of both the seductive appeal of such things and also the type of alienation which can result from a more dispassionate examination of what they might entail. This is most palpable at such moments as the Berlioz quotations in both *Le démon* and *Etched bright with sunlight*, which if strongly 'played out' can utterly dominate the rest of their respective chapters through their relative tonal and melodic familiarity (a common problem with any music featuring isolated prominent 'quotations').

Elsewhere, Finnissy presents extremely fragmented material, especially in the earlier sections of *My parents' generation* and *Muybridge-Munch*. In isolation, these might seem unduly cold and aloof if played without some injection of continuity and expressiveness, but I believe that maintaining expressive detachment here is structurally and dramatically important, not least to heighten the contrast with music elsewhere in these chapters. Other material, above all in the first and last chapters, can be quite 'flat', without much of a sense of harmonic profile or direction, whilst there are also long passages generally fixed within the central registers of the instrument (especially notable in the context of this composer's output, though an increasing feature of his piano writing from the mid-1980s onwards, perhaps as a way to avoid the possibility of his use of extreme registers becoming manneristic). Once again, I feel these qualities should not be minimised, in order to maintain sufficient contrast as is required over a five-and-a-half hour work, though the situation might be different when playing individual chapters separately.

Naturally, my own pianistic and interpretive choices reflect consultation with the composer, but many decisions represent essentially my own personal responses to the work, rather than slavishly attempting to re-create how Finnissy himself would play the work (which in the case of various chapters can be very different). I have chosen to use a moderate *non legato* as the basic touch where no phrasing is indicated, coupled sometimes to a relatively sparing use of the pedal (whilst employing it amply in other places, and obviously where indicated as such), whilst aiming for a high degree of brittle detachment in some of the material (throughout the cycle) associated with Alkan and Cocteau, and some *legatissimo* in the second half of *Muybridge-Munch* and some of *Sizilianische Männerakte*. And in general, I have chosen an approach by which the music is motored by the harmonically dynamic lines (most often in the bass register), rather than so much some of the sometimes circular and repetitive melodic parts. Above all I have tried to stress the interactions between different materials which occur simultaneously instead of creating clear hierarchies between them so that one dominates the other, whilst rarely flinching from discontinuities between successive materials. I hope very much that not only the expressivity but also the angularity, structural inventiveness and dramatic energy of the piece will come through as a result.

Material as Archetype in Michael Finnissy's *The History of Photography in Sound*.

It has become almost a banality to point out the sheer range of sources upon which Michael Finnissy draws for his composition, and nowhere is this more true than in *The History of Photography in Sound*. Through the course of its eleven chapters, the work employs (often in a concealed manner) sources from across the Western classical tradition (in particular music of Bach, Beethoven, Paganini, Berlioz, Alkan, Meyerbeer, Félicien David, Bruckner, Wagner, Busoni and Debussy), through music hall songs, hymns from Britain and America, war songs from several countries, African-American spirituals and 1940s popular song, to folk music from England, Ireland, Norway, Spain, Sardinia, Sicily, Crete, Tunisia, Ethiopia, the Transvaal, and music of Native Americans and the Inuit¹. Some of these materials recur in various guises throughout the cycle, some have a brief localised development, some appear fleetingly then disappear.

A common response to this phenomenon is provided in the following words from the critic Paul Driver, writing about the première of the cycle *Folklore*, but with words that might equally have been applied to the *History*:

Finnissy creates grippingly surreal landscapes in which one can imagine Percy Grainger – his folklorist hero – cheerfully cycling down an English country lane straight into the mountains of north India and on, by way of a Chinese pagoda and a Scottish glen, into an exploding Chernobyl.²

But it is this somewhat touristic view of Finnissy's music that I wish to challenge. and also to give a glimpse of how Finnissy's engagement with musical 'found objects' works on many levels of the composition, both in terms of music-immanent structural working as well as conceptually.

A major turning point in Finnissy's output, to my mind the most important, occurred around 1979-80, after the watershed provided by his ensemble composition *alongside*, a highly abstract work taking Finnissy's achievements in this direction further than at any previous time³. Feeling that he wished to change direction, Finnissy then embarked upon several cycles of works alluding to folk music from various regions, as well as bringing to fruition what were then partially-complete projects such as his *Verdi Transcriptions* and *Gershwin Arrangements*⁴. Almost all of his works from this point onwards make reference to some other music. This was by no means a wholly new development in 1980; Finnissy's employment of musical reference can be dated back at least as early as 1967, from which time date his *Romeo and Juliet are Drowning* and first versions of the *Strauss-Walzer*, followed in 1969 by his *Folk Song Set*⁵, not to mention in various juvenilia. Furthermore, whilst not necessarily explicitly referential, the influence of older contemporary composers is palpable in other of his earlier 'abstract' works – for example Boulez in *Le Dormeur du Val* (1963-64, revised 1966)⁶, Stockhausen in *Song 8* (1967), or Bussotti in *Babylon* (1971). However, in many earlier works references or influences generally play a small part within an essentially abstract framework (this is equally true of his notorious *English Country-Tunes* (1977, rev. 1982)⁷), and as such act essentially as islands of local colour, whereas in the post-1979-80 works the sources inform the music at multiple levels.

In several of Finnissy's earlier works, he employs broad categories of musical material to delineate structural boundaries or characterise long stretches of music. Most obvious amongst such strategies are his use of register, especially in piano works which contain extended passages at the upper or lower extremes (or both simultaneously), or conversely through the near-simultaneous use of the whole compass of the instrument. But in some orchestral and ensemble works (including *Offshore* (1975-76), *alongside* and *Sea and Sky* (1979-80))⁸ he sets up clear oppositions between material which seems implicitly defined in categories of line, chords or punctuation.

Finnissy himself has alluded to a similar strategy at work in the *History*⁹. Whilst not wishing simply to reiterate his own paradigms for cognition, I do find this model compelling in terms of what I experience as both performer and listener. So, first of all, I wish to elaborate upon these categories; whilst accepting Finnissy's own three macro-categories, the conclusions concerning assignation of material to categories, and further sub-divisions therein, are my own. To my mind these are more illuminating than might be provided by a more obvious categorisation in terms of the genres of the source materials (though some of the sub-divisions do relate to this latter).

The three macro-categories are simply Chords, Gestures and Lines¹⁰. The first of these, Chords, takes its cue from what Finnissy calls the *motive fondamentale* of the work¹¹, the plainchant *Te Deum Laudamus*. This motive, almost always harmonised in some way derived from Bach's setting of the *Te Deum* in his chorale prelude *Herr Gott, dich loben wir*, BWV 328, appears throughout the cycle. The characteristics of both this material and that associated with it are above all chordal homophony and harmonic directionality. Variations and exploratory developments of this type are usually 'canonic' in both current senses of the term. The allusions to these tonal sources are often somewhat askew, with deliberately awkward voice leading, interrupted cadences, use of diminished sevenths out of context, etc.

The first subcategory (a) consists of chordal material, selected depending upon the extent to which its source is recognisable as such – or in terms of some of its essential attributes - in the final work. This may be seen to include both the fundamental Bach chorale prelude and various others employed within the cycle, also material deriving from the *Matthäus-Passion* and also the *Livre d'Orgue de Montréal*, a seventeenth century, 540 page, collection of organ music from France which was brought to Canada in 1724, generally regarded as very representative of French organ music at the end of the period¹². To Finnissy, both this source and indeed some of the Bach material represented a slightly academic form of contrapuntal writing¹³.

The second sub-category (b) contains much of the hymn material, whether from the eighteenth century American choral composer William Billings (1746-1800)¹⁴, from traditional English Passiontide hymns¹⁵, or Arthur Sullivan's renowned 'Onward Christian Soldiers' (1871)¹⁶, as well as the Soviet War Song 'Sacred War'¹⁷, which appears in *My parents' generation*. This material exhibits much simpler harmonic progressions, with little counterpoint for singing by amateurs.

The third sub-category (c) contains a variety of material derived (with considerable mediation) from music of Beethoven¹⁸ and Bruckner¹⁹. Most of this employs relatively basic chords but in imaginative or visionary progressions.

The fourth sub-category (d) derives from material of Wagner (generally from a concatenation of short fragments selected randomly from the sources – *Götterdämmerung* and *Tannhäuser*)²⁰. This is an extension of (c) with more extravagant chromatic harmonies. Finnissy's allusion to Liszt's *La lugubre gondola* (which appears most explicitly in *My parents' generation*²¹) straddles the divide between this and category (c).

The fifth sub-category (e) comes from the *Pezzo serio* from Busoni's Piano Concerto²², which runs throughout the long *Sizilianische Männerakte*, the third section of the longest chapter of the *History*, *Kapitalistisch Realisme*. This is as chromatic as (d), but demonstrates a greater sense of aloofness, discontinuity and objectivisation of its harmonic elements²³.

The sixth sub-category (f) consists of abstract chordal progressions derived randomly, in which one finds maximum objectivisation and defamiliarisation of tonal harmony; For instance 'Rockingham' is given a series of harmonies and durations selected from gamuts of material derived from elsewhere, in order to produce this effect²⁴.

The final sub-category (g) I call 'Compression'. Here all semblance of harmonic progression disappears and the music is rapid and often incoherent²⁵. This type of material appears in most extended form near the end of the *Poets*, in slightly briefer form near the end of *Etched bright with sunlight*, in either registrally limited or fragmented forms in *Muybridge - Munch*, and more briefly in various other chapters.

These categories are approximations and some material could arguably belong in more than one. For example, the *Matthäus-Passion* material, at its first full appearance (in the *Poets*) is more chromatically coloured than on other occurrences; also categories (c) and (d) overlap to a degree. Nonetheless, in terms of the medium-range divisions of the whole work, I believe these categories are meaningful in terms of the aural experience.

The gestural category is much the smallest, and is headed by a key motif taken from the second act of Wagner's *Götterdämmerung*, specifically Hagen's utterance 'Der ewigen Macht. – wer erbte sie?' ('Who will inherit the might of the immortals?'), delivered to Alberich in his sleep, in Act 2, Scene 1 of the opera. This appears only a few times within the *History*, but at moments of huge structural and dramatic importance.

Related gestures include the opening motive from Beethoven's Fifth Symphony (a clear allusion to Charles Ives, who famously cited the 'fate motive' at various points throughout his *Concord Sonata*, and also discovered and developed links between this motive and hymns by Charles Zeuner and Simeon B. Marsh²⁶), a rhetorical gesture taken from Berlioz's *Roméo et Juliette*²⁷, recurrent rhythmic patterns in major or minor sixths, some of the Alkan material²⁸, certain abstract 'modernist' gestures (especially in the earlier part of the *Poets*), and a category I call 'pointillism', actually consisting not merely of single disembodied attacks –

though there are many of them – but also of enmeshed, fragmented gestures reminiscent of certain serial music of the '950s and 1960s, in particular that of Jean Barraqué²⁹.

The gestural material almost always takes the form of short phrases, often in the bass register. The source is nearly always alluded to with its text printed in the score, and - in the contexts in which it appears – it was intended to sound ‘dramatic’ in a quasi-literary manner (as the result of a controlling sensibility ‘from outside’ rather than in any sense emerging organically from preceding material).

The category of line is the largest, and is headed by another fundamental motive, derived from the ‘Scène d’amour’ from Berlioz’s *Roméo et Juliette*, which appears very prominently in both the first and last chapters of the work (*Le démon de l’analogie* and *Etched bright with sunlight*, respectively).

Firstly, (a), the diverse range of material in many instances is diatonic, employing an extensive degree of stepwise motion, and with only moderate or no ornamentation. Several examples employ a figure of a rising then falling step or half-step, or its inversion, a certain melodic archetype that can be found throughout the *History*, often in radically different contexts.

The second sub-category (b) consists of material that is pentatonic or near-pentatonic. This links as disparate sources as folk music from Venda Africa, North Greenland, the Tutelo Native American tribes and Lincolnshire, all of the African-American spirituals that feature so prominently in *North American Spirituals* and elsewhere, a chant-like melody derived from Bach’s chorale *Nun bitten wir den heiligen Geist* BWV 385, and even arguably the British First World War Song ‘Pack up your troubles in your Old Kit Bag’ (though this straddles sub-categories (a) and (b)). Amongst other recurrent features in this category of material is the use of two or three repeated notes.

The third sub-category of line (c) I call ‘folkish European’. Most of the material here demonstrates a degree of extravagant ornamentation or figuration that sets it somewhat apart from the preceding categories, though it is still mostly diatonic, albeit with a greater variety of modalities. This includes Norwegian hardanger fiddle music (as well as some of Grieg’s works based upon it), various music played on or with the Sardinian triple clarinet called the *launeddas*, as well as, traditional Irish folk melodies, and some Basque folk melodies that are employed in the section representing Federico García Lorca in the *Poets*. Note here that the original Basque melody on its own would not really belong in this category, but Finnissy’s mediated version is quite different; the same is true to a lesser extent of some of the *launeddas* music.

The fourth sub-category, (d), which I call ‘folkish extra-European’, is the most complex. Here are to be found various non-diatonic modes, featuring in particular augmented intervals, that staple of nineteenth century composers wishing to represent the ‘exotic’³⁰, as well as even more extensive ornamentation, sometimes quite angular in nature. Yet these properties can be as much a result of Finnissy’s modifications of his sources as being endemic to the original sources themselves³¹. Cretan melodies³², quite apart from being fragmented and reassembled (a process which Finnissy applies to much of the other material as well) are subject to

significant pitch modifications, as are some Ethiopian chants³³, which are presented in a variety of modalities, sometimes those relating to particular forms of Arab and Berber music³⁴ (as well as being presented in configurations derived from the latter musics). Finnissy also employs some Tunisian melodies³⁵, most prominently in *Etched bright with sunlight*, which feature quartertones, which obviously cannot be replicated on the piano; rather surprisingly, Finnissy simply rounds these off into diatonic patterns (though not necessarily the same modes as would result from simply making the quarter-flats into simple flats), rather than finding some other means of paralleling this aspect of the music on the piano³⁶. This sub-category of material (here once again I should stress that these sub-categories are my own rather than Finnissy's) also includes various material derived from Western composers of exoticist/orientalist works (including Rameau, Victor Massé, Félicien David, Gounod, Saint-Saëns, Alan Bush, and others³⁷), employed in such a way (especially in *Unsere Afrikareise*) that the distinctions between the 'original' material (or rather, the music as filtered through both the (usually Western) ethnomusicologists who collected it, as well as through Finnissy himself) and that coming from Western appropriations/representations become blurred.

There are a few types of linear material which do not fit easily into any of these categories: these would include wild, leaping (but still diatonic) Paganini-derived material (which possibly could go into category (c), though it is very different from anything else to be found there), extremely quiet lines associated with Frank O'Hara and derived obliquely from the music of Morton Feldman, ragtime melodies, and an important motif derived from a sketch for a Second Piano Concerto by Grieg, which is present in various guises throughout the second section of *Muybridge-Munch*. In terms of the macro-categories, material derived from Debussy's *Berceuse heroïque*, used on various levels in *My parents' generation*, arguably straddles the lines and chords categories.

But notwithstanding these exceptions, the categories I provide encompass the majority of the material to be found in the cycle, and the sub-categories delineate what I believe to be audible medium-range connections between types of material often derived from many different sources. In the absence of long-range structural harmony in the *History* (which is not to say that small-scale harmony is not crucial to the work), I would suggest that the listener is most likely to perceive, at least on first hearings, the ways in which certain passages and expanses of material are characterised by chordal/gestural/linear bias, types of figuration (in terms of degree of ornamentation, angularity or otherwise of contour, and so on), overall harmonic 'colour' (as provided by different modalities), use of the instrument (variously hushed and still, wild and flamboyant, or various things in between), register (less of a factor in the *History* than in other Finnissy works) and so on. My categories do not provide an exhaustive list – indeed, they do not incorporate all of the attributes I have just mentioned – but go some way towards providing a means of understanding how the structural delineations of material operate on a perceptual level. The eleven chapters of the *History* each exhibit particular emphases in terms of the three major macro-categories, whilst the central chapter, *Seventeen Immortal Homosexual Poets*, also contains through its individual sections an inner structure of this type³⁸. The predominance of each macro-category may be summarised as follows:

- 1. *Le démon de l'analogie* - lines.
- 2. *Le réveil de intraitable réalité* – gestures.
- 3. *North American Spirituals* – chords/lines.

- 4. *My parents' generation thought War meant something* - chords/lines.
- 5. *Alkan-Paganini* – lines.
- 6. *Seventeen Immortal Homosexual Poets* – everything
(but see inner structure below).
- 7. *Eadweard Muybridge - Edvard Munch* – Muybridge – gestures, Munch – lines.
Chords at end.
- 8. *Kapitalistisch Realisme (met Sizilianische Männerakte und Bachsche Nachdichtungen)* – KR chords, BN chords, SM chords/lines.
- 9. *Wachtend op de volgende uitsbarfing van repressie en censuur* – gestures.
- 10. *Unsere Afrikareise* – lines.
- 11. *Etched bright with sunlight* – everything.

Seventeen Immortal Homosexual Poets

1. Gregory Woods: Gesture
 2. Mutsuo Takahashi: Gesture → Line
 3. Thom Gunn: Line
 4. Allen Ginsberg: Gesture
 5. Frank O'Hara: Line/Chords
 6. Harold Norse: Line/Chords
 7. Pier Paolo Pasolini: Line
 8. James Kirkup: Chords
 9. Jean Genet: Line
 10. Stephen Spender: Gesture → Line
- Melange 1: All three types
 Melange 2: Beginning with all types, leading to Lines/Chords
11. Federico García Lorca: Line
 12. Ralph Chubb: Line
 13. Jean Cocteau: Line (with hints of Gesture)
- Transition: Chords
14. Konstantin Kavafis: Line
 15. Oscar Wilde: Line/Chords
 16. Edward Carpenter: Line/Chords
 17. John Addington Symonds: Line/Chords
- Compression: Chords
 Coda: Line/Chords

In terms of the sub-categories, one can find a plethora of all types in *Le réveil*, the *Poets*, and *Etched*. In the first of these, the music shifts continually between short fragments delineated by crescendos from and diminuendos into *niente*, to produce a ‘zoom in/zoom out’ effect³⁹; in the second each of the relatively short sections exhibits a clear predominance of one or other sub-category (or pairs of them combined simultaneously); in the third the same process applies across sections of medium length. Some of *Le démon* lies somewhere between *Le réveil* and *Etched* in terms of diversity of categories, but with longer expansions of ‘walking lines’ in regular crotchets, and some more extended use of chordal categories (c) and (d) towards the conclusion; an interaction between these two categories informs most of the first section of *Kapitalistisch Realisme*, *Bachsche Nachdichtungen* is dominated by chordal category (a), whilst *Sizilianische Männerakte* consists totally of an interplay between chordal category (e) and linear categories (a) and (c). *Unsere Afrikareise*, on the other hand, is in very large measure a dialogue between linear categories (b) and (d), with the boundaries between the two occasionally becoming confused.

Indeed much of the expressive power of the *History* derives from Finnissy’s exploiting the tension between two distinct categories presented either in alternation or simultaneously. The latter option is perhaps the most striking element of the whole work, occasionally even to the point of caricature. An obvious example of this is in the various sections of *North American Spirituals* in which Finnissy combines hymn material from William Billings (chordal category (b)) with one of the four African-American spirituals.

Finnissy removes the original tenor part (in which Billings would usually place the melody⁴⁰), and substitutes the pitches of one of the spirituals (maintaining Billings’ rhythms). The chorale itself is modified, so that the other parts are ‘forced to comply’, modifying each of them by the interval by which the spiritual melody differs from the original (sometimes shifting octaves), mirroring some of Billings’ own rather idiosyncratic techniques as laid out in his books⁴¹. Also the spiritual part shifts at one point into the alto register. The effect is strange and disorienting, literally as if one part is threatening to disrupt the others (which, according to Billings’ own definition, should be ‘forced to comply and conform to that’⁴²). Finnissy intended this as a musical representation of a white church service in which a black man is forced to attend, but subverts the proceedings by singing a quite different tune of his own⁴³ (and it is for this reason that I believe a performance which seeks to play down the dissonances and somehow ‘contain’ the discontinuous progressions violates something of the essence of the music⁴⁴). The resulting chord progression, sometimes clumsy, involving undefinable chords and strange enharmonic relations, is a long way from anything that would have been sung by an eighteenth century New England congregation.

We can chart the process by which Finnissy arrived at a passage that appears on the final page of the same chapter. He takes as his basis a well-known piece of ragtime by Homer Denney called *Chimes*. This is first combined with a Metis song *Mon cher amant* as transcribed from the singing of near-forgotten Metis-Canadian singer Joseph Gaspard Jeannotte (1889-?)⁴⁵, the pitches of which are used in retrograde form (with a few modifications) to replace the melody of the Denney, producing a bitonal combination that is further complicated by first a thinning-out of the bass, then the introduction of somewhat cheesy chromatic passing notes. The leaps of a fifth in the Jeannotte (a characteristic found in a wide range of French-Canadian folk songs) are quite at odds with the

mostly stepwise melody of the Denney original, as are the implied drone harmonies around which the melodic elaborations are organised. Then Finnissy transposes the right hand down to A-flat minor and applies a series of random transpositions (and some other modifications, including registral displacement) to fragments of the bass, as well as changing its basic pulse so as to create a Nancarrow-esque 6:5 relationship with the treble, then extracts a partial fragment from this total result. Finally, he adds some material in the middle parts and at the conclusion deriving from another derivation from ragtime which appears elsewhere in the cycle.

This may seem rather wilfully bizarre, but it does demonstrate various possibilities. The passage in question still recognisably inhabits the genre of ragtime (albeit in a highly defamiliarised form), as Finnissy maintains the rhythmic profile of the melody and the stride-like quality of the bass⁴⁶. The melody, with its obstinate repeated notes, also now forms aural connections with various of the spiritual-derived material experienced earlier in the piece, as this exhibits similar characteristics, whilst the polyrhythmic relationship between bass and treble links with various canons also heard earlier, and a passage on the previous page alluding to the music of Conlon Nancarrow. Thus Finnissy is able not only to combine multiple materials into one but also create structural correspondences as a result of so doing.

Wilfred Mellers offers a subtle insight into the genre of the ragtime, saying that:

The essence of the rag is in its unremittent rhythmic pattern which, though habitually syncopated, is never violent. The melancholy, the frenzy, the ecstasy of the blues are all banished. Instead of lament or orgy, we have a dead-pan manner that shuts out personal sensation. The music is hard, bright, obstinately eupeptic and incorrigibly cheerful; in its machine-made way it is even elegant, like the Negro dandy wearing his straw boater at a raffish angle. In so far as the inane grin and the prancing vivacity attempt to shut out the painful actuality of the Negro's experience, there is an affinity between piano rag and the positively ebulliently entertainment music we referred to in the previous chapter: rag is the Negro's attempt at the buoyant optimism of the Sousa march and the brilliant elegance of the Gottschalk dance, and the mass feeling is depersonalised because personal feeling may be too much to bear.⁴⁷

Finnissy's allusion to ragtime here exhibits many of the qualities described so perceptively by Mellers. After pathos, pained lyricism and visionary exploration such as are found earlier on in *North American Spirituals*, this heavily modified (and brief!) piece of ragtime summons up a sense of dandyism and Mellers' 'inane grin' and 'prancing vivacity', not least through its combination of machine-like rhythms in conjunction with a tonal melody (a combination which has not been encountered in such a manner previously in the piece). After so many moments of thwarted hope and aspiration as expressed by the hemmed-in spirituals, with the threat of violence lurking continuously beneath the surface, Finnissy's abstracted ragtime becomes not simply the stylised artifice of Stravinsky's excursions into the genre, but a moment of sardonic irony which serves as a window onto a form of experience and expression lying beyond the rest of the world circumscribed by this piece, not least because of the very possibility of rejuvenation of an archaic form in this Ivesian manner. At the same time, its inner tension between parts provides for one more level of integration with the rest of this emotionally intense chapter, rather than being a disconnected fragment.

Ragtime was not included in my broad categories and sub-categories; in its original form it constitutes a combination of line lying between categories (a) and (c), and chords between (a) and (b), in this mediated form we have something akin to a combination of linear category (c) (or possibly on the fringes of (d)) and a chordal figuration which does not really fit any category. There are very short ragtime-derived passages in other chapters (most notably in the Jean Genet section of the *Poets*), but no others of this type; this is one reason that this fragment sounds so remarkable in the context of the whole cycle.

The most striking of all Finnissy's combinations of material, to my mind, is to be found in *Sizilianische Männerakte*. This sub-chapter was inspired by a collection of photographs by the German photographer Wilhelm von Gloeden (1856-1931). Gloeden's work features young male nudes, from the Sicilian town of Taormina, where he made his home, captured in highly formalised and quasi-mystical homoerotic poses that evoke an idealised classical world⁴⁸. If von Gloeden's vision today seems utterly characteristic of romantic pre-industrial nostalgia, and can be viewed as sinister (because of its ideals of bodily perfection, association of sexuality with pre-adulthood, and cultivation of arrogant and brutal primitivism), Finnissy is not the type of composer who would engage with such work undialectically.

For this long section, he employs two categories of material, specifically chordal category (e), in the form of selected lines extracted from a retrograde of the whole of Busoni's *Pezzo Serioso* from the Piano Concerto, as mentioned earlier; and also a combination of a vastly slowed-down melody derived from the *Sicilienne* aria 'O fortune, à ton caprice', from Meyerbeer's *Robert le diable*⁴⁹, a collection of Sicilian folksongs collected by Meyerbeer⁵⁰, some of the Sardinian *launeddas* music, and a type of imaginary Sicilian folksong (from linear category (a), in some ways related to the Berlioz theme from *Roméo et Juliette*), which is much more rhythmically regular than the rest of the material, and derived from reiteration of a small number of cells. This linear material clearly alternates between categories (a) and (c), but in totality presents a long expanse of keening melody without any real sense of development or change (indeed one long melodic passage is repeated almost verbatim). For the most part the 'Sicilian' material is in the right hand, the Busoni material in the left, with a few reversals earlier on (mostly when alluding to the actual Sicilian folksongs).

The combination of the relatively narrow tessitura and lack of development in the Sicilian material would create a sense of timelessness, akin to von Gloeden's vision, were it not always tempered by the ongoing progression of the Busoni material. This latter material does not simply provide a dramatic underpinning for the melody, but is carefully configured by Finnissy so as to maintain a bitonal tension almost throughout (when the two hands seem to be arriving at some type of reconciliation, at a very advanced stage in the movement, Finnissy uses this as a cue for introducing the key gestural motif from Wagner). As mentioned before, the Busoni material is far from harmonically smooth (especially in its retrograded form), and when it is, at least in Finnissy's mediated representations, it is also frequently dark, brooding and chromatic, as well as somewhat insistent. There is not space here to describe in detail the intricacies of the combination; suffice to say that the result is of an illusory vision of some lost world which is forever tempered by a sense of urgency, drama, and motion. It would be simplistic to say that Finnissy is expressing some wholesale rejection of this Arcadian vision – on the contrary, the loving care with which he shapes and presents

the melodic lines demonstrate his awareness of the power of such visions – but instead he plays off an ideal of a lost world against a continual recognition of its impossibility. This is reminiscent of the concerns of *English Country-Tunes*, but with a much higher level of intricacy in terms of the detailed interactions between the materials.

Knowledge of the sources derived from study of the sketch materials can make perhaps too easy the reading of 'latent narratives' into the music. For example, the last section of *Le démon* could then be read as a reflection on Beethovenian heroic ideals transformed into the somewhat empty grandiosity of Bruckner and esotericism of Wagner, both of which culminate in the destruction commemorated by Debussy. This can then be taken to imply a particular type of political interpretation of the implications of bourgeois ideals. Such an interpretation arrived at in such a manner remains, however, essentially predicated upon an exegesis of iconic qualities of sources which are not necessarily apparent within the aural reality; what is more important, is to consider how after extensive mediation some of the fundamental properties of the sources inform the aural surface of the music. Instead of asking 'can one hear Bruckner 5, or the Busoni *Pezzo Serioso* at this point?' one would do better to ask 'How is Finnissy's piece affected by the sonic attributes which it shares with the works of Bruckner, Busoni, etc., upon which he draws?' That is of course a very complex question as different aspects of the sources are made manifest at various distinct levels of the music. The way in which, for example, Finnissy's concatenations of fragments from *Götterdämmerung* are formed into soaring, esoteric long lines is perhaps more significant than the precise nature of the fragments from which such lines are formed, in terms of lending the resultant music something of a 'Wagnerian' quality. Similarly, the use of very simple chords and progressions, even when in retrograde form, is vital to the characterisation of the material deriving from 'Onward Christian Soldiers', distinguishing it, for example, from other material with similar metrical qualities (of which there is much in this piece). And those properties come fundamentally from the sources themselves.

Whilst Finnissy's sources are invariably mediated, sometimes to the point of near-unrecognisability, this is not really the same thing as their being *developed* in the manner that Adorno would have recognised. Finnissy's form of mediation often takes the form of 'testing' the material, pushing it 'as far as it will go' whilst still exhibiting some of its fundamental attributes. This has some similarities with Stravinskian neo-classicism, yet it is rare to find Stravinsky's degree of objective detachment in Finnissy's music. Finnissy extends and re-perspectivises his material in place of developing it 'from within'. In this sense his approach also relates to surrealism, but with little of the musical equivalent of 'photographic realism' that Adorno deplored in surrealist painting⁵¹. Everything is distorted, smudged, modified, in a word individuated, an individuation that links disparate materials by making them sound 'Finnissy-esque' (not least through the eschewal of a stable pulse), this quality also achieved through his Ivesian simultaneities. Finnissy's materials are historically and culturally loaded; he does not shy away from this very fact by any means, but over and above the fact of 'modernising' them he engages with their historical and cultural properties by bringing them into a dialogue with other materials whose properties are dissimilar. And this is ultimately an optimistic strategy, because he is thus able to show their continuing potential without the need to resort to idle archaism.

But it is perhaps most important to stress the difference between the *History* and a postmodernist kaleidoscope, such as one might find in the music of some others who I would characterise as musical tourists or consumers⁵². Finnissy is not happy with simple

pluralism, diversity and exoticism for their own sake, but in Joycean fashion searches for axes of similarity as a means of making sense of the otherwise bewildering diversity of the world around him. In the end, whilst the range of material and the means used to transform it are of huge interest in terms of the study of compositional technique, the meanings engendered by the piece are more a result of the broad categories of material he thus obtains. This provides a framework within which to explore his subjective preoccupations, a form of subjectivity which is neither oblivious of history nor wholly subservient towards it.

Other Aspects of the Structure of the *History* as a Whole

The relative weighting of material types through the broad structure of the *History* has been outlined above. The cycle is structured in a quasi-palindromic fashion around the central piece, the *Poets*, which was the first to be completed (followed by those immediately surrounding it). This piece contains the greatest proliferation of material, whilst the two surrounding it, *Alkan-Paganini* and *Muybridge-Munch*, develop a vastly smaller amount extensively. Then the other pieces can generally be organised into pairs which share common material and concerns, but from different perspectives. Thus one can pair *My parents' generation* with *Kapitalistisch Realisme* (the two being the longest pieces in the cycle as well as sharing material), *North American Spirituals* with *Unsere Afrikareise* (both dealing with appropriations of non-Western or non-white musics), and *Le démon* with *Etched* (the first a sort of overall survey of the material from a distance, the last a frenetic recapitulation of much of it, each with prominent Berlioz quotations). The link between *Le réveil* and *Wachtend* is more tenuous; simply both exist as perspectives upon other material, but in quite different ways. The group of pieces coming after the *Poets* obviously constitute a much longer duration than those before it, mostly on account of *Kapitalistisch Realisme*, which is itself almost as long as Finnis's previous most extended piano work prior to the *History*, *Folklore*. So the symmetry is far from exact.

Register is also an important structural determinant: the vast majority of the piece takes place in the central registers of the instrument (as with the earlier work *Folklore*), with ventures into the extremes, including those moments that seem to encompass the whole keyboard simultaneously, very much the exception rather than the rule. The following gives a breakdown of the predominance of registers in each piece.

1. *Le démon* : central registers, but ending in the bass.
2. *Le réveil*: central registers, expanding to whole compass of keyboard in the centre.
3. *North American Spirituals*: central registers, occasional sorties elsewhere.
4. *My parents' generation*: central registers, long treble episode early on, two major expansions to whole compass
5. *Alkan-Paganini*: bass – treble – whole keyboard – treble
6. *Seventeen Immortal Homosexual Poets* – alternating whole keyboard and central registers continuously.
7. *Muybridge-Munch* – low treble – whole treble register – central registers – whole keyboard
8. *Kapitalistisch Realisme* – central registers for most of the piece, except for brief section connecting *Bachsche Nachdichtungen* and *Sizilianische Männerakte*
9. *Wachtend* – central registers, with some variety

10. *Unsere Afrikareise* – central registers. Wider in pointillistic section, but still relatively central.

11. *Etched* – high treble – treble – low bass – central registers – whole keyboard.

Only the three central movements (*Muybridge-Munch* least so) and *Etched* really extensively alternate different registers of the keyboard, one reason why these tend to sound the most brilliant and variegated of all.

Dynamics are also less extreme than in many earlier Finnissy works, though there are major exceptions. Both *My parents' generation* and *Unsere Afrikareise* have extended periods at extremely quiet dynamics, and there is a comparable moment in *Etched* as the music prepares for the appearance of the Berlioz theme. The Muybridge section of *Muybridge-Munch* also remains at a relatively quiet dynamic throughout, though in a less extreme manner. The final section of the *Poets* is also hushed throughout. The 'Compression' passages are usually (but not always) at a high dynamic and quite violent in nature. Otherwise, moments at extremely loud dynamics are exceptional and usually quite brief. Amongst the most prominent would be those in the second 'pop song' passage of *My parents' generation* and the entry of the two hands in *Alkan-Paganini*. These begin to mirror the 'Compression' material in their violence and density.

Textures vary throughout, but there is less use of extremes in this respect than in Finnissy's earlier works, as well. His characteristic monophonic writing makes a few brief appearances in *Le réveil*, the *Poets*, *Kapitalistisch Realisme*, and *Etched*, but the only truly extended passage occurs at the beginning of *Muybridge-Munch*. Extremes of density tend to occur either in the 'Compression' material or at other moments of extremely loud dynamics. The major exception to this is the last section in the *Poets*.

It is a fruitless question to ask whether the *History* should be considered a 'tonal' or 'atonal' work. Throughout the cycle, one can find localised tonal centres. However, there are marked differences of degree in this respect. The majority of the piece inhabits a fluid, somewhat unstable form of tonality, always in a state of relative flux. So the few moments that present relatively stable tonal centres become foregrounded. The most prominent of all of these are the Massé and David sections in *Unsere Afrikareise*, followed by the spirituals passages at the beginning of *Muybridge-Munch* (more stable than those in the *Spirituals* itself, where they are combined with bass parts which unsettle their implied harmonies). *Sizilianische Männerakte* has a larger degree of tonal stability than most emerging from the retrograded Busoni material, leading this extended passage to have a comparatively radiant quality, as does the beginning of *Kapitalistisch Realisme* to a slightly lesser extent. The Billings/spirituals passages in the *Spirituals* present tonal centres of gravity to varying degrees. In both full Berlioz quotations (in *Le demon* and *Etched*) the tonality is still fluid, but strongly implied by the melody.

Overall, other than in terms of scale, the *History* is not to be characterised primarily as a work of extremes, at least not by Finnissy's standards. The balanced and relatively moderate nature of much of the writing causes those more extreme moments to have a huge impact.

¹ This section was originally given as a paper in the conference on 'What does 'musical material' mean today?', Royal Musical Association, July 4th, 2008 and like the rest of these notes draws upon material in my wider monograph *Contexts, Sources and Interpretation in Michael Finnissy's The History of Photography in Sound* (forthcoming, hereafter simply *The History of Photography in Sound*). In all cases where I refer to chapters in the monograph, a reduced version of the chapter concerned can be found in the online notes on this work at www.divineartrecords.com/CD/HOPIS.htm.

² Paul Driver, 'The monody lingers on', review of world première of Finnissy *Folklore*, in *The Sunday Times*, 11th December 1994.

³ For a quite general exegesis of the basic structural properties of this work, see Roger Redgate, 'The Chamber Music', in Brougham et al., *Uncommon Ground*, pp. 141-148, also see Julian Anderson, 'The Orchestral Music', *ibid.* p. 180; for a more informal consideration of the work, Paul Driver, 'Michael Finnissy's 'alongside'', in *Tempo*, No. 132 (March 1980), pp. 42-45.

⁴ On these two cycles, see Ian Pace, 'The Piano Music', in Brougham et al., *Uncommon Ground*, pp. 86-97. Since the appearance of this book, the *Verdi Transcriptions* have been significantly revised and expanded to become a cycle of about twice the original length in two books.

⁵ It is likely that this work was influenced by the appearance of Luciano Berio's *Folk Songs* (1964), which Finnissy has cited as an important revelation for him (unpublished draft of Interview for *Uncommon Ground*).

⁶ This work, a setting of Rimbaud, is generally acknowledged as the first within Finnissy's mature output. On its construction and use of quasi-cinematic techniques, see Christopher Fox, 'The Vocal Music', in Brougham et al., *Uncommon Ground*, pp. 218-222.

⁷ On *English Country-Tunes*, see Pace, 'The Piano Music', pp. 66-71.

⁸ On *offshore* and *Sea and Sky*, see Anderson, 'The Orchestral Music', pp. 173-187; for an early response to the premiere of *Sea and Sky*, Paul Driver, 'Michael Finnissy's 'Sea and Sky'', *Tempo* No. 133/134 (September 1980), pp. 82-83. Anderson's taxonomy of material categories in these works, in terms of points, line and punctuation, bears some resemblance to the taxonomies I set out here.

⁹ In private conversations with the author.

¹⁰ Detailed musical examples for all of these can be found in the expanded online version of this article.

¹¹ Finnissy describes this as 'the Aristotelian unifying factor, subsuming the following 'variations'' (Finnissy, 'Notes on the Work', to accompany 2002 performance of the *History* by Mark Knoop). The nature of Finnissy's employment of this and other related motifs from Bach is much too elaborate to detail adequately here; for more on this, see in particular the section on *Bachsche Nachdichtungen* in Pace, 'Kapitalistisch Realisme', in Pace, *History of Photography in Sound*.

¹² *Livre d'Orgue de Montréal*, Édition Critique par Élisabeth Gallat-Morin et Kenneth Gilbert, two volumes (St-Hyacinthe, Québec: Les Éditions Jacques Ostiguy Inc., 1985), two volumes. See also <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/index.cfm?PgNm=TCE&Params=U1ARTU0002092> (accessed 21/8/13).

¹³ Private conversations with the author.

¹⁴ Finnissy employs four hymns by Billings in the chapter *North American Spirituals* – 'Bedford', 'Sing Praises to the Lord', 'Dudley' and 'Essex', taken from Billings, *The Psalm-Singer's Amusement* (1781) (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1987); *The Continental Harmony* (1794) (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1990) (in which it is called 'An Anthem for Thanksgiving Day', pp. 70-75); *The Singing Master's Assistant: Music in Miniature* (1778-1779) (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1984) and *The New England Psalm-Singer* (1770) (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1981), respectively. I examine Finnissy's relationship to Billings in detail in 'North American Spirituals', in Pace, *The History of Photography in Sound*. For the best overall studies of and sources on Billings' work, see J. Murray Barbour, *The Church Music of William Billings* (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 1960), and Hans Nathan, *William Billings: Data and Documents* (Detroit: College Music Society by Information Coordinators, 1975); on the early context and composition of and responses to his work, see David P. McKay and Richard Crawford, *William Billings of Boston: Eighteenth-Century Composer* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975), pp. 190-218; Richard Crawford, *America's Musical Life: A History* (New York and London: Norton, 2001), pp. 38-39; Wilfred Mellers, *Music in a New Found Land: Themes and Developments in the History of American Music*, revised and expanded edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 12-17 and Charles Hamm, *Music in the New World* (New York and London: Norton, 1983), pp. 41-42, 142-146. Billings was of course the subject of an earlier piano piece of Finnissy simply entitled *William Billings*

(1990) (discussed in Pace, 'The Piano Music', pp. 84-85), itself inspired by John Cage's *Apartment House 1776* (1976), which also draws upon numerous hymns from Billings.

¹⁵ Finnissy's use of these Passiontide hymns originate in the section of *Seventeen Immortal Homosexual Poets* devoted to James Kirkup, to signify a form of religious 'deviance' in line with Kirkup's poem 'The Love That Dares to Speak Its Name', which was the subject of a now-infamous blasphemy trial in the UK in 1977 after its publication in the British magazine *Gay News*. The hymns he uses are 'Rockingham' ('When I survey the wondrous cross') by Edward Miller (1731-1807), adapted S. Webbe (1820), 'Stabat Mater' from the *Maintzich Gesangbuch* of 1661, adapted Webbe (1782), and 'Salve Festa Dies', written by Vaughan Williams (1905).

¹⁶ This hymn appears most clearly in *My parents' generation thought War meant something*. Sullivan's was the second setting of words by the Rev. Sabine Baring-Gould, following an 1868 adaptation of the slow movement of Haydn's Symphony No. 53 by J.B. Dykes, which was published together with a hymn entitled 'Bright gleams our banner' by Henry Smart (1813-1879), with which Sullivan's setting shares an initial four-note repetition, and may thus have been an influence upon the later song. See Arthur Jacobs, *Arthur Sullivan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), pp. 71-72, for comparisons between the two hymns.

¹⁷ This was a song with Russian text by Vasily Lebedev-Kumach, a then well-known song lyric writer who has been described as one of 'Stalin's favourite hacks' (Catherine Merridale, *Ivan's War: The Red Army 1939-45* (London: Faber & Faber, 2005), p. 169), and music by Matvey Blanter, once well-known as a composer of popular and film music in the Soviet Union. The song is collected in Boris Kotlyarov (ed), *Six Soviet War Songs for voice and piano* (London: Novello & Co., for the Soviet State Music Publishing House, 1943), published in Britain at a time when the wartime alliance with the Soviet Union was at its height. For more on this genre of Soviet war song, see Boris Schwarz, *Music and Musical Life in Soviet Russia 1917-1970* (London: Barrie & Jenkins Ltd, 1972), pp. 180-181 (though the song 'Sacred War' that he discusses there is apparently in 'stately three-four time', and so is different); for further detail on this in the context of Soviet music and society, see Pace, 'My Parent's Generation thought War meant something', in *The History of Photography in Sound*.

¹⁸ Finnissy's specific sources for Beethoven were the String Quartet in A major op. 18, no. 5, the fifth piano sonata in C minor op. 10, no. 1, and the Fifth Symphony in C minor op. 67, derived in the latter case from Liszt's version of the work for solo piano. For an extensive consideration of various interpretive paradigms for Beethoven and how one might view parts of the *History* in light of these, see Pace, 'Kapitalistisch Realisme'.

¹⁹ Here the material comes mostly from the Third and Fifth Symphonies of Bruckner.

²⁰ For details on how Finnissy employs random procedures to select from the Wagner scores, and how the results are modified, see Pace, 'Kapitalistisch Realisme'.

²¹ This work also informed Finnissy's earlier arrangements of Gershwin, 'They're writing songs of love, but not for me', through the employment of a basic gesture consisting of a medium-size descending interval followed by a descending semitone, or its inversion.

²² An engagement with Busoni's work has been a recurrent concern for Finnissy, especially in the *Verdi Transcriptions*, several of which allude directly to Busoni piano works, and also in various parts of *Kapitalistisch Realisme*, which operates in a similar manner. Busoni's historical importance remains contested, and my own view on this is ambivalent; for some of the most thoughtful perspectives on this, see Jim Samson, 'The significance of Busoni' in *Music in Transition: A Study of Tonal Expansion and Atonality 1900-1920* (London: Dent, 1977), pp. 19-31, and Arnold Whittall, *Musical Composition in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 49-51. On the other hand, the writings of Ronald Stevenson, in *Western Music: An Introduction* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1971), pp. 169-170, like the fanatical work of Kaikshoru Shapurji Sorabji before him (in 'Busoni', in *Around Music* (London: Unicorn Press, 1932), and 'Metaphysic Motivation in Music', in *Mi Contra Fa: The Immortalisings of a Machiavellian Musician* (London: Porcupine Press, 1947)) hold up Busoni as an antidote to modernism, especially that of Stravinsky, whilst E.J. Dent, in his *Ferruccio Busoni* (London: Eulenburg, 1974), uses Busoni essentially for the purposes of anti-German prejudices. For Busoni's own views on the Piano Concerto, see Busoni, 'Self-Criticism', in *The Essence of Music and other papers*, translated Rosamund Ley (New York: Dover, 1962), p. 50. For more detailed examination of the *Pezzo Serioso*, see Anthony Beaumont, *Busoni the Composer* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1985), pp. 61-65, and Larry Sitsky, *Busoni and the Piano: The Works, the Writings and the Recordings* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1986), pp. 103-107. For a critical reading of these and other interpretations of the work, see Pace, 'Kapitalistisch Realisme'.

- ²³ Here parallels might be drawn with the interpretation of Mahler provided by Adorno, who argues that whilst Mahler's harmonic vocabulary is less extravagant than that of Wagner and others before him, the particular form of contextualisation and defamiliarisation employed entails a step beyond anything hitherto achieved in music ('Mahler's atmosphere is the illusion of familiarity in which the Other is cloaked', Adorno, *Mahler: A Musical Physiology*, translated Edmund Jephcott (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1992), p. 20).
- ²⁴ On the precise techniques Finnissey uses here, see Pace, 'Seventeen Immortal Homosexual Poets'.
- ²⁵ The inspiration for this technique came both from Iannis Xenakis's piano work *Evryali* (1973), much of which is in the form of rapid-fire repeated chords, and Richard Barrett's *Tract* (1989-96), the last section of which employs a similar 'compression' strategy (itself inspired by a comparable passage in Karlheinz Stockhausen's *Mantra* (1970)). *Tract* was given its first complete London performance in a concert on May 1, 1997, by the author, at the British Music Information Centre, Stratford Place, London, in the same concert as the first complete performance of *Seventeen Immortal Homosexual Poets*.
- ²⁶ See J. Peter Burkholder, *All Made of Tunes: Charles Ives and the Uses of Musical Borrowing* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995), pp. 195-200, 351-355, and Geoffrey Block, *Ives: Concord Sonata* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 36-38.
- ²⁷ This motif can be heard in the violas and cellos in bars 144-145 of the 'Scène d'amour' of the work.
- ²⁸ I have not dealt with this material in detail here as its appearances are mostly concentrated in a few places, principally in *Alkan-Paganini* and at a few strategic moments in *Le réveil* and *Kapitalistisch Realisme*. See Pace, 'Alkan-Paganini', in *The History of Photography in Sound*, for detailed consideration of how Finnissey derives this material from a variety of Alkan works.
- ²⁹ At least as imagined by Finnissey, for whom the work of Barraqué represented a movement within French music used to contrast as strongly as possible with the mid- to late-19th century French orientalism upon which he also draws in *Unsere Afrikareise*. See Pace, 'Unsere Afrikareise', in *The History of Photography in Sound*, for much more on this. The contrast is all the stronger because of the fact that this chapter includes some of the most unbroken linear material in the whole cycle.
- ³⁰ For the best overall studies of this phenomenon, see the various essays in Jonathan Bellman (ed), *The Exotic in Western Music* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1998) and Ralph P. Locke, *Musical Exoticism: Images and Reflections* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); see also Carl Dahlhaus, 'Exoticism, Folklorism, Archaism', in *Nineteenth Century Music*, translated J. Bradford Robinson (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989), pp. 302-311; Derek B. Scott, 'Orientalism and Musical Style' in *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 82 No. 2 (Summer 1998), pp. 309-335; Ralph P. Locke, 'Exoticism and Orientalism in Music: Problems for the Worldly Critic', in Paul A. Bové (ed), *Edward Said and the Work of the Critic: Speaking Truth to Power* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), pp. 257-81, 306-12; and Ralph P. Locke, *Music, Musicians and the Saint-Simonians* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986).
- ³¹ The very term 'original' is of course problematic in this course, in light of the various forms of mediation involved through collecting, notating and distributing folk music. For the purposes of this article, the term 'original' refers to the printed or recorded form in which Finnissey first encountered the source in question.
- ³² These are associated with the section representing Konstantin Kavafis in the *Poets*, and come from Samuel Baud-Bovy, *Chansons Populaires de Crète Occidentale* (Geneva: Edition Minkoff, 1972), pp. 99, 133.
- ³³ These come from Michael Powne, *Ethiopian Music: An Introduction* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), pp. 131, 136, 138.
- ³⁴ The ways in which Finnissey does this are beyond the scope of this article, but are detailed in Pace, 'Unsere Afrikareise'. The basic sources on Arab and Berber music that Finnissey employs are to be found in Alexis Chottin (ed), *Corpus de Musique Marocaine* (Casablanca: Librairie Livre Service, 1987), two volumes.
- ³⁵ From Baron Rodolphe d'Erlanger, *Mélodies Tunisiennes: hispano-arabes, arabo-berbères, juive, nègre* (Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1937).
- ³⁶ As for example in the para-microtonal writing in some of the *Verdi Transcriptions*, in which close-spaced trichords have varying inner intervallic relationships to parallel microtonal shifts. See Toop, 'Four Facets of the New Complexity, for more on this.
- ³⁷ All of these are fully detailed in Pace, 'Unsere Afrikareise', which also contains a critical reading of various texts (by Carl Dahlhaus, Mary Hunter, Jonathan Bellman, Ralph P. Locke and others) on issues of musical orientalism and exoticism.
- ³⁸ The delineation of sections in this chapter is drawn from my analysis in Pace, 'Seventeen Immortal Homosexual Poets'.

³⁹ This is an effect also employed by the composer Salvatore Sciarrino (especially in his First Sonata for piano (1976)), whose work Finnissey was probably re-studying (having known it for many years) at the time of writing this chapter.

⁴⁰ See Mellers, *Music in a New Found Land*, p. 15.

⁴¹ Especially in *The Continental Harmony*, his last collection (see pp. i-xxxiv). See also Mellers, *Music in a New Found Land*, pp. 12-17, for more on Billings' techniques.

⁴² Billings, *The Continental Harmony*, p. xxxi.

⁴³ Private conversations with the author. It is fair to call the implied singer a 'he' since the part is always in the tenor. The issue of appropriation of African-American music such as the spiritual, and its political implications, is again beyond the scope of this article; on this, see Pace, 'North American Spirituals', in *The History of Photography in Sound*, in which I draw in particular upon the work of Eileen Southern (*The Music of Black Americans: A History*, third edition (New York and London: Norton, 1997)), Arthur C. Jones (*Wade in the Water: The Wisdom of the Spirituals* (New York: Orbis Books, 1993)) and Jon Cruz (*Culture on the Margins: The Black Spiritual and Rise of American Cultural Interpretation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999)).

⁴⁴ In this context one should also bear in mind the letter 'To the Goddess of Discord', written by Billings as part of the introduction to *The Singing Master's Assistant* of 1778. He says here of one piece in the cycle, 'Jargon', which frequently employs conglomerations of seconds, fourths and sevenths, as well as more consonant intervals: 'Let an Ass bray the bass, let the fileing of a saw carry the Tenor, let a hog who is extream hungry squeel the counter, and let a cart-wheel, which is heavy loaded, and that had been long without grease, squeek the treble; and if the concert should appear to be too feeble you may add the cracking of a crow, the howling of a dog, the squalling of a cat; and what would grace the concert yet more, would be the rubbing of a wet finger upon a window glass' (cited in Hamm, *Music in the New World*, pp. 150-151).

⁴⁵ This can be found in Nancy Hockley, 'Transcription and vocal character: The songs of Joseph Gaspard Jeannotte', in Witmer (ed.), *Ethnomusicology in Canada*, pp. 145-151. The Metis are a native people to the Canadian and American Northwestern regions. The particular use of French in this song is described by the author as a 'Metis patois', which Finnissey notes besides the example in the sketches.

⁴⁶ Eileen Southern gives as key attributes of piano-rag music the left hand 'stomping and patting' (taking over the 'the foot stomping of the musicians and the "juba patting" of the bystanders' in earlier dance-music of slaves with music from fiddles and banjos) whilst the right hand provides 'syncopated melodies, using motives reminiscent of fiddle and banjo tunes'. See Southern, *The Music of Black Americans*, p. 315.

⁴⁷ Mellers, *Music in a New Found Land*, pp. 277-278. Mellers' interpretation I find more subtle than that in Christopher Small, *Music of the Common Tongue: Survival and Celebration in Afro-American Music* (London: John Calder, 1987), pp. 272-273, which is also dismissive of practically any use of the genre by classical composers. On the wider history of ragtime such as is particularly relevant to this context, see Edward Berlin, *Ragtime: A Musical and Cultural History* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1980), pp. 5ff, and Southern, *The Music of Black Americans*, pp. 315-319.

⁴⁸ See Peter Weiermair, *Wilhelm von Gloeden* (Köln: Benedikt Taschen, 1994), pp. 7-8; Weiermair, 'Et in Arcadia Ego', in Tobias G. Natter and Peter Weiermair (eds), *Et in Arcadia Ego: Turn-Of-The-Century Photography* (Zurich: Edition Oehrli, 2000); and Giuseppe Vanzella, 'The Fires of Taormina', in Vincenzo Mirisola & Giuseppe Vanzella, *Sicilia Mitica Arcadia: Von Gloeden e la "Scuola" di Taormina* (Palermo: Edizioni Gente di Fotografia, 1981), and Roland Barthes, 'Wilhelm von Gloeden', in *The Responsibility of Forms: Critical Essays on Music, Art, and Representation*, translated Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1985), pp. 195-197, for more on von Gloeden.

⁴⁹ For a brief examination of this aria in the context of the opera, see Robert Ignatius Letellier, *Meyerbeer's Robert le Diable: The Premier Opéra Romantique* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012), pp. 77-78. For an earlier sketch for this aria, see Mark Everist, 'The Name of the Rose: Meyerbeer's opéra comique, *Robert le Diable*', *Revue de Musicologie*, T. 80, No. 2 (1994), pp. 222-223.

⁵⁰ Giacomo Meyerbeer, *Sizilianische Volkslieder*, edited Fritz Bose (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co, 1970). Fritz Bose, in his introduction to this volume, draws attention to the fact that whilst 'O fortune' corresponds to the genre of the Siciliana in terms of rhythm and periodicity, the text and melody have no relation to any of the notated Sicilian songs and dances in this volume (p. 10).

⁵¹ Theodor Adorno, 'Looking Back on Surrealism', in *Notes on Literature*, translated Shierry Weber Nicholson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), Volume 1, pp. 86-90.

⁵² The archetypal example of this for me would be John Zorn. See the closing section of Pace, 'Seventeen Immortal Homosexual Poets' for more on correspondences and differences between Finnissey, Zorn and others, as well as setting Finnissey's work in the context of post-modernist writing on Zorn.

The Individual Chapters of *The History of Photography in Sound*

1. *Le démon de l'analogie*

The title of *Le démon de l'analogie* is taken from a passage in Roland Barthes' 1975 book *Roland Barthes par Roland Barthes*:

Saussure's *bête noire* was the arbitrary (nature of the sign). His is analogy. The 'analogical' arts (cinema, photography), the 'analogical' methods (academic criticism) are discredited. Why? Because analogy implies an effect of Nature: it constitutes the 'natural' as a source of truth; and what adds to the curse of analogy is the fact that it is irrepressible: no sooner is a form seen than it must resemble something: humanity seems doomed to Analogy, i.e. in the long run, to Nature. Whence the effort of painters, of writers, to escape it. How? By two contrary excesses, or call them two ironies which flout Analogy, either by feigning a spectacularly flat respect (this is the Copy, which is rescued), or by regularly - according to the regulations - distorting the imitated object (this is Anamorphosis).

Aside from these transgressions, what stands in beneficent opposition to perfidious Analogy is simple structural correspondence: Homology, which reduces the recall of the first object to a proportional allusion (etymologically, i.e., in the Edenic state of language, analogy used to mean proportion).¹

In this chapter, Finnissy almost parodistically enacts Barthes' 'spectacularly flat respect' *as well as* 'distorting the imitated object', this being each fragment of the musical material that is 'photographed' in the piece. The distortion *is* the flattening of the materials of this piece, a distanced survey of the 'terrain' to come, like an extended cinematic tracking shot (as found, for example, at the opening of Orson Welles' film *Touch of Evil* (1958) or Sidney Lumet's *The Hill* (1965)).

For a 29-minute opening to a five-and-a-half hour piano work, Finnissy's first chapter is surprisingly short on spectacular (in the more usual sense of the word) moments, as might produce an arresting effect; such moments, where they do occur, are brief and fragmentary, small windows onto what may come later. Rather, after a misleading opening (almost a 'false start'), the piece traverses slowly through its material, most of the time with a steady plodding beat, sustaining attention by means of the intensity that is produced by the concentrated sense of distance and reserve. However, at the same time Finnissy introduces many of the most important categories of material to be developed further later in the cycle. Primary amongst these is the *motivo fondamentale*, both as the plainchant *Te Deum Laudamus* and in Bach's *Herr Gott, dich loben wir* BWV 328, to which Finnissy applies various techniques (as he will in myriad different ways later in the cycle). This is used to generate a range of what I will call 'walking' material, mostly in regular crotchets, which is used to connect different passages, in the manner of a 'Promenade' (as in Mussorgsky's *Tableaux d'une exposition*). The harmonic processes thus generated appear to be relatively arbitrary, meandering around various tonalities without really fixing anywhere, as is common of various treatments of material that Finnissy will use in the cycle. But the stepwise aspects of the melodic material, notwithstanding the octave displacements, remain a common and distinguishing feature of all such passages.

Throughout this chapter, Finnissy forms continuities between the 'Walking material' and other categories with similar properties, in particular those derived from 'Onward Christian Soldiers', Bruckner's Fifth Symphony and Debussy's *Berceuse Héroïque*, all of which 'march' in various ways, as well as other chordal material derived from askew progressions (as found in the *Poets*) and snippets of hymns from Billings.

Otherwise, the structure of the chapter can be perceived in terms of five sections, as follows:

A: *Flatness*. Following a few short fragments and anticipation of the 'compression' material, this section is centered around four passages of canonic writing drawing upon the *motivo fondamentale*, interspersed by the rhythmic motive in sixths, a combination of the Bach material with some of that later to be found in *Alkan-Paganini* within a wider segment of the 'compression' material, as an anticipation of later virtuosity, and the rhythmic material again. Via flash-forwards to a rhapsody around the spiritual 'Steal Away' and Arthur Sullivan's 'Whatever you are', Finnissy is able to ease into the walking material as a transition into the next section.

B: *Walking/Motion*. Here Finnissy morphs from the walking material into two other derivations (both used later more extensively in *My parents' generation*) exhibiting 'marching' qualities, specifically inverted or retrograded passages from Debussy's *Berceuse héroïque* and Sullivan's 'Onward Christian Soldiers'. He fragments and thins out a derivative walking material (in a triadic form) to bring about the transition into the next section.

C: *Central Section*. This contains five sub-sections:

C (i): The *motivo fondamentale* in a clear form for the first time, but in a manner (first monophonic, in the bass register, then in counterpoint with a second voice) which parodies another highly extended piano work, Kaikshoru Shapurji Sorabji's *Opus Clavicembalisticum* (1929-30), specifically imitating the writing of the 'Fuga I' in the latter work. But this is cut short in order to return to the 'walking/triadic' material, emphasising Finnissy's distance from Sorabji's sprawling creations.

C (ii): short passages deriving from *Alkan-Paganini* (here Finnissy comes closest in the cycle to a clear allusion to Mozart's 'Fin ch'han dal vino', as set in Alkan's *Jean qui rit*), *Bachsche Nachdichtungen*, leading back into the walking material, with a short flash-forward towards a Billings hymn, which includes the first proper cadence of the piece, after which the music dissolves into a short montage of fragments.

C (iii): The first 'Sicilian/Sardinian' passage, in which energetic *launeddas* music is combined with hymn-derived material in the bass, then an semi-'compression' interlude from *Kapitalistische Realisme*.

C (iv): A longer passage of washed-out derivatives from imaginary 1940s popular music, looking forward to *My parents' generation*.

C (v): A longer 'Sicilian/Sardinian' section, incorporating both imaginary folk music from these regions with derivatives from Busoni and Beethoven, as in *Kapitalistisch Realisme/Sizilianische Männerakte*. Once again dissolving into a short montage of fragments.

D: *Melodies*. Two clear melodies, first the iconic and clearly-stated melody from Berlioz's 'Scène d'amour' from *Roméo et Juliette* (harmonised in an extremely fluid manner, in contrast to Berlioz!), then from the slow movement of Beethoven's Piano Sonata op. 10, no. 1, using the *motivo fondamentale* in place of the original melody; both accompanied by Bach derivations or block chords. Then a forlorn, desolate derivation from a combination of Beethoven, Wagner and Bruckner, as to be found in *Kapitalistisch Realisme*, leading ultimately back to the walking material.

E: *Coda – Walking/March*. Further dialogues between the walking material and the Beethoven/Bruckner material, intercut with flash-forwards to impassioned renditions of spirituals and hymns. All ultimately descending into a combination of the *motivo fondamentale* with more of the walking/march material from the *Berceuse héroïque*, before disappearing into nothingness.

One of the hardest chapters to interpret coherently if played in isolation from the rest of the cycle, *Le démon* is nonetheless structurally essential both in terms of laying the 'seeds' for various materials which flower gradually through the course of the longer work (here in palpably incomplete forms, thus pointing towards some later form of closure), and also as a counterpart to the final chapter, *Etched bright with sunlight*, in which similar strategies are employed in a drastically accelerated context. Much of the material is 'colour-drained' either through sparseness, repetitiveness, or simple harmonic saturation, or mediated to such a degree that it takes on a radically different form. These forms of treatment do roughly correspond to Barthes' 'ironies which flout Analogy', in ways that create an impression of rarefaction or developmental potential respectively.

¹ Roland Barthes, part of 'Le démon de l'analogie' from *Barthes on Barthes*, translated by Richard Howard (New York: Noonday Press, 1989), p. 44. Barthes' ideas here were prefigured in his writings on criticism in his earlier *Critique et vérité* (1966), in which he wrote that 'The critic separates meanings, he causes a second language – that is to say, a coherence of signs – to float above the first language of the work. In brief, we are concerned with a kind of anamorphosis, given of course that on the one hand the work never lends itself to pure reflection (it is not a specular object like an apple or a box), and on the other hand that the anamorphosis itself is a *guided* transformation, subject to optical constraints: out of what it reflects, it must transform *everything*; transform only according to certain laws; transform always in the same direction'. See Roland Barthes, *Criticism and Truth*, translated and edited by Katrine Pilcher Keuneneman, with foreword by Philip Thody (New York and London: Continuum, 2007), p. 32

2. *Le réveil de l'intraitable réalité*

Like *Le démon*, *Le réveil de l'intraitable réalité* also takes its title from Barthes, this time from his reflection on photography, *Camera Lucida*:

What characterizes the so-called advanced societies is that they today consume images and no longer, like those of the past, beliefs; they are therefore more liberal, less fanatical, but also more 'false' (less 'authentic') - something we translate, in ordinary consciousness, by the avowal of an impression of nauseated boredom, as if the universalized image were producing a world that is without difference (indifferent), from which can rise, here and there, only the cry of anarchisms, marginalisms, and individualisms: let us abolish the images, let us save immediate Desire (desire without mediation).

Mad or tame? Photography can be one or the other: tame if its realism remains relative, tempered by aesthetic or empirical habits (to leaf through a magazine at the hairdresser's, the dentist's); mad if this realism is absolute and, so to speak, original, obliging the loving and terrified consciousness to return to the very letter of Time: a strictly revulsive movement which reverses the course of the thing, and which I shall call, in conclusion, the photographic ecstasy.

Such are the two ways of the Photography. The choice is mine: to subject its spectacle to the civilized code of perfect illusions, or to confront in it the wakening of intractable reality.¹

The dissolution of the music into a montage of short fragments in sections C (ii) and (v) of *Le démon* provided an anticipation of the first half of *Le réveil*. This latter chapter also surveys a wide cross-section of musical materials, but where the musical 'photographs' in *Le démon* were relatively clear if somewhat 'colour-drained', in this piece they are very far from being subjected to the 'civilised code of perfect illusions' in the manner that Barthes describes above. Rather, Finnissy places his fragments almost always somewhat out of focus, half-formed, 'latent' rather than 'present', the music hinting at something to come without ever fully revealing what that thing is to be. As such, it is charged with a sense of potency and imminence which stands in great contrast to the static and aloof world of *Le démon*.

As originally planned, *Le réveil* was to be called *Canada: From its origins to the present day*², as mentioned earlier. It was to entail a large-scale engagement with a variety of music associated with the history of Canada, including a range of French-Canadian folksongs³, Jongleur melodies⁴, Metis folksongs, both Inuit and other Native American melodies from the area that is now Canada, as well as the collection called *Livre d'Orgue de Montréal*, mostly at the suggestion of French-Canadian pianist Marc Couroux, who compiled some of the sources. In the end, much of this material was discarded⁵, perhaps because the resulting work may have sounded too similar to *North American Spirituals*. A Metis and Native American melody appear in heavily mediated form at the end of the *Spirituals*; otherwise Finnissy used only the *Livre* and the Inuit melodies, both of which are sufficiently distinctive, even in their mediated form, as to be able to be considered some of the defining attributes of this chapter.

The structure of *Le réveil* is more straightforward than that of *Le démon*, essentially falling into two large sections:

A: A cut-up of a diverse range of fragments from throughout the cycle, all ‘zooming’ in and out from *niente*, with gradually increasing dynamic peaks. Within this, a fragmentary thread, provided by the combination of Bach and Billings material. All culminating in explosive combination of ‘Compression’ material and similar (but more irregular) writing associated with Mutsuo Takahashi in the *Poets*.

B: In four sub-sections:

B1: Dialogue between various materials drawn from the *Poets* (O’Hara, Cocteau, Genet), *Muybridge-Munch* and *Unsere Afrikareise*.

B2: ‘Fragments pulvérisées’ from *Livre d’Orgue de Montréal*.

B3: Retrograded bass line from *Livre d’Orgue de Montréal*, combined with Cocteau material from *Poets*.

B4: Inuit folk songs from Greenland combined with bass-line derived from Schoenberg ‘Menuett’ from *Suite für Klavier*, substituting a row derived from Arnold Schoenberg’s name for that originally employed by Schoenberg. Interspersed with further fragments from *Unsere Afrikareise*, culminating in brief allusion to hardanger fiddle music from *Muybridge-Munch*.

Section A draws upon a gamut of 100 fragments of varying length taken mostly from passages elsewhere in the cycle, which are frequently presented in inverted, retrograded or retrograde inverted forms. Also included within the gamut are a few fragments specific to this chapter, taken from the *Livre d’Orgue de Montréal*⁶ and a selection of Inuit⁷ folksongs from the Thule region of North Greenland⁸. In both cases, many of the essential attributes of the originals are maintained: slightly pedantic stepwise contrapuntal motion in the *Livre d’Orgue*, three or four pitch restriction with numerous repeated notes in the Inuit melodies.

Finnissy also creates some new material through a combination of derivations from Tunisian folk songs (material which he calls ‘L’orientalisme’ and will appear in full in *Etched*) and from a heavily elaborated form of the *Te Deum* (often in three parts). Furthermore, he derives new material from the setting of the *Te Deum* in Bach’s organ chorale BWV 725, creating a counterpoint between a derivation from the top two parts of the opening and an inversion of the same, the latter presented in a varying pulse that creates various polyrhythmic relationships with the former, and then extended more freely.

The gamut can fairly be organised into a smaller number of large-scale categories of material:

A: Chordal progressions (from Bach, Billings and elsewhere).

B: Orderly contrapuntal lines, keyboard idioms (Tutelo/’Hindoostanie’ derivations (see below), *Livre d’Orgue*).

C: Monophonic folk music (Inuit).

D: 1940s popular music.

E: Unmeasured music: Grace note interjections, pointillistic gestures.

F: Combinations of chordal and linear/gestural writing (L’orientalisme/Te Deum, *Alkan-Paganini*, ‘Anger’ from the *Spirituals*, final section of *Bachsche Nachdichtungen*, material from *Etched*).

It is essentially the interplay between such material types that creates the sense of overall structure, rather than any long-range harmonic plan.

Finnissy assembles these fragments into a series of thirty-six phrases of varying lengths, all presented in a ‘zoom in/zoom out’ fashion by hairpin dynamics to and from *niente*. The dynamic highpoint of each phrase begins consistently at *mp*, rises to *mf* at one point, then later to *f*, before sinking back downwards again. This device has obvious cinematic connotations, whereby the material, like a filmed image, comes only into momentary and partial focus, but can also be found in some of the piano and other music of Salvatore Sciarrino, for example the Piano Sonata No. 1 (1976) (a work with which Finnissy is well-familiar). Above all, it serves to counteract other rhetorical connotations within the phrases, dynamics thus being imposed externally upon the material to create a type of objectifying effect. At the outset there are silences between phrases, then in the central section they run continuously, with the reintroduction of silences towards the end through the increasing use of pointillistic material. Finnissy seems to have chosen the order of fragments consciously rather than randomly, and they form themselves into larger-scale regions of activity⁹. I delineate six regions, the first a highly fragmentary introduction, then a ‘Bach region’, a central section dominated by dense writing combining chords and lines/gestures, intercut with other chordal/contrapuntal progressions, a section in which the material becomes more fragmentary, a section in which some degree of continuity is reconsolidated, and a final section where the material falls away into pointillism.

Section B is much more clearly episodic, with longer expanses of relatively continuous material. The hushed material at the outset provides for a maximum contrast with the preceding violence, allowing Finnissy to work his way towards a series of arcane combinations of seemingly incompatible materials (combinations which will be developed further later in the cycle): ragtime combined with a bass line derived from Schubert Ecossaises, Inuit melodies with a Schoenbergian bass, then Vendan African melodies with bass lines derived from Mozart, variously interspersed with dense contrapuntal derivations from the *Livre* and the more frenetic staccato Cocteau material. As in Section A, Finnissy is again able to configure and present the materials in ways which generate correspondences (for reasons outlined in the section on ‘Material as Archetype’); the Cocteau/Alkan material can sound like an outgrowth of that from the *Livre*, whilst which melodies are Inuit, which Vendan, ceases to be of especial importance.

It was a daring strategy of Finnissy to open the cycle with two pieces that can both be considered ‘Preludes’. But this second of these has much more of the quality of an extended ‘upbeat’ to something which is to come (as with much of Sciarrino’s music), so that in retrospect *Le démon* sounds relatively monolithic in comparison. Fleeting and relatively light-toned, always expressing anticipation and potency, *Le réveil* can be heard as a way of aurally conveying Barthes’ ‘Desire without mediation’, even desire as an abstraction that exists prior to its fixation on a particular object or person (to add a Deleuzian twist). That object of desire is withheld for a long time, right until *Sizilianische Männerakte*. But this desire has a photographic quality as well – the presentation of the musical ‘objects’ says as much about the way they are musically ‘photographed’ as *what* is being photographed. Mediation superseding its particular applications itself becomes unmediated desire, a statement which is less self-contradictory than it might initially appear. In a world dominated by the language of ‘image’, in the form of reified categories into which human beings,

culture and much else are forced – as is common in Hollywood cinema, for example – this piece instead deals with image as an abstraction, a far remove from an objectified vocabulary of ‘images’.

¹ Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, translated by Richard Howard (New York: The Noonday Press, 1981), pp. 118-119.

² At the time of going to press with *Uncommon Ground*, the title and conception of the work was already in a state of flux, so that it is listed as *Canada: From its origins to the present day* in the index of titles (p. 407), but as *The awakening of intractable reality* in the catalogue of works (p. 397). In the end, Finnissey decided upon the French title.

³ These included ‘Le Raftsmen’, ‘Un Canadien Errant’, ‘Boum Badiboum’, ‘Bonhomme! bonhomme!’, ‘Blanche comme la neige’, ‘Youpe! Youpe! Sur la rivière’, ‘Il était un petit navire’ and ‘Le long de la mer jolie’, most of which can be found in collections such as Marius Barbeau, *Folk Songs of Old Quebec* (Ottawa: National Museum of Canada, 1936), *Romancero du Canada* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1937), and *Come A Singing! Canadian Folk Songs* (Ottawa: Edmond Cloutier, 1947), Edith Fowke (ed), *The Penguin Book of Canadian Folk Songs* (London: Penguin, 1974) and Margaret Gascoigne, *Chansons of Old French Canada* (Quebec: Chateau Frontenac, 1920). Some of the material Finnissey started to develop in this respect (combined with the *Livre d’Orgue de Montréal*) can be found in the sketchbook for *North American Spirituals*.

⁴ Specifically ‘Pas trop content’, ‘Haute Normandie’ and ‘Je voudrais m’y marier’, to be found in Barbeau, *Jongleur Songs of Old Quebec*. These were to be contrasted with the Inuit folksongs. The sketches for Finnissey’s treatment of these melodies can be found in amongst those for *Le réveil*.

⁵ Though this material may possibly surface in future Finnissey works.

⁶ *Livre d’Orgue de Montréal*, Édition Critique par Élisabeth Gallat-Morin et Kenneth Gilbert, two volumes (St-Hyacinthe, Québec: Les Éditions Jacques Ostiguy Inc., 1985), two volumes. See also <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/index.cfm?PgNm=TCE&Params=U1ARTU0002092> (accessed 21/8/13). The *Livre* was a seventeenth century manuscript which was rediscovered by Élisabeth Gallat-Morin in 1978. Brought to Montréal from France in 1724 (see Volume 1, p. xi), it contains 540 pages of liturgical organ music, with no page numbers or table of contents, nor any composer’s name. Two former owners can be identified – Jean-Joseph Girouard, notary and political figures (signed it in 1847); Jean Girard, young Sulpician cleric, organist and school master, signed it in 1724 (the year he arrived) – over an inscription which has been scraped off, possibly that of a former owner (ibid). 16 pieces have been identified as being by Nicolas Lebègue (1630-1702), the King’s organist, but the rest remains anonymous (ibid). See this introduction to volume 1 for more on the history and attributes of the work). The work is regarded as very representative of French organ music at the end of seventeenth century and beginning of the eighteenth. At this time, the previously dominant contrapuntal style from the tradition of Jehan Titelouze was gradually abandoned and plainchant became used only in certain liturgical verses.

⁷ There remains debate on the appropriateness of the terms ‘Eskimo’ and ‘Inuit’ for the people of this region (to do with differentiation of people from other regions also called Inuit). I use the term ‘Inuit’ in light of the fact that ‘Eskimo’ is a colonial term.

⁸ See Michael Hauser, *Traditional Greenlandic Music* (Copenhagen: Kragens/Acta Ethnomusicologica Danica 7, 1991), pp. 234-235 and 248-249. The text for Song 46, one of those drawn upon, would translate as ‘I cannot bear these stupid Danes, Who are so stupid that they are not able to speak!’, in reference to ‘collectors who do not master the Polar Eskimo dialect’.

⁹ The delineation of regions here is my own interpretation of the work, rather than anything discerned from the sketches.

3. North American Spirituals

Finnissy's relationship with the United States and with American music in general is deep-rooted and also highly individual. He has cited the music of Charles Ives as one of his primary formative influences, saying of Ives's music that 'its inclusiveness and the way it reflects man's thoughts and ideas, remain a kind of totem for me'¹. Ives' music, with its combination of surrealism and primitivism, clearly stands behind a piece like *English Country-Tunes* (1977, revised 1982-85); Finnissy also wrote a piano piece entitled *Ives* (1974), and other works alluding to specific American music, including *Nancarrow* (1979-80), *William Billings* (1990), *John Cage* (1992), the fourth book of *Folklore* (1993-94)², a setting of Jerome Kern's *Can't Help But Lovin' Dat Man* (1990), and of course the two books of *Gershwin Arrangements* (1975-90). Also works like *Jazz* (1976), *Boogie-Woogie* (1980, final revision 1996) and *That Ain't Shit* (2004) allude obliquely to early jazz (especially that of Jelly Roll Morton). His interest in the American 'experimental' tradition (including such figures as Henry Cowell, Conlon Nancarrow, John Cage, Morton Feldman or Christian Wolff) is large, equalling if not at times exceeding his corresponding interest in continental European contemporary musical traditions. However, it is hard to think of almost any engagements with more recent American popular culture in Finnissy's work; such music plays little part in his cultural world, it would seem. The 'America', at least in terms of popular culture, with which Finnissy engages intellectually and musically is for the most part one of six or seven decades ago at the latest³.

In his two 'Australian' cycles⁴, Finnissy entered into an engagement with the 'native' Australian music and culture of the Aboriginal people in one, then with the 'colonial' music of the white settlers in the other. Finnissy alluded to Native American folk music from the United States in a cycle from the early 1980s using sources from the Hopi people of Northern Arizona⁵; in *North American Spirituals*, a certain representation of the music of African-Americans, borne out of the experience of slavery, is central to the work, in conjunction with representations of the music of white settlers as well. The African-American music that Finnissy alludes to here and elsewhere is, however, that first created in earlier eras – Finnissy has not sought to engage with soul, funk or hip-hop, for example⁶ – whereas the 'white' music extends into the present day.

The African-American spiritual⁷ seems to have emerged in the nineteenth century from a combination of African music and European hymns (as transplanted to America)⁸. The texts clearly emerge from Old Testament parables, though large-scale conversion to Christianity did not occur until near the end of slavery⁹. Originally monophonic, spirituals combined hymn-like tunes with hand-clapping, foot-tapping, and moaning-style inflections that were characteristic of African-American religious music of the time, and have origins in the 'ring shout', a ceremony in which verbal utterances were expressed collectively¹⁰. Written documents from the times of slavery show that most of the songs are seen to use major or pentatonic scales¹¹, though some of the tones were probably 'flatted or "bent" to a lower pitch'¹². On the basis of the descriptions contained in *Slave Songs of the United States* (see below), it seems that singers would begin a refrain before a leader finished their solo, and a new solo might begin before the refrain was over, thus producing a homophonic effect, which is commonly known as *overlapping call-and-response patterns*¹³. Some have argued that some of the spirituals were used to communicate coded messages concerning escape, though this was not necessarily their primary purpose¹⁴. Following the end of the American Civil War and the abolition of formal slavery, spirituals began to be written down, published, and disseminated to wider audiences, with the Fisk Jubilee Singers playing a pioneering role in this process. Key published texts were *Slave Songs of the United States* (1867), edited by William Francis Allen,

Lucy McKim Garrison, and Charles Pickard Ware¹⁵, followed by *Jubilee Songs: As Sung by the Jubilee Singers, of Fisk University, Nashville, Tennessee*, under the auspices of the American Missionary Association¹⁶, the latter of which added harmonisations to the melodies.

Michael Tippett, in what is perhaps his best-known work, *A Child of our Time* (1939-41), written as part of a personal response to the shooting of a German diplomat in Paris by the Polish Jew Herschel Grynszpan which led to the pogrom *Reichskristallnacht* of November 9th, 1938¹⁷, employed five African-American spirituals at pivotal moments during the work, intended to function in a manner akin to the Lutheran chorales in Bach's Passions¹⁸. These were (in the order in which they occur) 'Steal away', 'Nobody knows the trouble I see', 'Go down, Moses' (described in the score by Tippett as 'A Spiritual of Anger'), 'By and by' and 'Deep River', taken from the now-classic collection of spirituals edited by James Weldon Johnson¹⁹. Tippett made quite exalted claims for the universal significance of this music, saying 'we *all* are moved by them beyond the power of the tunes as mere music'²⁰, sentiments which have been echoed by some of the more hagiographic writers on Tippett²¹, presupposing in a romanticised fashion some degree of mutual emotional empathy between all oppressed people (if not all people) which, at the very least, recent events in former Yugoslavia and Israel/Palestine certainly contradict, though others have sounded a more moderate and nuanced tone on such matters²².

Similar issues are at stake with *North American Spirituals*, especially in light of Finnissy's comment cited earlier about the spirituals representing 'the voices of hope and defiance everywhere'²³. An admirer of Tippett's music, Finnissy had earlier paid indirect homage to the older composer's work by the prominent use of 'Deep River' in the second and fourth parts of *Folklore*²⁴. In *North American Spirituals* he alludes, on a variety of levels, to all of the remaining four spirituals used by Tippett, in the same order. But in both works, Finnissy's appropriation of this music is quite unlike the lush use of the same melodies by Tippett; also, in *North American Spirituals* their relationship with the surrounding material is somewhat more intricate and involved²⁵.

Structurally, in *North American Spirituals* Finnissy weaves the work around four nodal points weaving the spirituals into hymn tunes from the eighteenth century Boston choral composer William Billings (1746-1800), already discussed in the section on 'Material as Archetype'. The work can then be demarcated into four sections, each beginning with the Billings/spiritual material. Of these, the second section is by far the longest and most intricate (the final section, on the other hand, is extremely brief). The overall layout is as follows:

A: *Steal Away*

Opening with Billings, 'Bedford'²⁶ combined with 'Steal away', in F. An alternation of a free rhapsody around 'Steal away' with material I call 'Anger/Ivesian' (see below), culminating in a coda which combines 'Steal away' with 'Nobody know the trouble I see'.

B: *Nobody knows the trouble I see*

Opening with Billings, 'Sing Praises to the Lord'²⁷, combined with 'Nobody knows the trouble I see', in G. An abstract canon around 'Nobody knows', dry, hard, acerbic, though also somewhat in the style of a duet for two African marimbas, a free rhapsody around 'Nobody knows', intercut with a dialogue between 'By and by' and a further two-part two-part abstracted canon from 'Steal away' leading to introduction of more intensely abstract material in parody of 'East Coast serialism'. Then into this already complex dialogue, introduction of further material combining renditions of songs of Stephen Foster with transcribed microtonal material (with intervals doubled) from elsewhere in Finnissy's sketch material, leading to silences, fragmentation, then some prefiguration of material from *Alkan-Paganini* and a two-part abstracted canon from 'Nobody knows' and 'Go down, Moses', leading to a clearer and hushed combination of these two in the coda.

C: *Go down, Moses*

Opening with Billings, 'Dudley'²⁸, combined with 'Go down, Moses', in B-flat. Extension of this material in dialogue with a free rhapsody around inverted 'Go down, Moses'. A 'false coda' combining 'Go down, Moses' and 'By and by' (seeming like a coda on the basis of the previous sections), then the section is brought to an end with a passage permeated by weighty clusters, as a homage to Henry Cowell.

D: *By and by*

Opening with Billings, 'Essex'²⁹ combined with 'By and by', in B-flat. Free rhapsody around 'By and by' interspersed with material relating to Conlon Nancarrow and ragtime (as analysed in the 'Material as Archetype' section above), ending with the Billings/spiritual material again.

As well as combining the spirituals with the Billings hymns, Finnissy also chooses to surround it with material from later periods in American musical history, such as a range of passages derived from (mostly retrogrades) of nineteenth-century white American composers such as Horatio Parker, Louis Moreau Gottschalk, Edward Macdowell, and others³⁰. But the nature and range of the allusions suggest the music of Charles Ives as much as anything else in the cycle, and this comes to the fore in some quite violent (or at least boisterous) passages in Section A (referred to above as 'Anger/Ivesian')³¹, which serve the role of temporary 'explosions' of material akin to those elsewhere in the cycle, though continuous melodies, almost always in the tenor line, remain intact in the midst of other tempestuous writing around them. Within this, Finnissy also weaves in a series of slightly comical inserts to form a type of relief. One is music associated with a 'Bead Giving Ritual' and 'Cloth Giving Dance' of the Tutelo Native American tribe (once resident in Virginia and North Carolina, now intermingled amongst the Iroquois, who took up their rituals on Six Nations Reserve, Ontario³²), which Finnissy configures in two parts almost like a minuet. The other comes from an eighteenth century book of music from the Indian subcontinent primarily for young European ladies (living in colonial India) to play at the harpsichord, which has received some attention from various scholars in recent times perhaps on account of its sheer novelty. The piece in question which Finnissy cites is taken from the collection 'Hindoostannie Airs' by William Crotch³³. Finnissy configures the Tutelo material in such a way as to form a continuity with that of the 'Hindoostanie Air', so that the composite material provides a momentary tonal (and static) reprieve from the raging material that surrounds them.

The second section of the work is the most extended and constitutes the heart of the whole piece. Above all it attempts a near-impossible reconciliation between the semantically and emotionally charged music of the spirituals with the highly abstract techniques associated with the pseudo-scientific world of American serial music in the twentieth century. In this context Finnissy ventures into a type of interplay between materials whose compositional nature is as veiled as anything up until *Unsere Afrikareise*: highly abstracted derivations from spirituals, presented in a highly dry and anti-‘expressive’, mechanistic, fashion, but which still preserve some of the spirituals’ qualities, in terms of pitch contour, use of repeated notes, and some other factors, and genuinely abstract material, whether coming out of microtonal material³⁴ with intervals doubled (as he had in other works halved intervals of chromatic writing in order to generate microtonal lines³⁵). On a symbolical level it could be read as a further type of ‘assimilation’ of black music into the language of East Coast serialism, continuing such a process of varying appropriation as is enacted through the course of this work. In aural terms one can hear the melodic qualities of the spirituals ultimately dissolve completely.

Finnissy’s use of the songs of Stephen Foster (1826-1864)³⁶ adds to the complicated dialogue with issues of appropriation and cross-cultural tension, especially if we are to imagine that Finnissy shares something like the following view of Foster:

Stephen Foster’s further claim to the affection of Americans is that he sings primarily of the Negro and that his songs were born at the very time when the Negro was a paramount subject in the United States. Stephen Foster revolutionized the art of Negro minstrelsy, a strictly American form of entertainment, raising it from the level of coarseness and buffoonery to one of humor and pathos.³⁷

then the relationship between the black music he combines with Foster’s songs is more complicated than in other parts of the piece (not that it is simple there), at least in terms of intention. The Foster melodies are made to grow relatively seamlessly out of the inverted spiritual melody, though a shift is palpable through the initial harmonisation and creation of firmer tonal harmony (as there is no other part at a lower register than the melodies) and clear melodic profile.

The remainder of the piece is more straightforward, with the most remarkable events in the third and fourth sections coming from some of the ‘Canadian’ material envisaged for the earlier version of *Le réveil*, simply in the form of three excerpts whose symbolic titles would spell ‘CANADA’ (eventually simply ‘C-N-D’). These were based on music by Henry Cowell (‘C’), Conlon Nancarrow (‘N’) and ragtime by Homer Denney (‘D’); into each is incorporated either a Canadian melody or one collected by a Canadian³⁸. The combination of a Metis song with a rag from Denney has already been explored in detail; the other Canadian materials bear little obvious trace of their origins (no context sets the melodies used in the Cowell or Nancarrow settings especially apart; the latter in particular could have come from any music of close tessitura).

It is far from an obscure possibility that one might come away from a performance of Tippett’s *A Child of our Time* with a feeling that the spirituals themselves (notwithstanding their mediated presentation) are used to represent some sort of ‘authentic’ or

‘universal’ music in contrast to the more ephemeral movements that surround them. The same could be said of Finnissy’s *Folklore* 2, though this situation is mitigated both by the violence of the opening of part 3 (if the cycle is played as a whole) and the much more ambivalent and pessimistic portrayal of ‘Deep River’ at the end of the whole cycle³⁹. In the *Spirituals*, however, the situation is rather more complicated. Even where clearly recognisable, the spirituals are generally portrayed in such a highly mediated form (usually with extensive harmonisation that can be quite dissonant – the moments of greater monodic lyricism are relatively short-lived, or followed by explosive moments) that it is difficult to hear them in an unequivocally affirmative manner. I suspect this was intentional on Finnissy’s part, and also feel that it is important in performance not to smooth over the dissonances and disjunctures contained within for this very reason. Finnissy *does* play off the music of the spirituals against a type of modernism that developed primarily at the hands of white composers (in an interesting fashion due to the fact that he does not simply stratify the categories), but to read this piece as a celebration of authentic, warm, spiritual (in the wider sense of the term), communal black music against nasty white modernist individualism – the types of paradigms one often finds emanating from some of the New Musicologists⁴⁰ – would be woefully simplistic.

¹ ‘Conversations with Michael Finnissy’ in *Uncommon Ground*, p. 9.

² See Ian Pace, ‘The Piano Music’ in *Uncommon Ground*, pp. 127-132 for a discussion of this ‘American’ part of *Folklore*. Also pp. 111-127 for other allusions to American music throughout the work.

³ However, one should not neglect to bear in mind the potential copyright issues involved were Finnissy to directly allude to music not yet in the public domain.

⁴ The first of these, the ‘Aboriginal’ cycle, consists of the works *Teangi*, *Warara*, *Aijal*, *Banumbirr*, *Marrngu*, *Ulpirra*, *Hikkai*, *Ouraa* and *Quabara* (the latter piece written some five years after the others); the second of *Botany Bay*, *Australian Sea Shanties Sets 1, 2, 3* and *The Eureka Flag*.

⁵ The pieces in question are *Sikangnuqa*, *Pavasiya* and *Talawva*.

⁶ That said, connections between some of Finnissy’s piano writing and the free jazz of Cecil Taylor have been commented upon by himself and others. See Richard Barrett, ‘Michael Finnissy – An Overview’, in *Contemporary Music Review* Vol. 13 Part 1 (1995), ‘Aspects of Complexity in Recent British Music’, edited Tom Morgan, p. 42.

⁷ There are a variety of terms that are and have been used for the spirituals (including ‘negro spirituals’ or ‘black spirituals’). I will call them either ‘African-American spirituals’ or simply ‘spirituals’. Eileen Southern cites the root of the term ‘spiritual’ in ‘the three species of sacred song early set up in the history of Protestantism – psalms, hymns, and spirituals – which, in turn, points to Scriptures, Col. 3:16’. When the term ‘spiritual’ (or ‘sperichel’) was used in the introduction to *Slave Songs of the United States* in 1867, it was not defined, from which she concludes ‘the term must have been in common usage by the 1860s’. See Eileen Southern, *The Music of Black Americans: A History*, third edition (New York and London: Norton, 1997), pp. 180-181.

⁸ The history I present here derives from a reading of a wide range of sources that are listed in subsequent footnotes.

⁹ Arthur C. Jones, *Wade in the Water: The Wisdom of the Spirituals* (New York: Orbis Books, 1993), pp. 6-7

¹⁰ Eileen Southern points out that ‘For the participants the shout was not under any circumstances to be construed as a dance, and strictly observed rules insured that the line between “shouting” and dancing was firmly drawn. Only songs of a religious nature were sung, and the feet must never be crossed (as would happen in the dance). Among strict devotees, the feet must not even be lifted from the ground. Presumably, any song could function as a shout song or “running spiritual.” In practice, however, the slaves preferred some songs to the exclusion of others, and a special body of these songs was developed among them.’ (Southern, *The Music of Black America*, p. 182). For an early description of the ‘shout’ from the N.Y. Nation of May 30 1867, see William Francis Allen, ‘From *Slave Songs of the United States*’ (1867), in Eileen Southern (ed), *Readings in Black American Music* (New York and London: Norton, 1983), pp. 156-158.

¹¹ Tilford Brooks lists typical scales as ‘the major, natural minor, mixed major and minor, pentatonic, hexatonic (lacking either the fourth or the seventh tone), major with both raised and lowered seventh tone, major with lowered seventh tone, minor with lowered seventh tone, and minor with raised seventh

tone' (see Brooks, *America's Black Musical Heritage*, p. 36), whilst pointing out that the most striking departures are to be found in spirituals in the minor mode, many raising the sixth tone or omitting it altogether (ibid. p. 37).

¹² Southern, *The Music of Black America*, p. 192. Southern cites 'Roll, Jordan, Roll' as one of numerous songs that uses both flattened and 'normal' seventh tones, as well as another, 'Sabbath Has No End', in which both sixth and seventh tones are ambiguous (ibid.).

¹³ Ibid. p. 197.

¹⁴ See Jones, *Wade in the Water*, pp. 45-45, 74-75, 154 n. 14; Harold Courlander, *Negro Folk Music, U.S.A.* (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1963), p. 43; and Small, *Music of the Common Tongue*, pp. 96-97 for various views on this subject. Jon Cruz argues that 'What seems incontrovertible is that black religious song-making, along with other forms of music-making, served multiple functions under slavery', pointing out amongst other things the role such music played in attaining cohesiveness and solidarity in a community. See Jon Cruz, *Culture on the Margins: The Black Spiritual and Rise of American Cultural Interpretation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), p. 20. For a selection of memories of singing by former slaves, see 'From the Slave Narrative Collection' (compiled 1941), in Southern (ed), *Readings in Black American Music*, pp. 116-121.

¹⁵ A modern edition is William Francis Allen, Charles Pickard Ware, and Lucy McKim Garrison (eds), *Slave Songs of the United States* (Bedford, MA: Applewood Books, 1996). See Dena J. Epstein, *Sinful Tunes and Spirituals* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1978), pp. 303-341 for more information on this publication.

¹⁶ *Jubilee Songs; As Sung by the Jubilee Singers, of Fisk University, Nashville, Tenn.*, under the Auspices of the American Missionary Association, with afterword by Erastus M. Cravath (New York: Biglow & Main, [1872])

¹⁷ See Merion Bowen, *Michael Tippett*, revised second edition (London: Robson Books, 1997), p. 17.

¹⁸ Michael Tippett, *Those Twentieth-Century Blues: An Autobiography* (London: Hutchinson, 1991), p. 50.

¹⁹ A recent edition of which is James Weldon Johnson and J. Rosamond Johnson, *The Book of American Negro Spirituals*, two volumes (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2003). All of the spirituals set by Tippett and Finnissy are included in here. They are all fitted out with quite elaborate and more-than-a-little kitschy piano accompaniments, the preface however saying that in these 'the arrangers have sincerely striven to give the characteristic harmonies that would be used in spontaneous group singing'. (Vol. 1, p. 37). Kenneth Gloag shows in detail how Tippett alters the harmonies in Johnson's book, sometimes simplifying them. See Gloag, *Tippett: A Child of our Time* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 71-84.

²⁰ Michael Tippett, 'The Nameless Hero: Reflections on *A Child of our Time*', in *Tippett on Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 182-183.

²¹ See for example, Ian Kemp, *Tippett: The Composer and his Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), p. 158.

²² Kenneth Gloag suggests that Tippett's claiming 'a universal significance for the spiritual' is a view that 'now may seem somewhat optimistic but one which accentuates Tippett's concern for the generalisation of human experience'. See Gloag, *A Child of our Time*, p. 28.

²³ Finnissy, note on *History*.

²⁴ See Pace, 'The Piano Music', in *Uncommon Ground* for more on this. For another perspective on this work, see Maarten Beirens, 'Archaeology of the Self: Michael Finnissy's 'Folklore'', in *Tempo*, Vol. 57 No. 223 (January 2003), pp. 46-56. The use of 'Deep River' in the earlier work is also discussed in Jonathan Cross, 'Vive la différence' in *The Musical Times*, Vol. 137, No. 1837 (March 1996), pp. 7-13.

²⁵ Which is not to say that Tippett's use of them is not. See Kemp, *Tippett*, pp. 164-66 and 172, for more on this.

²⁶ From William Billings, *The Psalm-Singer's Amusement* (1781) (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1987).

²⁷ From William Billings, *The Continental Harmony* (1794) (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1990), pp. 70-75. In this volume this chorale is called 'An Anthem for Thanksgiving Day', but Finnissy refers to it in the sketches as 'Sing Praises to the Lord'.

²⁸ From William Billings, *The Singing Master's Assistant: Music in Miniature* (1778-1779) (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1984).

²⁹ From William Billings, *The New England Psalm-Singer* (1770) (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1981).

³⁰ Many of the nineteenth-century white American sources used in this chapter can be found in John Gillespie (ed), *Nineteenth-Century American Piano Music* (New York: Dover, 1978).

³¹ These sections are amongst the most difficult of which to establish the provenance and nature of the compositional techniques employed in their creation, even with the full sketches to hand (and Finnissy himself has been unable to recall some of their sources). They appear to derive from a splitting of 'Steal

away' into small cells of pitches which are combined with their inversions to provide a gamut of pitch cells which are then employed in varying metres and transpositions, configured in such a way as to recall some of Ives's piano works, such as his *Study No. 22*.

³² See Gertrude Prokosch Kurath, *Tutelo Rituals on Six Nations Reserve, Ontario* (Ann Arbor: Society for Ethnomusicology, 1981), pp.25-35 for more information on the sources in question.

³³ William Crotch published a volume entitled *Specimens of Several Styles of Music* (1808), itself drawing in part upon an earlier collection (from sometime in the 1780s) called *Indoostani Airs*, compiled by Margaret Fowkes. The material that Finnissy uses comes from Ian Woodfield, 'Collecting Indian Songs in Late 18th-Century Lucknow: Problems of Transcription', in *British Journal of Ethnomusicology*, Vol. 3 (1994), pp. 73-88. See Raymond Head, 'Corelli in Calcutta: Colonial Music-Making in India in the 17th and 18th Centuries', in *Early Music*, Vol. 13 No. 4 (Nov. 1985), pp. 548-553 for more on the subject, and for a wider overview, see Ian Woodfield, 'The 'Hindoostannie Air': English Attempts to Understand Indian Music in the Late Eighteenth Century', in *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, Vol. 119 No. 2 (1994), pp. 189-211, Nicholas Cook, 'Encountering the Other, Redefining the Self: Hindoostanie Airs, Haydn's folksong settings, and the 'common practice' style', available at <http://cf.hum.uva.nl/mmm/new-directions/Cook-Encountering.pdf> (accessed 21/8/13) (Cook's article takes a somewhat more benevolent view) and Richard Leppert, 'Music, domestic life and cultural chauvinism: images of British subjects at home in India', in Richard Leppert and Susan McClary (eds), *Music and Society: The politics of composition, performance and reception* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 63-104.

³⁴ Almost certainly this derives from unused material for the quarter-tone keyboard part in Finnissy's orchestral work *Speak its Name* (1996). See Julian Anderson, 'The Orchestral Works', pp. 206-208, for more on this work.

³⁵ This was, for example, a technique he used in the series of *Obrecht Motetten* (1989-1993) for ensemble, when transforming material from Obrecht.

³⁶ The songs cited by Finnissy are, in order, 'Come where my love lies dreaming' (1855), 'Don't bet your money on ole Shanghai' (1861), 'Down among the Cane-brakes' (1860), 'Gentle Annie' (1856), 'Ah may the red rose live always' (1850), 'Beautiful Dreamer' (1862), 'Better Times are Coming' (1862), and 'Camptown Races' (1850).

³⁷ See <http://www.bobjanuary.com/foster/sf1.htm> (accessed 21/8/13). Alain Locke (who associates one of the periods of African-American music he delineates, 'The First Age of Minstrelsy' (1850-1875) with 'Stephen Foster and the Sentimental Ballad', pointing out that whilst Foster did have some first-hand experience of plantation singing he, like children's story writer Joel Chandler Harris, 'watered the original down just enough to give it the touch of universality, and yet not enough to destroy entirely its unique folk flavor. But neither service ... was an unmixed blessing' (Locke, *The Negro and his Music and Negro Art: Past and Present* (1939), reprint (New York: Arno Press, 1969), p. 47). Locke goes further to suggest that 'With the vogue of these songs the sentimental side of the plantation legend wormed its way into the heart of America for better or worse, mostly worse. For with its shallow sentiment and crocodile tears went an unfortunate and undeserved glorification of the slave regime' (ibid. pp. 47-48).

³⁸ The melodies in question are a Haitian melody collected in a Canadian ethnomusicological journal: Claude Dauphin, 'Genèse et éclosion du métalangage musical dans le conte-chanté haïtien', in Robert Witmer (ed) *CanMus Documents, 5: Ethnomusicology in Canada* (Toronto: Institute of Canadian Music, 1990), p. 272 (this article details the ways in which musical ciphers are used to preserve texts in the memory); 'Klawulacha' from the Kawkiutl people of Northwestern Canada, about the Chief Wakiash and the building of the first totem pole, as collected in Natalie Curtis, *The Indians' Book: Songs and Legends of the American Indians*, reprint of second edition (New York: Dover, 1968), pp. 299-303, and the Metis song 'Mon cher amant' described in the 'Material as Archetype' section. Curtis's book was once immensely popular and the source for Busoni's 'Red Indian' settings (see Anthony Beaumont, *Busoni* (London: Faber and Faber, 1985), pp. 190-203). See also Michael V. Pisani, 'I'm an Indian Too', in Jonathan Bellman (ed), *The Exotic in Western Music* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1998), pp. 250-256.

³⁹ Of course, in performances of the second part alone, including Finnissy's own recording of just that part (Metier MSV CD 92010), this will not be the case.

⁴⁰ See for example Susan McClary's 'Terminal Prestige: The Case of Avant-Garde Music Composition' in *Cultural Critique* 12 (1989), pp. 57-81, or her crazily romanticised view of gospel music in *Conventional Wisdom: The Content of Musical Form* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000), pp. 21-29. In fairness to McClary, it should be pointed out that she does elsewhere criticise the perception of African-Americans as having 'access to real (i.e. preindustrialized) feelings and community' (ibid. p. 55), but mostly as a rhetorical strategy for attacking British rock musicians in contrast to their American counterparts.

4. *My parents' generation thought War meant something*

Whilst the fourth chapter of the *History* is not strictly autobiographical, and alludes to the *generation* of people to which his parents belonged rather than so much his parents themselves¹, it is certainly informed by his memories of and perspectives on that decade, including the music that his parents would have encountered during their early years of adulthood. Its initial inspiration came from photographs that Finnissey's parents showed him of their wartime experiences, during the London Blitz, in which German bombers caused the death of over 30,000 people in the city and flattened large swathes of houses. Both of Finnissey's parents had served in the British Army during the war, though neither were actually involved in combat. His father was involved in radar work, in the process developing a range of skills that enabled him to build radios after the war was over (Finnissey recalls that the family never once had to buy a radio²). His mother was a member of the Auxiliary Territorial Services (ATS), a women's branch of the army attached to the Territorial Army. They were married in 1945 and Finnissey was conceived soon afterwards.

Post-war Britain, under a radical Labour government elected in 1945, was characterised by a simultaneous combination of optimism and austerity³. Despite serious national debt, the loss of Britain's previously dominant international trading position, and a further drain upon resources as a result of Britain's involvement in the post-war occupation of Germany, this government oversaw the introduction of a comprehensive welfare state, free education for all until age 15, and the beginning of the dismantling of the British Empire. In London, the aftermath of the wartime Blitz necessitated major repair and rebuilding work⁴, and a group of young architects inspired by the ideas of Le Corbusier and Mies van der Rohe, and sympathetic to the Labour government, were able to gain positions of influence in the post-war years, and make grand plans for the rebuilding of the city, though many of these foundered because of the expenditure involved⁵. Most of the repair work upon houses in the capital was completed between 1944 and 1947, with local newspapers publishing lists of numbers of repairs completed each week⁶. The government maintained strict control over supplies of building materials, restricting in large measure the construction of new offices; thus emerged a black market in building licenses⁷. It was the job of George Finnissey, Michael's father, to photograph the processes of redevelopment and repair for the archives of the then London County Council (LCC)⁸. He rapidly became aware of the cheapness and corruption that was entailed in the whole venture and ultimately quit the job in disgust. His photographs, which would be unattributed, may languish somewhere in LCC archives.

The optimism generated by the Labour government, even during a time of austerity, did not last, however, and was damaged above all by a fuel crisis during a freak winter in early 1947. With financial resources at a low, Britain needed to rely upon the Marshal Plan to save the country from bankruptcy, necessitating commitments to free trade, European economic integration and generally to a capitalist economy based upon private ownership. Further international pressures forced devaluation of the pound and severe cuts in public spending, with the military being brought in to break strikes. In this context, the besieged government won the 1950 general election by a majority of only five seats and had to call a further election the next year, which they lost to the Conservatives, who would remain in power for the next thirteen years.

These were the years in which Finnissey would have been first conscious of the world; this was the environment that would have coloured his first memories, and these events created the foundations for the later post-war society in which he came of age. In

such a context, it would be natural to ask ‘what the war was fought for’? Britain and the world seemed on the verge of further conflict, with the new spectre of the atom bomb and prospect of mass annihilation (the Berlin Blockade of 1948 did indeed bring the world to the brink of a third world war⁹, and this possibility was even greater during the later Cuban Missile Crisis). The austerity, wage restraint and rationing of the post-war world were obvious to all, Britain remained a deeply class-bound society with limited opportunities for upward mobility, homosexuality remained illegal, the nation remained provincial in outlook, defensive as ever against European cultural influences, and more widely the whole country was forced to pander to the wishes and interests of the new superpower of the United States.

To read *My parents’ generation* simply as a parable of the horror of war is only to scratch the surface of the work; while the musical symbols are relatively clear in this respect, it stands equally as a reflection on popular culture, its role as ‘distraction’, and even upon the continuing fate of a world built upon the ashes of the Second World War. It is in some ways the bleakest of all the pieces in the *History*, yet has a charge and passion of its own. Two principal categories of material are used in the chapter: songs associated with war of various periods (from the nineteenth century through to the Soviet era), and imaginary popular songs relating to those from the 1930s and 1940s. The materials belonging to the latter category (sometimes overlapping with the former) do not as a whole constitute direct references or allusions, but rather abstractions prominently featuring generalised characteristics of the music of the period – syncopations, obsessively reiterated rhythms (especially dotted rhythms), stepwise melodies which are easy to sing, booming and incessant basslines, sometimes extravagant but rather cheesy harmonies (with ample use of dominant ninths), and so on. Finnissy has suggested that some of the figures he had in mind when writing this sort of music included Jerome Kern (whose ‘Can’t Help But Lovin’ Dat Man’ he had earlier set in a piano piece from 1990), George Gershwin, Cole Porter and Harold Arlen (famous for ‘Stormy Weather’), all of whose songs dominated the Swing Era, and the British bandleader and violinist Bert Ambrose (known at the time simply as ‘Ambrose’), who ‘discovered’ and frequently performed with the celebrated singer Vera Lynn¹⁰.

Dancing was hugely popular in Britain during the war years. Ballrooms were opened all over the country, the most celebrated in London being the Hammersmith Palais, which was regularly full¹¹. The whole phenomenon of ‘mass entertainment’ grew to new dimensions as a distraction from fear and hardship, the ballrooms serving as ‘fun palaces for the people where the soft lights and the sweet music could banish reality for a few brief hours and allow dreams and fantasies to flourish’¹². Classical venues were taken over and used as dance halls, including the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden, which Frank E. Huggett has suggested was ‘symbolic of the wartime change of values’¹³. It may be the case that the widening of the high/low culture divide in Britain, and the consequent distrust towards many forms of culture perceived as ‘elitist’, may have its roots in the values of this era.

Finnissy has engaged with popular and commercial musical genres in a number of works (including elsewhere in the *History* as well, as for example with the music hall songs that appear in the *Poets*), whilst at the same time employing compositional techniques which would be impossible without the lessons of high modern abstraction. To find some unity between these distinct necessities is by no means easy; a simple desire to demonstrate empathy with the cultural desires of others does not sit easily with suspicions and reservations about the sentimentality or anonymity of some popular culture, the very qualities in reaction to which it

has been argued that modernism developed¹⁴. Furthermore, Finnissy's approach to the iconic qualities of popular music, presented with a degree of critical detachment or defamiliarisation, can be said to parallel the work of television dramatist Dennis Potter, both here and in the earlier *Gershwin Arrangements*, as a means of colouring the cultural surface of an era with a historical awareness of other aspects of conditions of the time¹⁵.

The six sections of *My parents' generation* are each announced by a short B-flat minor incipit (each one overlapping slightly with the last) deriving from Debussy's *Berceuse héroïque*, written in 1914, and published in *King Albert's Book*¹⁶, intended to offer 'a tribute of admiration to Belgium, on the heroic and ever-memorable share she has taken in the war'¹⁷, after Debussy's earlier nationalistic sentiments¹⁸ led to disillusionment as the carnage of the war became clear¹⁹. The work is a hushed, melancholy march at a moderate tempo that precludes its being heard either as obviously triumphal or funereal, in which counters a yearning, *expressif* melody in chords with the sound of distant bugles in the remote key of F (from that of E-flat minor in the bass)²⁰, and in the central section features a deceptively comforting allusion to the Belgian national anthem, *La brabaçonne*.

Then the work is divided into a six-part structure, the beginning of each section signalled by the Debussy-based incipit, just as the Billings/spirituals material served a similar role in the *Spirituals*:

A: Reminiscences, in modified form, of passages from the *Spirituals* – Billings/spirituals combinations, Nancarrow. Glimpses of combined popular songs. Fragmented material. 'Onward Christian Soldiers'.

B: After short continuation of A, long *pppppp* passage combining pop songs material with Mozart minuets and material from the later *Sizilianische Männerakte*.

C: Meandering fragments, eventually coalescing into the first proper mock popular song. Sudden explosion into 'compression' material. More fragmentation, blank. First glimpses of 'Whatever You Are' – Sullivan.

D: Soviet war song 'Sacred War' combined with Liszt's *La lugubre gondola I*, the latter giving way to 'Onward Christian Soldiers', this time more aggressively. Uncertain combination of various materials – anticipations of the *Poets*, pop songs, more sustained passages from *Sizilianische Männerakte*. Sudden shift to extended passage of pointillistic material.

E: Second mock popular song, with obsessive dotted rhythms. Expanding into manic, violent extension, then continuation with hands reversed. Second passage of pointillistic material. Further anticipation of the *Poets*, intermingled with 'Onward Christian Soldiers' again.

F: Extremely depressive opening section, built upon Arthur Sullivan – 'Whatever you are'. Interjections with material from *Poets*. Third pointillistic section, then long passage from *Sizilianische Männerakte*.

From the first section, Finnissy eases his material in gradually, in a fragmented manner, not really achieving any degree of continuity right up until the end of the section. The effect is one of distant, fragmentary, hazy memories. Much of the material can be characterised as a type of ‘abstract war song’ derived in part from Arthur Sullivan’s 1871 hymn ‘Onward Christian Soldiers’ (well-known to most of those raised in the Church of England), into which mould Finnissy is able to fit various of the Billings/spirituals material from earlier (with a different arrangement of voices, equal dynamics, and a modified tempo), whilst adding some jarring dissonant pitches. Above all, the presence of dotted rhythms define a category of material drawn from various sources, just as the introduction of syncopation and certain harmonies signal a move towards the other primary category of (popular) musical material, especially in the form of inserts of pairs of material in similar treble registers. Finnissy creates a whole gamut of melodic archetypes for 1940s music of such a fashion (all themselves derived out of just three figures, featuring ascending stepwise motion, dominant ninth harmonies, and triplets to add freedom to a pulse), which supply much of the upper part of the extremely hushed Section B.

The only direct allusion to the Debussy other than the incipits comes through Debussy’s own allusion to the Belgian national anthem. Debussy had supplanted the reiterated tonic of the original with a richer progression in the first phrase, then added a descending and darkening chromatic progression in the second, providing a startling recontextualisation of this incessant and militaristic song; Finnissy sets the theme as *marcato* rather than *Plus calme*, restoring some of its militarism, and supplants Debussy’s harmonies with his own doublings of the melodic line, as well as some rhythmic modifications, all of this serves to subvert the sense of growth and harmonic progression. He also draws upon the quartet ‘Whatever you are’ from Act 2 of Gilbert and Sullivan’s opera *Utopia Limited* (1892-93), a little-performed satire on companies, the Royal Navy and colonial deference. This song appears in extended form in Section F (very much slowed down and surrounded by other material), but at other earlier points (and also for use elsewhere in the cycle) he transforms the chorus into a 4/4 metre, somewhat more akin to a popular song, with syncopations and transformations of the triplet quavers of the Sullivan into recurring pairs of notes.

Both of the more extended ‘popular songs’ (in Sections C and E) emerge not so much of the preceding material (which in both cases is relatively aimless), but as an alternative to it – a means to alleviate boredom and depression in the manner of mass culture. The songs themselves once more derive from abstracted archetypes (syncopated ascending figures in the first, dotted rhythms around accented notes in the second), configured in certain manners (for example with a Cole Porter-like booming bass in the first case). Neither have much possibility of direction (despite some by-now relatively routine processes of fragmentation), so Finnissy can only effect the first of several major ‘compressions’ in the cycle (allusions to such material in the first two chapters had more the character of references than any consequence of the surrounding material). Here the process is facilitated by the very use of archetypes, used to create virtuosic but also rather coruscating musical explosions, shaking up the listener’s attention with unpredicted violence. Equally violent in a different way are the extended sections in which Finnissy dissolves the material into abstracted gestures and pointillism (referred to simply as ‘pointillism’ in the outline of the structure above), which will also occur in *Unsere Afrikareise* and briefly in *Wachtend*.

My parents' generation was also written in the wake of the death of Finnissey's mother and is dedicated to her memory; in this context he was sure to have been aware of the following passage from Barthes' *Camera Lucida*:

In the Mother, there was a radiant, irreducible core: my mother. It is always maintained that I should suffer more because I have spent my whole life with her; but my suffering proceeds from who she was; and it is because she was who she was that I lived with her. To the Mother-as-Good, she had added that grace of being an individual soul. I might say, like the Proustian Narrator at his grandmother's death: "I did not insist only upon suffering, but upon respecting the originality of my suffering"; for this originality was the reflection of what was absolutely irreducible in her, and thereby lost forever. It is said that mourning, by its gradual labor, slowly erases pain; I could not, I cannot believe this, because for me, Time eliminates the emotion of loss (I do not weep), that is all. For the rest, everything has remained motionless. For what I have lost is not a Figure (the Mother), but a being; and not a being, but a quality (a soul): not the indispensable, but the irreplaceable. I could live without the Mother (as we all do, sooner or later); but what life remained would be absolutely and entirely unqualifiable (without quality).²¹

What is lost is not just a Figure, nor even just a being, but also a link to an earlier world, a time of hope and possibility in the aftermath of calamitous world events. Finnissey was born into that aftermath, but was too young to know from first-hand experience the context from which they emerged – his parents provided that link. Barthes was haunted by a photograph he found of his mother as a child, standing with her brother in the Winter Garden (the house where she was born in Chennevières-sur-Marne), the two united by their parents' imminent divorce²². He described how:

[T]his Winter Garden Photograph was for me like the last music Schumann wrote before collapsing, that first *Gesang der Frühe* which accords with both my mother's being and my grief at her death; I could not express this accord except by an infinite series of adjectives, which I omit, convinced however that this photograph collected all the possible predicates from which my mother's being was constituted and whose suppression or partial alteration, conversely, had sent me back to these photographs of her which had left me so unsatisfied. These same photographs, which phenomenology would call "ordinary" objects, were merely analogical, provoking only her identity, not her truth; but the Winter Garden Photograph was indeed essential, it achieved for me, utopically, *the impossible science of the unique being*.²³

And so Finnissey expresses his own grief from 'all the possible predicates' from which his own mother's 'being was constituted', those things themselves suppressed or partially altered which send him back to these other musical photographs that are ultimately unsatisfying. Perhaps Finnissey searches for the musical equivalent of the photograph in the Winter Garden, but does not seem to find it; therein lies the tragedy of the piece. Nonetheless, he comes closer to illuminating something of the conflicting but intertwined forces of militarism and populism that characterised the pre-war era and whose continuation into the post-war period were factors that mitigated against the dreams of 1945 ultimately being realised in full.

The relationship between popular culture and militarism was not lost on Adorno, who regularly spoke of the relationship of the pulse of jazz to that of the military march, and argued thus that ‘jazz can be easily adapted for use to fascism’, pointing out its popularity in fascist Italy²⁴. Like many of Adorno’s pronouncements, this is extremely hyperbolic, but nonetheless contains more than a few seeds of truth. That militaristic music is anti-subjective almost goes without saying – its very purpose is to inspire unified collective feelings rather than incite unique and individualised responses. To a large extent the same is true of popular music produced so as to become a mass commodity, and many of the means of so doing – repetition, metrical regularity, standardisation, and crude glamour – are also similar. It is for this reason that Finnissy is able to create continuities between the two genres - compare the ambience of the first full popular song with that of ‘Onward Christian Soldiers’, for example, or look at how he can smoothly integrate the popular archetypes into the initial abstracted militaristic music (not least because of the commonality of the dotted rhythms, also shared by the Debussy). However, what stands out as unsubsumed by the context and pointing outwards beyond the work’s confines is the lyricism and emotional complexity in Finnissy’s mediated renditions of the Busoni *Pezzo Serioso* and of South Italian folk music, right up to the work’s conclusion (despite the final harmonic twists). *My parents’ generation* may be a dispiriting work in many senses, presenting a musical analogue of shattered dreams, but some shards of hope survive its conclusion.

¹ Private conversations with the author.

² Private conversations with the author.

³ The outline of post-war Britain presented here and in more detail on the online version of this section is indebted to several sources in particular: Alan Sked and Chris Cook, *Post-War Britain: A Political History*, fourth edition (London: Penguin, 1995), especially pp. 23-87; Arthur Marwick, *British Society since 1945*, fourth edition (London: Penguin, 2003), especially the chapter ‘The Culture of Austerity’, pp. 52-72; Arthur Marwick, *Culture in Britain since 1945* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991); Paul Addison, *Now the War is Over: A Social History of Britain 1945-51* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1985); Peter Hennessy, *Never Again: Britain 1945-1951* (London: Vintage, 1993); Kenneth O. Morgan, *Britain since 1945: The People’s Peace* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997); David Childs, *Britain since 1939: Progress and Decline*, second edition (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2002); Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain: Rationing, Controls and Consumption 1939-1955* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) and Tony Cliff and Donny Gluckstein, *The Labour Party: A Marxist History* (London: Bookmarks, 1988), as well as the books on London cited separately.

⁴ See Jerry White, *London in the Twentieth Century: A City and its People* (London: Viking, 2001), p. 42.

⁵ Maureen Waller, *London 1945: Life in the Debris of War* (London: Murray, 2004), p. 443-451; Marwick, ‘Rebuilding and Redesigning Britain’ in *Culture in Britain since 1945*, pp. 50-55.

⁶ See Waller, *London 1945*, p. 130.

⁷ White, *London*, pp. 42-43.

⁸ This body ran from 1889 to 1965, when it was replaced by the Greater London Council, itself abolished in 1986 by the Thatcher government as part of an attack upon local government, often run by left-wing councils. In 2000, a new body, the Greater London Authority, was set up. See Andrew Saint (ed), *Politics and the People of London: The London County Council 1889-1965* (London and Ronceverte: The Hambledon Press, 1989), for more details on the history of the organisation.

⁹ See Sked and Cook, *Post-War Britain*, p. 75.

¹⁰ Private conversations with the author.

¹¹ Longmate, *How We Lived Then*, p. 418 and Huggett, *Goodnight Sweetheart*, pp. 26-28.

¹² Frank E. Huggett, *Goodnight Sweetheart: Songs and Memories of the Second World War* (London: W.H. Allen, 1979), p. 26.

¹³ *Ibid.* p. 85.

¹⁴ See, for example, Andreas Huyssen, 'Mass Culture as Woman: Modernism's Other', in *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1986), pp. 44-62, for one elaboration of such an argument and John Carey, *The Intellectuals and the Masses: Pride and Prejudice among the Literary Intelligentsia 1880-1939* (London: Faber and Faber, 1992) for a much more populist rendition of similar arguments. Carl Dahlhaus, however, argues that the opposite of the category he defines as 'trivial music' 'is not "modern" but "classical" music' (Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, translated J. Bradford Robinson (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989), p. 314).

¹⁵ This idea is developed in more detail in the online version of these notes, and in Pace, *The History of Photography in Sound*, arguing for parallels between Finnissey and Potter's techniques.

¹⁶ *King Albert's Book: A Tribute to the Belgian King and People from Representative Men and Women throughout the World* (London: Daily Telegraph, 1914). See Glenn Watkins, *Proof Through The Night: Music and the Great War* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003), pp. 38-40, for more about this.

¹⁷ François Lesure and Roger Nichols (ed), *Debussy Letters*, translated Roger Nichols (London: Faber and Faber, 1987), p. 295 n. 2.

¹⁸ See Debussy to his pupil Nicolas Coronio, September 1914, in Lesure and Nichols (eds), *Debussy Letters*, pp. 292-293, and also Roger Nicholls, *The Life of Debussy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 152 and Edward Lockspeiser, *Debussy: His Life and Mind* (London: Cassell, 1962/1965), volume two, pp. 205-206.

¹⁹ See François Lesure (ed), *Claude Debussy: Correspondance 1884-1918* (Paris, Hermann, 1993), p. 346-348. Debussy also said that the very 'familiar sound' of the piano had become 'odious' to him. See Lesure, *Claude Debussy: Biographie critique* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1994), p. 389. Arthur B. Wenk sees Debussy having to 'beg Durand for work as a means to justify his inability to serve in the war effort'; see Wenk, *Claude Debussy and Twentieth-Century Music* (Boston: Twayne, 1983), p. 18.

²⁰ Jane F. Fulcher claims that at this point there are three simultaneous tonalities, of E-flat, D and F (see Fulcher, 'Speaking the Truth to Power: The Dialogic Element in Debussy's Wartime Compositions', in Fulcher (ed), *Debussy and his World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), p. 230 n. 43). I would argue that the chord which enharmonically becomes D major (tellingly spelt D, G-flat, A, D, and approached from a chord of A-flat minor preceding it, a tritone apart) constitutes an appoggiatura onto the D-flat chord of two bars later, so the real three keys are E-flat minor, D-flat and F.

²¹ Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, p. 75.

²² Ibid. pp. 67-69.

²³ Ibid. pp. 70-71.

²⁴ Adorno, 'On Jazz' (1936), in *Essays on Music*, edited Richard Leppert (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002), p. 485. Adorno furthermore argued that 'The ban against it in [Nazi] Germany has to do with the surface tendency to reach back to pre-capitalist, feudal forms of immediacy and to call these socialism' (ibid).

5. Alkan-Paganini

Alkan-Paganini is an exploration both of various types of nineteenth-century pianistic idioms and of forms of diablerie, as exemplified by the two composers of the title, also filtered through the music of Schumann, Liszt, Berlioz and others. It is a work that explores the nature of virtuosity as a musical effect or form of expression, rather than virtuosity in a merely pianistic sense (though it is extremely demanding to play!). The tripartite structure is taken directly from Alkan's *Trois Grandes Études Op. 76*, the first of which is for left hand alone, the second for right hand alone, and the third for the hands re-united. As the shortest and in some ways most quicksilver chapter of the *History*, it performs a scherzo-like function within the whole¹.

Structurally and conceptually *Alkan-Paganini* is not difficult to comprehend and as such is one of the most easily immediate pieces in the cycle, as well as being one of the most self-standing and thus individually performable chapters. In essence the first section involves a free fantasy around various material in mediated form, the second is a high-octane quasi-cadenza around a basic species of Paganini-esque material, leading to its eventual statement in a clearer form. The third section begins with an explosive combination of the two hands playing material from the previous two sections, then settles into the clearest exposition of both Alkan and Paganini material yet (though still mediated), eventually dissolving (via a reiteration of the *motivo fondamentale*) into a melancholy coda.

The French-Jewish composer Charles-Valentin Alkan (1813-1888) continues barely to register in wider histories of nineteenth-century music² and is a difficult figure to gauge satisfactorily: a radically innovative writer for the keyboard, creating a unique idiom quite different to (but no less challenging than) those of Liszt or Thalberg, and given to startlingly visionary and modern uses of harmony, texture and rhythm, as well as strikingly unusual structural conceptions, whilst at the same time a composer of melodies of sometimes embarrassing banality, even when smothered by ornamental figurations. Amongst the characteristics of his piano writing are a crispness of rhythm and articulation, far removed from the lush sonorities of Liszt or the morbid sensuousness of Chopin, which is often associated with the *style severe* school of French pianism – dry, neo-classical, rhythmically regular and tight, emphasising clarity above all and centered upon the use of the fingers and wrist rather than so much the rest of the arm – which had many notable adherents in the nineteenth-century in France, as distinct to an opposing school descending from Chopin and Thalberg³.

The first section of *Alkan-Paganini*, plays upon material derived from Alkan's two fugues entitled *Jean qui pleure*, *Jean qui rit* of 1840, the latter based on a theme from Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. *Jean qui pleure* uses what seems to be an original and quite chromatic theme in quavers and semiquavers, with oscillating 'zig-zag' patterns in the second bar. Alkan milks the chromaticism amply whilst also later rendering the theme in thirds and sixths. *Jean qui rit* is based upon the famous 'champagne' aria for Don Giovanni in Act 1, "Fin ch'han dal vino", itself used for the final section of Liszt's *Reminiscences de Don Juan*. But while Mozart's aria is notable for its static harmonies, leading Benjamin Perl to suggest that Mozart may have been alluding to the *alla turca* style⁴, Alkan's fugue is harmonically dynamic, with ample use of chromatic pitch modification to produce unexpected harmonic twists. Varying between two and four voices, Alkan sometimes fixed upon subsections of the main theme, in particular the trill in the seventh bar. Finnissy's allusions to this Mozart aria in this chapter do not ever present the theme in an obviously

recognisable form, but the resultant material shares numerous attributes (it is presented at ‘least remove’ during the two handed section, though still unrecognisably). These include a preponderance of repeated pitches and in particular the use of single or multiple trills in the two parts given to one hand, which is one of the most conspicuously ‘Alkan-esque’ features of the arrangement. Most of the material is derived from a set of 64 cells that are taken from the left hand of the Cocteau section of the *Poets*, then subject to random permutations. This material was itself derived from the Alkan/Mozart originals; for a description of this process, see the section underneath on the *Poets*. Thus this material exists at a level of second derivation from the Alkan, third derivation from the Mozart (a ‘copy of a copy’)⁵.

The Alkan section takes the form of a set of quasi-variations, and a wide range of pianistic figurations are used, some representing modernist reworkings of some of the techniques used in Alkan’s *op. 35 Études*⁶. It can be clearly divided into four parts.

1. *Alla barbaresca (assez vite). Diabolicamente – En animant un peu*
2. Episode. Crotchet = circa 129
3. Crotchet = 87 *come prima* – crotchet = 103 – crotchet = 87 – crotchet = 103 – crotchet = 87
4. Same tempo, much more rapt and hushed writing.

Both tonality and pulse are fluid in the first section, so that it displays simultaneously explosive and ethereal qualities (the latter through its decenteredness, despite being mostly in the bass register). The second section, derived from the twelfth of Alkan’s *Douze Études dans les tons majeurs*, *op. 35*⁷, employs spectacular three-part writing, combining a slurred ‘bass line’ at the bottom together with an undulating melody in the middle sharing a similar mostly stepwise motion, with punctuation in the top part. Finnissy settles into more sustained melodic writing for the third section, but interrupted by further ‘Étude fragments’, in particular brilliant outbursts of ascending and descending dissonant chords. Then follows an allusion to the accompaniment of Weber’s ‘Choeur Barcarolle’ from *Oberon* (which was itself transcribed for piano by Alkan), together with a derivation from the ‘Lass uns im Himmel’ section from the fundamental Bach chorale, before settling back into the main melody. Finnissy leads towards a more distant set of mostly quiet episodes which retain elements of a sparser melodic music.

The right-hand section is naturally inspired by the playing of Genoa-born violinist Niccolò Paganini (1782-1840), a seminal early figure in the nineteenth-century virtuoso tradition, who dazzled audiences during his tours of Europe. Paganini dazzled audiences during tours of various parts of Europe, provoking near-incomprehension at the miracles of his playing. Many believed him to be literally possessed by the devil, a belief fed by his eccentric and eerie stage manner, as well as his thinness and aloof and ghostly appearance (actually the result of long-term illness produced by erroneous prescriptions by a quack doctor⁸). He developed a style of playing that restricted the violin at first to only two strings and eventually to just one, the G string. Through the use of harmonics he could extend the compass of this last string to more than three octaves⁹. An 1829 treatise on Paganini’s playing by Carl Guhr wrote of his ‘powerful, all-conquering mechanism of execution with the godlike breathings of human tone, thus affording endless space for the workings of imagination, and touching the deepest feelings of the heart’¹⁰. Guhr listed Paganini’s innovations as being *scordatura*, bowing, left-hand pizzicato, harmonics, performing on the G-string alone (he also often played

on just two strings¹¹), fingering and ‘extraordinary *tours de force*’¹². Many of these qualities are reproduced in the right-hand section of *Alkan-Paganini*.

Both Robert Schumann and Franz Liszt were mesmerised by the playing of Paganini. Liszt, whose own brand of virtuosity was heavily inspired by Paganini, wrote:

‘I, too, am a painter,’ cried Michelangelo, when he first beheld a masterpiece. humble and poor though I am, since I heard Paganini play I keep repeating Michelangelo’s words to myself. René, what a man! What a violin! What an artist!! What suffering, what anguish, what torture those four strings can express! Look, here are some of his phrases.¹³

Schumann’s sentiments were equally characterised by awe and amazement, and he wrote two sets of *Études* based upon Paganini’s work¹⁴; the first of his *Sechs Concert-Etuden componirt nach Capricen von Paganini* op. 10, itself derived from Paganini’s Caprice op. 1, no. 12 in A-flat major, provides the basis for the right-hand section of *Alkan-Paganini*. Unlike Liszt, Schumann does not really make a concerted effort to recreate the *physical* aspect of Paganini’s playing at the piano. Finnissy, on the other hand, does indeed do so, in a uniquely modern manner. The Schumann piece is almost entirely in rotary patterns and arpeggios, whilst Paganini’s name as a musical cipher happens also to follow the same sort of rotary motion; such zig-zag figurations dominate the Paganini material in *Alkan-Paganini*.

Finnissy creates a 11 x 16 matrix of pitch cells from a fragment composed to appear in the *Poets* (which was written first). The process by which the cells are developed downwards in each column is similar to Messiaen’s technique of *agrandissement asymétrique*¹⁵. There is a second chart as well, this time derived directly from the Paganini original. Finnissy simply selects pitches from the violin part on what seems to be a relatively *ad hoc* basis, and arranges these into a matrix. The piano writing is configured for the most part to imitate the sound of the violin (with numerous rhetorical grace-note flourishes mimicking open strings), though it occasionally moves into the bass clef, which Finnissy has described as being intended to signify those ‘sounds never before heard’ that Spohr and others described in Paganini’s playing¹⁶. It is in two parts throughout, perhaps a reflection upon the following comment in *Le Revue Musicale* in 1829:

Monsieur Pacini [a music publisher] possesses the original manuscript of a duet which Paganini executes solo with amazing skill. It has a left hand *pizzicato* accompaniment, while the intricate melody which contains a great many quick passages, is played with the bow. The effect produced is that of two distinct instruments.¹⁷

Finnissy begins with varying metres, accelerandos and various wide spread chords, until a continuous 4 against 3 pattern emerges. In general, there is little of a sense of harmonic progression throughout the section, contour differentiation being a more prominent feature. The expansions of register give a clear sense of development, and eventually this knife-edge music explodes into wild runs, derived from the same material - a different form of ‘compression’ – in between continuing in an almost impossibly

dense and overloaded manner. Finally the music regains composure in a *Vivace* section, in which the Schumann/Paganini reference seems more explicit.

For the two-handed section, Finnissey begins by giving a version of the left hand material to the right hand, and vice versa, though the hands soon begin to alternate. In both cases the basic line is derived from a cut-up and transposition of the earlier sections. The dynamics are clearly terraced, a layer in *ffff* at the outset, sustained right through to a *meno mosso*, then down to *ff* soon afterwards, followed by an *mf* passage. Within these are inserted several passages of material with more of an A-flat centered tonality, freely employing a scale derived from Alkan and Paganini's names, to lead towards the somewhat calmer final section, in which the left hand in particular is much closer to the Schumann/Paganini original than hitherto. The combination of a repeated note followed by a falling sequence, as at the beginning of the Schumann/Paganini, recurs several times, whilst Finnissey works in passages from the Pasolini material of the *Poets* and also Norwegian folk tunes as used in *Muybridge-Munch*. Finally he interrupts the material to reintroduce the *motivo fondamentale*, before a shimmering conclusion looking forward to music in *Unsere Afrikareise*, specifically that relating to Félicien David's *Le desert*, a key work for the Saint-Simonian movement which interested many artists (including Liszt) contemporary with Alkan and Paganini.

Alkan-Paganini takes to the furthest extent the idea of a 'copy of a copy' or *simulacrum*¹⁸. There is nowhere in the piece where the Mozart original is recognisable; yet Alkan's *Jean qui rit* would be impossible without it. Furthermore, this piece is one of the least harmonically directed in the cycle (which is one reason why I have not discussed harmony other than in very broad terms). Not that the use of pitch is unrefined, by any means; rather it is concentrated in such a way as to focus attention upon gestural rather than harmonic features, from which unwanted consonances and progressions might distract. Finnissey manages to extract from Alkan's piece the attributes of Alkan's mediating techniques independently of their object. Alkan's transcription seems to be rendered in terms of 'pure difference'; transcription as an abstract form of mediation that could be said to *precede* its application to objects¹⁹. In this way it demonstrates how abstraction and uncanny virtuosity are by no means necessarily mutually exclusive categories.

¹ A similar process is enacted on two levels within the revised four-book version of Finnissey *Verdi Transcriptions* (1972-2005), in which the fourth piece in each book forms a quirky scherzo-like movement, whilst also the generally lighter character of Book 3 of this cycle creates a larger-scale 'scherzo' if one views the piece as a four-movement work.

² For example in standard English-language texts on the period: Alkan is not mentioned in Leon Plantinga, *Romantic Music: A History of Musical Style in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (New York: Norton, 1984), Charles Rosen, *The Romantic Generation* (London: Fontana, 1999) or either original or translation of Carl Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, translated J. Bradford Robinson (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989), and only extremely briefly in passing in Rey M. Longyear, *Nineteenth-Century Romanticism in Music* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1973) and Arnold Whittall, *Romantic Music: A Concise History from Schubert to Sibelius* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1987).

³ For more on the *style severe* and schools of French piano playing, see Charles Timbrell, *French Pianism: A Historical Perspective*, second edition (Portland, Oregon: Amadeus Press, 1999), especially pp. 46-52.

⁴ See Benjamin Perl, 'Mozart in Turkey', in *Cambridge Opera Journal*, Vol. 12 No. 3 (Nov. 2000), pp. 219-235.

⁵ See Ian Pace, 'The Piano Music', pp. 78-83 for an elucidation of this process with Finnissey's earlier piece *G.F.H.* (1985).

⁶ See Ronald Smith, *Alkan: The Man/The Music* (two volumes in one) (London: Kahn & Averill, 2000), Vol. 2, pp. 98-109 for an extensive discussion of this cycle.

⁷ See Smith, *Alkan*, Vol. 2, pp. 98-109 for an extensive discussion of this cycle.

⁸ See Alan Kendall, *Paganini: A Biography* (London: Chappell & Co., 1982), pp. 27.

⁹ See Kendall, *Paganini*, p. 25. Apparently Princess Elise, Napoleon's sister, asked Paganini whether, 'Now that you have already played something so beautiful on two strings, couldn't you let us hear something on one string?' (see John Sugden, *Niccolò Paganini; Supreme Violinist or Devil's Fiddler?* (Tunbridge Wells: Midas Books, 1980), p. 27)

¹⁰ Carl Guhr, *Ueber Paganini's Kunst. Die Violine zu spielen ein Anhang zu jeder bis jetzt erschienenen Violinschule* (Mainz: Schott, 1829); English version *Paganini's Art of Playing the Violin, With a Treatise on Single and Double Harmonic Notes*, translated Sabilla Novello, revised C. Egerton Lowe (London: Novello, 1915), p. vi.

¹¹ Robin Stowell, *Violin Technique and Performance in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 101-102; Kendall, *Paganini*, pp. 25-27. Kendall is somewhat sceptical about the claims that Paganini deliberately tuned his strings so that they would break during the concert.

¹² Guhr, *Paganini's Art*, p. ix. See Boris Schwartz, *Great Masters of the Violin: from Corelli and Vivaldi to Stern, Zukerman and Perlman*, with foreword by Yehudi Menuhin (London: Robert Hale, 1984) for a wider exploration of each of these. According to Guhr, the idea of playing whole pieces on the G-string alone originated in a piece written for Princess Elise, duchess of Tuscany and the sister of Napoleon. This was in the form of a 'conversation' between the G and E strings, the former representing the lover, the latter the loved one. Both the Princess and the whole Court favoured the dialogue, and the Princess challenged Paganini to speak only as a Man, using strong tones. Hence he saw the use of the G-string alone as a way of demonstrating this (Guhr, *Paganini's Art*, p. vii).

¹³ From a letter to La Mara (Marie Lipsius) of May 2nd, 1832, cited in Renée de Saussine, *Paganini*, translated Marjorie Laurie with preface by Jacques Thibaud (London: Hutchinson, 1953), p. 124.

¹⁴ See Robert Schumann, *Tagebüch*, Vol. 1 (Leipzig: VEB Deutscher Verlag für Musik, 1971), p. 404, cited in John Daverio, *Robert Schumann: Herald of a "New Poetic Age"* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 94 and Eric Frederick Jensen, *Schumann* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 95-97.

¹⁵ For a description of this technique in the work of Messiaen, see Robert Sherlaw Johnson, *Messiaen*, reprint edition (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989), p. 73 or Peter Hill, 'Piano Music I' in Hill (ed). *The Messiaen Companion* (London: Faber and Faber, 1995), pp. 90-92.

¹⁶ Private conversations with the author.

¹⁷ Cited in Saussine, *Paganini*, p. 129.

¹⁸ This issue will be discussed more in the context of *Unsere Afrikareise*.

¹⁹ The concept I am presenting here owes something to Gilles Deleuze's ideas of 'Difference in itself'. For more on this subject, see Deleuze, 'Difference in Itself', in *Difference and Repetition*, translated Paul Patton (London: Continuum, 2004), pp. 36-89.

6. *Seventeen Immortal Homosexual Poets*

Seventeen Immortal Homosexual Poets was the first section of the *History of Photography* to be completed, and as such was Finnissy's first large scale piano work since the completion of *Folklore* in 1994. After such a high degree of musical referentiality in *Folklore* and his subsequent shorter piano works, Finnissy made use of this opportunity to exploit a more 'abstracted' type of material at the very outset of the work, hearkening back a little to some of his piano works of the 1960s and 1970s. The meaning of the title is obvious; the 'immortality' of the poets is indicated by Finnissy's indication only of their birthdates in the score, although many are now dead). As presented by Finnissy in the score, they are as follows:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| (1) Gregory Woods (1953-); | (10) Stephen Spender (1909-); |
| (2) Mutsuo Takahashi (1937-); | (11) Federico García Lorca (1898-); |
| (3) Thom Gunn (1929-); | (12) Ralph Chubb (1892-); |
| (4) Allen Ginsberg (1926-); | (13) Jean Cocteau (1889-); |
| (5) Frank O'Hara (1926-); | (14) Konstantinos Kavafis (1863-); |
| (6) Harold Norse (1926-); | (15) Oscar Wilde (1854-); |
| (7) Pier Paolo Pasolini (1922-); | (16) Edward Carpenter (1844-); |
| (8) James Kirkup (1918-); | (17) John Addington Symonds (1840-). |
| (9) Jean Genet (1910-); | |

Some sections of the piece were clearly composed or drafted a while before Finnissy began serious work on it – the sketches date the Pasolini, Chubb and Kavafis material as having been written in January 1995.

For the basic conceptual strategy, Finnissy drew inspiration from the film *Galaxie* (1966) by the homosexual director Gregory Markopoulos (1928-1992). Markopoulos filmed thirty-three personalities from the artistic world, poets, painters, film directors and others, including W.H. Auden, Allen Ginsberg (who also appears as a personage in the *Poets*), Jasper Johns and Susan Sontag, each in their apartments. He would point the camera at the subjects for a while, then move away to pan around the room, inspecting their books and other paraphernalia for clues to personalities based upon their possessions. Markopoulos drew upon techniques used when in filming his own New York apartment earlier the same year in the short film *Ming Green* (1966), focusing on his possessions such as a photographic nude by Edmund Teske, a rose as a gift from students, and several record albums, as well as a dress shirt¹.

Finnissy parallels Markopoulos's basic strategy by the characteristic use of musical materials that can be associated with each of the poets in question. The piece is structured as a series of episodes on each poet in turn (presented in reverse chronological order of birth date), connected by other sections or 'melanges', which offer space for reflection.

Finnissy has described his particular choice of poets as being designed as much to do with their iconic status (from which in part springs their perceived immortality) as their actual work². Poems by many of them are included in *The Penguin Book of*

Homosexual Verse, upon which Finnissy drew when composing the piece³. Finnissy himself compared the work to a Japanese *wakashu*⁴ collection of poetry, the most famous of which is the *Kokin wakashu*, a collection of poems from ancient and modern times compiled in the year 905⁵.

The musical material presented for each poet is sharply characterised and highly distinguished from the others (though there are some linking attributes between a few poets, as I will explain). Each such ‘episode’ is relatively short, producing the highest density of stylistic variegation in the whole cycle, found in this central chapter. Thus the overall structure of the work, which resembles a rapid cinematic montage, should be relatively clear to the listener (allowing for possible and understandable confusion about where one poet begins and another ends, and the distinction between the episodes and the melanges).

A: (1) Gregory Woods; (2) Mutsuo Takahashi; (3) Thom Gunn; (4) Allen Ginsberg; Transition 1

B: (5) Frank O’Hara

C: (6) Harold Norse; (7) Pier Paolo Pasolini; (8) James Kirkup; (9) Jean Genet; (10) Stephen Spender

D: Mélange I – a cut-up of short fragments of material placed upon rhythmic and other matrices based on (i) Genet, (ii) Kirkup, (iii) Gunn, (iv) Pasolini, (v) O’Hara, but always with a thread derived from the fundamental Bach chorale BWV 328 running through.

E: Mélange II. Similar to Mélange I, but without the presence of the Bach. (i) Genet again, incorporating a reference to *Alkan-Paganini* and a vague allusion to Ginsberg, (ii) a longer passage using categories of material that will emerge later in *Unsere Afrikareise*, (iii) Kirkup (very short), (iv) O’Hara (likewise), (v) a more extended section combining the Pasolini material in the right hand and the Kirkup material in the left.

F: (11) Federico García Lorca; (12) Ralph Chubb; (13) Jean Cocteau; Transition 2 (returning to Lorca).

G: (14) Konstantinos Kavafis; (15) Oscar Wilde; Transition 3 (returning to Wilde); Insert (a) of rapid chordal material; (16) Edward Carpenter; (17) John Addington Symonds, interrupted successively by Inserts (b), (c) and (d) of rapid chordal material.

H: Compression: Extended virtuoso cataclysm of very rapid periodic chords and notes.

I: Mélange III: Coda returning to the hushed world of O’Hara, denser and ornate, once again organised around the Bach chorale.

The relative prominence of gestures, lines or chords has already been outlined in the ‘Material as Archetype’ section. The following is an outline of the musical characterisation of each poet:

Gregory Woods’ poetry is terse, concentrated, often transforming prose-like sentences into groups of four three-line stanzas, each with two metrical feet, and abounds with blatant homoerotic allusions. As with many of the succeeding episodes, Finnissy derives a musical cipher from the letters of the poet’s name. He configures the section as a series of dramatic, separated, rapid gestures interspersed with quiet ruminations in the low registers. Rhythms in these latter passages derive from the speech rhythms of Wood’s poem ‘Fall’⁶, using tenutos to accentuate the words that are repeated with distinct meanings as nouns and adjectives (‘stale’, ‘lean’, ‘fall’).

Mutsuo Takahashi's work, if translations of it are to be trusted as being faithful to their source, evokes images and sensations of extreme desire using archetypal allusions and terms. There is an underlying tone of violence in his work and frequent sadomasochistic allusions, reflected in the tempestuous music (developing further some of the gestural world of the material for Woods). For pitch material, Finnissy uses scales based on Takahashi's name in contrary motion.

The poetry of Thom Gunn combined at first a type of formalism akin to the late work of W.H. Auden with contemporary subject matter (motorcycle gangs, revolutionaries, Claus von Staffenburg (who attempted to assassinate Hitler), Elvis Presley, etc.). Later poems explore the use of free verse and speak more explicitly of drugs and homosexuality. Finnissy here develops the Woods and Takahashi material in another direction, sparser, restricted to the treble register, alternating legato and staccato and in the first section permeated by low E-flats and B-flats that imply an E-flat tonality (as both the first letters in 'Thom' spell D# = E-flat in a musical cipher employed).

The work of the fourth poet, Allen Ginsberg, uses discontinuous montage-like techniques with unity provided by theme rather than narrative, a stress upon varied use of pulse rather than fixed metre, and a small amount of typographical experimentation, all in the service of an ultimately romantic, even primitivist world-view. Finnissy brings the type of material of the Woods and Takahashi sections here to a head, infested with crazed gracenote groups encompassing a wide tessitura and potent trills, in a way he has described as like a 'parody of 1960s high modernism'⁷, then a 'Reckless Blues', as a reference to the fact that Ginsberg himself composed some blues (from which some of Finnissy's material is very obliquely derived).

Frank O'Hara's work is diverse in terms of both its subject matter and its technical and stylistic devices (he would often experiment with radical forms and techniques), but always with a level of high discipline and refinement with respect to the use of language (whilst maintaining a frequently hazy and melancholy tone) that produces a captivating effect. A musician himself as well, O'Hara was closely associated with both the musical and artistic worlds of New York City, about which he wrote a large amount, and evoked the city itself frequently, in a manner that suggests bewilderment and alienation⁸. Finnissy hit upon a notion of the poet as a an Orpheus-like figure in the modern 'hell' of New York City⁹, and so chose to use for his source materials music of O'Hara's collaborator Morton Feldman (specifically *The O'Hara Songs* (1962) and *For Frank O'Hara* (1973), the former a setting of the O'Hara poem 'Wind' (1962), itself dedicated to Feldman¹⁰). The most banally obvious characteristic of the Feldman allusion is the fact that the section is extremely quiet throughout, as was most of Feldman's music. The other source was Offenbach's opera *Orphée aux Enfers*¹¹, to add a symbolical allusion to Orpheus.

Harold Norse was influenced by both the Objectivists and the Beat Generation (amongst whom he was welcomed as a fellow traveller¹²). His poems are in free verse, often employing a wide variety of experimental typographical devices. Norse's frequent homoerotic evocations have something of a macho quality, suggesting hard-nosed sexual determination rather than submissive rapture. Finnissy again uses a cipher for Norse's name, and uses random techniques to apply this to passages from the O'Hara section to provide continuity, then introduces a version of an Ethiopian folk tune from Addis Ababa (transcribed by Emile Bloch

from an 1897 phonograph), a love song, modally altered into a particular Arabic *maqam*, with the intention to portray ‘the stylized Algiers’¹³ of Norse’s poetry and the boy prostitutes that he used¹⁴.

Pier Paolo Pasolini is clearly an important figure for Finnissy (as he was also for the film-maker Derek Jarman); the music he here associates with him recurs regularly throughout the *History*. Pasolini’s love for peasant and folk civilisation (very much romanticising this¹⁵), his disdain for and rage at many aspects of contemporary bourgeois civilisation, not least in terms of sexual hypocrisy and repression, interest in uncovering mythical archetypes within his subject matter, deep awareness of fascist undercurrents in behaviour and society (not to mention the reality of actual fascism), and interest in Antonio Gramsci¹⁶, all resonate strongly with many of Finnissy’s own concerns. The following words of Pasolini could equally have been spoken by Finnissy himself:

And stylistically I am a *pasticheur*: I use the most disparate stylistic material – dialect, poetry, decadent poetry, certain attempts at socialist poetry; there is always a stylistic contamination in my writings, I don’t have a completely invented personal style of my own, though my style is recognizable. If you read a page of mine you can recognize it’s mine fairly easily. I am not recognizable as an inventor of a stylistic formula, but for the degree of intensity to which I bring the contamination and mixture of the various styles. Neither is right, because what counts is the degree of violence and intensity – and this involves both the form and the styles, as well as the ideology. What counts is the depth of feeling, the passion I put into things; it isn’t so much the novelty of the content, nor the novelty of form.¹⁷

Pasolini’s poetry (which he began to write from the age of seven) is as vivid, charged, incendiary and tender as are his films, but carefully controlled through the appropriation of techniques from classical verse. He captures sordid realism, the decadence of contemporary civilisation (without ever romanticising such a fact), his hatred for consumerism, as well as homoerotic longing, in an inflamed but carefully paced verse¹⁸. The folk-like quality of the Norse section provides a clear link with the material for Pasolini, for which Finnissy makes use of modified segments from Sardinian folk tunes originally played on a *launeddas*, a Sardinian triple clarinet, which consists of a pipe played with the left hand and attached to a drone pipe, with yet another pipe for their right hand. At the end of this section, the folk music is joined (in Ives-like manner) by material in the bass register derived from the soprano and alto parts of the Bach chorale ‘O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden’ from the *Matthäus-Passion*, as a reference to Pasolini’s film *Il vangelo secondo Matteo* (*The Gospel according to St Matthew*).

There is a particular iconic significance to this type of material for Finnissy himself: Sardinian folk-music had provided the source material for one of his first major essays in folk-inspired music, his work for mezzo-soprano, flute, percussion and piano *Duru-Duru* (1981). Pasolini had paid tribute to the Sardinian Gramsci in his collection of poems, *The Ashes of Gramsci* (1957), and described the ‘Sardinian muse’ as having until now retained a ‘sensual, religious nature, in the pagan or mystical sense’¹⁹.

James Kirkup is perhaps most notorious for his poem ‘The Love that Dares to Speak its Name’ (after the poem by Lord Alfred Douglas ‘Two Loves’ (1894)²⁰), in which he fantasised about a sexual encounter between Jesus of Nazareth and a Roman

Centurion. This poem was the subject of a now-infamous blasphemy trial in 1977 after its publication in the British magazine *Gay News*²¹. Finnissy chose to represent his perception of this type of religious ‘deviance’ by taking a selection of traditional Passiontide hymns, and inverting them. The hymns in question are ‘Rockingham’ (‘When I survey the wondrous cross’) by Edward Miller (1731-1807), adapted S. Webbe (1820), ‘Stabat Mater’ from the *Maintzich Gesangbuch* of 1661, adapted Webbe (1782), and ‘Salve Festa Dies’, written by Vaughan Williams (1905). Despite the use of inversion and combination, the material retains many of the qualities of the traditional English hymn – earnest, warm, plodding, and the like.

To represent the work of poet, novelist, playwright, petty thief and prostitute Jean Genet, whose aestheticism is always tempered by the sordid nature of his subject matter, and whose moral subversion is matched by the reinscription of other forms of morality, Finnissy uses a series of fragments and melodic archetypes from ragtime, as might have been heard in brothels (to reference Genet’s play *Le Balcon*, in which men in a brothel act out fantasies in which they become figures of authority, then realise the emptiness of such positions, whilst a revolution proceeds outside)²².

Various questions have been asked about the sexuality of Stephen Spender, but because of doubts as to whether homo/hetero/bisexuality should be considered as an identity, rather than simply a set of practices, I do not wish to dwell upon these here²³. Spender was the most passionately committed to left-wing causes of all the ‘thirties generation’ (a category usually taken to include Spender, W.H. Auden, Christopher Isherwood, Louis MacNeice and Dylan Thomas), but would later turn away from his earlier politics and contribute something of a *mea culpa* in the anti-communist volume *The God That Failed*²⁴. His poetry deals with vivid subject-matter (especially in his poems dealing with war and fascism), but is somewhat lacking in terms of linguistic and metrical subtlety. Finnissy once again generates abstract music using a cipher from Spender’s name, whilst carrying over some rhythms from the Frank O’Hara section. He combines these with two British music hall songs from the early twentieth century: ‘Young Men Taken In and Done For’ (by Harry King²⁵), and ‘Be a Man’ (by Henry E. Pether and Leonard Cooke²⁶), the latter inserted into the line, retrograded, in *quasi recitativo* fragments from the end of the second verse. There is no evidence of any particular interest in music hall songs on Spender’s part, nor of appropriation of the texts in his poetry; but Finnissy chose to attempt to capture something of the spirit of an era with which he associated Spender²⁷.

The poetry of Federico Garcia Lorca often has an ecstatic and fantastical quality, combining his fascination with the world of the Roma together with his wild surrealist associations, as amply shown in his most famous collection *Romancero gitano* (*Gypsy Ballads*) (1928)²⁸. Lorca worked closely with Manuel de Falla, who took a deep interest in composers’ use of folkloristic material; together the two collaborated on a thesis on the *cante jondo*. Lorca through his short life sought to create an idiom that was both avant-garde but also rooted in traditional Spanish poetry²⁹; he also tried to raise money to publish an album of traditional songs from Granada. Finnissy creates his own surrealist tapestry using mostly folk sources. The material comes from both Spanish and Basque folk music; the Spanish source is obscure, but the material resembles the Arab-influenced folk song from Santander, ‘Viva la Montaña’³⁰. The Basque source material is a selection of fragments from the ‘Danzas’ (Nos. 1300-1318, sampled randomly) in *Cancionero vasco* by J.A. Donostia³¹. These are combined with more fervent passages relating obliquely to (though not directly quoting) Giacinto Scelsi’s piano cycle *Hispania*.

Ralph Chubb was a mystical romantic, a nostalgic who hated science and the contemporary material world, who constructed in his work an immensely elaborate private mythology. Chubb appealed to some form of earlier Arcadia (idealised, as so often³²) which was constructed in terms of his own pederastic world-view, speaking of ‘The form of youth without blemish, is not such the form divine? / Children of love, today I will sing my song to you!’³³. He sought to legitimise his own desires by evoking images of the Holy Ghost appearing in the form of a naked boy. His work is little-known and was issued mostly in limited editions, highly elaborate and beautifully produced books filled with his own drawings as well as his mythical tales involving himself as some type of spiritual guru. Finnissy finds a musical means to allude to Chubb’s sexual behaviour, by the use of multiple English folk songs in high registers³⁴, to suggest the voice of treble voices, the upper voice mostly monophonic, the lower one harmonised.

For the quasi-surrealist polymath Jean Cocteau, Finnissy once more uses two types of material for each hand. For the right hand, this is a plethora of random fragments alluding to music of Satie (including *Parade*), Milhaud and other composers who had collaborated with Cocteau. This hand is all written *piano* and as such is very much overshadowed by the *fortissimo* left, drawing upon Alkan’s *Jean qui pleure*, *Jean qui rit*, as used more extensively in *Alkan-Paganini*. From this he derives a series of cells, whose most striking features derive from the use of trills in the *Jean qui rit* and of double notes in the *Jean qui pleure*.

Konstantinos Kavafis was born to Greek parents, growing up for a while in Liverpool, England, but later settling in the Greek community in Alexandria, Egypt (which itself has a long mixed heritage – Cleopatra’s family were Macedonian Greek³⁵), where he lived for most of his life. His verse is highly refined (he was a perfectionist) whilst mixing rhymed, regular forms with unrhymed free verse and also *Katharevousa* (an old-fashioned form of ‘high’ Greek diction) as well as *demotika*, a street language. His poems range from bookish treatments of historical subjects to highly personal pictures of individuals he knew, with the type of gentle homoerotic tone that can also be found in Ancient Greek poetry³⁶. Finnissy’s music, which has its origins in an oboe piece written in 1995, is monophonic throughout, deriving from a book of Cretan folk songs³⁷, which are generally in a declamatory style with heavy, elaborate ornamentation. It is a relatively straightforward section in two parts, the first of which is a rather superficially ‘exotic’ series of undulations, the second more of a dance, with the two types of writings fusing towards the conclusion.

Oscar Wilde’s life, prose and plays are well-known and need no introduction here. Other than the famous ‘Ballad of Reading Gaol’, however, his poetry is little-known. Of mixed quality (Wilde himself believing that ‘all bad poetry springs from genuine feeling’³⁸), his poetry often deals with classical or mythical subject matter intermingled with more rapt and personal lyrics, but generally unimaginative use of tetrametric forms. Finnissy here uses a simple superimposition of two materials once more, the right hand being derived from several Irish folksongs collected in Edward Bunting’s *The Ancient Music of Ireland* (1840)³⁹, specifically ‘Paidin Mhac Ruairidhe’ (Paddy MacRory) and ‘Conchobhar Macareibhe’ (Connor Macareavy) for the first and second sections respectively. The left hand is derived from Wagner’s *Tannhäuser* (a favourite opera of Wilde’s), in particular from the sextet in Act 1, Scene 4 (‘Sei unser, Heinrich!’), using the melodic part in the strings and woodwind, and the bass line in the cellos and basses, in the *molto tenuto* section.

Edward Carpenter was an eccentric English socialist who dabbled in various forms of Eastern mysticism as well as advocating vegetarianism and sandal-wearing. He was an active campaigner for homosexual rights, believing that homosexuals constituted a third sex or 'intermediate sex', which became the title of a book he published on the subject⁴⁰. A minor poet, Carpenter's verse can be overloaded and somewhat over-earnest. Finnissey once again uses the Music Hall songs that previously feature in the Spender section ('Young men taken in and done for' in the top part, 'Be a Man!' in the bottom, in both cases with significant pitch modification), together with a left hand derived from Tchaikovsky's song 'Do Not Leave Me' op. 27, op. 3.

The work of John Addington Symonds is enormously important in the history of aesthetic writing explicitly dealing with same-sex relationships. Whilst unable to be wholly open about his preferences, on account of the censorious Victorian England in which he lived, Symonds was nonetheless able to drop stronger hints than had previously been possible, in his work on Michelangelo, Benvenuto Cellini (whose *Autobiography* Symonds translated⁴¹) and Walt Whitman, as well as writing an important essay in defence of homosexuality, *A Problem in Greek Ethics* (1873)⁴². The right hand is derived (extremely obliquely) from Berlioz's *Les Troyens*, mostly from the Septet with Chorus, 'Tout n'est que paix' from Act 2, Scene 6 (Symonds was an avid Berlioz-lover) and the left hand from Lincolnshire folk-songs, some of which are included in the collection made by Percy Grainger⁴³, specifically 'I'm seventeen come Sunday', 'The American Stranger', 'Betsy Walton', 'Riding down to Portsmouth' and 'The ship that lies in harbour'. Once again, Finnissey included these folksongs simply as they for him evoke a certain archetype of 'Englishness', rather than having any specific relation to Symonds.

Finnissey's musical narrative in the *Poets* is influenced by ideas from the cinema, most obviously the juxtaposition of a regularly spaced series of portraits in Makropoulos's *Galaxie*. Makropoulos, like Finnissey, understood the dangers of making a fetish out of a singular aspect of artistic creation, as evidenced in the following:

For the filmmaker to refrain from viewing his film rolls as images in movement is to imbue them with a far greater and extraordinary Movement. It is, perhaps, a fallacy to continue to believe that film is constant movement. The movement must be separated and achieved by the filmmaker's craftsmanship in editing. This craftsmanship of editing is a reflection which mirrors the art of meaning. The materials to this greater end are less known in today's filmmaking than they were fifty years ago. The reasons for this are the same, always the same: commerce.⁴⁴

Finnissey's own 'craftsmanship of editing' mirrors the 'art of meaning' in much of his music. In the case of the *Poets*, the important editing decisions are taken *within* the episodes rather than so much in through the way they are assembled together. The choices in terms of cross-referencing of material or its attributes are equally akin to the process of musical 'editing'.

¹ See Kristin Jones, 'Ming Green: The Colour of Memory', in *Millennium Film Journal* No. 32/33 (Fall 1998), available online at <http://www.mfj-online.org/journalPages/MFJ32%2C33/jones.html> (accessed 21/8/13).

² Private conversations with the author.

³ Stephen Coote (ed), *The Penguin Book of Homosexual Verse*, second edition (London: Penguin, 1986). This includes poems by all of the authors cited in the *Poets* except for Woods, Takahashi, Wilde (!) and Symonds.

⁴ Finnissy, programme note for the *History*. The term *wakashu* also refers to a boy under the age of nineteen.

⁵ See Helen Craig McCullough, *Kokin Wakashu: The First Imperial Anthology of Japanese Poetry* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985).

⁶ Gregory Woods, 'Fall', in *We Have the Melon* (Manchester: Carcanet, 1992), p. 65.

⁷ Private conversations with the author.

⁸ In private correspondence, the poet Harry Gilonis suggested to me a quite different interpretation of O'Hara's poem 'The Day Lady Died' (in Frank O'Hara, *The Collected Poems of Frank O'Hara*, edited Donald Allen (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995), p. 325) as 'vibrantly alive, happy in a slightly *faux-naïf* way (he admits to the existence of ugliness only in book design, and it is quietly subsumed into a satisfactory transaction with the world – he buys the book after all). The mode/mood is Apollinaire, giddy with excitement at the shire *quiddity* of Paris. His (rare) miseries are socio-sexual, not civic'. Nonetheless, I maintain the interpretation I give here, in light of the very routine implied by the precise times of the trains and the normative nature of his dealings with the cashier, O'Hara's juxtaposition of 'muggy street' with 'hamburger', and the vaguely Beckettian listing of books without further comment. The accumulative metrical feet, which themselves suggest enthusiasm, are given an ironic twist by the mundanity of the manner in which the subject matter is detailed.

⁹ Private comments to the author.

¹⁰ *The Collected Poems of Frank O'Hara*, p. 269.

¹¹ The score Finnissy used was Offenbach, *Orphée aux Enfers*, (Paris: Heugel & Cie, [1874?]) (Production 'Théâtre de la Gaité', 7th Février 1874, Opéra-Féerie en 4 actes et 12 tableaux), 'Nouvelle Partition Réduite pour piano et chant'

¹² See the introduction to Harold Norse, *In the Hub of the Fiery Force: Collected Poems 1934-2003* (New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 2003), p. xviii.

¹³ The use of an Ethiopian folk tune to signify somewhere as remote as Algiers is in keeping with the very loose, even arbitrary, nature of geographical identifications throughout this piece. However, some have discerned or suggested Arabic influences upon Ethiopian folk music. See Michael Powne, *Ethiopian Music: An Introduction* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), pp. 42-57 for some information on links between Ethiopian and Arab musical instruments, also pp. 86-87 on religious influences from the Middle East.

¹⁴ Private conversations with the author. Norse's feelings are made quite clear in the poem 'Behind the Glass Wall', which includes the lines 'genitals thick swollen out / of big tear in pants / derelict 14 yr old street arab / cameras snapping / like teeth / great souk / swarms for dirhams / and who / are you little arab / I shared my visions / and ate / black hasheesh candy with / the door of yr body flung / open we twitched in spasms / muscular convulsions / heavenly epilepsy on the bed ' (*Penguin Book of Homosexual Verse*, pp. 340-341).

¹⁵ Oswald Stack speaks of how, throughout Pasolini's career, his work in general stresses 'the need to restore an epic and mythological dimension to life, a sense of awe and reverence to the world: a sense which, he believes, the peasantry still sustain, though the bourgeoisie has done all in its power to destroy it', involving an 'emphasis on the spirituality of the peasantry, their semi-pagan consciousness of super-natural meanings and forces', which Stack realises 'is obviously difficult to reconcile with a marxist political analysis' (Oswald Stack (ed), *Pasolini on Pasolini* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1969), p. 9). These leads Pasolini to such amazing conclusions as that the 'peasant communists' were 'the ones who make revolutions' in Russia (as well as other countries where this claim is truer) (ibid. p. 22).

¹⁶ Pasolini spoke of how when 'reading Marxist texts, the most important, even more important than Marx himself, was Gramsci. . . Whereas Gramsci's ideas coincided with mine; they won me over immediately, and he had a fundamental role in my formation' (Stack (ed), *Pasolini on Pasolini*, p. 23). Finnissy cites Gramsci in his programme note for *Folklore*, specifically the reference to 'Gramsci's imperative to compile an inventory of the 'infinity of traces' that historical processes leave on 'the self' (Finnissy, programme note for *Folklore*, included in edition of the score (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996)). The precise quote from Gramsci, perhaps one of the most fundamental conceptions informing Finnissy's engagements with other musics and allusions is 'The starting-point of critical elaboration in the consciousness of what one really is, and is "knowing thyself" as a product of the historical process to date which has deposited in you an infinity of traces, without leaving an inventory.' (Antonio Gramsci, 'The Study of Philosophy', from *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, edited and translated Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971), p. 324).

¹⁷ Stack (ed), *Pasolini on Pasolini*, p. 28.

¹⁸ For an insightful investigation of Pasolini's *The Ashes of Gramsci* in particular, See Enzo Siciliano, *Pasolini*, translated John Shepley with introduction by Paul Bailey (London: Bloomsbury, 1987), pp. 205-222.

¹⁹ Pasolini, *Passione e ideologia* (Milan: Garzanti, 1973), cited in Angelo Mundula, 'Sardinia' at <http://userhome.brooklyn.cuny.edu/bonaffini/DP/sardegna.htm> (accessed 21/8/13).

²⁰ See Alfred Douglas, *Collected Poems* (New York: AMS Press, 1994), and *The Penguin Book of Homosexual Verse*, pp. 262-264.. Finnissey also named his orchestral work *Speak its Name!* (1996) after this poem.

²¹ For more on the trial, see 'The gay poem that broke blasphemy laws', *Pink News*, January 10th, 2008, at <http://www.pinknews.co.uk/2008/01/10/the-gay-poem-that-broke-blasphemy-laws/> (accessed 21/8/13).

²² Finnissey was soon afterwards to write another Genet-inspired work, his piano trio *Un chant d'amour* (1999, rev. 2003) to accompany Genet's erotic film of the same name.

²³ It should be noted, though, that neither of the two poems included in the *Penguin Book of Homosexual Verse*, '18' and 'To T.A.R.H.', are included in the 1985 edition of Spender's *Collected Poems 1928-1985* (London: Faber and Faber, 1985), whilst they had been included in the 1953 edition of Spender's poems (see *Penguin Book of Homosexual Verse*, 'Acknowledgements', p. 27). According to David Leeming, after the appearance of this later edition, and also the *Journals 1939-1983* (London: Faber and Faber, 1985), John Lehmann asked why Spender had 'censored' some poems from the 1930s. Spender 'replied by assuring Lehmann that the revisions did not represent censorship but were determined by aesthetic concerns. He wished to avoid "gushing" and things "poetically bad." Several of the poems were about love and could be taken to be love between men or between men and women. His job as a poet was not to write specifically heterosexual or homosexual poems' (David Leeming, *Stephen Spender: A Life in Modernism* (London: Duckworth, 1999), pp. 238-239).

²⁴ See Richard Crossman (ed), *The God That Failed*, revised edition with introduction by David C. Engerman (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), pp. 229-273. Spender was also deeply involved with the CIA funded periodical *Encounter*, though he quit when he discovered the CIA involvement; for more on this, see Leeming, *Stephen Spender*, pp. 170-171, 206-207, John Sutherland, *Stephen Spender: The Authorised Biography* (London: Penguin, 2004), pp. 438-439, 453, and Frances Stonor Saunders, *Who Paid the Piper? The CIA and the Cultural Cold War* (London: Granta, 1999), pp. 170-178, 388-391.

²⁵ In Peter Davison, *Songs of the British Music Hall* (New York: Oak Publications, 1971)

²⁶ In *Masterpieces of Variety Theatre Part 15* (London: Amalgamated Press, 1935). Pether is better known for the songs 'Waiting at the Church' and 'Poor John', both from 1906. See Richard Anthony Baker, *British Music Hall: An Illustrated History* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 2005), pp. 100, 169.

²⁷ Private conversations with the author.

²⁸ See Federico Garcia Lorca, *Gypsy Ballads (Romancero Gitano)*, translated Robert G. Havard (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1990). See also Herbert Ramsden, *Lorca's Romancero Gitano: Eighteen Commentaries* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008).

²⁹ See Christopher Maurer, 'Introduction', in Federico García Lorca, *Collected Poems*, edited and with an introduction and notes by Christopher Maurer (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1991), pp. xlv-xlvi, l-liv.

³⁰ From Kurt Schindler, *Folk Music and Poetry of Spain and Portugal* (New York: Hispanic Institute in the United States, 1941), song no. 530, cited in Bruno Nettl, *Folk and Traditional Music of the Western Continents*, with chapter on Latin America by Gerard Béhague, third edition (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1990), p. 123. Nettl cites the use of a wide degree of ornamentation combined with the lack of a metrical structure as betokening Arabic influences (ibid. p. 122); these attributes can be found in numerous of the Santander songs in Schindler's book. Other songs with which Finnissey's material exhibits similarities include the set 'Cantos de danzantes' from Ávila, no. 101 in Schindler. Federico de Onís points out in his introduction to Schindler's book how the latter found that 'the same songs are to be found in the most widely separated regions, which proves that the folk music and poetry of Spain and Portugal have a common background' (this includes the Basque regions of Spain as well) (p. xxiv). This type of Iberian commonality seems to be exploited, or at least portrayed, in this passage of Finnissey's.

³¹ J.A Donostia, *Cancionero vasco* (Madrid: Unión Música Española, 1944).

³² Though the first appearances of Arcadia in pastoral poetry associate it with poverty and social realism (Theocritus) and then with poverty and open critique (Virgil, whose first Eclogue opens with a discussion of land seizures in order to profit the army). Even traditional English pastoral "afforded a way of

attacking contemporary political abuses obliquely' (John Barrell and John Bull (eds), *The Penguin Book of English Pastoral Verse* (London: Penguin, 1974), p. 6). My thanks to Harry Gilonis for drawing this to my attention.

³³ Ralph Chubb, 'Song of My Soul, 3' in *The Penguin Book of Homosexual Verse*, p. 301.

³⁴ The source of these is obscure – possibly they derive obliquely from the same Lincolnshire collections used later in the Symonds section.

³⁵ Thanks to Harry Gilonis for pointing this out.

³⁶ See Daniel Mendelsohn, 'Introduction: *The Poet-Historian*', in C.P. Cavafy, *Collected Poems*, translated, with introduction and commentary Daniel Mendelsohn (New York: Random House, 2009), pp. xlii-xlix; also George Kalogeris, 'The Sensuous Archaism of C.P. Cavafy', *The Critical Flame*, September 1st, 2009, at <http://criticalflame.org/the-sensuous-archaism-of-c-p-cavafy/> (accessed 21/8/13).

³⁷ Samuel Baud-Bovy, *Chansons Populaires de Crète Occidentale* (Geneva: Edition Minkoff, 1972). Baud-Bovy was a Swiss musicologist and conductor who lived from 1840-1910. This source was also used for Finnissy's later chamber work *Ceci n'est pas d'un forme* (2003).

³⁸ Oscar Wilde, 'The Critic as Artist', (1891) in Wilde, *The Major Works* (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 289.

³⁹ Edward Bunting, *The Ancient Music of Ireland: Arranged for the Pianoforte* (1840) (Dublin, Walton's, 1969), four volumes. The sketches mistakenly lead one to believe that these songs are included in George Petrie, *The Petrie Collection of the Ancient Music of Ireland* (1855), edited David Cooper (Cork: Cork University Press, 2005).

⁴⁰ Edward Carpenter, *The Intermediate Sex: A Study of Some Transitional Types of Men and Women* (1908) (Kila, MT: Kessinger Publishing Company, 2005).

⁴¹ Benvenuto Cellini, *The Autobiography of Benvenuto Cellini*, translated John Addington Symonds (1887) (New York: The Modern Library, 1985).

⁴² John Addington Symonds, *A Problem in Greek Ethics: Studies in Sexual Inversion* (1883) (Honolulu: University Press of the Pacific, 2002).

⁴³ Percy Grainger, Patrick O'Shaughnessy (eds), *21 Lincolnshire Folk Songs* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988). Grainger was particularly drawn to these songs after hearing them performed in the Lincolnshire town of Brigg by the elderly singer Joseph Taylor. See John Bird, *Percy Grainger* (London: Faber and Faber, 1976), pp. 103-104, 110-112.

⁴⁴ Gregory Markopoulos, 'The Intuition Space' in *Millenium Film Journal* No. 32/33 (Fall 1998), available online at <http://www.mfj-online.org/journalPages/MFJ32%2C33/MFJ32TOC.HTML> (accessed 21/8/13).

7. *Eadweard Muybridge-Edvard Munch*

After the rapid cross-cutting of materials and high density of musical information in the *Poets*, the next chapter in the *History*, *Eadweard Muybridge – Edvard Munch*, which exhibits a high degree of continuity and long-range development, acts as a huge contrast. Continuing the exploration of ‘portraiture’ in the two previous chapters, the reasons for combining these two artistic figures are not obvious; whilst their dates overlap to a certain extent (1830-1904 for Muybridge, 1863-1944 for Munch), they remain of different generations, active in very different parts of the Western world, and with very different aesthetic and technical approaches. However, both were in different ways concerned to capture the dynamism of the external world – the former through combination of multiple images, the latter through attempting to capture in still pictures the phenomenon of ongoing motion surrounding the figures portrayed. Finnissy used this piece to attempt to find musical analogues of both of these approaches, and to, in his words ‘play out the conflict between the High Victorian rationality of Muybridge and the expressionistic world of Munch.’¹

Muybridge, who lived an eventful life involving a serious stagecoach crash which may have left him with a degree of brain damage, and the shooting dead of his young wife’s lover (yet receiving a not-guilty verdict)², became in his mid-20s interested in the new medium of photography³. He would produce spectacular early photographs of natural sites such as those in Yosemite National Park (after returning to America in 1867) and of clouds and of Native American people (including in the context of the Modoc War between the United States Army and the Native America Modoc tribe, of 1873), as well as of railroads and buildings during various stages of construction. He simultaneously captures inhumane and awe-inspiring nature and the efforts of humankind to develop and build upon the natural world, to ‘dominate’ nature, as Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer might have put it⁴.

Muybridge also became concerned with the exploration of human and animal motion in photography. The Governor of California, Leland Stanford (after whom Stanford University was later named), a lover and owner of horses, had expressed his belief to Muybridge there was a time when a horse had all four hooves off the ground. Wanting to prove this, he hired Muybridge to take pictures of his own champion racehorse ‘Occident’⁵. By 1877, with the use of drop-shutters, flash, multiple cameras and high-speed shutters, he had succeeded in capturing a horse in motion through a series of still photographs taken at very short intervals. He was soon afterwards to create a whole series entitled *The Attitudes of Animals in Motion* (1881)⁶. A few years later, Muybridge developed a device called the *zoopraxiscope* for projecting multiple images in quick succession, so as to be able to show the horse in motion. This was an early prototype for the cinema projector⁷. He continued to develop his innovations and began to photograph nude humans in motion as well⁸. It is this aspect of his work that is of most interest to Finnissy, to whom such sequences have a curiously lifeless quality of which he sought to obtain a musical analogue.

In the first section of *Muybridge-Munch*, Finnissy makes use of musical techniques for capturing other ‘images’ that directly parallel those of Muybridge. The first passage is in four sections. The first, third and fourth of these all directly allude to material from the *Spirituals*, but with an important modification. He divides the material into staggered fragments, so that the ending of one overlaps with the beginning of the next.

The overall structure of the Muybridge section is as follows:

- (i) 'Steal Away'.
- (ii) Bruckner 3rd Symphony/Chabrier *L'Étoile*, 'without any sense of phrasing or continuity'. Austere derivation from this material and the *Poets*.
- (iii) 'Nobody knows the trouble I see'
Transition – *Meno mosso*
- (iv) 'Go Down, Moses'
- (v) *Presto fuocoso*, 'like shattering glass'. Explosive 'compression' material entirely in the treble at first.
- (vi) Transition into Munch section.

The versions of the spirituals used are those freely modified in the sketches, followed in each case by a passage from the free improvisatory passages from the *Spirituals*. Finnissy draws upon the works of Bruckner and Chabrier because both were written in 1877, the year when Muybridge first succeeded in capturing 'Occident' in motion. If played according to the composer's expressive (or rather, anti-expressive) indications, this passage truly can create the aural equivalent of Muybridge's lifeless sequences of photographs, as Finnissy casts his sonic 'camera' upon a musical subject.

Finnissy sprinkles the 'compression' section (which consists first of three outbursts each starting quickly and gradually decreasing in volume and tempo) with a few gestures of repeated major or minor sixths (fundamental intervals in the cycle), which then take over to become an ominous knell leading towards the Munch section, leading via a hushed echo of the 'compression' material and a series of diminished chords towards a resolution on C#/A.

Like Muybridge, Edvard Munch also attempted to capture dynamism in still images. He did not simply place his human figures against backgrounds but rather attempted to represent the energy or force fields surrounding such figures. Munch was obsessed by sickness and death, after a terrible series of childhood experiences, including the death of grandmother, mother, aunt and sister all from tuberculosis, and great sickness on Munch's own part⁹. He portrayed nature and the environment as violent and hostile, mankind as lonely and alienated, upon whom psychological violence is enacted by their environment in an often terrifying manner. He was to be highly influential upon the German expressionists of the early 20th century.

Munch came to own a small Kodak camera, which he acquired in 1902. He started to take a variety of photographs straight away (despite declaring that 'The camera cannot compete with painting as long as it cannot be used in heaven or hell'¹⁰), in particular a collection which he called *Fatal Destiny*¹¹ compiled from 1902-1908, during the last year of which period he was being treated at a clinic in Copenhagen for *dementia paralytica* induced by alcohol poisoning¹². These works were the primary inspiration for Finnissy. Many of them are self-portraits, employing deliberate (though elementary) techniques for blurring, by moving either himself or the camera, passing a white sheet of paper across the lens during the exposure, or uniting two images by the use of

double exposures. The works are as lonely, alienated and intense as his paintings, his human figures (because of the double exposure) having a ghost-like quality.

For this part of the piece, Finnissy uses three Norwegian sources: (a) Grieg's Second Piano Concerto (which only exists in sketch form, in the form of a fragment for a planned opening for the first movement, as well as a few measures from the first and third movements, together with a longer tarantella-like passage) (b) the same composer's late folk-music settings *Slåtter* op. 72¹³, which had also been used in *Folklore*, and (c) a book of Norwegian folk-songs collected in the nineteenth-century by Ludwig Mathias Lindeman¹⁴. Beyond, there are various references to passages from the *Poets*. Finnissy manages a remarkable degree of development out of the short Grieg Second Piano Concerto fragment, whilst integrating it with material from *Slåtter*. The sketches demonstrate how much he worked on this in myriad different states of developing variation.

For the penultimate section of the piece, Finnissy generates a series of eight fragments from *Slåtter*, here in the clearest and most over-elaborated form yet, together with a further eight taken directly from a source book of literal transcriptions of Hardanger fiddle playing¹⁵. These are even more extremely ornamented than the transcriptions Grieg used, but still use the basic figurations of the trill and acciaccatura in various ways¹⁶. But this rowdy folk-like Arcadia is not to last. Finnissy cuts into it violently with the 'compression' material, now using the whole register of the instrument, all derived from the corresponding section near the end of the *Poets*. The difference here is the fragmentation of the material, which is presented in irregular groups separated by varying silences, coming full-circle back to the opening Muybridge passages in this respect. With some small variation of dynamics, the piece ends with a character of extreme violence and destructiveness, utterly obliterating the momentary ecstasy attained previously.

If Muybridge's photographic sequences seem lifeless and dehumanising, this need not be endemic to the technical processes he employed; this is more a result of the rather elementary nature of his technique, quite understandable when the medium was so very new. And the individual materials as presented in the Muybridge section of this piece may sound bereft, disembodied, withered, void of qualities of warmth or hope (or anger) that they possessed upon their earlier appearance (at least in the case of the spirituals), but the total experience of the section is most certainly 'expressive' in a broader sense (and, for that matter, the aforementioned qualities might also be considered 'expressive'). Finnissy creates a tremendous sense of tension and anticipation through his use of pared-down and fragmented materials, an almost frightening imminence and menace through apprehension of exclusion. Indeed it is one of the most dramatic passages in the whole cycle, so that the appearance of the 'compression' material is indeed in every sense 'shattering'. The very control, discipline and refinement exercised in the composition of this passage, all products of a rational sensibility, are utterly essential in bringing such an effect about.

In comparison to the work of Muybridge, that of Munch, on the other hand, lacks much in the way of self-reflexivity. His paintings are not realist in the sense of strict representation (which is ultimately an impossibility) but strive to be so in a psychological manner. He captures the effects of external nature upon man's inner nature, in a sometimes terrifying manner, but communicates little sense of man as a social animal. Rather, his individuals are the aloof, alienated beings of romantic mythology, between whom

and the rest of society disdain is exchanged in a reciprocal manner. The artistic individual is left to brood, to fear, to wallow in the depths of their solipsistic imagination, cut off from the rest of society's goings-on.

Finnissy is far too savvy a composer to be content simply with the presentation of neo-Expressionist doom and gloom in the Munch section of this work. From its dark beginnings, the work grows, even flowers, right up to its ecstatic near-conclusion. The sense of atmosphere and colour in the Munch section is captivating, the Hardanger fiddle-like ornamental figurations fully integrated into the whole rather than standing out as exotic curiosities. The inner sense of foreboding, every bit as palpable as that of the Muybridge section (though achieved through radically different means) can genuinely bear comparison with that of a Munch painting. It is as if the themes develop against an ominous backdrop that initially dwarfs them and against which they are played off from beginning to end. But this is not simply some contest between unequals; it is precisely when the diatonic Griegian material at the end seems to have relegated the lower part merely to the status of an accompaniment that Finnissy, in a wholly calculated manner, steps in to effect a violent change of texture. Finnissy's musical *materials* in this section may have the ambience of Norwegian neo-Expressionism, but his structural grammar is borne out of a rational and modernist sensibility. And the passage can also be appreciated in terms of the technical virtuosity of its composition, somewhat offsetting its initially ominous mood.

To set the work up as presenting the ultimate supremacy of the 'emotive' over the 'rational' would be an extremely simplistic interpretation; whilst the two sections are wholly different on the surface, some attributes of each one infiltrate the other. Finnissy combines a type of musical naturalism with thoroughly artificial structural and dramatic devices. But each of these aspects of the music feeds off the other. The 'compression' material at the end of the *Poets* makes an impact, but nothing like as powerful as that in *Muybridge-Munch*. This is because rapid shifts of highly diverse material occur throughout the *Poets*, so the shift to the 'compression' is not such a big surprise. The corresponding moments in *Muybridge-Munch*, however, come at the end of long continuous expanses of material (notwithstanding the fragmentation in the Muybridge section), so the impact is all the more startling. Yet there is a sense in which the final 'compression' passage could also be heard as 'growing out of' the overloaded textures of the passage that precedes it, so the relationship between structure and organic growth of material may not be wholly estranged.

¹ Private conversations with the author. Finnissey's programme note for the *History* describes the two figures as representing 'Abstract structuralism (scientific rationality)' and 'Metaphysical expressionism (emotive irrationality)' respectively.

² For more on Muybridge's life, see Rebecca Solnit, *Motion Studies: Time, Space & Eadweard Muybridge* (London: Bloomsbury, 2003) and Philip Prodger, *Time Stands Still: Muybridge and the Instantaneous Photography Moment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

³ The first photograph (involving a negative, as opposed to a daguerreotype), is generally taken to be William Henry Fox Talbot's *Latticed Window* of 1835. Talbot went on to produce a book, *The Pencil of Nature*, in 1844, with photographic illustrations. The *collodion* process, in which wet glass plates were used to produce photographs, was developed by Frederick Scott Archer by 1851, superseded by the dry gelatin plate in the 1870s. See Graham Clarke, *The Photograph: A Visual and Cultural History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 15-17 and Ian Jeffrey, *Photography: A Concise History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), pp. 10-18.

⁴ See Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, 'The Concept of Enlightenment', in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, translated John Cumming (London: Verso, 1997), pp. 3-42.

⁵ For more details on the interactions between Muybridge and Stanford, see Prodger, *Time Stands Still* pp. 9-23. This book also contains an invaluable earlier history of the Instantaneous Photography Movement (pp. 24-111).

⁶ See Eadweard Muybridge, *Complete Human and Animal Locomotion*, three volumes (New York: Dover, 1979).

⁷ See Mitchell Stephens, *The Rise of the Image, The Fall of the Word* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 87-88 and for more detail and diagrams, Prodger, *Time Stands Still*, pp. 154-161.

⁸ See Solnit, *Muybridge*, pp. 220-227.

⁹ See Poul Erik Tøjner, *Munch: In His Own Words* (Munich, London and New York: Prestel-Verlag, 2001), p. 136, for Munch's own account of his childhood.

¹⁰ Cited in Tøjner, *Munch*, p. 72.

¹¹ Sue Prideaux, *Edvard Munch: Behind the Scream* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), pp. 254-257.

¹² Ibid. pp. 248-249.

¹³ On this work, see Finn Benestad and Dag Schjelderup-Ebbe, *Edvard Grieg; The Man and the Artist*, translated William H. Halverson and Leland B. Sateren, (Gloucester: Alan Sutton, 1988), p. 363ff, and Ståle Klieberg, 'Grieg's *Slåtter*, Op. 72: Change of Musical Style or New Concept of Nationality?', in *Journal of the Royal Music Association* 121 (1996), pp. 46-57.

¹⁴ Ludwig Mathias Lindeman, *Ældre og nyere norske fjeldmelodier*, reprint (Oslo: Norsk Musikforlag, 1983).

¹⁵ Morten Levy, *The World of the Gorrlaus Slått*, three volumes (Copenhagen: Acta Musicologica Danica No. 6, 1989).

¹⁶ Ibid. vol. 3, p. 22. As Levy says, 'Nearly every step in the gorrlaus scale may be embellished with a trill', giving details of how this is applied to each individual step (pp. 23-28). The 'typical gorrlaus scale' that he describes runs from f to b'' on white notes, with only c'', f'' and g'' raised (p. 11).

8. *Kapitalistisch Realisme (met Sizilianische Männerakte und Bachsche Nachdichtungen)*

*Kapitalistisch Realisme*¹ is by far the longest chapter of the *History*, but nonetheless relatively straightforward to apprehend and follow, at least on some levels. In essence it consists of three large sections connected by two interludes. The first and last of these sections are unified by long threads of material that run throughout – in the case of the first music derived from three works of Beethoven, for the last the *Pezzo Serioso* from Busoni's Piano Concerto, in retrograde form. The middle section consists of a series of Bachian canonic and other elaborations, mostly upon the *motivo fondamentale*. Thus we have a new set of 'the three B's' – Beethoven, Bach and Busoni, each informing a large-scale section.

Various scholarship on Beethoven has concentrated on the relationship between his own self-conception as composer and the political ideals which emerged following the French Revolution², whilst preserving the idea of an elite artistic class to which he would belong³. Theodor Adorno had argued that Beethoven was 'the musical prototype of the revolutionary bourgeoisie', but nonetheless embodied the contradictions of this class, who must renounce the egalitarian ideals upon which their revolution was based in order to preserve their own position; in music this ultimately led to an introspective turn in the late works⁴. A fair amount of recent Anglo-American musicology has taken a critical view towards notions of heroism, subjectivity, individualism and autonomy such are associated frequently with Beethoven's music. The most intelligent of these, such as Scott Burnham's *Beethoven Hero*⁵, trace the persistent trope of the 'heroic' in terms of Beethoven's mid-period work, combining detailed analysis of a few pieces, in particular the *Eroica* and Fifth Symphonies, with a study of reception history (in particular how 'Beethoven reception treats Beethoven himself as the subject of his heroic-style works'⁶), to examine why this trope has proved so durable, identifying 'the importance of individual freedom (the ability to create one's own future), the romantic emphasis on becoming, and the change in philosophical method from syllogism to dialectic'⁷. Other figures associated with the 'New Musicology' have sought to describe these paradigms primarily in terms of reified conceptions of gender and sexuality⁸, often concentrating upon the use of gendered language for valorisation. But to view Beethovenian heroism and individualism relative to the feudal role for artistic production is to see them as part and parcel of historical *process*, rather than in their later reified form.

In various ways, *Kapitalistisch Realisme* can be seen to embody some of these concerns. Finnissy takes three works of Beethoven as his thread, all associated with the number five, specifically the String Quartet in A major op. 18, no. 5, the fifth piano sonata in C minor op. 10, no. 1, and the Fifth Symphony op. 67 (derived in this case from Liszt's transcription of the work for solo piano). Following three short allusions to the Fate motive from the Fifth Symphony, Finnissy employs *Maestoso* material in the bass from the Finale of op. 18, no. 5, extracting a march-like pattern with strong *sforzandi*, maintaining most of the overall harmonic progression. The right hand is derived from a different source: a series of fragments selected randomly from Wagner's *Götterdämmerung*. Finnissy uses his usual methods of rhythmic distortion, pitch modification and octave transposition to abstract this material from its more obvious tonal properties, giving it a hyper-chromatic and somewhat flamboyant quality, which contrasts very strongly with the more restricted tessitura and tonal centres of the bass line. Against such affirmative and relentless material Finnissy contrasts passages marked *Distantly reflecting*, always at a very quiet dynamic, generally using less dense Wagner-derived material.

Subsequent sections see the carrying over of Beethovenian offbeat *sforzandi* into the quieter material, the evocation of a characteristic motive (in distorted form) from the jubilant scenes between Siegfried and Brünnhilde from the Prelude of *Götterdämmerung*, and shifting foregrounding between the hands, especially when one or the other goes silent, in a manner reminiscent of Ives's overlaying of materials. When drawing upon the Beethoven Sonata in C minor op. 10, no. 1, Finnissy presents at first little more than a bare harmonic outline, in itself hardly very noteworthy until the transitional section begins, at which point Finnissy combines with more of the ostentatious Wagner material (coming after an extremely sparse preceding section, then new material (in the form of triplet crotchets) mined from Bruckner's Fifth Symphony (some of which appeared earlier in *Le démon*). From Beethoven's own Fifth Symphony, the selection of material is as arcane as possible, so as to obfuscate easy recognition of the source, though a window is opened up in the texture by Finnissy's allusion to the passage in the development section of the first movement of the Beethoven in sequences of minims, which Adorno called 'a holding of the breath'⁹. A full-on Beethoven melody (from the slow movement of op. 10, no. 1) drives the music forward, into other regions, but almost immediately afterwards, Finnissy starts to reference elsewhere in the cycle, including material from the *Spirituals* and *Alkan-Paganini*. All the time the Beethoven line forces its way onwards despite its continual recontextualisation by the material around it. After a shift back to the first movement of the Beethoven, this material becomes almost submerged by the confusion, but Finnissy simply opens a new window by moving to a new line from the *Menuetto* of op. 18, no. 5 in the treble. Ultimately the music comes to a hold on a sustained d", a little in the manner of a resolution.

If one considers the work as taking as its starting point Beethoven simply as representative of the archetype of the composer under capitalism, then works around the intrinsic properties of the music itself, the character is one of profound optimism and confidence that somehow seem much more than simply idle affectations. For the first time in the whole cycle, Finnissy has a long passage with stable tonal centres over extended periods of music, despite all the efforts to disrupt them through other parts. There is also to a very large degree a consistent pulse (notwithstanding the few areas of modification, which only ultimately serve to heighten the sense of reaffirmation afterwards) and an emphatic assertion of that very pulse. The contrasts between dynamics are stark and equally emphatic, simply embodied through the alternating sections. The rawness of the music, in such a way as seems to exclude the purely decorative or any connotations of aestheticism, is quite uncharacteristic for Finnissy. Even the Wagnerian flamboyance seems quite unaffected in its nature. Heroism in the face of adversity (a metaphor I do not ultimately accept to be innately gendered, despite the fact that it has been appropriated in such a manner) seems an appropriate description of this epic music. Another quote from Dahlhaus, about Beethoven, seems to encapsulate some of the factors at play in this work:

The formal principle that laid the foundations for the 'heroic style' was the idea of drawing the 'revolutionary tone' into a complicated formal dialectics, despite the fact that, in the tradition going back to Gluck, the revolutionary ideal had previously been characterized by emphatic simplicity, and by a vigorous cultivation of simplicity and the elemental. As he entered on the 'new path', Beethoven found the way to mediate between concrete and abstract thematic procedure: that is, between apparently simple and latently complex structures. But with that the connection between the growing sophistication of the form and the 'heroic style' becomes apparent: for, in so far as the style is

symphonic and not merely martial, it needed the inner complement of a tendency towards the esoteric as part of its means of expression.¹⁰

Finnissy then employs a rearrangement of the Sardinian Pasolini music, which will also feature prominently in the *Sizilianische Männerakte* section later, to effect a transition to a near verbatim repetition of the *Poets et al* derived section of *Le réveil* (B1-B3). This all leads towards *Bachsche Nachdichtungen* (which Finnissy translates as ‘Bach-ian post-poesis’¹¹), which also exists as an independent piece completed in 2000, the 250th anniversary of Bach’s death. Finnissy’s area of focus here is not simply Bach’s own music, but also the work of those who transcribed him for piano, in particular Ferruccio Busoni and Kaikhosru Shapurji Sorabji. Most clearly, this section of the work stands as a homage both to Bach’s *Die Kunst der Fuge* and Busoni’s *Fantasia Contrappuntistica*, itself in part a completion and elaboration around the ‘Contrapunctus XIV’ from the Bach work. The importance of Busoni as an influence on Finnissy should not be underestimated. As well as being a passionate lover of many aspects of Busoni’s work since young days, he has repeatedly cited Busoni’s thoughts on transcription and notation in the context of his own work (specifically that ‘notation is itself the transcription of an abstract idea. The moment that the pen takes possession of it the thought loses its original form.’¹²). Busoni is a recurring presence in Finnissy’s revised set of the *Verdi Transcriptions*, with pieces in each of the four books referring to the *Indianisches Tagebuch*, First Sonatina, the *An die Jugend*, and the *Fantasia Contrappuntistica*. Busoni’s sense of free fantasy, exploration of highly individualised keyboard virtuosity, experimental late-tonal or post-tonal harmony and combining of distinct stylistic worlds (specifically the German and the Italian) all find parallels throughout Finnissy’s output. And Bach of course looms large in Busoni’s life and work; Busoni composed a range of transcriptions of Bach organ chorale preludes, preludes and fugues and other works, the famous D-minor Chaconne, as well as a series of freer works relating to Bach. On top of this, Busoni edited a massive eight-volume edition of both his own transcriptions and Bach’s original works for keyboard – the latter with elaborate editorial suggestions that practically amount to a rewriting themselves¹³. The ‘Bach’ that inhabits *Bachsche Nachdichtungen* is heavily filtered through his successive reworkings and reinterpretations in the hands of later composers, above all Busoni.

At the heart of the work are four of Bach’s organ chorale preludes, BWV 717, 716, 662 and 677, all based upon the Lutheran chorale *Allein Gott in der Höh’ sei Ehr’*, the German version of the Gregorian chant *Gloria in excelsis* from the Latin Late Medieval Liturgy, which was probably adapted to the new text by the 15th century monk, hymn-writer and composer Nikolaus Decius, and which was also used by Busoni for the third of his *Elegies*. These are interwoven with a range of different types of canons and free fantasies, generally based upon the *motivo fondamentale*, alluding to a range of different styles.

The overall structure of *Bachsche Nachdichtungen* is as follows:

A. *Moderato, un poco essitando*. Introduction

B. *Allegretto con spirito*. Choral-Vorspiel 1. On Bach BWV 717. Two sections. Second in B-flat.

C. *Andante – Poco più*. Choral-Vorspiel 2. On Bach BWV 716. A major, combined with chorale melody *Nun bitten wir den heiligen Geist*. Shifting to *Poco affrettando – presto, mormorando – Sostenuto, dolce sempre*. Free fantasy, obliquely derived from Busoni *Choral-Vorspiel*, leading to *In Canone all'Ottava*, based on inversion of the *motivo fondamentale*.

D. *Sommessamente moderato*. Presentation of the *motivo fondamentale* in the manner of the Fuga 1 from Sorabji's *Opus Clavicembalisticum*, as in *Le demon*.

E. *Allegretto – un poco vivace, e più sotto voce – a tempo (più sostenuto)*. *Alio modo in Canone alla Quinta*, upon *motivo fondamentale*. Alluding to Busoni *Etüde* op. 18, no.4, then again to Busoni *Choral-Vorspiel* at the end. Short *Calmo* transition to:

F. *Allegro appassionato, energico – declamato*

G. *Allegretto con spirito*. Short recapitulation of Choral-Vorspiel 1.

H. Combination of Choral-Vorspiel 3, on Bach BWV 662, with *In Canone all'Ottava per augmentationem*. The former is in D-flat major.

I. Inserted passage, combining various Sicilian folk melodies (to be used more extensively in *Sizilianische Männerakte*) with the 'Choeur Infernal' from Offenbach's *Orphée aux Enfers* and Bach's organ chorale *Herr Gott, dich loben wir*, BWV 725.

J. Continuation of Choral-Vorspiel 3, with *L'altra sorte del Canone al rovescio, alla Terza*, derived from material from the beginning of *My parents' generation*.

K. *Allegro*. Free fantasia on the *motivo fondamentale*, based on second section of Busoni *Choral-Vorspiel* and Bach BWV 711.

L. *In Canone al rovescio (i) alla Seconda; (ii) alla Nona*. Leading to short allusions back to first section of Busoni *Choral-Vorspiel*, to Beethoven Fifth Symphony, then to Busoni *Etüde* op. 18, no. 3. Transition to:

M. Choral-Vorspiel 4, on Bach BWV 677, A major, in the bass, combined with an abandoned organ piece derived from (and named after) the seventeenth-century Lutheran Chorale *Morgenglanz der Ewigkeit* (not used by Bach).

Structurally, the work is somewhat less block-like than the Busoni *Fantasia Contrappuntistica*; the latter has a clear episodic structure consisting of an introductory choral prelude, three fugues, an intermezzo, three variations and a cadenza, then the fourth fugue, chorale and stretta. Finnissy integrates the chorale preludes and the canons in various ways into the overall structure. Nonetheless, the intense characterisation of the choral preludes causes them to act as centres of gravity or nodal points, in a similar manner to the Massé and David sections in *Unsere Afrikareise*.

The choice of types of canons is also a direct allusion to Bach's monumental set of Canonic Variations for organ on the Lutheran hymn *Von Himmel hoch, da komm' ich her* (BWV 769), a work about which, together with *Das Musikalische Opfer* and *Die Kunst der Fuge*, Malcolm Boyd writes that 'canon at its most intricate achieves a new autonomy, serving not as an esoteric greeting or a dry scholastic exercise, but in the creation of some of the most visionary and profound music ever composed'¹⁴. For Finnissy, on a symbolical level, the allusion to this Bach work incorporated the knowledge that this was orchestrated by Stravinsky, thus tying in

with another form of ‘neo-classicism’, and the circumstances of the work’s production. Specifically, it was Bach’s submission to the Correspondirende Soceität der Musicalischen Wissenschaft, founded by his student Lorenz Mizler, which he joined in June 1747. This was a highly exclusive society for connoisseurs to exchange information and make contacts¹⁵; thus Finnissy would seem to be alluding here to the very elite circumstances under which the work was received¹⁶.

In a now infamous essay on Bach, Adorno asked ‘If Bach was indeed modern, then why was he archaic?’¹⁷ and, after exploring specific processes at work in various pieces, argued that:

Among his archaic traits is the attempt to parry the impoverishment and petrification of musical language, the shadow-side of its decisive progress. Such traits represent Bach’s effort to resist the inexorable growth of the commodity-character of music, a process which was linked to its subjectivization. Yet such features are also identical with Bach’s modernity inasmuch as they always serve to defend the right of inherent musical logic against the demands of taste. Bach as archaist distinguishes himself from all subsequent classicists, up to and including Stravinsky, by his refusal to confront the historical level of the material with an abstract stylistic ideal. Rather what becomes a means of forcing what is toward a future of its own making...Bach, as the most advanced master of *basso continuo*, at the same time renounced his obedience, as antiquated polyphonist, to the trend of the times, a trend he himself had shaped, in order to help it reach its innermost truth, the emancipation of the subject to objectivity in a coherent whole of which subjectivity itself was the origin. Down to the subtlest structural details it is always a question of the undiminished coincidence of the harmonic-functional and of the contrapuntal dimension. The distant past is entrusted with the utopia of the musical subject-object; anachronism becomes a harbinger of things to come.¹⁸

It would be pointless, premature and perhaps ultimately meaningless to ask whether Finnissy’s piece can match the actual work of Bach, or the exalted claims made in Adorno’s extraordinarily perceptive exegesis of it. Nonetheless, these issues are extremely relevant to any discussion of Finnissy’s own music vis-à-vis questions of modernity and archaism. Whilst Finnissy’s *objets trouvés* (such as the Bach chorale preludes used in *Bachsche Nachdichtungen*) do appear in a quasi-iconic role from time to time, Finnissy is canny enough to be aware of the need to approach Bach in terms of his own output as a continually developing and fluctuating quantity, both during and after his lifetime, rather than as a set of precious gems to be revered from a distance. Such an approach is both most Bachian and most modern simultaneously, provided one realises that the modern is itself a form of historical process rather than a stylistic commodity.

For the transition to *Sizilianische Männerakte*, Finnissy launches into a version of the ‘compression’ material, beginning with very wide-spaced spread chords (in contrast to the focus on central registers in *Bachsche Nachdichtungen*) at extremely quiet dynamics, and with a continuously fluctuating pulse. The inspiration behind *Sizilianische Männerakte* itself, and some exegesis of how Finnissy combines materials in this context, have already been covered in the ‘Material as Archetype’ section. The ‘homage to Busoni’ is brought to a climax here through the use of the *Pezzo Serioso* from the Piano Concerto as a thread throughout the whole work, which consists of four sections of differing lengths: *Introductio – Prima Pars – Altera Pars – Ultra Pars*. At the heart is a

theme that Busoni wrote for his first opera *Sigune* (also appearing in an unpublished *Étude en forme d'Adagio d'une Sonate* from the 1890s, which was written for Busoni's American student Augusta Cottlow¹⁹, and a further *Etüde* in B flat minor²⁰), used to depict a majestic cathedral, and thus which Anthony Beaumont calls the 'Cathedral' theme. Guido Guerrini describes this movement as 'the only example of an almost Wagnerian Busoni, or more correctly, a Busoni derived from that Liszt which Wagner plagiarized'²¹. In truly Lisztian fashion, Busoni structures the movement as much according to colour and texture as to thematic or harmonic development. Harmonies are relatively static, often simply consisting of undulations around a few chords for long stretches, whereas the use in particular of register within Busoni's imaginative figurations is extremely dynamic and varied.

Finnissy essentially structures the whole of *Sizilianische Männerakte* around a long line derived from running each of the four sections through the *Pezzo serioso* in reverse. This occurs for the most part (though not always) in the bass register, and is relatively faithful to the material it selects (without as many chromatic modifications as are to be found in the Beethoven, or certainly the Bach, sections). Thus are maintained long sections of relatively static, often idyllic calm and grandeur, together with a few dramatic passages. The emotional and psychological trajectory of the whole movement, is of course, significantly altered through the fact of each section running in reverse. In particular, the third and largest section, the *Alter Pars*, grows to a peak over a long period of time then falls, rather than peaking early then darkening over an extended period as in the Busoni. And, of course, the continuous combination of this with another ever-present layer of material complicates things further.

So the structure is as follows:

A. *Introductio.* *Adagio serioso – Sostenuto – Molto tranquillo, ma un pò liberamente – Andante sostenuto, pensoso.*

B. *Prima Pars.* *Andante, quasi Adagio*

C. *Alter Pars.* *Più con affetto, irrequieto – Ancora più tranquillo – Come da principio – Più lento e improvvisando – Un poco allargando – Andante maestosamente – Sommessamente – scorrevole il tempo.* Then appearance of Wagner motive.

D. *Ultima Pars.* *Andante idillico.*

Whilst the Busoni runs throughout, section A is dominated by the Meyerbeer *Siciliano*, section B by the various Sicilian folk tunes, section C by the Pasolini material and section D by the *Siciliano* again. Perhaps the most significant moment of all, or the point to which all else leads, is that which sees the appearance of the 'Der ewigen Macht' theme from *Götterdämmerung*, at the end of section C. At this point the music drops to a *pppppp* dynamic and stops on a long pause in between the two phrases, before re-emerging and leading into the final section. The predominant mood is of an ongoing warmth and generosity, though with darker moments, as provided by the Busoni, combined by an endless lament from the Meyerbeer, Sicilian folk tunes and Pasolini.

What to make of the totality of *Kapitalistisch Realisme* on a symbolical or conceptual level? The characters of the three main sections are extremely distinct: heroic intransigence in the first, abstracted constructivism with touches of the macabre in the second and epic warmth and lyricism leading to darkness and tragedy in the third. As the titles of the second and third are incorporated within the first, what do *they* have to do with 'capitalist realism'? That is a question to which I have no answer, and

wonder if it could be answered in a meaningful sense at all. But the fact that the piece has such an overall title surely has some sort of effect upon how it is perceived. Could Finnissy be attempting to say something about how *all* of the affective categories presented in the music have come to assume commodity status in this day and age?

¹ The title of this work, and of *Wachtend*, is in Flemish, reflecting the fact that Finnissy was teaching at the *Katholieke Universiteit Leuven* when writing both pieces. Whilst the term ‘Capitalist Realism’ was not new, having been used at least as early as 1963, for an exhibition in Düsseldorf featuring the work of Gerhard Richter, Sigmar Polke and others, and more recently in Mark Fisher, *Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?* (Winchester: Zero Books, 2009), Finnissy claims that he arrived at it independently (‘capitalism’ seen as a political system which manipulates and distorts perception, particularly through advertising and the media, so only a variant, and in my view an aberrant and dangerous variant, vision of ‘reality’ – e-mail to the author, 22/8/13).

² See for example Reinhard G. Pauly, *Music in the Classic Period*, second edition (Englewood Cliffs, NK: Prentice-Hall, 1973), p. 187-195 (originally published in 1965)

³ See William Kinderman, *Beethoven* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 3; Barry Cooper, ‘Politics’, in Cooper (ed), *The Beethoven Compendium* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1991), p. 145; Maynard Solomon, ‘Beethoven’s *Magazin der Kunst*’ in *Beethoven Essays* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), p. 203; Sanna Pederson, ‘Beethoven and Masculinity’ in Scott Burnham and Michael P. Steinberg (eds), *Beethoven and his World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), p. 322.

⁴ Theodor W. Adorno, “Soziologische Anmerkungen zum deutschen Musikleben”, in *Deutscher Musikrat, Referate Informationen 5* (February 1967), pp. 2 ff. cited in *Introduction to the Sociology of Music*, translated E.B. Ashton (New York: Seabury Press, 1976), pp. 208-214; also printed in Adorno, *Beethoven: The Philosophy of Music*, edited Rolf Tiedemann, translated Edmund Jephcott (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998), p. 43-46.

⁵ Scott Burnham, *Beethoven Hero* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995).

⁶ Burnham, *Beethoven Hero*, p. 157. Lewis Lockwood, however, points out the problems in defining Beethoven’s mid-period as characterised by the ‘heroic style’, as in the work of Burnham and others, showing how it necessitates an exclusive focus on just a few works, discounting others that are ‘primarily lyrical, intimate, and expansive’, such as the Violin Concerto, Fourth Piano Concerto or “Archduke” Trio. See Lockwood, ‘Beethoven, Florestan, and the Varieties of Heroism’, in Burnham and Steinberg (eds), *Beethoven and his World*, especially pp. 36-41, also Lockwood, *Beethoven: The Music and the Life* (New York: Norton, 2003), pp. 209-214.

⁷ Burnham, *Beethoven Hero*, p. 157.

⁸ See for example Lawrence Kramer, *Classical Music and Postmodern Knowledge* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995), p. 22; Susan McClary, *Feminine Endings* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), p. 69; Marcia Citron, *Gender and the Musical Canon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 138-139; Pederson, ‘Beethoven and Masculinity’, p. 326

⁹ Adorno, *Beethoven*, p. 107. Others interpreted this section differently; A.B. Marx saw it in terms of formal necessity so that, as paraphrased by Robin Wallace, ‘tension, of a dramatic if not a tonal variety, must increase constantly as the movement goes on; and given that it is a piece in sonata form, both types of tension must reach a momentary climax just before the return of the principal theme. Thus, somewhat irrationally, music which is clearly anticipatory in nature is made to bear the burden of carrying the struggle forward.’ (see Wallace, *Beethoven’s Critics*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 133). Berlioz used a poetic metaphor closer to that of Adorno, by comparing the passage to ‘the painful breathing of a dying man’ (ibid. p. 134). E.T.A. Hoffmann would surely have had this passage in mind when he talked about how ‘the constant repetition of single phrases and chords, which intensifies to the highest possible degree the feeling of ineffable yearning’ (Hoffmann, ‘Beethoven’s Instrumental Music’, in *E.T.A. Hoffmann’s Musical Writings: Kreisleriana, The Poet and the Composer, Music Criticism*, edited David Charlton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 99 and described the latter part of the section as having an ‘ominous, eerie effect’ (Hoffmann, ‘Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony’, ibid. p. 243).

¹⁰ Dahlhaus, *Ludwig van Beethoven*, p. 19.

¹¹ Finnissy, programme note for *Bachsche Nachdichtungen*. It is most likely that Finnissy got the idea for this title from the passage in Anthony Beaumont’s book on Busoni, where he describes the *Fantasia after J.S. Bach* as ‘a new genre of composition, the *Nachdichtung*. This almost untranslatable term,

meaning neither paraphrase nor transcription, implies a reconstruction of an original text in another language or style.’ See Beaumont, *Busoni*, p. 137.

¹² Ferruccio Busoni, ‘Value of the Transcription’ in *The Essence of Music*, p. 87. For Finnissy’s thoughts on this, see Toop, ‘Four Facets of the New Complexity’, p. 9.

¹³ For an overview of Busoni’s works relating to Bach, see Beaumont, *Busoni*, pp. 269-273, and H.H. Stuckenschmidt, *Ferruccio Busoni*, translated Sandra Morris (London: Calder and Boyars, 1970), pp. 105-108. Also see Kenneth Hamilton, ‘The virtuoso tradition’ in David Rowland (ed), *The Cambridge Companion to the Piano* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 66-67 for a look at Busoni’s rewritings of Bach in his editions. A selection of Busoni’s thoughts on Bach can be found in *The Essence of Music*, pp. 96-103.

¹⁴ Malcolm Boyd, *Bach* (London: Dent, 1983), p. 194. This work has been much praised from Bach’s last years until the present day. In 1754, Johann Michael Schmidt wrote that ‘If he [a composer] wishes to become great and famous, he must possess, in addition to knowledge of rules already discussed, all the powers of understanding in considerable degree; he must be able to think deeply and in intricate combinations. To be convinced of this, just look at the chorale, published in copper engraving by Bach, who has now been received into the choir of angels: *Von Himmel hoch da komm ich her*. I cannot persuade myself that the most difficult demonstration in geometry requires much deeper and more extensive reflection than this labor must have demanded.’ (Schmidt, ‘On the depth of Bach’s compositional art’, quoted in Hans T. David and Arthur Mendel (eds), *The New Bach Reader: A Life of Johann Sebastian Bach in Letters and Documents*, revised and enlarged by Christoph Wolff (New York: Norton, 1998), p. 361. The work probably dates from 1747-8 – see Yoshitake Kobayashi, ‘Zur Chronologie der Spätwerke Johann Sebastians Bachs. Kompositions- und Aufführungstätigkeit von 1736 bis 1750’, in *Bach-Jahrbuch* 74 (1988) (Leipzig: Neue Bachgesellschaft, 1988), cited in John Butt (ed), *The Cambridge Companion to Bach* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 281, n. 86.

¹⁵ See Christoph Wolff, *Johann Sebastian Bach: The Learned Musician* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 422-424.

¹⁶ Private conversations with the author.

¹⁷ Theodor Adorno, ‘Bach Defended Against his Devotees’, in *Prisms*, translated Samuel and Shierry Webber (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1983), p. 139.

¹⁸ Ibid. p. 142. For an extremely intelligent and essentially sympathetic exploration of this perspective from one who has studied Bach’s musical processes in great detail over many years, see Lawrence Dreyfus, ‘Bach as Critic of Enlightenment’, in *Bach and the Patterns of Invention* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), pp. 219-244.

¹⁹ Ferruccio Busoni, *Selected Letters*, edited and translated Anthony Beaumont (London: Faber and Faber, 1987), p. 188 n. 5.

²⁰ See Beaumont, *Busoni*, p. 69.

²¹ Guido Guerrini, *Ferruccio Busoni: La Vita, La Figura, L’Opera* (Firenze, Montsalvato, 1944), p. 250, cited in Larry Sitsky, *Busoni and the Piano: The Works, the Writings and the Recordings* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1986), p. 104. A discussion of the movement can be found in Sitsky, pp. 103-107.

9. *Wachtend op de volgende uitbarsting van repressie en censuur*

After the symphonic dimensions and grandiosity of conception of *Kapitalistisch Realisme*, *Wachtend op de volgende uitbarsting van repressie en censuur* (whose Flemish translates as 'Before the next wave of repression and censorship') is a much more withdrawn, delicate and introverted piece. It can be loosely conceived as in two long sections with an introduction: the second section consists of a 'cut-up' of modified fragments from the first, usually presented in retrograde-inverted form, and with a greater frequency of translation into abstract pointillistic form – a type of musical 'censorship'. Two fundamental sources inform the movement, from Busoni and Beethoven.

Busoni's *Symphonisches Intermezzo (Sarabande)* (1918) comes from his opera *Doktor Faustus*, but also exists as a separate work, usually coupled with the *Cortège* from the same opera. In a letter to Volkmar Andreae on the 1st January 1919, Busoni (who had earlier talked about the habit of 'rounding off the year with a small composition so as to put my signature to it as it were'¹) described the two works as 'both entirely *un-brilliant* and contemplative', saying that they 'represent my most individual style'². Anthony Beaumont points out how the work was composed with the closing scene, during which Faust effects the migration of his soul into another body, in mind, and that the use of the sarabande genre related to its association with hell in Cervantes's 'The Caves of Salamanca'³.

The first, second and fourth movements of Beethoven's String Quartet Op. 18 No. 5 were alluded to in *Kapitalistisch Realisme*, as mentioned before. The third movement of this quartet underlies the first section of *Wachtend* both as a source of material (this movement features passages in ascending or descending sixths, linking with the fundamental intervals of the cycle) and to provide the variation structure for the first main section. The structure is then as follows:

Introduction: Presentation of abstracted Sarabande, then three very brief episodes alluding to Berlioz *Roméo et Juliette*, Alkan material, Wagner 'Der Ewige Macht'.

A: In three sub-sections:

A (i): Emerging sarabande, with allusions to themes from *Muybridge-Munch*.

A (ii): Fragmentation and transition using Paganini material, and 'looping' Bach-derived material from *My parents' generation*.

A (iii): Three 'variations' (relating to Beethoven variations) followed by near-tonal 'Theme'.

B: Cut up of retrograde inversions of material from Section A.

The introduction references the very opening of the 'Scène d'amour' from Berlioz's *Roméo et Juliette*, which was used in Finnissy's first mature 'transcription', *Romeo and Juliet are Drowning*⁴, and as such has a somewhat iconic meaning for the composer. This is itself re-configured in the manner of Busoni's Sarabande, with an accompaniment drawn directly from the Busoni work. In the A section, the Busoni provides the fundamental thread around which other material is woven and combined. Finnissy's variations allude obliquely to those in the Beethoven quartet, culminating in a more direct quotation of the theme, first

in a retrograde-inverted form, then with the theme quoted outright (with a few distortions, but recognisable for what it is). But this signals the beginning of the B section, an array of disembodied fragments of what has come before, many of them in pointillistic form, and with several violent interjections. The possibilities of more fluent and uninhibited expression have become censored, repressed.

¹ Cited in Beaumont, *Busoni*, p. 259.

² Busoni, *Selected Letters*, p. 280.

³ See Beaumont, *Busoni*, p. 259.

⁴ See Pace, 'The Piano Music' for more discussion of this work.

10. *Unsere Afrikareise*

Unsere Afrikareise ('Our African Journey') takes its title from the film of the same name by Peter Kubelka. Kubelka's film manipulates images of the safari, used as a metaphor for colonial exploitation, described in Finnissey's words as:

[A]ppropriation (the 'benign' conversion and 'civilisation' of 'barbaric' traditions and religions, the outright theft and exploitation of mineral wealth) and exploration of a preconstructed otherness (the freshness and magic innocence of a Garden of Eden, a holistic spirituality now lost to European materialism and pseudo-scientific 'wisdom')¹

Enacting a compositional strategy which parallels that of Kubelka, Finnissey draws primarily upon musical materials from different parts of Africa, which in his view represent 'trophies' which are displayed ('a jumble of tourist-snapshots'²) as well as being partially subsumed within the 'civilizing' influence of European traditions.

Kubelka, a film-maker whose abstract structural cinematic strategies owed something to his interest in contemporary music³, constructs a film out of starkly juxtaposed shots that are never more than four seconds long (giving it something of the structure of a tourist film, though the content is as different as could be imagined). The cuts are in no sense smoothed over (either visually or aurally – the latter mirroring the former⁴), continually alternating between bloated-looking, contemptuous Austrian tourists (together with African servants or helpers – in one memorable shot an Austrian rests their gun on the shoulder of an African) taking in pleasure in shooting wild animals, and the natives, filmed so as to look utterly helpless and innocent. The Europeans are captured savagely, as is Kubelka's prerogative as a European himself; however, his portrayal of the African natives accords somewhat too readily with primitivist stereotypes, casting Africans as eternal victims with little power of free will of their own.

Finnissey's *Unsere Afrikareise* acts as a direct counterpart to *North American Spirituals*, with a good deal of cross-referencing of material between the two pieces. In the *Spirituals* Finnissey was concerned to demonstrate in a quite perverse manner the nature of musical 'assimilation' through the device of incorporating African-American spirituals within hymn tunes of William Billings, in *Unsere Afrikareise* he not only does something similar (see below) within a 'European' context, but also mediates between forms of *representation* of African music in the context of several centuries of European music. In this sense the 'European' world of *Unsere Afrikareise* differs significantly from the 'American' one of the *Spirituals*.

The work interacts on many levels with wider issues and debates about musical orientalism and exoticism, which have been explored in quite some detail by musicologists in recent decades⁵. Much of the work in question has concentrated upon questions of *representation*, and all the ideologies of imperialism, domination, gender, etc., entailed therein, rather than whether depictions of non-European worlds (or, occasionally, 'exotic' worlds existing within the West, such as those on the fringes of Europe, the culture of the Romani, and so on) can be considered to have any relationship to any external reality. A lot of Finnissey's music might be found wanting by these terms, for he has engaged with, alluded to, and even represented a very wide range of 'exotic' music and peoples in his work from the early 1980s onwards (Australian Aboriginal, Azeri, Kurdish, Indian, Korean, etc.). In most cases Finnissey foregrounds the most obviously 'exotic' extra-European musical attributes of this work – elaborate ornamentation,

unusual rhythms, wide tessitura, the use of microtones, sensuous harmonies and in general that which seems to connote the primal and the sexual.

It is not easy in particular to disentangle, say, the Vendan African-inspired *ngano* for choir flute and percussion (1984) from a good deal of primitivist cultural stereotypes about sub-Saharan African people, and perhaps *Unsere Afrikareise* might be seen as an attempt to respond musically to the issues thus thrown up. To this end, Finnissy employs varying types of representation and implied distance from a source, drawing in a whole vocabulary of orientalist representation drawn from nineteenth-century composers (mostly French) in dialogue with other material derived from collections from the areas in question, and explicit and obvious forms of musical ‘assimilation’. Specifically, he uses the following categories of material:

1. Folk music from Africa. This includes Vendan African songs (taken from the ethnomusicological work of John Blacking⁶, which was earlier sourced in *ngano*), Ethiopian chant, as well as Moroccan and Berber folk music⁷. These are simply called ‘Folksongs’ in the sketches.
2. ‘Assimilated’ African folk music. This is music from category 1, but combined with other European material, specifically Mozart Minuets and Schubert Ecossaises, designed so as to demonstrate the incongruity of the combinations as in the *Spirituals*. This generally takes the form of the folk music as a right hand melody together with a bass line from Mozart or Schubert.
3. European representations of Africa and African music. Here Finnissy draws upon mediated allusions to music of Rameau, Gounod, Saint-Saëns, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, Debussy, Alan Bush, and more prominently, passages from Victor Massé’s opera *Paul et Virginie* and Félicien David’s ‘symphonic ode’ *Le Désert*. In the sketches, these are divided up into one group called ‘European response’ – twelve moderately extended fragments which seem to all be derived from Bush, a corresponding set of ‘Accompaniments’ (very freely derived from the same source and some others, including the Rameau), not all of which were used, and another category called ‘Quotations’, including the Rameau, Debussy, Coleridge-Taylor, Denny and Gounod.
4. African-American music and its representations. This takes the form mostly of the more mediated passages from the *Spirituals* (usually further mediated simply through techniques of retrograde and the like) as well as additional material from Homer Denny’s collections of ragtime.
5. ‘Pointillistic discourse’. This type of material encountered earlier in *Le réveil* and *My parents’ generation*. Deriving from the other material in the piece, the passage of this type in *Unsere Afrikareise* is the most extended of its type in the whole cycle. In its nature and configuration it suggests the Piano Sonata of Jean Barraqué⁸ or the passages of unstemmed pitches in Iannis Xenakis’s piano piece *Mists*.

Whilst this is not the place to embark upon an extended discussion of Moroccan, Berber, Ethiopian or Venda music⁹, some basic attributes as filtered through into Finnissy’s material are relatively clear: pentatonic or other limited groups of pitches for the Venda melodies and the first Moroccan/Berber melodies, more florid, extensively ornamented lines for the Ethiopian, in a variety of modes. However, the origins of much of the material ceases to be of much consequence when it becomes transformed, as Finnissy uses configurations associated with one of the material types in order to transform another. Recurrent oscillating adjacent

pitches (an extremely common figuration in much Arabic music) form a further link with 'By and by' and the ecstatic Chabrier music experienced briefly in *Muybridge-Munch* and *Wachtend*.

Many of the materials taken from the third category are distinguished by being presented in a form relatively close to that of the original (especially in terms of register, tessitura and density). Finnissy frequently juxtaposes these with a selection of material from category 1, distinguished by rhythmic unison between hands in the case of Vendan music (also shifting continuously between central and more extreme registers), and alternating chords on the offbeat for the Moroccan/Berber/Ethiopian music, in the typical *dum-tak* (representing the centre and the edge of a drum respectively) manner common to much North African music¹⁰. Crudely put, the Northern African material is presented as monody with rhythmic accompaniment, whilst the sub-Saharan African material is presented in a polyphonic style; in both cases representative of highly generalised characteristics of the music of the different regions.

Structurally, the work falls into clear sections demarcated by pronounced shifts in dynamics, texture, or tonality/atonality, as follows:

- A. An extended passage all marked *pppppp!*. Alternating four combinations of African folk songs together with Mozart minuets as bass lines with mélanges of most types of material to be found in clearer form in section C.
- B. Tonal Music 1. A relatively literal transcription of part of the Air 'Ah! Pauvre nègre...' from Act 1 of Victor Massé's opera *Paul et Virginie*. The predominant modality at the outset is Aeolian on D. A freer short fantasy upon this material acts as a transition to the following section.
- C. The central section of the work. An elaborate montage of material from categories 1-4, including some silences alluding to their equivalents in the *Spirituals*. Tempo continually shifting up and down a spectrum from crotchet 116 to crotchet 192. A short transition, *pp* then *pppppp*, first introduces material from David, which becomes clearer in D.
- D. Tonal Music 2. More extended than B, this consists of three sections quoting clearly passages from Félicien David's *Le Désert*. The first uses a Phrygian mode on F#, the second approximates to G major, the third B minor. An explosive fourth section loses a clear sense of a key centre.
- E. Pointillistic discourse. In violent contrast to what has come before, an extremely extended discourse consisting mostly of unstemmed pitches or fragmentary gestures. In the final moment, passages from the *Spirituals* (including the 'cluster' material) are interspersed within this.
- F. Coda. A melancholy and mysterious selection of materials, very slow, settling down to the spirituals after a short violent interruption. This section appears to be resolving into D-flat major at the end, but the final gesture contradicts this.

The two sections I call 'Tonal Music' on one level mirror the popular songs which appear in *My parents' generation*, though their structural function in the whole work differs somewhat. The first is a transcription of the aria 'Ah! Pauvre nègre...' from *Paul et Virginie* (c.1876) by the now largely forgotten, but once prominent French composer Victor Massé (1822-1884). This 2/4 aria

consists mostly of a staccato quaver accompaniment in chords, above which the tenor part for ‘A Negro’ (an onlooker) sings about the awful plight of the black slave Meala, kicked, whipped and cuffed by the tyrannical plantation owner St. Croix. The repeated dotted rhythms in the orchestra might be interpreted as representing the crack of a whip in a manner akin to the ‘scourging’ music in the *Matthäus-Passion*. Finnissy transposes the aria down a perfect fifth into a Phrygian mode on D, but otherwise maintains its somewhat stereotypically “non-Western” qualities – static harmonies, ornamental figurations on the melody and (in line with many representations of black music) incessant rhythm.

In the C section, the rate of change of material is rapid, whilst overlaid by a tempo structure (oscillating up and down between metronome marks of 116 and 192, but with gradual accelerandos and sudden rallentandos at the ends of sections) that seems to operate independently in some respects, in accordance with the particularities of the material in others. The peak tempos are always associated with the four Ecossaises, which parallel the Minuets in the A section, here using bass lines derived from Schubert Ecossaises. The music is suffused with familiar tropes of musical orientalism, for example the use of a turn like figuration, often in thirds (a commonly-used device that can also be found in the music of Meyerbeer and Massenet). Very crudely, one could say the music shifts rapidly between different types of musical ‘images’: non-European/modal (folk music), nineteenth-century European/tonal/bitonal (from the European representations of African music), modernist/chromatic (from the *Spirituals* material) and non-European/European clashing (the Ecossaises).

The second ‘Tonal Material’ is taken from Félicien David’s ‘symphonic ode’ *Le Désert* (1844), a vital work relating to the ideas of French socialist group (at least usually described as such) who were followers of the ideas of Claude Henri de Rouvroy, comte de Saint-Simon (1760-1825). Saint-Simon and his small cult of followers analysed the forms of wage slavery that befall the proletariat working for their industrial chief in a way that clearly anticipates Marx’s later and more systematic analysis of such a situation. His ideas were tied in with a very particular brand of Christianity to the extent that he can be considered a highly significant figure within the history of ‘Christian socialism’¹¹ (he is also believed to have been the first figure to have applied the term ‘avant-garde’ to culture¹²). After the suppression of the movement, many disciples travelled to the Middle East, apparently in search of the ‘Female Messiah’ or ‘woman-mother’¹³ (the Saint-Simonians adhered to a strange mixture of matriarchal ideas and sexual mysticism). David, who had first become involved with the Saint-Simonians during his time as a student at the Paris Conservatoire, travelled with them and during his trip collected various music which he later transcribed for piano as a volume called *Mélodies orientales* (1836) upon his return to France¹⁴. Eight years later he composed *Le Désert*, equivalent to a scenic cantata in three parts, portraying a scene in the Middle Eastern desert to a text by the poet August Colin¹⁵. Each of the three movements is subdivided into several scenes, portraying life in the desert (the story is ultimately reasonably inconsequential; the atmosphere portrayed is of much greater importance to this music¹⁶). Finnissy sets David’s ‘Dance des almées’ (Egyptian belly dancers¹⁷), whose melody is presented in a form totally clear to anyone who knows the piece in question, then the tenor solo, ‘Rêverie du soir’ at the beginning of Part 2, its relatively static harmonies (as with the previous section) in accordance with other ‘non-European’ evocations (especially alluding to the music of the Arab world), though also establishing this passage as an oasis of calm in the context of the whole work. The final section transcribes, in relatively literal form, the ‘Chant du muezzin’ (the

muezzin is a servant of the mosque who gives the summons to the five daily prayers and the Friday service from on a platform), from the beginning of Part 3 of David's piece.

A moment of calm tends to anticipate a violent explosion in Finnissy's music, and the end of Section D is no exception¹⁸. However, the violence of Section E, in terms of its musical nature, positioning within the piece and sheer length, exceeds this by some measure. As if in response to the extended passages of relative tonal stability encountered just previously, Finnissy seems to have felt the need to create a musical gesture that enacts the aural equivalent of slashing a canvas (as with some of the paintings of Francis Bacon upon which he committed such violent acts; the lines running across some of Barnett Newman's paintings might also be said metaphorically to fulfil a similar function). Within the course of the cycle's composition, *Unsere Afrikareise* was the first piece in which he did such a thing (as we know from earlier, similar if less extended passages occur in *Le réveil* and *My parents' generation*). As he did with the 'compression' material in earlier pieces, Finnissy derives his pointillistic material from that to be found earlier in the work, by cutting up the first four-and-a-bit pages into 100 short fragments, then using a random procedure to select these and combine them to form gestures.

After a long expanse of such material which almost obliterates memories of that which came previously, Finnissy heralds a transition back to more 'regular' piano writing with a sudden change of dynamics, but then leads into some left-over material from the 'Cowell' section of the *Spirituals*, bringing clusters into this piece for the first time. Then he incorporates a snippet of some completely new material, from the traditional Christian hymn 'Washed in the Blood of the Lamb', the words and music for which were written by Tullius C. O'Kane and published in 1872. The title of this hymn derives from Revelations 7: 9-17 – 'These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb' (King James version)¹⁹. The final section presents a hushed, but harmonically murky, piece of Ivesian phantasmagoria based on short fragments in each hand of modified material from the Bach *Te Deum*, which parallels the earlier lead into the David section, then Finnissy works back to a slow and yearning last page once more featuring music from the *Spirituals*, here marked *molto allargando* and *marcato espressivo*, implying but ultimately withholding a tonal resolution.

In an analysis of Kubelka's film, Catherine Russell describes aptly how:

The film was commissioned to be a mirror of sorts, by the Austrian hunters who Kubelka accompanied to Africa, but it becomes a fun-house mirror, horrifically distorting their image. The montage is accompanied by rifle shots on the soundtrack, extending the cause and effect of killing to other rhetorical transitions. The horror of the film is not only the merciless killing of wild game but the intercutting of this imagery with supplemental footage of Africans, many of them bare-breasted women. Match cuts equate, through substitution and metaphor, African bodies with the animal targets. Shots of the hunters looking through binoculars and telescopic rifle sights inscribe a voyeuristic *dispositif* within the film, and a voyeuristic gaze is equally implied in the footage itself, which is consistently marked by a depth of field and frames within frames.²⁰

Few works of instrumental music can work with materials as concrete as those in Kubelka's *Unsere Afrikareise*; here the resemblance with Finnissey's piece becomes less clear-cut. There is violence in Finnissey's *Unsere Afrikareise*, for sure, shockingly so on a structural level but also manifest in certain types of material (for example in the combination of Venda songs with Schubert bass lines), but not in a way that generates meaning as does the sequence of a dead animal next to a helpless African woman. Rather, Finnissey juxtaposes his musical 'images' (which inevitably would be heard more in terms of their musical properties rather than in a clear semiotic manner, so hazy can be the relationship with the originals (which themselves are surely relatively obscure to those Western audiences as are most likely to hear Finnissey's piece)) in ways that draw attention mostly to the strangeness of the combinations and joins.

¹ Finnissey, programme note for *Unsere Afrikareise*, 1988.

² Ibid.

³ As well as an interest in early music and period instruments, which Kubelka mentions. Andre Halib, Frederick Pelletier, Vincent Bouchard and Simon Galiero, 'An Interview with Peter Kubelka', *Hors Champ*, Vol. 9, Issue 11 (November 30th, 2005), at http://www.offscreen.com/index.php/phile/essays/interview_kubelka/ (accessed 21/8/13).

⁴ Kubelka speaks about his approach to sound in the interview with *Hors Champ*, saying 'In the visual, I have a shooting. Now I can use this visual to speak with sound. I thus put one of the voices of the man who is writing his journal. It says: "So!" meaning "Then!" in German. The voice of the accountant goes on: "We did that and that, etc." I used this sound as the exact portrait of the speaker. I combined or juxtaposed, or synchronized, the deadly shooting of the rifle with this "So!" of a typical "petit-bourgeois" indifference making him write: "Dear Journal, we are now in Africa and bla, bla, bla..."

⁵ Amongst the most important writings on the subject are also Carl Dahlhaus, 'Exoticism, Folklorism, Archaism', in *Nineteenth Century Music*, translated J. Bradford Robinson (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989), pp. 302-311; Peter W. Schatt, *Exotik in der Musik des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Munich: Katzschler, 1986); Jonathan Bellman (ed), *The Exotic in Western Music* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1998); Derek B. Scott, 'Orientalism and Musical Style' in *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 82 No. 2 (Summer 1998), pp. 309-335; Ralph P. Locke, 'Exoticism and Orientalism in Music: Problems for the Worldly Critic', in Paul A. Bové (ed), *Edward Said and the Work of the Critic: Speaking Truth to Power* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), pp. 257-81, 306-12; Ralph P. Locke, *Music, Musicians and the Saint-Simonians* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986); Matthew Head, *Orientalism, Masquerade and Mozart's Turkish Music* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000); Matthew Head, 'Musicology on Safari: Orientalism and the Spectre of Postcolonial Theory', in *Music Analysis* 22 (1-2) (2003), pp. 211-230; and Ralph P. Locke, *Musical Exoticism: Images and Reflections* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009). The study of musical 'exoticism' has particularly focused upon opera, as in Ralph P. Locke, 'Constructing the Oriental 'Other': Saint-Saens' *Samson et Dalila*', in *Cambridge Opera Journal* Vol. 3 No. 3 (November 1991), pp. 261-302, Thomas Bauman, *W.A. Mozart: Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987) and Susan McClary, *George Bizet: Carmen* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

⁶ John Blacking, *Venda Children's Songs: A study in ethnomusicological analysis* (1967), reprinted (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

⁷ The basic source here is Alexis Chottin (ed), *Corpus de Musique Marocaine* (Casablanca: Librairie Livre Service, 1987).

⁸ An allusion that the composer himself suggested to me and which seems appropriate.

⁹ Powne and Blacking provide excellent introductions to Ethiopian and Vandan music respectively; on Arabic music in general, a concise but highly informative text in English is Habib Hassan Touma, *The Music of the Arabs* (Portland, OR: Amadeus Press, 1996).

¹⁰ For an extremely brief description of the basics of Arabic rhythm, see Otto Karolyi, *Traditional African and Oriental Music* (London: Penguin, 1998), pp. 64-66; for more detail, see Touma, *The Music of the Arabs*, pp. 46-54.

¹¹ See <http://sadenaco.ipower.com/Archive/New-Christianity/> (accessed 30/8/2013) for Saint-Simon's important essay on this subject.

¹² In the volume *Opinions littéraires, philosophiques et industrielles* (Paris: Galerie de Bossange Père, 1825), pp. 210-211, cited in Matei Calinescu, *Five Faces of Modernity: Modernism, Avant-Garde, Decadence, Kitsch, Postmodernism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1987), p. 101. Calinescu argues that whilst attributed to Saint-Simon, this volume was actually a collaborative enterprise between Saint-Simon and some of his students and disciples (pp. 101-102).. Saint Simon argued in 1820 that 'New mediations have proved to me that things should move ahead with artists in the lead, followed by the

scientists, and that the industrialists should come after these two classes.’ (*Oeuvres de Claude-Henri de Saint-Simon* (Paris: Editions Anthropos, 1966), Vol. 6, p. 422, cited in Calinescu, p. 102).

¹³ See ‘Saint-Simon and Saint-Simonism’. *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, at <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13377a.htm> (accessed 21/8/13)

¹⁴ See Locke, ‘Cutthroats and Casbah Dancers’, p. 113.

¹⁵ Locke discusses the creation of the work in some detail in *Music, Musicians and the Saint Simonians*, pp. 208-212. He expresses the view that ‘Colin’s text for *Le Désert* the “social milieu” was clearly defined by the almost unrelenting focus on the Arab people (represented by male chorus) rather than on individuals. (Of the three solo numbers, all for tenor, only one deals primarily with love; it is sung by a character never named or encountered again, and his beloved is apparently not with him.) . . . Colin’s text ‘explicitly contrasted the freedom and vigor of life in the desert with the paleness of urban society. David must have found all of this uncommonly appealing. It permitted him to exploit the Oriental vein, transmit a social message, and, in the descriptive passages, fulfil his longstanding desire to sing of “the beautiful and the good.”’ (p. 208). See also Dorothy Veinus Hagen, *Félicien David 1810-1876: A Composer and a Cause* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1985), pp. 67-90.

¹⁶ Though Locke believes that “As for the central image of a desert caravan, the audience cannot have missed in it an allusion to the Saint-Simonian mission to Egypt.’ (*Music, Musicians and the Saint Simonians*, p. 209).

¹⁷ Richard Taruskin says that these were ‘regarded by Europeans as prostitutes’, and that this dance ‘supplies what would prove to be the most durable, indeed indispensable, ingredient in European musical orientalism. See Taruskin, ‘Self and Other’, in *The Oxford History of Western Music* Vol. 3 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 387-389. Locke (‘Cutthroats and Casbah Dancers’, p. 115) says this dance is ‘quite pathbreaking in that it vividly evokes images of curvaceous women dancing with supple arm and torso movements; the beckoning quality is intensified by the curly melody’s being given to a solo oboe, perhaps understood as the equivalent of the Arab *mujwiz*’. Both of course are highly subjective interpretations of the dance.

¹⁸ Other examples of this can be found in the piano pieces *Snowdrift*, ‘Midsummer Morn’ from *English Country-Tunes*, ‘Nashville Nightingale’ from *More Gershwin*, or the *La Traviata* piece from the *Verdi Transcriptions*. The primary model for this sort of dramatic gesture is probably Ives’s ‘Hawthorne’ from the *Concord Sonata*, the moments in which hushed chorale-like passages are interrupted with moments of extreme violence.

¹⁹ ‘Sweeping through the gates of the New Jerusalem, washed in the blood of the Lamb’ were supposed to be the dying words of the Rev. Alfred Cookman, a clergyman who preached against slavery and died in 1871. However this has been questioned – see Duane V. Maxey, ‘Sweeping Through the Gates: A compilation of Material about the Life, Christian Experience, and Dying Testimony of Alfred Cookman’, at <http://wesley.nnu.edu/wesleyctr/books/0201-0300/HDM0269.PDF> (accessed 21/8/13).

²⁰ Catherine Russell, *Experimental Ethnography: The Work of Film in the Age of Video* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999), p. 128.

11. Etched bright with sunlight

In the last chapter of the *History*, Finnissy opts for a reasonably conventional notion of a ‘finale’ to the work, one which brings various musical strands together in a relatively logical, even inevitable manner. It is a more continuous and ‘driving’ piece than most of the others, with an inexorable sense of momentum that drives it from beginning to end. The title is taken from a closing line in an unfilmed screenplay by the late director Derek Jarman, entitled *Sod ‘Em’*¹ - Jarman’s combination of apocalyptic vision and tender lyricism provides an obvious affinity for Finnissy. *Sod ‘Em’* was written whilst Jarman was directing a film of Sylvano Bussotti’s opera *L’Ispirazione* at the Teatro Communale in Firenze in 1988² (two years after Jarman had been diagnosed as HIV-positive). It is an extremely angry and somewhat crudely didactic work that served as a prototype for his later film, *Edward II* (1991). It portrays a ravaged England in the not-too-distant future, characterised by brutality, extreme homophobia and racism, and genocide at the hands of a Tory government together with the willing participation of the security services and armed forces. Gay people are quarantined on account of public hysteria about AIDS, books by gay authors are publicly burned, the Royal Family are relegated to appearing on a television sitcom, the welfare state has been completely dismantled; in some ways this England resembles Nazi Germany. Within this decimated landscape wander historical gay figures (or at least assumed to be so) such as Shakespeare, Christopher Marlowe, Lord Byron and Oscar Wilde. A young actor Edward is the central protagonist, dreaming of being Edward II in Marlowe’s play, and dying for his love for Piers Gaveston (taken up in more detail in the later film). Contemporary dialogue is intermingled with allusions to Marlowe’s Elizabethan verse. It is a screenplay that communicates extreme bitterness, anger and impotence. In the final scene, Edward, having woken up in bed with his lover Johnny (with whom he finds his own oasis of tenderness in a deeply hostile world), utters the following biblically-tinged lines:

This morning, etched bright with sunlight, precise as the shadows cast by my life, I emptied my pockets of time, the eternal that neither endures or passes, lay in my hand, world without beginning or end, always and now.³

From the very outset of the piece Finnissy mirrors something of Jarman’s apocalypse. The first section begins with an explosive outburst in the upper registers reminiscent of some of Finnissy’s earlier virtuoso piano works. Despite a continuous sense of forward momentum, the structure of the work is quite detailed, in six large sections:

- A: 1. Brilliant *ffff* explosion at top of keyboard, based on ‘digest’ of Bach.
2. Polyrhythmic quasi-ostinato with regular metrical units in either hands, hands swapping half-way. Based upon continuous variation of Bach-derived notes/chords and short allusions to other parts of the cycle. Gradually falling in dynamic.
3. More irregular rhythms in the hands, continuing same material. Appearance of Wagner ‘Der Ewigen Macht’ clearly in the left hand. Material using longer and longer note-values.
4. Sudden shift into bass region. Development of Wagner, with interruptions. First allusions to *Unsere Afrikareise*.
5. Long canons in chords in treble register, based on penultimate phrase of Bach chorale.
6. Ornate and mysterious passage, *pppppp!*, preparing the ground with first hints of Berlioz.
7. Appearance of distant vision of theme from Berlioz ‘Scène d’amour’ from *Roméo et Juliette*.

B. Orientalism. 1. Monophonic passage based on Moroccan/Berber music from *Unsere Afrikareise* and Kavafis material from *Poets*. Combined with drone then extra part.

2. Rowdy, overloaded four part writing, three parts all from fragments of *Unsere Afrikareise*, bottom line based on Bach and *Te Deum*. Introduction of melodies from the *Spirituals* towards end.

C. Catalogue 1. Increasing diversity – material from *Unsere Afrikareise*, *My parents' generation* (Sullivan, 'Whatever you are') and *Poets*, as well as further allusion to the Berlioz. First anticipations of 'Compression' material.

D. Bach. Selections from various of the canons in *Bachsche Nachdichtungen*. Then combination of Bach with Billings in the manner of the *Spirituals*. This is ultimately transformed into:

E. Compression. Wild, like that near the end of the *Poets*, but shorter.

F. Catalogue 2. Rapid montage of fragments from all around the cycle, leading to final outburst then dissolve into nothingness.

Section A6 appears out of a paring down of material towards a sense of nothingness, from which context the Berlioz motive can grow. Finnissy leads into this by a final passage at an extremely quiet dynamic, mixing harmonically diffuse material with short inserts which suggest a clearer tonal centre. The 'Scène d'amour' theme appears in its fullest form since *Le démon*. Unlike then, when it was accompanied by Bach organ chorale prelude material, here the accompaniment is derived directly from the Berlioz itself. Finnissy skilfully leads into this by continuing some of the figuration from the previous passage, though thinned out, and gradually configuring it until it is transformed into downward arpeggios. The melody begins with a fragmented form of the Berlioz made into a seamless line, before the theme proper (the 'Juliette' theme) appears. Nostalgia is a feature of this passage, undoubtedly, but tempered by a more critical sensibility. The Berlioz theme appears, but somewhere on the distant horizon, a reminder of what was rather than an implication that it is recoverable in the same form. A parallel can be found in the passages of Elizabethan poetry in the Jarman screenplay, acting as small oases of tenderness within the otherwise savage scenes.

Sections B and C are more straightforward, ranging through fragments of past material, with something of the tight montage to be found in *Unsere Afrikareise* in particular, and at one point featuring a further fragment derived from Berlioz, now more clearly tonally centered and at a medium dynamic. Finnissy then uses a near-exact recapitulation of the Symonds material from the end of the *Poets* (with the same folk song allusions) as a route towards the ultimate return of the 'compression' material. But a detour is provided via several sections from *Bachsche Nachdichtungen*, specifically the 'In Canone all'Ottava', then a combination of Billings' hymn 'Bedford' with the first phrase of the Bach chorale, using a configuration taken directly from the opening section of Busoni's *Choral-Vorspiel und Fuge über ein Bachsches Fragment*, described by Busoni as an *edizione minore* of the *Fantasia Contrappuntistica*⁴. This sets into motion the build-up proper towards the work's climax, in which Finnissy employs further combinations of Billings with the *motivo fondamentale*, then *Canone al rovescio (i) alla Seconda*, and the *calmando e semplice* of the *alla Nona*. The use of continuous 3/4 rhythms provides a useful link into the 'compression' material.

Unlike in the *Poets*, Finnissy postpones the climax by at first lowering the dynamic to a (possibly unrealistic!) *ppppppp!*. The effect of this passage is absolutely electric, providing as it does a counterpart to the wildest reaches of the opening, but here spread over the whole keyboard. The very calmness of the Bach section leading up to it has created a sense of imminence by its placing (coming after various somewhat more animated sections). The final Section F naturally attempts some type of summation of the cycle, using a randomly chosen selection from most of the pieces in rapid succession, like a flash-by of the cycle as a whole. Quite naturally, the final phrase comes from the Bach chorale BWV 328, specifically from the inner parts. The grace note E-flat (itself preceded by a D serving as a leading note) that precedes the climactic G (this preceded by a B-flat-A-flat progression), combined with a B-flat in the treble, all preceded by various progressions and harmonies which imply a type of cadence, provide a strong sense of a climactic E-flat major. The ending in the treble register also suggests a belated resolution of the material in Section A, whilst the register itself aids the sense of the music ‘disappearing’, as if into the ether.

In comparison to the involved musical arguments to be found in, for example, *My parents’ generation* or *Kapitalistisch Realisme*, *Etched bright with sunlight* is a relatively straightforward piece to listen to, a fiercely immediate and surface-dominated finale that I have elsewhere described as a ‘devastating vortex of a piece that pulls in most of what has come before’. Yet there is an optimism about the conclusion. It is violent, certainly, but it also achieves a type of partial resolution; more importantly, it implies the music could go on longer, and there continues to be scope for creation and innovation.

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¹ Published in Derek Jarman, *Up In The Air: Collected Film Scripts* (London: Vintage, 1996), pp. 183-225.

² Ibid. p. 183.

³ Ibid. p. 225.

⁴ This first section of the Busoni work constitutes the completion of an abandoned preliminary sketch for the third of his *Elegies*, which itself in large part appeared in the *Fantasia Contrappuntistica*. See Beaumont, *Busoni*, pp. 107-108, 171.

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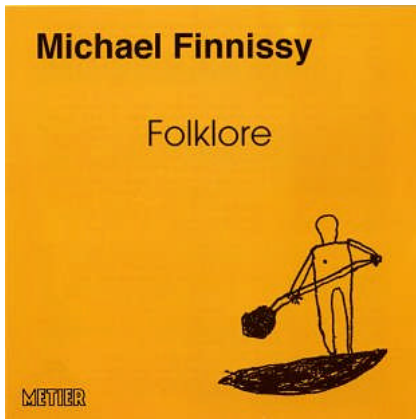
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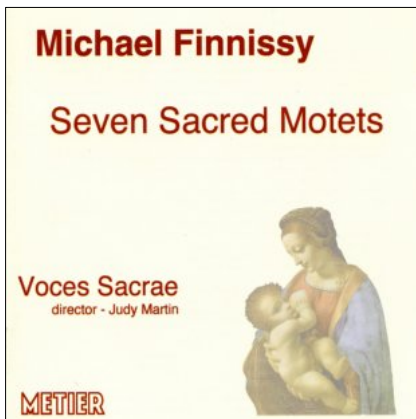


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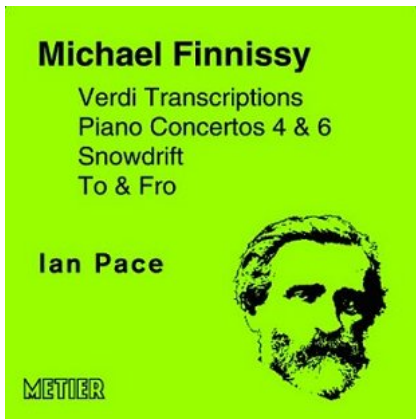


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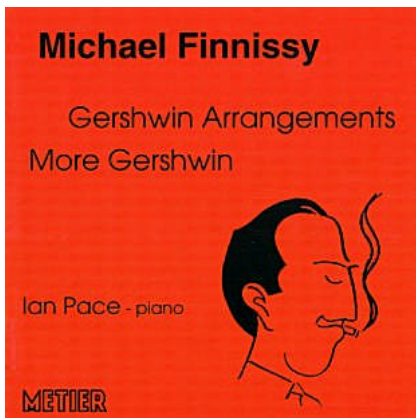
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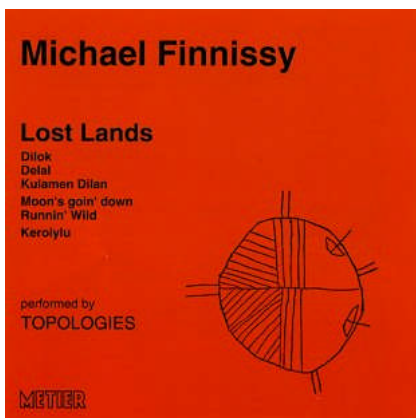
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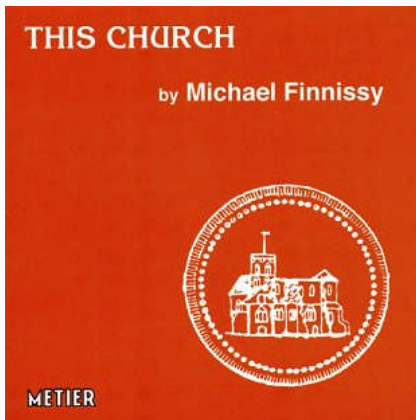
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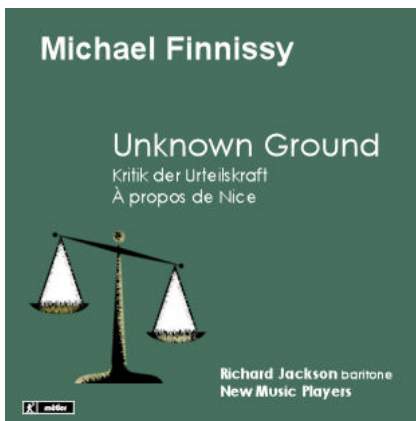
Finnissy: This Church

Soloists, Ixion, conductor Michael Finnissy

"This is a remarkable document of a remarkable large-scale piece that, in all likelihood, won't be performed again. this piece owes everything to the performers it was written for.. But it enjoys the additional virtues of a taut structure and some real passion and humanity. We're lucky indeed they made this recording." - "Quinn" (American Record Guide)

"The courage of Finnissy's This Church in challenging preconceived notions of new music stood out like a beacon" - Philip Clark (The Wire) (The Wire Top CDs of 2003)

METIER MSVCD 92069 (midprice)

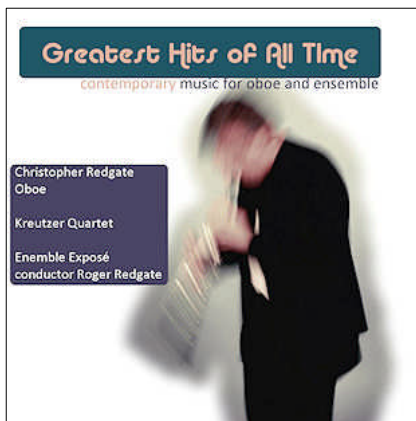


Finnissy: Unknown Ground & other works

Richard Jackson (baritone); New Music Players

"The harmonies are certainly not tonal, but neither are they dodecaphonic. One could hardly call this music over-written, but it is also far from a "minimalist" kind of aesthetic. It feels as though there is a mature restraint. One must come to terms with a moment-to-moment style of listening to appreciate its beauty. Unknown Ground is the high point of the album. It is a powerful work by the English composer, played and sung with dedication." - George Adams (American Record Guide)

METIER MSV 28536



Greatest Hits of All Time

Christopher Redgate (oboe); Kreutzer Quartet; Ensemble Exposé

Includes Finnissy's "Greatest Hits of All Time" and "Ceci n'est pas une forme"

"This is an excellent disc of well written and imaginative repertoire. Christopher Redgate's playing is dazzling throughout, and the ensembles with whom he performs are similarly excellent" – Carla Rees (MusicWeb) MusicWeb Disc of the Month December 2009

"[The title track by Finnissy is] fascinating. The other works are so good that the disc title is warranted. Redgate plays with tremendous zest." – Paul Driver (The Sunday Times)

METIER MSV 28513



New Music for a New Oboe, volume 1

Christopher Redgate (oboe); Michael Finnissy (piano); Stephen Robbings (piano)

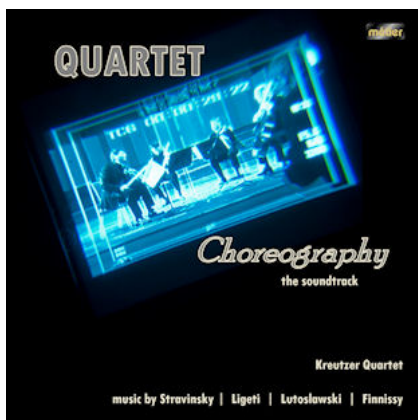
Includes Finnissy's "Âwâz-e Niyâz"

"It's always a joy to hear Redgate play anything at all, but this coupling of works by Roxburgh and Finnissy does fine justice to the Howarth-Redgate instrument." – Roger Thomas (IRR)

"[Finnissy's piece] has a ritualistic, meditative quality..... you lose your place and realise how liberating that is. Edwin Roxburgh's soberer The Well-Tempered Oboe gives Redgate plenty of technical substance to chew on, but the Finnissy obliges him to play beyond himself." –

Philip Clark (Gramophone)

METIER MSV 28529



Quartet Choreography – The Soundtrack

Kreutzer Quartet

Includes Finnissy's Second String Quartet

"Any release spunky enough to embrace Ligeti's and Finnissy's Second Quartets..is OK by me. Stravinsky was right: we hear these moves, see the sounds differently. - Philip Clark (Gramophone)

"The performances of all this music are riveting and have captivated listeners who would normally find engagements with some of this music far from easy. Recommended for essential purchase." – Peter Grahame Woolf (Musical Pointers)

METIER MSVCD 92105 (DIGITAL DOWNLOAD ONLY – ALSO AS DVD (MSVDX101)



New French Song

Alison Smart (soprano); Katharine Durran (piano)

Includes Finnissy's "Salomé" (song)

"Alison Smart ... elicited a really impressive range of colours and contours, comfortably handling the stylistic changes between songs... Katharine Durran's playing was a musical lesson in Art history." (Musical Opinion on the live launch recital)

"excellent CD" - Iain Cameron

METIER MSVCD 92100 (midprice)



Chanticleare – Contemporary vocal music

Clare Lesser (soprano)

Includes Finnissy's "Song 15"

"Clare Lesser is blessed with a gorgeous voice and terrific technique. The programme is nicely varied... very entertaining. An exceptional disc." – Peter Grahame Woolf (Musical Pointers)

METIER MSVCD 92102 (midprice)



Multiplicities – New British music for solo flute

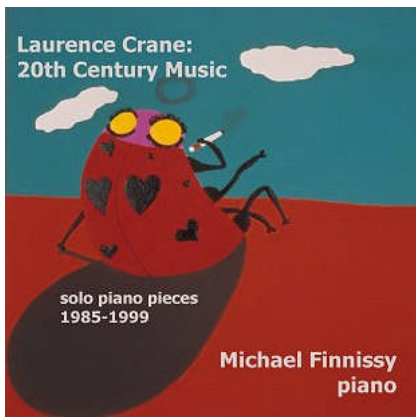
Nancy Ruffer (flutes)

Includes Finnissy's "Ulpirra"

"An ambitious survey of late twentieth century pieces for solo flute. This disc will no doubt be essential listening for flautists engaged with the contemporary music scene. The performances are as authoritative as it gets!" - Neil Horner (Music Web)

"Ruffer's playing is fastidious, impassioned and silver-tongued throughout." - Paul Driver (The Sunday Times)

METIER MSVCD 92063 (midprice)

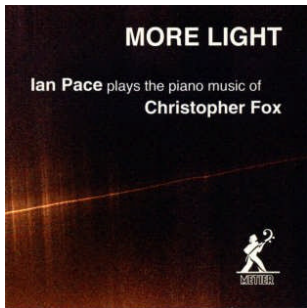


Laurence Crane – 20th Century Music

Michael Finnissy (piano)

"This is a fine piano recording, and Michael Finnissy's peerless playing is of course unsurpassed in this kind of material. I admire Laurence Crane's expressive mission and musical honesty, and am delighted to have been allowed a good long look into his output for solo piano. For me it was a little like peering into a coral reef in a glass-bottom boat – full of timeless beauty." – Dominy Clements (MusicWeb)

METIER MSV 28506



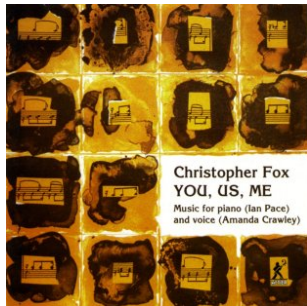
More Light – piano music of Christopher Fox Ian Pace (piano)

“This is music where the apparently bland exterior discloses a wealth of invention on repeated listening. Pianist Ian Pace's performances are exceptional and insightful.” –

Andy Hamilton (Classic CD)

“Christopher Fox merges often complex technical procedures into sensuous streams of sound that beguile as well as fascinate the ear.” – Gramophone

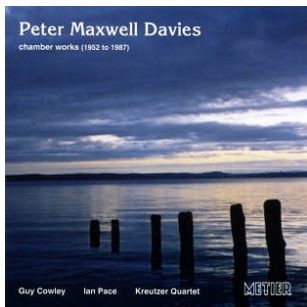
METIER MSVCD 92022 (midprice)



You, Us, Me – Music for Piano and Voice by Christopher Fox Amanda Crawley (soprano); Ian Pace (piano)

“Ian Pace is convincing in all idioms here, while Amanda Crawley conveys the nonsense most entertainingly... a thoroughly entertaining presentation of the work of this quirky and inventive British composer.” - Andy Hamilton (Classic CD) Classic CD 5-star choice

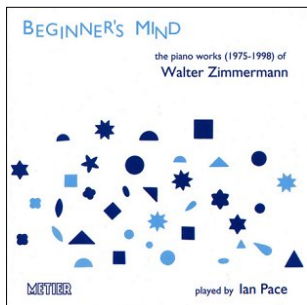
METIER MSVCD 92031 (midprice)



Peter Maxwell Davies – Chamber Music Ian Pace (piano); Guy Cowley (clarinet); Kreutzer Quartet

“This programme gives a remarkably clear picture of Peter Maxwell Davies's art. Guy Cowley and Ian Pace's playing is strong and well controlled. All the playing, indeed, is excellent - the Kreutzer Quartet's pure tone and fine intonation are great assets in the pared-down idiom of the two Little Quartets. With realistic, sensitive recording, this is a must for anyone interested in Maxwell Davies.” - Duncan Druce (Gramophone)

METIER MSVCD 92055 (midprice)



Beginner's Mind – piano music by Walter Zimmermann Ian Pace (piano)

"...complex ideas presented with endearing simplicity... fascinating, it's one of those sound-worlds in which you just have to allow yourself to be absorbed and there's much pleasure to be had." - Andrew McGregor (BBC Radio 3)

METIER MSVCD 92057 (2 CD midprice)

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**Michael
Finnissy**



**Ian
Pace**