

Op. 48: Composing as Re-Creation

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Composing as Re-Creation

Op. 48 by Rupert Jeffcoat

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The scores of Op. 48 constitute Vol. 11.

Composing as Re-Creation

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Piano pieces

A Minute Waltz

Holy and Individual

Hungarian Flour Fudge

Just Dyeing to See it (aleatoric)

Les Sornettes Sonores

Prelude 465300.2751 (161049811271235) in C (pref. electric piano, or even electric organ)

Returning the Complement

Shanghaied

Sinister Developments

Sonata K. (pref. fortepiano)

Spieglein

The Bad-Tempered Clavichordist

The Rag Trade

Organ pieces

Can't Play, Won't Play!

Kontrafuge und Praeludium

Le V(i)ol de Bourdon

Luke 10.1

The Star and Garter

The Third Degree

Two-Keyboard pieces

Bachmaninov of Beverly Hills (2 pianos)

Marianne and Cecilia (Fortepiano and Glass Harmonica)

Mind the Gap (Piano and Harpsichord, pref. differing temperaments)

WTC1 (2 pianos: other options available)

Solo-Duet piece

Aladdin's Lamp (Piano and Harpsichord)

Cimbalom

Carmina Carmena

Singer/Pianist

Der Lustige Witwer

Trios

Dixit Dominus (Percussion: 4 players)

Gibraltar Gloria (English Horn, Spanish Guitar, Solo Treble)

Open and Shut (Violin, Viola, Piano)

The Interpretation of Drams (Fiddle, Piano and Inebriated Bagpiper)

Duets

Bach Kata Log (Cello and Piano)

Getting Even (Bassoon and Piano)

Hands Sax (Saxophone and Harpsichord)

Ja-Pan (Flute and Shakuhachi; Shoji required)

Offenbacharolle (Piano and Violin)

Tea-Tray (Viola, Piano and Sandwich - remember to check dietary requirements)

Ensembles

A = 416 (Harpsichord; 2 Oboes, 2 Bassoons and Contrabassoon)

Arutadrocs (Broken Ensemble: Alto Flute, Muted Trombone, Harp, Violin)

Glucklicherweise (String Band and Xylorimba)

No Bows Allowed (String Quartet and Harp)

Not my Field (almost Pierrot and almost Marteau ensembles; non-singing Soprano)

Penguins and Polar Bears (Piccolo, Contrabassoon; Marimba, Cor Anglais)

Re:Creation - *Usshering in Reality* (String Quartet)

Red Shoes (A clutch of Clarinets and an Electric Organ)

Space-Time Continuum (Broken Quartet - mobile - and vibraphone - static)

The Powick Pianoforte Quintet (Mixed-up ensemble; also 2 nurses)

Tromperie 1872 (Broken Quartet: Flute, Trumpet, Glockenspiel, Double Bass)

World Peace (6 instruments all plucked from around the globe)

WTC1

(WTC1 exists in a version for 2 ensembles as well as a version for 2 pianos: the 2-piano version can be played in differing ways, and two different scores are provided for this; both in the major mode, one is a smaller 'minor' version, the other a bigger 'major' version.)

NOTE to performabilities of Op. 48

The forces required for **Op. 48** appears to have an arch-structure: although there seem to be 48 pieces, with **WTC1** existing in both a two-keyboard version (itself with a smaller and a larger version) and a double-ensemble version (for 18 players) the below list comes to 50 pieces. Many such anomalies or quirks infect the design and some of the works respond to differing situational necessities and performance possibilities, although their notation remains the same. The progression from 1 player to many has two small dips either side of the midpoint, both of which underline issues surrounding players, parts and roles.

- 13 piano pieces (other instruments can be employed)
 - 6 organ pieces (one non-sounding)
 - 4 two-keyboard pieces (various combinations)
 - 1 solo-duet piece (one player on two instruments)
 - 1 cimbalom piece
 - 1 singer/pianist piece (same player in both roles)
 - 4 trios (though one requires 4 players)
 - 6 duets (of varying combinations)
 - 13 ensemble pieces (for various differing groups)

With the Two-Keyboard pieces, the possibility exists of having one part played on computer, with the other part live. In **Mind the Gap**, especially, this would be particularly effective, while **Aladdin's Lamp** (whichever instruments are used) needs the instruments to be angled appropriately. **World Peace** might benefit from judicious amplification, as would **Der Lustige Witwer**. **Ja-Pan** needs to have both instrumental parts in different zones, so questions arise over priority. **Space-Time Continuum** needs additional power to move the players around, while **Offenbacharolle** merely requires two stands in different places for the same violinist. **Red Shoes** needs to be on a stage with easy egress (including a table for the lead clarinetist's initially partial instrument), and **The Powick Pianoforte Quintet** should be played at the end of a first-half as the players are required to make a quick getaway. **Re:Creation** begins in darkness, and **Not my Field** requires a soprano soloist (sited between the two ensembles) not to sing.

Prefatory Notes

Like a body at a funeral, the sound that music makes is a luxury item. Various composers have made do with not hearing their work out loud, whether it be Beethoven (from deafness), Bach (who posted his Brandenburg Concerti off as a job application) or Bizet (whose Symphony in C was unplayed for 80 years). As a composition portfolio, and not a performance one, the schema of the scores is the basis for discussion. While some voices (notably Ingarden) contend that the non-sounding elements of music are more important (1986: 51), hearing music out loud (rather than in the internal aural imagination) is beneficial. Regardless of the means of performance, though, I agree with Yeats, who said you cannot write without an audience (in Muir 1962: 51).

Many works have certain performance issues, such as un-prescriptive Baroque Sonatas which invite the player's input. Some of **Op. 48** is 'baroque' in not fussing over the notation of dynamics or tempo. If some see this as un-user-friendly, I wish to call on a musician's ability to respond (which is their 'responsibility'). *Pace* Birkets, who sees printing as making text immutable and permanent (1994: 157), the writtendownness of a score (even when detailed) strangely encourages its peculiar mobility. This Derridian point is pre-echoed by Ingarden (1986: 151), and this protean propensity of music is key to understanding **Op. 48**. Although it is possible to appreciate, say, ballet-music without the movement, even when it is performed as fully staged, so-called complete artworks are still only partially appreciable. Various options for pieces mean that performances can never tell the whole story: the universe of **Op. 48** is similar, with diverse constellations taking time to be understood.

Yet **Op. 48** is not a tome of arid philosophy, but an essentially playful exercise, not intended just for a "fit audience though few". **Op. 48** stretches notions of practicality as well as practicability. **Op. 48** suggests that commenting on and thinking about music (paramusic and metamusic?) takes place inside music itself. It acts as a Critique of Pure (and even Practical) Music, since no piece is pure, with each abounding in musical, musicological, textural, textual, numerical, pictorial, philosophical, spiritual, practical and

doubtless other references. It avers that music's currency never goes out of date. Larkin's poem (about libraries) beautifully expresses how such a partnership evolves.

New eyes each year
Find old books here,
And new books, too,
Old eyes renew;
So youth and age
Like ink and page
In this house join,
Minting new coin.

Philip Larkin

(*Collected Poems*, Faber, London, 1988: 212) [*re-printed here in Book Antiqua font.*]

6 notes on Op. 48 and the commentary

- B) Words that may not appear elsewhere are detailed in the Glossary.
- A) Works cited in bold type refer to pieces in Op. 48. These can be found listed alphabetically in the Appendix.
- G) Works cited in both bold and italic type are pieces by the author. These can be found listed alphabetically in the Sub-Appendix.
- F) Standard conventions are employed with regard to other works: italic for particular pieces (e.g. *Verklärte Nacht*); roman type for generic titles (e.g. Symphony no. 2).
- E) The section entitled Works Cited contains titles of works directly mentioned in Op. 48 or this commentary. However, to counter Cooke's notion of "unconscious 'cribbing'" (1959: 172), further examples are alluded to so that the musical or musicological references, of which I am aware, are recorded.
- D) The section entitled Bibliography contains references to books, but also to plays, poetry and sound recordings.

A Trio of Acknowledgments

I wish to express my thanks to the University of Salford (its people, libraries, and IT services) for their support during this period. I have particularly appreciated the comments and criticism of Professor Alan Williams, who has been able to sift and seed ideas with a telling mixture of wisdom and generosity. Others have helped me consider matters deeply over many years: Alexander Goehr apostrophising on late Stravinsky; Robin Holloway helping me to trepan two-piano repertoire; tutorials on the Tudors with Peter le Huray; or organically bashing Bach with Glenn Gould's teacher, Peter Hurford. Conversations with Kenneth Leighton, Alan Ridout, Robin Orr, Judith Bingham, Malcolm Williamson (accompanied by Vegemite sandwiches), Ronald Stevenson, Geoffrey King and John Joubert on the rights and rites of modern music have played a part too. Working with countless instrumentalists, conductors, organists, choirs and assorted artists over the years has been a privilege: they have taught me more than they know.

I also need to thank more distant musicians. Strangely, Rupert Brooke, in his poem *Heaven* (2014: 21-2), mentions two important forces within a few lines: both the Eternal Brook (Bach) and the Almighty Fin (Sibelius) have contributed to Op. 48 - the former was materially productive, while the latter's software helped to produce the material. Brooke's fish seeks ever "wetter water", and it has been a joy to discover more about the ocean of music. Like the Leviathan in Psalm 104 (v. 26), my 'playground', 'arena', 'theatre' or 'forum' is the sea of music inside which I compose, and I am humbled and excited that "both small and great beasts" (v. 25) have stopped awhile. Naturally, any mistakes are my own though, like the proverbial Persian carpet, these are a witness to human fallibility (contrasting with divine perfection) and even a hint (from the beyond?) of myriad future possibilities.

Finally, after a brief but sincere apology to friends I have doubtless bored over several decades, I wish to say an enormous thank-you to my family who stoically survived books, notes, scores, sounds and ideas invading their time and space sporadically and spasmodically. Their love and patience is one of the more recent wonders of the world.

Abstract

What is it to write 'new' music? Music is not written in a vacuum, and Op. 48 investigates how one small Bach piece's (re)sourcefulness can result in a variety of musics. The collection (of 48 pieces) explores not only scientific areas of musicology and analysis, but subjective and intuitive areas of performance, resonances with other art forms and more fantastical elements such as virtual history and humour.

More challengingly, the amount of music (some 2 hours) presents an issue over the language used in discourse, for the linearity of words is partial and even misleading. Op. 48 is a criticism of what Bach notated and an economic way of talking about how music talks. Drawing on poetic and philosophic insights, 'Bach' is played with re-creatively: the precedents and parallel developments of the procedures I employ form a further stage of possible development.

Rather than repeating empty encomia in this Bach *Festschrift*, Op. 48 honours Bach's invention by creating further music. Op. 48 is arguably not subservient to the Bach, and asks when (if ever) pieces grow up and become independent organisms. For while Op. 48 exhibits a wide-ranging diversity, it does not (and perhaps cannot) claim to be exhaustive, since the music seeds further pieces, which questions if it is viable to talk of an art work as discrete at all.

Foreword

Many compositions nowadays come with programme notes or commentaries, and I do not wish to confuse things further by adding a commentary on the commentaries and so on. However, as this is a PhD submission, I trust it is seen as helpful to provide a brief comment which explains why its structure has come out the way that it has.

This commentary is designed to be reader-friendly, although I accept that some of the topics and interrelationships within (and in the music too) stretch normal accessibility. To amplify something of how discourse is layered, direct quotations (from authors etc) are placed in double inverted commas, while conceptual references and topical assignations are shown by single inverted commas; a good example occurs earlier in note E on page vi. How we deal with the issue over the relative importances of 'music or commentary' may sometimes be straightforward: here, though, it is more intricate, and I believe that the discussion about prioritising these is interesting on many levels. Tempting as it is to simplify the matter, the difficulties encountered in doing so are revealing. If the 'music v. commentary' debate is actually about reconciling two incompatible thought systems, then a simplistic sound-bite solution is unlikely to suffice, and it suggests we find, or at least seek, solutions in other dimensions.

4 particular problems inform the whole project (which arguably apply to anyone involved in composing music). Although the focus of the PhD lies in another area - it develops the implications of a short keyboard piece by a mediocre Thuringian church musician - these issues loom over the project and will be addressed in the Afterword.

- i) With 'Music' and 'Commentary', can one ask about priority and apply this more widely?;
- ii) Is developing a piece of Bach somehow a statement on the Canon?;
- iii) Is composition fruitful in enabling Musicology to focus on music and not on itself?;
- iv) Can a wide-ranging study help to ask how the Academy embraces interdisciplinarity?

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Vol II.

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Dixit Dominus
Getting Even
Gibraltar Gloria
Glucklicherweise
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WTC1 - for 2 pianos
WTC1 - extended version for 2 pianos

