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AN ANALYSIS OF GEORGE CRUMB'S
ANCIENT VOICES OF CHILDREN

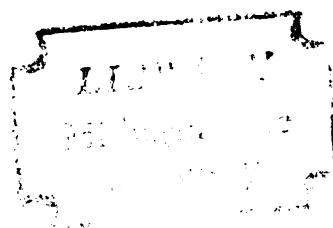
THESIS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF MUSIC

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

DOLORES HRUBY

1975

JHE918



JUN 11 1987

H 161
H 119

M 28

C 296

APR 21 1987

26 K111

JUN 30 1987

175 A 157

JUN 12 1993

1 0 2 2 8 2 3

1 A 0 5 0

1 2 1 0 0 0
8 - 2 3 3

APR 30 1991

JUN 19 1992

FEB 07 1994

FEB 06 1995

ABSTRACT

This thesis is an analysis of George Crumb's Ancient Voices of Children. This work was chosen because of the composer's important contribution to twentieth century music and because I believe in the intrinsic merit of this work.

Through observation and discovery, I determined that Crumb worked with six three-note cells, their permutations, transformations and transpositions. This thesis examines the manner in which he used this material.

It also examines his method of orchestration, notation, his use of rhythms, the Lorca texts he used and the resulting texture of the music.

AN ANALYSIS OF GEORGE CRUMB'S
ANCIENT VOICES OF CHILDREN

By
Dolores Hruby

A THESIS

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
MASTER OF MUSIC
Department of Music

1975

PREFACE

Ancient Voices of Children was written by the Pulitzer Prize winning composer, George Crumb, during the summer of 1970 on commission from the Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge Foundation. It is part of an extended cycle of vocal compositions based on the poetry of Federico Garcia Lorca. This paper is an analysis of that part of the cycle entitled Ancient Voices of Children.

After hearing a recording of George Crumb's "Of Time and the River," I immediately acquired a recording of his Ancient Voices of Children. I found this work particularly interesting because I think the human voice is one of the most beautiful of instruments, and I greatly admire the work of Federico Lorca. I was fascinated by Crumb's treatment of both the human voice and Lorca's poetry.

I wish to thank the C. F. Peters Corporation which publishes the score of Ancient Voices of Children for allowing me to quote two measures from the score.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I. BIOGRAPHY	1
CHAPTER II. COMPOSITIONAL MATERIAL	5
CHAPTER III. TEXTURE AND HARMONY	15
CHAPTER IV. RHYTHM	20
CHAPTER V. NOTATION	24
CHAPTER VI. ORCHESTRATION	28
CHAPTER VII. TEXT AND MUSIC	32
APPENDICES	40
BIBLIOGRAPHY	50

CHAPTER I

BIOGRAPHY

George Crumb

George Crumb was born in Charleston, West Virginia, on October 24, 1929. He did his undergraduate work at Mason College, his master's work at the University of Illinois and his doctoral work at the University of Michigan. Ross Lee Finney, at the University of Michigan, was his principal composition teacher. He also had a Fulbright fellowship to study at the Hochschule fuer Musik in Berlin and did some post-graduate work at Tanglewood.

He was married at the age of twenty and has three children. In 1958 he joined the faculty at Hollins College (Virginia). Subsequently, he has taught at the University of Colorado, the University of New York at Buffalo and the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, where he currently teaches composition.

Crumb has won many awards, including grants from the Rockefeller, Koussevitsky, Guggenheim and Ford Foundations; and the National Institute of Arts and Letters. His Echoes of Time and the River: Four Processionals for Orchestra was premiered by the Chicago Symphony and won the 1968 Pulitzer Prize in Music.

Ancient Voices of Children was voted the most distinguished work heard at the 1971 session of the International Rostrum of Composers, held at UNESCO House in Paris from May 3 to 8, 1971.

Federico Garcia Lorca

Federico Garcia Lorca was born in a small town near Granada on June 5, 1898. His father was a well-to-do farmer. His mother was a former school teacher, and according to her son a highly educated and imaginative one. She was his first teacher in music and poetry. He adored both his parents, who gave him a happy, protected childhood.

At an early age his parents introduced him to the great literature of Spain. By the time he was an adolescent his reading was prodigious; the nineteenth century Spanish romantics, the Latin American modernists and Spanish contemporaries, the French symbolists, Shakespeare, and the Spanish and Greek classics.

In 1914 he enrolled as a law student at the University of Granada but was a very poor student. He left school to seek the company of literary men rather than take academic courses. Years later, however, he returned to the university to take his degree in law although he never thought of practicing law.

He was a man of wide ranging talents; his first book of poems was published when he was twenty-three, he played both piano and guitar with some excellence, and he had paintings and drawings exhibited in some art galleries

in Spain. In his late twenties he was part of the Spanish artistic elite which included Gerardo Diego (the poet), Luis Bunuel (the film director), Manuel de Falla and Salvador Dali.

His contemporaries described him as a magnificent companion, marvelous conversationalist, filled with infectious laughter, joyful, quick-witted, dramatic and exuberant. He entertained his friends for hours at a time by playing the piano or guitar and reading his newest, unpublished poetry.

He became a very popular young poet. It has been said that one of the reasons he left Spain for New York City was to escape this easy popularity and to regain some perspective on his own life and talent. In 1930 he went to Cuba, where he continued to write both poetry and drama.

Lorca returned to Spain in 1931 to co-direct a government sponsored theater group, "La Barraca." He brought the great traditional Spanish plays to every province in Spain; he arranged traditional Spanish ballads as musical accompaniments to these plays; and he staged plays he had written while continuing to write new ones.

In July, 1936, he left Madrid for Granada to celebrate his saints day, San Federico, with his family. The revolt against the Spanish Republic began on July 17th and spread rapidly throughout Spain. Although Lorca had never espoused a political cause, he was arrested by Franco's men on August 18th and shot the following day. His murder was

incomprehensible and terrifying, not only to his friends, but to the whole world.

In addition to several volumes of poetry, Lorca may be even better known for his plays among which are Yerma, Blood Wedding, and The House of Bernarda Alba.

CHAPTER II

COMPOSITIONAL MATERIAL

After the analysis of Ancient Voices of Children was begun, it became apparent that certain melodic, intervallic juxtapositions of three-note combinations were used repeatedly. The regularity of the appearance of these combinations made it possible to identify them and to analyze the composition on the basis of this integrative element.

The integrative element is often a minute intervallic cell, which may be expanded through the permutations of its components, or through the free combination of its various transpositions, or through association with independent details. It may operate as a kind of micro-cosmic set of fixed intervallic content, statable either as a chord or as a melodic figure or as a combination of both. Its components may be fixed with regard to order, in which event it may be employed, like the twelve-tone set, in its literal transformations: prime, inversion, retrograde, and retrograde-inversion . . . Individual notes may function as pivotal elements, to permit overlapping statements of a basic cell or the linking of two or more basic cells.¹

The statement above describes the method in which Crumb handles his material, therefore the term "cell" will be used in this presentation.

There are six three-note basic cells and variants thereof, that provide the basis for most of this work.

¹George Perle, Serial Composition and Atonality (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), pp. 9-10.

Perle also states that a new juxtaposition of the intervals of a basic cell can form an additional cell, which can then be considered another basic cell. Crumb follows this procedure. The initial cell A consists of an ascending major second (c#-d#), followed by a descending tritone (d#-a). This intervallic order is rearranged, so that both intervals are ascending (page 1, system 3, last note, plus system 4, first two notes [$\bar{d}$ -e-b $\flat$]) and a new cell, cell B is formed, using the original intervals; this cell has been expanded from a tritone to a minor sixth.

The first three notes of Example 2 are a permutation of cell B and designated B⁸ (page 1, system 1, soprano).

Example 2



A third basic cell, cell C which is formed by contracting the tritone to a P4th is found on page 1, system 1, last beamed figure (f# ascending to g#, g# descending to the P4th, d#).

As stated earlier, there are six basic cells used throughout this composition; the three described above plus two more which are introduced early in Movement I, and one

which is introduced later in Movement III. The initial statement of each one is illustrated in Example 3. (Note that the initial statements of cells C, D and E have the same contour as the initial cell A, the M2nd ascending followed by the characteristic interval descending).

Example 3

Cell A	Cell B	Cell C	Cell D	Cell E	Cell F
(tritone)	(m6)	(P4)	(m9)	(M7)	(M3)

Cells A, B and C appear in the introductory passage; cell D appears for the first time on page 1, system 2, soprano, the last seven notes; cell E appears on page 1, system 3, soprano 2nd beamed figure, third through sixth notes; and cell F⁵ appears on page 3, system 3, electric piano, first four notes.

There is a striking relationship of intervallic content between the six cells. Just as cell B grew out of cell A by a new juxtaposition of the original intervals, so one could say that cell D grew out of cell E (a M7th plus a M2nd) to form a m9th; cell C grew out of cell F (a M3rd plus a m2nd) to form a perfect 4th; and possibly one could even see cell E growing from cell B if the m6th of cell B were expanded to a M6th with the M2nd added to form the M7th.

Cell A is the seminal cell since it contains a M2nd and a tritone, these being the most frequently used intervals in this composition. The original statement of cell A (c#-d#-a), with the M2nd ascending and the tritone descending, determines the form which will be considered the "basic" form for all the cells. Notice then, that all the basic cells have a M2nd ascending (m2nd is consistently substituted for the M2nd in all F cells) followed by its characteristic interval descending. Notice also that in the cells with the two largest characteristic intervals, cells D (m9th) and E (M7th), that the tritone is sometimes substituted for the M2nd. Cell E, for instance, has two basic statements; one with the M2nd ascending (f#-g#-a) and one with the tritone ascending (d-g#-a). (See Appendix).

Crumb does not consistently use the same pitches for a given cell; neither does he start any given cell on all twelve pitches. Instead he favors repetition of the original pitch levels plus repetition of a few transpositions. (He uses cell A most often on original pitches but also uses transpositions starting on a, d# and a#).

He also employs some of the transformations associated with the twelve-tone set. Although A^6 is the retrograde of the original cell A, it can also be explained as a permutation of the original cell. However, A^7 is the retrograde-inversion of A^1 ; A^{11} is the inversion of A^1 ; A^3 is the inversion of A^2 ; and A^5 is the inversion of A^4 . None of

these inversions or retrograde-inversions could have been formed with the original pitches of cell A.

Forty of the sixty-three cells are introduced by the soprano. The harp introduces five cells, the piano introduces four cells; and the two instruments in combination introduce three other cells. The remaining cells are introduced by the boy soprano, percussion, mandolin or musical saw.

Repetition plays an important part in this work. Repetition of single pitches (opening figure, soprano); repetition of two pitches, often small intervals (page 1, system 2, electric piano, 2nd beamed figure); repetition of any or all of the notes within a three-note cell (page 1, system 1, soprano, 4th beamed figure, first four notes). When these repetitions occur within a cell, they are considered as one cell pattern and labeled according to the three-note skeleton.

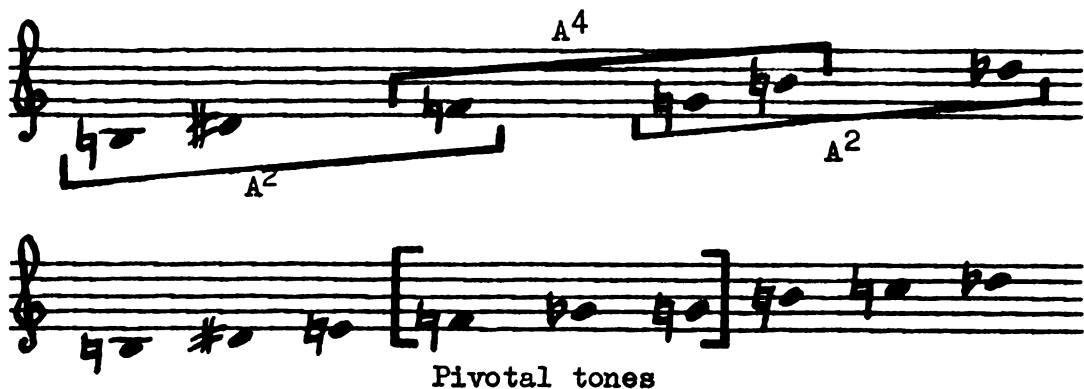
There are also repetitions within a particular movement of single cells (page 1, system 4, soprano, 3rd and 4th beamed figures), and repetitions of larger figures which encompass more than one cell (page 1, system 1, soprano, last beamed figure repeated at page 1, system 3, soprano, 6th beamed figure). There are also repetitions from one movement to another which will be noted as the various movements are discussed.

Crumb exposes the listener to a wide spectrum of his compositional material in the first movement as two-

thirds of all the cells are first heard in this opening movement. Since it is mostly a soprano solo, it is she who introduces most (thirty-three) of these cells. It is the A cells, however, which are most repeated and which are predominant in this movement. He even expands the A cell by embroidering around the much repeated c# and d#, and the longer duration of a in the opening two lines of the movement.

Movement II begins with a series of minor seconds, an interval which was not heard in Movement I. It seems that Crumb has constructed overlapping pivotal scales surrounding overlapping pivotal cells in this manner.

Example 4



VII the oboe is again given this kind of material which is a scale superimposed upon cells.

All the F cells are now introduced in Movement III in the following manner: these pitches



which are heard repeatedly in Movement II are now heard in

this contracted form



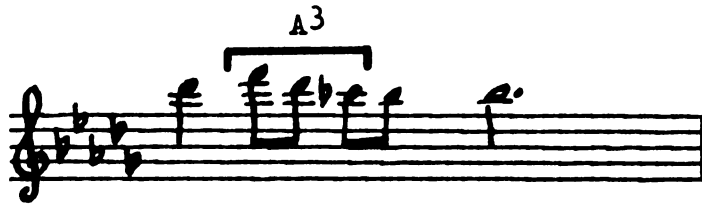
at the opening of

Movement III. The movement is performed pianissimo, employs many glissandos and uses the most intervallically contracted of the cells (cell F and variants), with an occasional A or C cell.

The fourth movement is the most dramatic of the movements; it uses a wide range of dynamics and employs the cells with the largest intervals, cells B, D and E. However, there is no movement which does not use some A cells; and in Movement IV they are used in the oboe and soprano parts. This movement opens on the E¹⁰ cell sung by the soprano, repeating the original pitches used in the first movement for this cell.

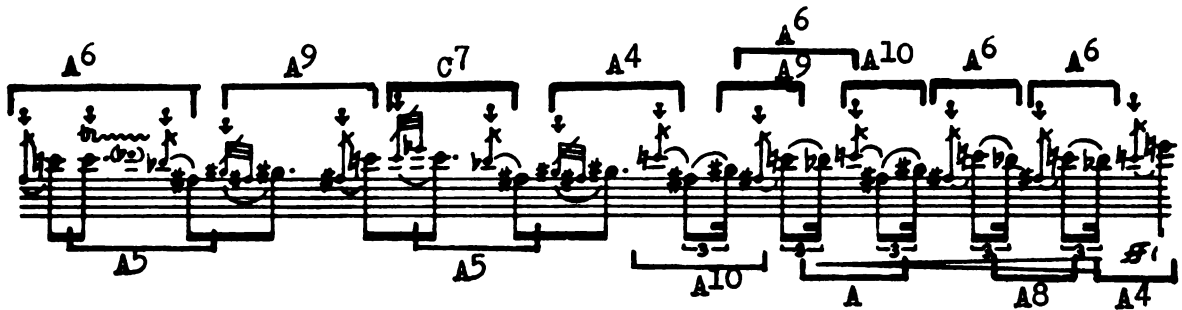
Movement V opens with the C# major triad, followed by the soprano singing a series of major seconds on the pitches c#, d# and e#. These are then followed by a series of A cells. The ubiquitous A cell appears in the Bach quotation which is used in this movement, as seen in Example 5.

Example 5



Movement VI opens with B cells played by the mandolin, but quickly goes into A cells and then uses these almost exclusively. On page 5, system 5, mandolin, this passage again illustrates the characteristic overlapping, pivotal use of material.

Example 6



Movement VII is similar to Movement I in that it uses a great variety of cells; there are some of each group represented. Although most of this movement can still be analyzed according to this cell construction, there is a freer use of the twelve tones than in any other movement. At the climax of this movement (page 7, system 4, soprano singing the words "Cristo Senor"), Crumb uses a combination of D and A cells.

At the conclusion of the work, he repeats material from the opening and the closing of the first movement. The boy soprano ends the work singing the same pitches (f-b-a) of an A cell that he sang at the conclusion of Movement I.

CHAPTER III

TEXTURE AND HARMONY

The texture of most of Ancient Voices of Children is very fine, very delicate.

Movement I, "El nino busca su voz," is largely monophonic, vocal writing for the soprano, with a short, similar passage for the boy soprano. The instruments employed are used sparingly.

Twice the electric piano and harp are combined to create a thin accompaniment for a sustained note in the soprano, and twice the percussion instruments plus the whispered voices of the percussionists are combined to create a delicate homophonic passage which begins independently and then briefly becomes an accompaniment for the boy soprano. Harmony is at a bare minimum since two or more notes are never attacked simultaneously. Tonal decay is almost always complete before a second voice enters.

Movement II, "Dances of the Ancient Earth," is somewhat fuller textured than Movement I. In the opening of this movement the oboe has some rather long unaccompanied passages, but these are preceded and followed by short accompanied passages which employ a simple kind of polyphony.

There is an example of heterophony between the mandolin and the paper harp (page 2, system 4) which appears later in an abbreviated form, with a voice exchange between the two instruments (page 2, system 5).

Following this, the oboe is provided with a slightly fuller accompaniment which uses mandolin, harp and a few percussion instruments; the oboe is added to the mandolin and harp in the repeat of the heterophonic passage; and in the closing passage the oboe is silent while the mandolin and harp softly echo the preceding heterophonic passage.

The basic texture of Movement III, "Me he perdido muchas veces por el mar," consists of the alternation and overlapping of two voices; one voice is the whispered, vocal line; the other voice is the instrumental line which is enriched by barely audible but effective, one-note additions from the piano, antique cymbals and harp.

In comparison with the rest of the composition, there are some unusual features found in Movement IV, "De donde vienes, amor mi nino?": it has a discernible, vigorous bolero "beat"; it consistently has a more thickly written texture; it has a gradual crescendo which builds to a high, dynamic level. These elements combine to give it the illusion of being even more fully written than it actually is.

The movement opens with an unaccompanied vocalize by the soprano that is reminiscent of Movement I. After this monophonic introductory passage, two-part writing

predominates. The soprano and boy soprano alternate to form one voice while the tenor drum and timbale alternate to form a second voice. This happens on the oboe's entrance, the soprano's entrance at C of the circle, on the return of the soprano at A of the circle, and on the harp and mandolin's entrance at C of the circle. In addition, there are brief entrances on the electric piano, tam-tam and suspended cymbal plus various whispers and shouts from the percussionists. The timpani plays a secondary glissando part throughout the constant bolero pattern of the drums.

The penultimate chord of this movement, which is the most thickly textured sonority to be encountered up to this point, is scored for soprano, boy soprano, mandolin, harp, electric piano, timbale, tenor drum, antique cymbals plus shouts from some of the instrumentalists. The pitches for this chord are the same pitches as contained in cell D¹⁰. which the soprano sang in the opening section of this movement (page 4, system 1, fourth, fifth and sixth notes).

Movement V is homophonic. It opens with the marimbas softly playing a C# major triad, which is reinforced by male voices (percussionists) and an harmonica. The soprano enters, accompanied by the marimbas only. When the soprano line ends, the toy piano enters, playing an excerpt from "Bist du bei mir" (from the Notebook of Anna Magdalena Bach) accompanied again by the marimbas. The movement is concluded as the male voices softly sing vowel sounds on a g minor triad. The importance of the tritone is again

emphasized by the fact that the opening and closing triads of this movement are a tritone apart.

"Ghost Dance," Movement VI, is largely monophonic. A maraca enters first, followed by an unaccompanied mandolin. On page 5, system 4, three percussionists play maracas, entering one after the other; but since they all play the same rhythm simultaneously, it gives the listener a sense of increased dynamics rather than of increased texture. The percussionists, however, do whisper syllables while playing this, which does add to the textural quality. The mandolin and maracas continue to alternate until the conclusion of the movement when they are heard simultaneously. The unaccompanied mandolin then echoes this final passage.

Movement VII combines most of the textural devices used throughout the composition: heterophony is found between the mandolin and harp (page 6, system 1); the oboe plays unaccompanied passages almost exclusively (page 7); the cadence of the solo oboe line is accompanied by soft, subtle percussion parts (page 7, system 2); the overlapping of alternating voices suggests the barest of two-part writing (page 8, systems 1 and 2, soprano and boy soprano); and brief instrumental entrances add small bursts of sound which are found throughout this and most of the other movements.

In this movement the harmonic writing is fuller than in any of the other movements. The opening three

measures consist of the most straightforward harmonic, homophonic writing to be found in this composition, as does the accompaniment to the climactic words "Cristo Senor" (page 7, system 4).

The composition ends quietly on a vocalize between the soprano and boy soprano.

A textural summation of the movements follows:

Movement I	Mostly monophonic
Movement II	Mixture of monophonic and heterophonic
Movement III	Mostly monophonic
Movement IV	Mostly two-part writing
Movement V	Homophonic
Movement VI	Mostly monophonic
Movement VII	Summarizes all textures using most of the textural devices used in the previous movements

CHAPTER IV

RHYTHM

Movement I, "El nino busca su voz," which is void of bar lines, measures, and a time signature, is free and unmetered. The use of the sixteenth note in the tempo indication,  = ca90, is consistent with the employment of small note values, sixteenths, thirty-seconds, sixty-fourths and even one-hundred-twenty-eighth notes (page 1, system 2, soprano, 2nd beamed figure). Many triplet and quintuplet divisions are used, as well as an occasional sextuplet and septuplet. All of the silent pauses are of three-second duration.

In contrast, Movement II can be classified as metered music with a beat. The opening passage has a time signature of $\frac{5}{\text{♩}}$; it is barred; and the expression mark is "very rhythmic." Even the unmetered, unbarred passage introduced by the Tibetan prayer stones (page 2, system 4, following $\frac{3}{\text{♩}}$), which is echoed by the paper harp and later by the oboe, has a regular, recurring pattern which gives it a recognizably rhythmic character.

Most of Movement II is barred, including a passage of alternating $\frac{6}{\text{♩}}$ and $\frac{5}{\text{♩}}$. Again, as in Movement I, most of the silent pauses are three-seconds in duration. Crumb varies this only once with a five-second pause.

Movement III, which is unbarred and unmetered, creates a rather unusual blurred sense of both pitch and duration. Although it is precisely notated, the electric piano and the musical saw play mostly glissandos while the soprano whispers her line. Without definite attacks on particular pitches, an indefinite, blurred sound emerges.

In this movement Crumb favors quintuplet divisions over triplet divisions.

After a free, unmetered introduction, similar to the writing found in the first movement, Movement IV, because of the constant bolero ostinato played by the tenor drum and the timbale, becomes the most markedly rhythmic of all seven movements.

Triplet divisions predominate in this movement as they are constantly repeated in the bolero patterns for the percussion and in the sprechstimme passages for the boy soprano and soprano. The idea of three also predominates in the silent pauses. Although there are only two pauses, they are both of three-second duration.

Except for the Bach quotation for toy piano, Movement V returns to unmetered, unbarred, non-pulsative writing.

For the first time Crumb uses a few seven-second pauses, although he still favors divisions and pauses of threes and fives.

Although Movement VI, "Ghost Dance," is unbarred, it nevertheless has a lightly pulsative character. The

maracas play a rhythm similar to the one played by the Tibetan prayer stones in Movement II. This device of writing short passages with recurring rhythmic patterns, then repeating these passages with slight variations in the same or other voices, gives this unmetered music a feeling of pulse.

The final movement is free, unmetered, non-pulsative music with only one short section being metered (page 7, systems 3 and 4). One surmises that this short section is barred, not to create a new or contrasting sound, but rather to give accuracy of performance since there are many rhythmically independent lines produced simultaneously.

As in the previous movements, Crumb uses mostly three- and five-second pauses, an occasional seven-second pause and for the first and only time, one four-second pause. Triplet and quintuplet divisions are used in this as in the previous movements.

The overall rhythmic design alternates between pulsative and non-pulsative music, with the strongest feeling of pulse occurring in the fourth movement.

The movements alternate thusly:

Movement I	Non-pulsative
Movement II	Lightly pulsative
Movement III	Non-pulsative
Movement IV	Highly pulsative
Movement V	Non-pulsative

Movement VI Lightly pulsative

Movement VII Non-pulsative

CHAPTER V

NOTATION

Although composers of the twentieth century often experiment in the field of notation, either to indicate precisely a passage of a new, unusual technique or to indicate a passage of a free, aleatoric character, George Crumb does little of this kind of experimentation.

He finds no need to improvise notation for aleatoric passages because there are so few such passages. (See Appendix for complete listing). Nor does he experiment with notation for new, unusual techniques, except for the circle notation (page 4), because he writes exact directions for execution throughout the score, either in the part itself or, more often, as a footnote. An example of this kind of footnote is found on page 1, "The soprano sings into the piano to produce sympathetic vibrations. The pianist must keep the damper pedal depressed in this and all similar passages."

His use of expression marks is in the flamboyant tradition of Scriabin and Ives. "Very free and fantastic in character," "Elegantly," "raw, primitive," "Musingly," "freely, with dark, primitive energy," "Spoken in a very dramatic style (Project! Keep up the momentum!)" are some of the expression marks found in the score.

The dynamic indications are almost excessively precise, but quite standard. Those required of the vocal line, particularly the soprano, are constantly changing, exceedingly demanding dynamics. On page 1, system 1, in one line of unaccompanied music, the soprano has the following dynamic markings: ffz pp  molto f  pp
 ffz ffz pp ffz ffz pp  mp  mp  mp ff
 sub.  molto fffz sub. pp. One might question whether the human voice can really produce that much variation, particularly in that short period of time.

Crumb freely mixes English and Italian expression marks, even alternating between the two languages for the same word. On page 7, system 4, soprano, 3rd beamed figure is the instruction in Italian "sempre piu intenso"; while on page 8, system 1, soprano, the instruction is "gradually subsiding in intensity." In Movement II, page 2, system 5, he uses the word "languid"; while in Movement VI, page 5, system 5, he uses "languido."

Throughout the composition, Crumb asks for shouts and whispers, often scored for the instrumentalists. These are notated , always accompanied with the word "shout!" or "whisper." The whispers have dynamic gradations from pppp to fff.

The few trills that are used are written out in full (page 1, system 6, 4th beamed figure).

The music abounds in grace notes and appoggiaturas for instruments and voice. These are written in a

traditional manner, often with the addition of a diagonal slash () which indicates that they should be executed as quickly as possible (page 1, system 1, soprano, 4th beamed figure). Movement III is the only movement which contains neither grace notes nor appoggiaturas.

Glissandos are notated with the traditional straight line between two pitches, plus the abbreviation "glis."

Crumb uses short, incomplete beams () rather than flags for separate notes (page 1, system 4, electric piano, first note).

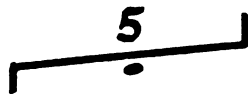
Crumb states in his brief, introductory Performance Notes that "each note is preceded by an accidental except in case of immediate repetition of a pitch or a pattern of pitches."

In describing the circle notation of the Fourth Movement, he says,

The third song (De donde vienes..) has the following form: Soprano introduction leading to the beginning of the percussion ostinato; then A¹ (cued into percussion ostinato), B¹, C¹, (after 3 seconds pause) D¹, (after 3 seconds) E¹, A², B², C², (after 3 seconds) D², (after 3 seconds) E², A³, B³, C³: then after one full statement of the 2-measure percussion ostinato, all performers go to the last measure to conclude the song. (N.B. Some segments overlap slightly; dotted lines show the beginning points for A, B and C segments). The percussion crescendo-decrescendo must be very gradual.

The remaining introductory instructions are the following:

$$\left(\frac{7}{3} \right) = 3 \text{ seconds (approx.)}$$

 = 5 seconds (approx.)

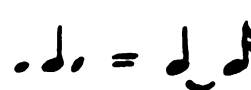
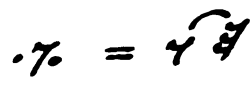
 = fermata lunga

 = fermata corta

 = extremely short break

 = $\frac{1}{4}$ tone lower than given pitch

 = $\frac{1}{4}$ tone higher

The notation of Ancient Voices of Children then is precise. One feels that the composer knows exactly what he wants and that he gives the musicians every opportunity to recreate the music as he conceived it.

CHAPTER VI

ORCHESTRATION

Crumb has orchestrated Ancient Voices of Children for conventional instruments including oboe, harp, mandolin and a rather large group of standard percussion instruments. On the less conventional side he has included an electrically amplified grand piano, a toy piano, a musical saw, an harmonica and Tibetan prayer stones. Just as with the expression marks, Crumb instructs the performers precisely. Either in a footnote or in the score proper, he writes in detail what instrumental devices he wants and how they are to be achieved.

To illustrate this precision, on page 3, Movement III, there is this footnote for the piano.

**) Use 5/8" chisel with smooth cutting edge. In the first phrase, apply chisel (held in r.h.) to F $\sharp$ string at proper point to produce the written C $\sharp$. Phrase begins with l.h. plucking F $\sharp$ string after chisel is in position (thereby producing C $\sharp$.) After pizz. note, the chisel is moved along string to produce the various written pitches. The movement of chisel should be rapid and decisive between pitches in order to produce a distinct sound. The amplification of piano will help to project these delicate sounds.

Most of the instrumentalists have special instructions for the purpose of producing non-traditional sounds from their instruments. The mandolin (page 5, system 3) is asked to play with a "bottle-neck technique." This is

explained in a footnote in the following manner:

*) For "bottle-neck" playing, a glass rod is held (lightly) against E string. Sliding the rod along string produces the various pitches. A metal plectrum should be used (e.g. paper clip); pluck string only at points marked . The symbol $tr\frac{1}{4}$ indicates a quarter-tone trill (i.e. a wide vibrato).

The oboist is asked to do little that is unconventional, other than to "bend" pitches. By "bent" pitches Crumb means quarter-tones (which actually have become a commonplace in contemporary music). The oboist is the only musician who is not asked to shout or whisper at any time throughout the composition! However, he is asked to play two triads on the harmonica in Movement V.

No performer is asked to perform in a wider technical range than the soprano. Her voice is often treated in an instrumental rather than in a vocal manner. She opens the composition vocalising on purely phonetic sounds, singing into the amplified piano (page 1, systems 1 through 5). The text does not start until page 1, system 6, and is of much shorter duration than the more instrumental-sounding vocalise. She is also asked to perform a tongue click (page 1, opening note), to flutter tongue (page 1, system 3, 4th beamed figure), to produce a "tight, nasal sound--like a muted trumpet" followed by "normal, open sound" on the same syllable (page 1, system 3, 8th and 9th beamed figures), to "expel breath violently, like sneeze" (page 1, system 5), to whisper through a cardboard speaking tube (page 3, system 3), to sing "breathily like a sigh" (page 3, system 5) and to perform a dramatic sprechstimme in Movement IV.

In the last movement the soprano is asked to play two mounted glockenspiel plates (page 6, system 1). That she should be asked to do so seems reasonable since the three percussionists are playing other percussion instruments at this time. One wonders if union problems might not result from this double duty.

The composition ends as it began, with the soprano vocalising into the amplified piano.

Crumb's ability as an orchestrator lies as much in his choice of instruments and their combinations as in any innovative orchestral techniques which he employs. In the second movement he has an oboe solo accompanied by the barest of sounds from the mandolin, harp and finger cymbals, with brief shouts from the performers of these instruments. Later in this same movement he combines the "paper-harp" (a harp which has a piece of paper threaded through the strings) and single notes from the mandolin, together with a few whispers and small sounds from delicate sounding percussion instruments. He ends this short movement with a combination of the oboe, mandolin, harp, tambourine, Tibetan prayer stones and the inevitable few shouts.

In the final movement he uses these various combinations: the toy piano and harp play while the sleighbells and suspended cymbal sustain a long trill (page 6, system 1); the harp plays while the sleighbells sustain a trill (page 7, system 1); the mandolin plays a tremolo with a

metal plectrum, and this is punctuated by soft blows on a very small triangle struck with a ten-penny nail (page 7, system 1); the soprano sings, accompanied by tubular bells, Japanese temple bells and suspended cymbals, and at the climax she is accompanied by antique cymbals, electric piano, tubular bells and vibraphone (page 7, system 4).

It is also in this final movement that the opening bars of "Der Abschied" from Das Lied Von Der Erde by Gustav Mahler (page 6, system 2) are quoted. Crumb says, "I was intrigued with the idea of juxtaposing the seemingly incongruous: . . . a reminiscence of Mahler with a breath of the Orient." He uses a "reminiscence of Mahler" with an Oriental sounding scale played by the oboe in Movement II (page 2, system 2). But when he uses similar material played by the oboe in Movement VII, it sounds more than reminiscent; it sounds like a short quote from Mahler.

In summary, he uses a combination of traditional and non-traditional instruments; he uses these instruments in both conventional and unconventional ways; he asks his musicians to play brief, simple passages on instruments other than their own; he asks his musicians to shout and whisper while playing their instruments; he uses unusual combinations of the given instruments; and he quotes from other composers.

CHAPTER VII

TEXT AND MUSIC

Crumb uses the following excerpt from an early poem by Lorca for the opening movement of Ancient Voices of Children.

El nino busca su voz.
(La tenia el rey de los grillos.)
En una gota de agua
buscaba su voz el nino.

No la quiero para hablar;
me hare con ella un anillo
que llevara mi silencio
en su dedo pequenito.

The little boy was looking for his voice.
(The king of the crickets had it.)
In a drop of water
the little boy was looking for his voice.

I do not want it for speaking with;
I will make a ring of it
so that he may wear my silence
on his little finger.¹

In the opening line of the sung text, "El nino," (pause) "busca," (pause) "su voz," (pause), the last syllable of each fragment is emphasized by dynamics and length. "Voz" (voice) is set to a strong, smooth, lyrical line of increasingly expanding intervals. The next line "La tenia

¹Federico Garcia Lorca, "El Nino Mudo," The Selected Poems of Federico Garcia Lorca, ed. by Francisco Garcia Lorca and Donald M. Allen (New York: New Directions, 1955), pp. 50-51, i.ii.1-8.

el rey de los grillos" (The king of the crickets had it) is light and staccato, suggesting the sound of a cricket. On the word "grillos" (cricket) this suggestion is intensified as the soprano whispers the word and the percussionists are instructed to make "cricket sounds" which are whispered while they execute single, rapid scrapes on tam-tams. This is an excellent example of word painting which describes a natural sound.

The last two lines of the first verse, "In a drop of water the little boy was looking for his voice." are whispered by the percussionists in a series of overlapping entrances. There is no effort to have the words understood, but the general mood of those two lines is suggested.

The second verse is sung by the boy soprano offstage as the percussionists are whispering "buscaba su voz el nino" (the little boy was looking for his voice). It would be difficult to determine the reason Crumb wanted the boy soprano offstage until the final vocalise in Movement VII. Is the reason because the composer wanted to achieve a certain quality of sound, or is it because the boy's remoteness is symbolic of the texts he sings? Whatever the reason, an offstage voice does seem appropriate for the words "I do not want it for speaking with" and "my silence."

Me he perdido muchas veces por el mar
 con el oido lleno de flores recién cortadas,
 con la lengua llena de amor y de agonía.
 Muchas veces me he perdido por el mar,
 como me pierdo en el corazón de algunos niños.

I have lost myself in the sea many times
 with my ear full of freshly cut flowers,
 with my tongue full of love and agony.
 I have lost myself in the sea many times
 as I lose myself in the heart of certain children.¹

In this movement single words do not receive specific treatment; instead the general mood of the poem is expressed by the music.

The undulating glissandos of the electric piano and the musical saw could well represent the movement of the sea.

The word "lost" is used in the first and fourth lines of the poem, the word "lose" in the fifth line. Perhaps this sense of being lost is suggested as the soprano whispers rather than sings most of the text.

In Movement IV, Crumb chooses a poem in the form of a dialogue, which is one of Lorca's favorite devises.

De donde vienes, amor, mi nino?
 De la cresta del duro frio.
 Que necesitas, amor, mi nino?
 La tibia tela de tu vestido.

Que se agiten las ramas al sol
 y salten las fuentes alrededor!

En el patio ladra el perro,
 en los arboles canta el viento.
 Los bueyes mugen al boyero
 y la luna me riza los cabellos.

Que pides, nino, desde tan lejos?
 Los blancos montes que hay en tu pecho.

Que se agiten las ramas al sol
 y salten las fuentes alrededor!

¹Ibid., "Gacela de la Huida," pp. 166-67, i.1-5.

Te dire, nino mio, que si,
tronchada a rota soy para ti.
Como me duele esta cintura
donde tendras primera cuna!

Cuando, mi nino, vas a venir?
Cuando tu carne huele a jazmin.
Que se agiten las ramas al sol
y salten las fuentes alrededor!¹

From where do you come, my love, my baby?
"From the mountains of icy cold."
What do you lack, sweet love, my baby?
"The woven warmth in your dress."

Let the branches tremble in the sun
and the fountains leap all around!

In the courtyard the dog barks,
In the trees the wind sings.
The oxen low for the ox-herd,
and the moon curls up my hair.
What want you, boy, from so far away?

"The mountains white upon your chest."
Let the branches tremble in the sun
and the fountains leap all around!

I shall say to you, child, yes,
for you I'll torn and broken be.
How painful is this belly now,
where first you shall be cradled!
When, boy, when will you come to me?

"When sweet your flesh of jasmine smells."
Let the branches tremble in the sun
and the fountains leap all around!²

This poem is mostly a dialogue between a pregnant woman and her unborn child. Three times the mother questions the child and three times the child answers (this

¹Federico Garcia Lorca, Yerma, I.i., Obras Completas, with notes by Arturo del Hoyo, a prologue by Jorge Guillen and an epilogue by Vicente Aleixandre (Madrid: Aguilar, 1967), pp. 1277-78.

²Federico Garcia Lorca, Three Tragedies of Federico Garcia Lorca, translation by James Graham-Lujan and Richard L. O'Connell and introduction by Francisco Garcia Lorca (New York: New Directions, 1955), pp. 105-6, I.i.

dialogue is contained in the A section of the circle on page 4). Crumb sets these questions and answers in sprechstimme. The instruction for the mother (soprano) is "eager, exuberant!" and for the unborn child (boy soprano) "hard, metallic." It is possible that the boy soprano is so instructed because his response to the mother's first question, "From where do you come, my love, my baby?" is, literally, "From the edge of the 'hard' frost." The boy soprano is still offstage, which seems appropriate for an unborn child.

This movement is filled with such instructions to the singers as "hard, primitive energy," "eager, exuberant!" "joyously!" "very dramatic style." This exuberant, dramatic sprechstimme, accompanied by a highly rhythmic, driving, percussion ostinato, effectively portrays the great strength and drama of birth.

After birth, Crumb chooses a poem about death. This is an excerpt from one of Lorca's last poems.

Todas las tardes en Granada,
todas las tardes se muere un nino.

Each afternoon in Granada,
a child dies each afternoon.¹

The quiet, sustained mood of this movement (Movement V) is in great contrast to the rhythmic vitality of the previous movement. The soprano sings the complete, short text of this poem in her opening, flamenco-like

¹Garcia Lorca, op. cit., "Gacela del Nino Muerto," The Selected Poems, pp. 160-61, 1.1-2.

passage, using a very limited range. Possibly, baroque word painting is suggested by the way that Crumb handles the word "muere" (dies). On this word the soprano sings a long descending passage, gradually diminishing to a whisper.

The remainder of the song is a textless, musical commentary on this opening passage. A toy piano (a child's instrument) plays an excerpt from "Bist du bei mir" from the Notebook of Anna Magdalena Bach (often played by children). The toy piano gradually becomes slower and slower with the instruction "like clockwork of toy running down." This seems symbolic of a young life ending: the death of a child.

In the opening remarks of the score Crumb says:

In composing ANCIENT VOICES OF CHILDREN I was conscious of an urge to fuse various unrelated stylistic elements. I was intrigued with the idea of juxtaposing the seemingly incongruous: a suggestion of Flamenco with a Baroque quotation.

This "seemingly incongruous juxtaposition" produces a dramatic song.

For the final movement, Crumb chooses an excerpt from the Ballad of the Little Square, which is an early poem of Lorca's.

Se ha llenado de luces
mi corazon de seda,
de campanas perdidas,
de lirios y de abejas.
Y yo me ire muy lejos,
mas alla de esas sierras,
mas alla de los mares,
cerca de las estrellas,
para pedirle a Cristo
Senor que me devuelva
mi alma antigua de nino,

My heart of silk
 is filled with lights,
 with lost bells,
 with lilies and bees.
 I will go very far,
 farther than those hills,
 farther than the seas,
 close to the stars,
 to beg Christ the Lord
 to give back the soul I had,
 of old, when I was a child,¹

Three times in this last movement the oboe plays a passage unmistakably reminiscent of the last movement of Mahler's The Song of the Earth. The poems, too, that were used by each composer have striking similarities. If one compares the last verse from The Song of the Earth, "Der Abschied":

Whither am I bound? I go, I wander into the mountains.
 I seek rest for my lonely heart.
 I am wand'ring toward my native place, my home.

I shall no longer seek the far horizon.
 My heart is still and waits for its deliverance.²

with the last verse of the poem used by Crumb (see the Lorca quotation above), it will be evident that: both poems speak of "my . . . heart"; in the Mahler, it is "my lonely heart," in the Crumb it is "my heart . . . with lost bells"; both poems speak of the mountains (or hills) as the distant culmination of a search, and both poems speak of a final realization of that search, the Mahler in death, the Crumb in refound innocence.

¹Ibid., "Balada de la Placeta," pp. 10-13, xvi.1-10.

²Li-Tai-Po, "Der Abschied," The Song of the Earth, translated by Alfred H. Meyer (RCA Victor, 1960) 30-35.

It seems reasonable to suppose that, when quoting the Mahler, Crumb hoped to evoke in the listener those same emotions that he felt would be evoked by the original Mahler.

On page 6, system 3, there are some bell sounds produced by the electric piano and tubular bells, to accompany the words "lost bells."

Crumb states in his opening remarks contained in the score,

It is sometimes of interest to a composer to recall the original impulse--the "creative germ" of a compositional project. In the case of ANCIENT VOICES I felt this impulse to be the climactic final words of the last song: ". . . and I will go very far . . . to ask Christ the Lord to give me back my ancient soul of a child."

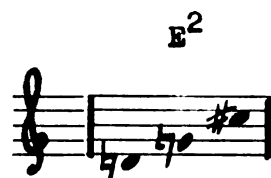
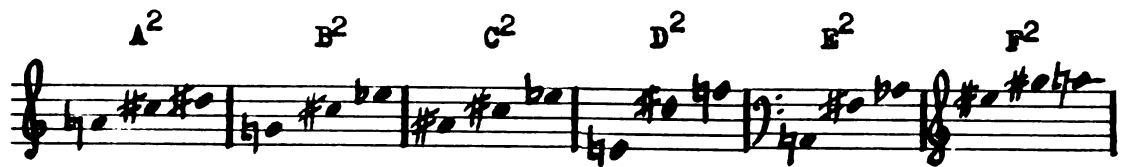
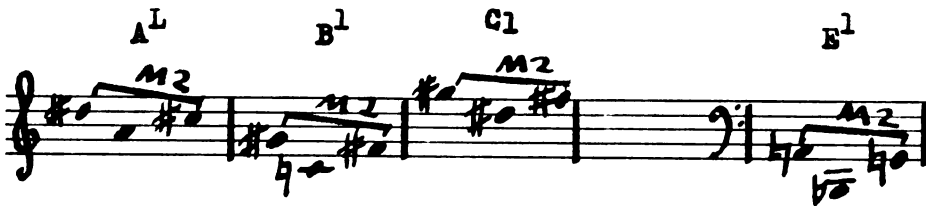
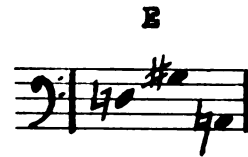
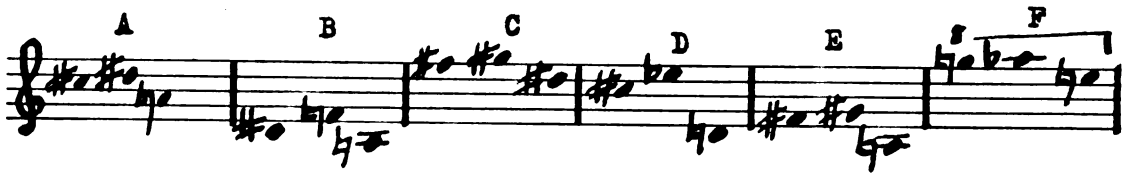
On page 7, systems 3 and 4, this climax is reached. Building with a gradual crescendo and accelerando, the soprano's ascending line reaches its peak on the words "Cristo Senor" (Christ Lord).

"Gradually subsiding in intensity" is the instruction to the soprano for the final two lines. In this final passage the boy soprano appears on stage for the first time, while he and the soprano sing an alternating vocalise which gradually diminishes until he alone is left on the stage singing "pppp."

APPENDICES

APPENDIX

CELLS



The original statement of each of these cells is found in the score as follows:

- A -- Page 1, system 1, soprano, first three pitches
- A¹ -- Page 1, system 1, soprano, second, third and fourth notes
- A² -- Page 1, system 1, soprano, 2nd beamed figure, second and third notes, 3rd beamed figure, grace note
- A³ -- Page 1, system 2, soprano, 1st beamed figure, second, third and fourth notes
- A⁴ -- Page 1, system 2, soprano, 1st beamed figure, fourth, fifth and sixth notes
- A⁵ -- Page 1, system 2, soprano, 3rd beamed figure, seventh, eighth and ninth notes
- A⁶ -- Page 1, system 3, soprano, 2nd beamed figure, second, third and fourth notes
- A⁷ -- Page 1, system 3, soprano, 4th beamed figure, second, third and fourth notes
- A⁸ -- Page 4, system 1, soprano, 6th beamed figure, last note, 7th beamed figure, first and second notes
- A⁹ -- Page 5, system 5, mandolin, 2nd beamed figure, last note, 3rd beamed figure, first two notes
- A¹⁰ -- Page 5, system 5, mandolin, 5th beamed figure
- A¹¹ -- Page 7, system 3, soprano, third, fourth and fifth notes following thirty-second notes
- B -- Page 2, system 4, percussion II, second, third and fourth notes

- B¹ -- Page 1, system 6, soprano, last three pitches
- B² -- Page 1, system 3, soprano, 7th beamed figure, last two notes plus single note
- B³ -- Page 2, system 1, boy soprano, 4th and 5th beamed figures
- B⁴ -- Page 1, system 3, soprano, last note, plus system 4, first two notes
- B⁵ -- Page 1, system 3, soprano, 3rd beamed figure, first three notes (d# displaced)
- B⁶ -- Page 1, system 1, soprano, grace notes preceding 4th beamed figure
- B⁷ -- Page 5, system 3, "Ghost Dance," mandolin, first three pitches
- B⁸ -- Page 1, system 1, soprano, 3rd beamed figure, last note, 4th beamed figure, first two notes
- B⁹ -- Page 1, system 6, soprano, third, fourth and fifth notes
- B¹⁰ -- Page 3, system 1, percussion II, third, fourth and fifth notes
- C -- Page 1, system 1, soprano, last beamed figure, first three notes
- C¹ -- Page 1, system 1, soprano, last beamed figure, second, third and fourth notes
- C² -- Page 2, system 1, boy soprano, 2nd beamed figure, second and third notes, 3rd beamed figure
- C³ -- Page 1, system 2, soprano, 3rd beamed figure, sixth seventh and eighth notes

- C⁴ -- Page 1, system 2, soprano, 3rd beamed figure, fourth
fifth and sixth notes
- C⁵ -- Page 1, system 6, soprano, 3rd beamed figure, first
three notes
- C⁷ -- Page 1, system 1, soprano, last beamed figure, third,
fourth and fifth notes
- C¹⁰ -- Page 1, system 1, soprano, last beamed figure, fourth,
fifth and sixth notes
- C¹¹ -- Page 7, system 4, soprano, 6th beamed figure, last
note plus next two notes
- D -- Page 1, system 2, soprano, last beamed figure, first
three notes
- D² -- Page 1, system 4, soprano, 2nd beamed figure
- D³ -- Page 6, system 1, harp, second fragment, fifth, sixth
and seventh notes
- D⁴ -- Page 6, system 1, harp, last fragment, first three
notes
- D⁵ -- Page 1, system 2, electric piano and harp, first note
of electric piano plus first two notes of harp
- D⁶ -- Page 1, system 5, soprano, 4th beamed figure, eighth,
ninth and tenth notes
- D⁶ -- Page 1, system 2, harp, 3rd beamed figure, first
three notes
- D⁷ -- Page 8, system 1, soprano, 7th beamed figure, last
note plus next two notes
- D⁸ -- Page 1, system 5, soprano, last note of 4th beamed
figure, next two notes of determined pitch

(b displaced)

- D⁹ -- Page 1, system 4, electric piano and harp, first
note in electric piano, first two notes in harp
- D¹⁰ -- Page 1, system 3, soprano, 2nd beamed figure, first
three notes
- E -- Page 1, system 3, soprano, 2nd beamed figure, fourth
fifth and sixth notes
- E -- Page 1, system 4, harp, fifth, sixth and seventh
notes
- E¹ -- Page 1, system 4, harp and electric piano, last two
notes of harp, third note of electric piano
- E¹ -- Page 4, circle, C¹²³, harp, system 2, first three
notes
- E² -- Page 1, system 2, electric piano and harp, last note
of harp plus next two notes in piano
- E² -- Page 1, system 3, 7th beamed figure, third, fourth
and fifth notes
- E³ -- Page 4, circle, C¹²³, soprano, system 2, first three
notes
- E⁴ -- Page 4, circle, C¹²³, soprano, system 2, third,
fourth and fifth notes
- E⁵ -- Page 8, system 1, soprano, 4th beamed figure, last
two notes plus next note
- E⁶ -- Page 1, system 3, soprano, 3rd beamed figure, third
and fourth notes, 4th beamed figure, first two notes
- E⁹ -- Page 1, system 2, soprano, 1st beamed figure, last
two notes, 2nd beamed figure, first note

- E⁹ -- Page 1, system 3, soprano, 3rd beamed figure, second third and fourth notes
- E¹⁰ -- Page 1, system 3, soprano, 2nd beamed figure, last two notes, 3rd beamed figure, first note
- E¹¹ -- Page 8, system 1, soprano, 10th beamed figure plus next two notes
- F -- Page 3, system 3, musical saw, 1st segment, last three notes
- F² -- Page 3, system 3, electric piano, fourth, fifth and sixth notes
- F³ -- Page 3, system 3, electric piano ("Chisel-Piano"), 4th beamed figure, last three notes
- F⁴ -- Page 3, system 3, electric piano ("Chisel-Piano"), first three notes
- F⁵ -- Page 3, system 3, electric piano, second, third and fourth notes
- F⁷ -- Page 3, system 3, musical saw, last note plus system 4, first two notes

APPENDIX

ALEATORIC PASSAGES

1. Page 1, system 5, soprano, 5th beamed figure, on words "ha-ha-ha" etc., starts on b♭, ends on b, with the instruction to "improvise pitches" on intervening passage.
2. Page 4, system 1, last beamed figure on word "ha-ha-ha" etc., with the instruction "extremely rapid, indeterminate pitches."
3. Page 4, circle, A¹²³, soprano and boy soprano. Insofar as sprechstimme is composed of indeterminate pitches, this passage could be considered partially aleatoric.
4. Page 4, circle, C¹²³, system 2, 2nd beamed figure, last syllable of "alrededor," indeterminate pitches with rhythm indicated.
5. It would be possible to consider all of the fourth movement as partially aleatoric. Although parts have determined rhythms with metronomic markings, the simultaneity of these parts is not precisely determined, so there will be variations from performance to performance.

6. Page 5, system 4, mandolin, 2nd beamed figure and last beamed figure, the pitches are indeterminate, although it is indicated that they should be quarter-tone pitches.

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