Portrait

~in~

Song

a song cycle for soprano and piano

Stephen F. Lilly

Pastorale
Das Mädchenlied
Canción de tímida
Chanson à boire pour Frédéric

(2007)

Pastorale

Stephen F. Lilly

Score Construction:

This piece consists of six regions, and the repeated throwing of a single die determines the content and duration of each region. When throwing the die for each of the categories below, repetitions of a number should be ignored so that every selection is used once and only once. For *Performer Choice*, each performer selects one of the previously listed qualities to repeat. The pianist and soprano should construct his/her part independently of the other performer (this includes "Duration of Each Region") before the performance. A new part should be constructed for each performance. Additionally, each performer may use additional throws of the die to determine any other parameters left to improvisation, including *Performer Choice*.

Duration of Each Region (in seconds):
1. 45
2. 30
3. 20
4. 13
5. 9
6. 6

Duration of Events:
1. Generally Short
2. Generally Long
3. Erratic/Constant Change
4. Gradual Change
5. *Performer Choice*
6. *Performer Choice*

Activity Level:
1. Dense (Constant Activity; No Silence)
2. |
3. |
4. |
5. ↓
6. Sparse (1-3 Events per Region)

Interaction
(relation to other performer):
1. Independent
2. Oppositional
3. In Dialogue
4. Accompany
5. Imitate
6. *Performer Choice*

Cluster Type (pianist only):
1. Half-step Cluster
2. Whole-tone Cluster
3. White-key Cluster
4. Black-key Cluster
5. *Performer Choice*
6. *Performer Choice*

Vocal Sounds (soprano only):
1. Animal Sounds
2. Non-verbal Human Sounds
3. Non-vocal Battle Sounds
4. Abstract Vocal Sounds
5. *Performer Choice*
6. *Performer Choice*

Tessitura (pianist only):

1.

2.

3.

4.
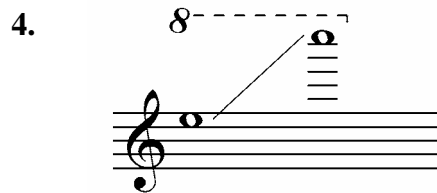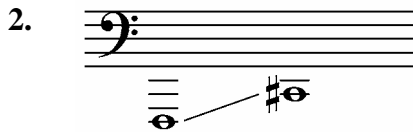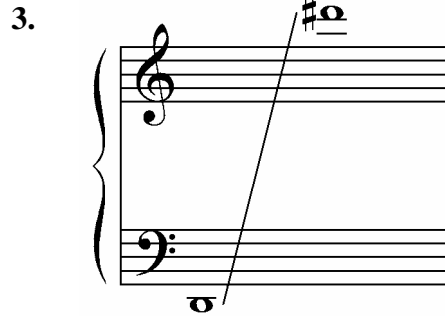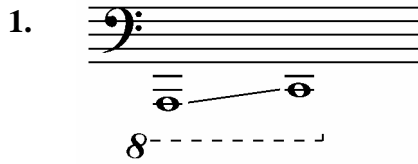
5. *Performer Choice*
6. *Performer Choice*

Performance Instructions:

General – Within the above restrictions, the performers improvise. For example, dynamics, the pedaling of the pianist, and the tessitura of the soprano are left up to the discretion of the performers but should not violate the determined Duration, Interaction, or Vocal Sounds of a region. Each performers should have a chronometer and adhere to it strictly.

Pianist – This piece consists entirely of clusters of three or more pitches. As long as Cluster Type is not violated, the performer may use more than just fingers (e.g. palm, arm, etc.). Clusters are chords with the constituent pitches as close to one another as possible given the Cluster Type. For instance, in a Whole-tone cluster, all pitches are a whole-step apart. For each region, choose two tessituras, one for each hand. When throwing the die for tessitura, each number should count twice so that every selection is used twice. For each region, it is up to the performer to decide which hand should play in which register, but once decided, each hand should not vary from its tessitura for the duration of the region. It should be considered possible that both tessituras for a given region are the same, in which case both hands should work together to create larger clusters.

Soprano – The soprano should avoid all verbal utterances. Animal Sounds should be imitations; the performer should try to avoid using standard onomatopoeias such as "bark" or "tweet." The difference between Non-verbal Human Sounds and Abstract Vocal Sounds is connotation. For example, raspberries, coughing, and snoring are all Non-verbal Human Sounds with connotations for the average audience member. On the other hand, one should consider sounds such as vocal fry, mouth clicks, and flicking the side of one's mouth as Abstract Vocal Sounds. Battle sounds can be from any era, imaginary or real (e.g. hand to hand combat, sword fighting, artillery fire, etc.).

Some Examples:

In determining the "Duration of Each Region," let us say that the performer rolls the sequence: 6, 5, 4, 3, 3, 2, 1.
The durations for each region would be:

Region 1 = 6s (#6)	Region 3 = 13s (#4)	Region 5 = 30s (#2)
Region 2 = 9s (#5)	Region 4 = 20s (#3)	Region 6 = 45s (#1)

-the duplicate 3 is ignored-

To determine the "Duration of Events" for each region, the performer must first choose which qualities to repeat as *Performer Choice* (#5 and #6).
Let us say that the performer decides to repeat "Erratic/Constant Change" as #5 and "Generally Long" as #6.
Let us say the performer then rolls the sequence: 6, 5, 4, 3, 3, 2, 1.
The quality for each region would be:

Region 1 = "Generally Long" (#6)	Region 4 = "Erratic/Constant Change" (#3)
Region 2 = "Erratic/Constant Change" (#5)	Region 5 = "Generally Long" (#2)
Region 3 = "Gradual Change" (#4)	Region 6 = "Generally Short" (#1)

-the duplicate 3 is ignored-

Alternatively, the performer may use the die to determine *Performer Choice*. For instance, the performer could choose to let die repetition determine which qualities to repeat.
Since only #1-4 stand for given qualities, all 6's and 5's would be ignored.
Let us say the performer rolls the sequence 6, 5, 4, 3, 3, 3, 2, 1.
The quality for each region would be:

Region 1 = "Gradual Change" (#4)	Region 4 = "Erratic/Constant Change" (#3)
Region 2 = "Erratic/Constant Change" (#3)	Region 5 = "Generally Long" (#2)
Region 3 = "Erratic/Constant Change" (#3)	Region 6 = "Generally Short" (#1)

-the initial 6 and 5 are ignored-

"Tessitura" is a more difficult since each register counts twice.

For *Performer Choice*, let's say the performer chooses to repeat register #3 as #5 and register #1 as #6.

Let us say the performer then rolls the sequence 6, 5, 4, 4, 3, 3, 2, 4, 1, 6, 1, 5, 2. The registers for each region would be:

Region 1 = Registers #1 and #3 (#6 and #5)   Region 4 = Register #2 and #1

Region 2 = Register #4   Region 5 = Register #1 (#6 and #1)

Region 3 = Register #3   Region 6 = Registers #2 and #3 (#2 and #5)

-the third time 4 is rolled it is ignored-

When performing regions with two registers (Region 1, 4, and 6 in the example above), the performer chooses which hand should be in which register (the performer can choose to have the hands crossed, but they must remained crossed for the entire region). When performing regions with only one register (Region 2, 3, and 5 in the example above), the hands play together to form large clusters in the given register.

Interlude #1

Stephen F. Lilly

Performance Instructions:

> *Pianist* – For each interlude, read the text in a conversational manner, addressing the audience while seated at the piano bench.

> *Soprano* – Listen intently to the pianist while he/she speaks.

The piece you just heard, *Pastorale*, was very carefully crafted and employed a variety of effects. Some of those effects were successful, some less so. For our purposes it's a bit long and a bit difficult. It is definitely the most abrasive piece of the evening. In fact, I noted that the single child in the audience, who has been fidgeting in confusion, slapped his hands over his ears in desperation.

Das Mädchenlied

Stephen F. Lilly

Performance Instructions:
> *Pianist* – Play anything to capture the mood of the following events except quotations from preexisting music. There should be no breaks between events and little transition. Each event should last between 5 and 10 seconds.
> *Soprano* – If desired, reflect changes in mood with subtle facial expressions and knowing glances toward the pianist.

Event 1:
Youthful naïveté. An awakening full of promise, hope, and optimistic vigor brimming with self-confidence.

Event 2:
Intense sorrow punctuated by pangs of inconsolable yearning. Turbulent. All is lost; drowning in a sea of the unrequited.

Event 3:
A fickle turn. Somewhat cheeky, furtive, distracted, and "hard-to-get."

Event 4:
Giddy anticipation. On the verge of salvation as if all hinges on this next moment.
(The last chord should hang in the air.
Then, pausing briefly in silence, look at the soprano for her entrance.)

Soprano:
With the familiarity of a seasoned sailor:

"Shit!"
ff

Interlude #2

Stephen F. Lilly

Das Mächenlied, this last piece, is just dark. It is the sort of thing you are very glad to have experienced without necessarily wanting to revisit it, and presented this way, it's really more "performance art" and vulnerable to the accusation of being gratuitously difficult.

Canción de tímida

Stephen F. Lilly

Performance Instructions:

> This is a mime of an art song. The only audible sounds should be the breathing of the pianist and the soprano, the pianist pedaling, and the soft tapping of the pianist's fingertips on the piano keys. If at any time the soprano accidentally sings or the pianist accidentally plays, the piece ends immediately, and the performers proceed to the next song.
>
> The performers should not exaggerate any part of the performance to make up for the lack of sound. They should pretend as if they were performing normally. For instance, the soprano should breathe as if singing the indicated phrase lengths at the indicated dynamic level in the indicated part of her range.
>
> For the "text," the soprano should describe members of the audience.
>
> The overall mood of the piece is somber.
>
> *Coordination:* During the **Piano Introduction**, the soprano may look at the pianist, and the pianist may give the soprano a visual cue when he/she reaches the vamp that begins **Part 1**. After this, the soprano should always look out at the audience. The pianist should take his/her cues (i.e. when to begin **Part 2**, the pause before **Part 4**, and when to end) from the soprano.

Piano Introduction (30"-45")**:**
Primarily low, soft, homorhythmic (i.e. chordal), and brooding. Ends with a vamp over which the soprano enters.

Part 1 (45"-60")**:**
Soft, slow, and foreboding with an anxious undercurrent. The soprano "sings" long syllabically set phrases in her middle range. The piano accompaniment is still largely homorhythmic and low but with the occasional arpeggio into the upper-middle register; the pianist should use lots of pedal.

Part 2 (15"-20")**:**
Suddenly loud and violent. The soprano is still "singing" syllabically. The tempo is faster, however, and the phrases are shorter. Additionally, each phrase moves ever higher in the soprano's range. The piano accompaniment consists of fast scalar passages, racing from high to low and vice versa; the pianist should use little or no pedal.

Part 3 (15"-20")**:**
Virtuosic chaos. Overall, the dynamic level is very high, and the mood is tense and anxiety-ridden. The soprano "sings" a highly melismatic setting in a coloratura style that sits very high in her range. The pianist is on the edge of his/her abilities – hands frantically crossing and leaping from one register to another.

Brief Pause (2"-3")

Part 4 (20"-25")**:**
A return to the texture, mood, and dynamic level of **Part 1**. *The soprano, however, continues "singing" a melismatic setting that remains in her upper-middle range. The piece should end with sparse chords in the piano supporting a high, soft, sustained note in the soprano.*

Interlude #3

Stephen F. Lilly

I have to say that the style of what you just heard, *Canción de tímida*, would probably attract a smaller audience – deducting performers, publishers, composers, critics, and their friends, attendance would be about zero.

Chanson à boire pour Frédéric

Stephen F. Lilly

Performance Instructions:

This score employs both measured and unmeasured notations.
Measured notation is indicated by the marking *tempo giusto* and the quarter-note is set at M.M. = 120.

In the unmeasured portions of the score, notes are laid out proportionally, and barlines are used only for visual clarification. The duration of each system is indicated in seconds at the end of the system.

Notation:

- When two or more notes are joined by a ligature with a slash through it, they are to be played as quickly as possible.

Piano:

slam piano lid closed

Single-line staves are used for non-pitched events:

bang keyboard lid with closed fist
as chord fades and after soprano cuts off

mf
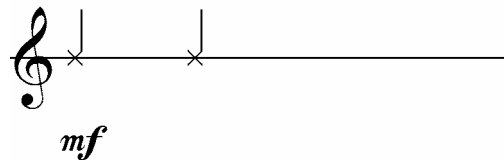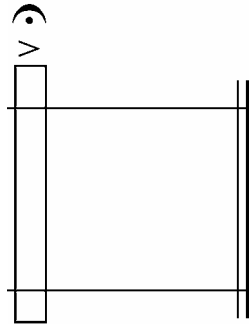
Clusters are indicated with block notation. The boundary pitches are given, and every note in between should be sounded. Unless indicated, clusters may be played in any way deemed appropriate.
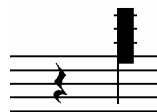
Soprano:

spoken musingly

mf

Ir - rel - e-vant?

Single-line staves indicate spoken text.
Contour is sometimes indicated. When it is, it should always be interpreted as contours within normal speaking range. Do not exaggerate high and low extremes.

spoken more freely

increasingly more angry

mf ———————————————— *ff*
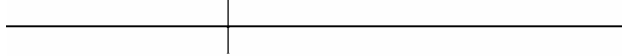
Irrelevant   Irrelevant   Irrelevant Irrelevant

For spoken text without contour indications, words are placed relative to where they should sound chronologically.

Non-bracketed text should be pronounced using American English standards.

I_____   am___
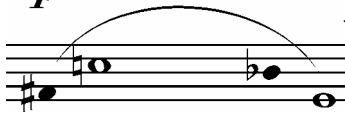
Bracketed text should be pronounced using IPA standards. Please note that all IPA sounds are taken from the words "I" and "am."

p

[æ] - - -

Chanson à boire pour Frédéric

Stephen F. Lilly

stiff and formal

15''

whispered

Soprano

I

am

I

Piano

una corda

Cut off with soprano

15''

tempo giusto – – – – – – – – – – – – – – –

♩ = *120*

S

I am I____ am I___ am__

bang open keyboard lid at insignia
with closed fist

Pno.

Chanson à boire pour Frédéric

increasingly more angry

Irrelevant　Irrelevant　Irrelevant　Irrelevant

whispered

agitated

Irrelevant

I am irrelevant.

growing agitated

Chanson à boire pour Frédéric

flustered and frustrated
blurting out the indicated phrases

Irrelevant.

Pointless.

An academic exercise.

Why should I even bother?

I am irrelevant.

Ir - rel - e - vant!

shouted

screamed

IRRELEVANT!

IRRELEVANT!

frantic *with fists*

with a sense of arrival