

Politics, Improvisation, and Musicking
in Frederic Rzewski's 'Which Side Are You On?' from *North American Ballads*.

by

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A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Music
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Musical Arts, The City University of New York

2012

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This manuscript has been read and accepted by the Graduate Faculty in Music in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts.

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ABSTRACT

Politics, Improvisation, and Musicking in Frederic Rzewski's 'Which Side Are You On?' from *North American Ballads*.

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Discussions of the role of politics in Frederic Rzewski's music generally stop at surface elements: the title of the work, the use of a particular song, and guesses as to what left-leaning audience the piece is directed at. Similarly, discussion of the role of improvisation in Rzewski's work begins and ends simply at the mention of its existence. Using transcription and analysis of improvisations from recordings of "Which Side Are You On?" from *North American Ballads* combined with ideas about modeling from Christian Asplund, musicking from Christopher Small, dialogue from David Bohm, and Rzewski's own writings about music, I demonstrate how the political manifests at every level of the music, enabling listeners and performers to experience a socio-political situation beyond mere sloganeering, and the essential role improvisation plays in creating that experience.

Preface

This work began with an interest in improvisation and how it is incorporated into classical music practices. One piece in particular served as an effective model and case study for me, Frederic Rzewski's *North American Ballads*, a four-movement work based on four different folk songs, whose two inner movements have opportunities for free improvisation. I intended to have an in-depth look at the relationship between the written and improvised music via a thorough analysis of both the written music and transcriptions of recorded improvisations.

While this intention still stands, my idea of a purely scientific, theoretical treatment, unencumbered by the seemingly extra-musical political ideas tacked onto the work has given way to a different realization: the political ideas are part and parcel of the theoretical analysis. Improvisation's role is not simply a chance for the performer to stretch improvisational muscle, but serves an important function in the musical and political power of the work. What prompted the change of heart?

Two things tugged at me while doing research: first, the lack of information about the original folksongs in articles about the piece, which led me to the second, the treatment of politics in connection with classical music. The first issue was the information about the songs the work was based on, "Which Side Are You On," in particular, was superficial. I couldn't find resources about Rzewski's piece that looked at the source material in depth. When comparing what one article said was the source where Rzewski found the song,¹ I found it was significantly different than the way Rzewski presented the song in his own work. Only one source mentions the

¹ Larry Bell and Andrea Olmstead, "Musica Reservata in Frederic Rzewski's *North American Ballads*." *Musical Quarterly* 72, no. 4 (1986): 455.

difference and chalks it up to the folk process.² Few seemed to question why Rzewski would change the melody. It seemed to me that more research about the original song was needed, in order to understand more clearly how it works musically and politically in the piece.

As I researched the song, I learned more about its history, when and why it was composed and began to consider more deeply why Rzewski would pick this song. I looked into Rzewski's writings for clues about his political motivations, his background in free improvisation, and his other explicitly political works preceding *North American Ballads*. From this, it became clear that Rzewski views music making as a political act, improvisation especially so. The combination of the political nature of the song the work is based on and Rzewski's own impetus for composing explicitly political works, led me to suspect that I could no longer ignore the political aspects in the name of "pure musical analysis." Whether I agreed with the politics or not, I felt if I were really going to understand how this piece worked and how improvisation functioned in the work, then I should take the political ideas seriously and explore what musical analysis could illuminate about them.

I wish to demonstrate with this paper that political ideas are not merely frosted on top of the piece, in the form of lyrics or titles, but that these ideas are woven into the fabric of the music at multiple structural levels. These ideas are then transformed even further through improvisation. By political ideas, I do not mean

² Vanessa Cornett-Murtada, "Quotation, revolution, and American culture: the use of folk tunes and the influence of Charles Ives in Frederic Rzewski's *North American Ballads for solo piano*." (DMA Performance diss., Univ. North Carolina Greensboro, 2004), 52. "Rzewski alters some of the pitches of the original folk tune ... although with the oral tradition of these folk tunes, it would not be surprising to find several different versions of the same melody." As shown in Chapter II, there are indeed multiple versions of Reece's melody, as well as the melody she based hers upon. I propose that Rzewski didn't alter, but instead was familiar with a different version of the tune.

sloganeering or propaganda. Instead, the abstract quality of music allows us to combine our own ideas with those in the music. This happens in every piece of music, but when a piece is consciously composed to explore certain political ideas, it can be a powerful form of dialogue.

Introduction: I introduce *North American Ballads* and “Which Side Are You On,” then describe how Rzewski’s use of multiple styles, political songs, and improvisation enable him to provide an environment wherein performers and listeners experience a socio-political situation.

Chapter I: I discuss Rzewski’s compositions and life in order to place the work in an historical context, looking in particular at how improvisation and politics appeared in his oeuvre. I look at motivations and justifications for exploring the political in music, and posit ways in which the political is a musical element.

Chapter II: I present an historical, political and musical analysis of the original “Which Side Are You On” by Florence Reece, to form a basis from which we can understand how Rzewski uses the song — musically and politically — in his own piece. I show how Reece embeds political experiences into the musical structure of the song, by drawing on songs and forms with which she and her immediate audience are familiar. These embedded political experiences are then transferred to Rzewski’s work, forming the foundation of the ideas he incorporates into his piece. The primary experience in both Reece’s song and Rzewski’s work is that of sidedness: having sides, forming sides, taking sides, switching sides — these experiences originate in the structure of the musical materials themselves.

Chapter III: I analyze the composed part of Rzewski’s work and show how Rzewski uses not just the same sounds to create his piece, but also integrates the same political and musicking issues from Reece’s song, extending the political

experience of sidedness to model rapidly changing relationships between different groups.

Chapter IV: I analyze four recordings of improvisations and explore the ways in which the performers manipulate the musical and political material to create a sense of dialogue between those musicking with the piece. Using philosopher and physicist David Bohm's writings about dialogue, I discuss how sidedness is transformed into dialogue via improvisation.

David Bohm's work in theoretical physics led him to explore and write about other aspects of human existence including language, thought, creativity, and dialogue.³ Bohm describes dialogue as a process by which participants co-create a new, shared idea. Certain conditions have to be in place in order for this to happen and I argue that improvisation creates those conditions in the performance of Rzewski's work.

Chapter V: I discuss the potential meanings brought up in performance, the importance of improvisation to the work, the issues surrounding transcription, and the political power in combining the traditions of classical music and improvisation.

³ Basil J. Hiley, "Obituary: Professor David Bohm." *The Independent* 30 October 1992: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/people/obituary-professor-david-bohm-1560397.html?printService=print>; David Bohm, *On Dialogue*, 110.

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Introduction

By the time Frederic Rzewski composed *North American Ballads* in 1979–80, he was in his forties, living and teaching in Belgium at the invitation of composer Henri Pousseur.¹ A work composed by someone established in the field and having developed a ‘mature’ style, *North American Ballads* contains what may be considered the hallmarks of Rzewski’s style: virtuosic use of multiple styles within a single work that often run the gamut of what has happened musically in the 20th century; loosely structured or unstructured improvisation; and some sort of reference to socio-political events, appearing in the form of folk songs, text, or simply in the title.

Pianist Paul Jacobs commissioned *North American Ballads*, asking that the music be “accessible and recognizably American.”² Rzewski honored this request by choosing four songs associated with various protest and labor movements from early 20th-century Appalachia, the melodies of which have their origins in American-British folk balladry and African-American blues and spirituals. Rzewski had met and was influenced by Pete Seeger while living in New York City. Seeger’s dictum to “follow the example of Bach”³ — i.e., use tunes that people can sing, as Bach does in his chorale preludes — was on Rzewski’s mind as this piece was germinating.⁴

¹ Robert Schwartz, “A Composer for the Masses Scales Down His Ambitions.” *New York Times*, (October 26, 1997): <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9E0CE2DC143EF935A15753C1A961958260&sec=&spon=&pagewanted=print>.

² Paul Jacobs, Liner notes, *Paul Jacobs Plays Blues, Ballads & Rags*. Elektra/Nonesuch D-79006, (1991).

³ Frederic Rzewski, Liner notes, *Rzewski Plays Rzewski: Piano Works 1975-1999*. Nonesuch CD79623, (2002).

⁴ Frederic Rzewski, "Ballads," in *Nonsequiturs: Writings & Lectures on Improvisation, Composition and Interpretation*. Edited by Gisela Gronemeyer and Reinhard Oehlschlägel.

The four songs — “Dreadful Memories,” “Which Side Are You On?,” “Down by the Riverside,” and “Winnsboro Cotton Mill Blues” — each comprise a movement, and they provide all of the musical materials. The lyrics of the songs explore the relationship of the individual to some sort of power hierarchy and the protagonist’s desire to improve his or her situation. In “Dreadful Memories,” the narrator tells how awful it is to have to watch your family die of starvation when you are not making enough money, despite working all day. The narrator goes on to say that the only way things will change is to unionize and fight for better wages.

Dreadful memories, how they linger,
How they ever flood my soul.
How the workers and their children
Died from hunger and from cold.

Hungry fathers, wearied mothers,
Living in those dreadful shacks,
Little children cold and hungry
With no clothing on their backs.

...

Really, friends, it doesn't matter
Whether you are black or white.
The only way you'll ever change things
Is to fight and fight and fight.

We will have to join the union,
They will help you find a way
How to get a better living
And for your work get better pay.⁵

“Which Side Are You On?” is also a rallying cry to unionize, presenting the

Köln: Edition MusikTexte, 2007: 464. “When I was living in New York in the early seventies I got to know Pete Seeger, who was one of my heroes. ... In the later seventies, I was living in Europe again, but thinking a lot about the United States. I also thought about following the example of Bach.”

⁵ Sarah Ogan Gunning, lyrics to “Dreadful Memories” in liner notes, *Come All You Coal Miners*, Rounder 1972.

argument in more black and white terms:⁶

Come all of you good workers,
Good news to you I'll tell,
Of how the good ol' Union
Has come in here to dwell

...

They say in Harlan County
There are no neutrals there;
You'll either be a union man
Or a thug for J. H. Blair [the sheriff]

...

Oh, workers, can you stand it?
Oh, tell me how you can.
Will you be a lousy scab?
Or will you be a man?
Which side are you on?
Which side are you on?⁷

The most well known of the set, "Down By the Riverside" is a spiritual decrying war.

Goin' to lay down my sword and shield down by the riverside
Down by the riverside, down by the riverside.
Goin' to lay down my sword and shield down by the riverside
And study war no more.⁸

The last song describes the greediness and cruelty of the mill boss and the dedication of the mill worker:

Old Man Sargent, sitting at his desk,
The damned old fool won't give us a rest
He'd take the nickels off a dead man's eyes
To buy Coca-Cola and Eskimo Pies

...

When I die, don't bury me at all,
Just hang me up on the spool-room wall;
Place a knoter in my hand,
So I can spool in the Promised Land⁹

⁶ Edith Fowke and Joe Glazer, eds. "Which Side Are You On?" *Songs of Work and Protest*. New York: Dover Publications, 1973: 55.

⁷ Florence Reece, "Which Side Are You On?" Taken from Fowke and Glazer, *Songs of Work and Protest*, 1973: 55. Lyrics also appear in many other publications and on the internet.

⁸ Quoted in Frederic Rzewski, Liner notes, *Rzewski Plays Rzewski: Piano Works 1975-1999*. Nonesuch CD79623, 2002. Lyrics appear in many publications and on the internet.

While the piece may seem like a sonata, being a four-movement piano work of similar weight and breadth, the forms of the individual movements and the dramatic trajectory do not correspond to that of a typical 19th century piano sonata, which may be described as one in which a protagonist overcomes his environment or situation through a dialectical struggle. Rzewski likens them to chorale preludes, in which “the melody may be cut into smaller pieces, stretched, compressed, transposed into other tonalities, and stacked up against itself, but if you look for it, it is always present.”¹⁰ The four “chorale preludes” here function perhaps not as an overarching narrative, but more as a polyptych, in which the topic at hand is explored through different scenes. In this way, the piece is aligned more with the organ tradition than the piano sonata tradition, but also in that the inner two movements present the opportunity for extended improvisation on the given musical materials.¹¹

It is this opportunity, particularly in “Which Side Are You On?” that is the focus of this study. In the same way that Bach’s chorale preludes are written from a place of faith — the prettiness, the memorability of the tunes, as Seeger implies, serves a purpose beyond abstract beauty, that is, they help the congregation experience their faith more deeply — Rzewski has picked these songs not for their surface musical malleability but because he “think[s] of these ‘ballads’ as

⁹ Rzewski, Liner notes, *Rzewski Plays Rzewski: Piano Works 1975-1999*. Nonesuch CD79623, 2002.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Generally speaking, the organ tradition includes improvisation on given materials — not specifically in regards to “inner movements.” For a brief overview of organ improvisation, see Derek Bailey, *Improvisation: Its Nature and Practice in Music*, New York: Da Capo Press, 1992: 29-35.

representing the things [he] believe[s] in.”¹² The combination of the song *Which Side Are You On*, its notated treatment, and an improvisation on those materials make this representation something palpable: the listeners and the performers experience something beyond clever re-workings of a catchy melody, instead being placed in the socio-political situation themselves.

A brief discussion about my use of “socio-political” is warranted here. One way the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) defines the term simply means “involving both social and political aspects,”¹³ which is certainly an apt description of Rzewski’s music. For clarity, I would like to differentiate between “social,” implying a sort of *Gebrauchsmusik* — although there are aspects of that in Rzewski’s music — and the initial definition that OED gives, “relating to society or its organization”;¹⁴ “socio-” in this term refers to the latter. It is worth defining “political” more sharply, as well. Here, both entries in OED are of interest: The first deals with government or public affairs; the second concerns seeking power or status, often at the expense of morals. The second sense is usually used derogatorily,¹⁵ but it’s worth noting that even when morals remain intact, any relationship between two or more people involves defining power roles, and is, therefore, political. While Rzewski’s music is not free of specific political ideologies, I contend that Rzewski’s music, and in particular “Which Side Are You On,” is less about specific ideologies and is more

¹² Rzewski, Liner notes, *Rzewski Plays Rzewski: Piano Works 1975-1999*. Nonesuch CD79623, 2002.

¹³ “Socio-political,” OED, 2005: <http://www.oxfordreference.com/views/ENTRY.html?subview=Main&entry=t140.e73274>

¹⁴ “Social,” OED, 2005: <http://www.oxfordreference.com/views/ENTRY.html?subview=Main&entry=t140.e73218>

¹⁵ “Political,” OED, 2005: <http://www.oxfordreference.com/views/ENTRY.html?subview=Main&entry=t140.e60020>

about how individuals function within groups of people (socio-) to deal with the (often unfair) distribution of power (political). In the course of this paper, I will use “political” to refer to the more general socio-political sense.

Chapter I — The Political is the Musical

Discovering how the representation of a socio-political situation in music works requires looking not only at the lyrical content of the songs Rzewski chose, but how the songs are used musically, as well as the function of improvisation as an essential part of the piece. It is helpful to have a context for Rzewski's work, which can be gained from looking at his work leading up to *North American Ballads*, his own writings about music, as well as other critical writings on Rzewski, *Which Side Are You On*, and improvisation. Possibly the most noted aspects of Rzewski's music, as mentioned above, are the use of multiple styles both within a single work and from work to work, the use of improvisation, and the use of overtly political texts and titles. Yet there are few sources that actually delve deeply into these phenomena to connect them to the larger dramatic impulses of any given work. Understanding how these phenomena relate to the structure and flow of the work is crucial to understanding the work of Rzewski.

Style

According to musicologist Kyle Gann, Rzewski was thought of as "the fifth minimalist" due to works like *Les Moutons*, *Coming Together*, and *Attica*. The conventional wisdom changed in 1976 with *The People United Will Never Be Defeated*, a work whose variations on a composed political protest song (as opposed to a folk song) run the gamut from pointillistic serialism, to jazz, to dadaist whistling, the

whole piece tied together by a strict numerical formal scheme.¹ The works composed in the brief period between *The People United Will Never Be Defeated* and *North American Ballads* include works for jazz ensemble, open instrumentation, and songs for voice and piano. Variation is the norm for Rzewski. As composer Christian Wolff writes:

Rzewski's work has sometimes been seen as simply eclectic, and so too not fitting well into any single standard category. To be sure, he knows well, and in some cases has extensively performed, a wide range of musics — classical, folk, blues, jazz, avant-garde experimental among them. And elements of all of these can be seen in his work, though not as simple appropriations; rather, he experiments with them and keeps in touch with musical traditions whose vitality continues to be affecting, for him and for listeners from a variety of musical backgrounds.²

Rzewski himself denies the existence of a “personal style” in his own music, “Every music that I do seems to be very different than the thing that came before. ... [Y]ou cannot rely on any one historical tradition anymore.”³ In a later interview, he explains his use of a myriad of styles by placing himself in an historical continuum between serialists like Pousseur and postmodernists like John Zorn:

[I]n my case, and in the case of colleagues of my own generation, say, people like Cornelius Cardew or Louis Andriessen or Christian Wolff — those of us who, in a sense, came to maturity, if we did, in the late 60s —

¹ Kyle Gann, “Never Second-Guessing Rzewski,” *Playbill: Carnegie Hall*, 2008: 33. The original four minimalists are today known as LaMonte Young, Terry Riley, Philip Glass, and Steve Reich, who were all born within three years before Rzewski. For more information, see Potter, Keith. “Minimalism.” *Grove Music Online*. Oxford Music Online. 30 August 2010, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/40603>

² Christian Wolff, “Frederic Rzewski and His Piano Music,” liner notes from *Rzewski Plays Rzewski*, Nonesuch, 2002.

³ Walter Zimmermann, “Frederic Rzewski,” *Desert Plants: conversations with 23 American composers*, Vancouver: ARC Publications, 1976: 312-3.

[moving around among styles] had a different reason, a different function, which was we were, at that time, fooling around, trying to— we were concerned with the problem of musical language, as a way of reaching parts of the potential audience which, apparently, was alienated by the kind of language that our older colleagues had perfected: the serialist language, and so on. ... This was a commonly perceived problem at that time, and there were many different responses to it.⁴

Improvisation

Many composers of the post-Cage generation began to explore including varying degrees of improvisation in their works, but Rzewski is one of the few working in the classical tradition to include space for completely free improvisation and place it on an equal footing with his own written material. Rzewski's experience with improvisation began with his activities in the group Musica Elettronica Viva (MEV). After finishing graduate school in the 1960s, Rzewski moved to Italy on a Fulbright and formed the live-electronics improvisational group with fellow composers Richard Teitelbaum and Alvin Curran. MEV was a means of exploring their musical interests that lay outside the classical mainstream, namely, homemade electronic instruments used in a live setting — as opposed to tape music and computer music produced in a studio, and various forms of group composition.⁵

He continued to include directions for improvisation — ranging in degrees of specificity — when he returned to writing concert music in the 70s. Rzewski indicates in "Which Side Are You On?" that the improvisation is optional and the

⁴ Frederic Rzewski, Interview by Charles Amirhanian, KPFA, January 1989. Transcription by this author. Hereafter known as KPFA.

⁵ Rzewski, "Experiences and Retrospects: A Short History of MEV," *Nonsequiturs*, 268. Originally an unpublished text from January 1991.

piece can be performed without it.⁶ Although composers are increasingly including space for improvisation in their compositions, improvisation in classical music remains a contentious issue. Seth Beckman points out in his dissertation “The fact that Rzewski leaves [improvisation] as optional components of the pieces signals the precarious position of improvisation in classical music.”⁷ In his book on improvisation, jazz guitarist and free improviser Derek Bailey provides a perspective as an outsider to classical music:

It is undeniable that for many musicians, performing music is a matter of being a highly-skilled executant in a well-rehearsed ensemble, and it is also true that this role has its satisfactions. But it does seem that to be trained solely for that role is probably the worst possible preparation for improvisation. And the biggest handicap inflicted by that training is the instilling of a deeply reverential attitude towards the creation of music, an attitude which unquestioningly accepts the physical and hierarchical separation of playing and creating. From this stems the view of improvisation as a frivolous or even a sacrilegious activity.⁸

That view of improvisation has loosened, yet the standards of performance in both jazz improvisation and classical composition can make the inexperienced improviser feel insecure. Composer Earle Brown struggled with this issue in the 1950s, when he started to include improvisational elements in his music:

“Improvisation takes a certain degree of self-confidence and a lot of classical musicians don’t have that self-confidence.”⁹

⁶ Rzewski, *North American Ballads*, 43.

⁷ Seth Beckmann, “The Traditional and the Avant-Garde in Late Twentieth Century Music” (DMA diss., Ball State University, 1996), 208.

⁸ Bailey, *Improvisation*, 67.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 63.

About forty years later, pianist Kim Hayashi expresses similar reluctance to attempt to fill the expert improviser's shoes:

Rzewski is known as a formidable improviser. ... In order to carry out the instructions he provides effectively, one must not only be confident in the art of improvisation, but must be extraordinarily proficient and adept at creating music with a sense of structure and form to correlate the improvisation to the rest of the music in the piece. It would be presumptuous of anyone who cannot meet these requirements to attempt to even do so.¹⁰

A search on improvisation in classical music turns up articles about the "revival" of improvisation in classical music from as recent as 2010. It seems that at the time of writing this paper the prevailing sentiment remains that improvisation is simply something a majority of classical musicians do not engage in.¹¹

With a number of recordings of the work that don't include the improvisation (either in "Which Side Are You On?" or "Down By the Riverside") — Lara Downes, Kathleen Supové, Paul Jacobs, Tony DeMare — it seems that often soloists are reluctant to record their improvisations. Many have written that improvisation is central to Rzewski's aesthetic and leave it at that. Happily, this mentality is changing, albeit slowly. Former Bang on a Can pianist Lisa Moore has recorded the piece with improvisations, as has David Jalbert, as I discuss below. In addition, pianist Robert C. Paul's dissertation *Improvisation in twentieth-century solo piano repertoire: as represented in Alvin Curran's "First piano piece" (1967) and pieces selected from "Squares"*

¹⁰ Kim Hayashi, "The keyboard music of Frederic Anthony Rzewski" (DMA Performance, University of Arizona, 1994), 113.

¹¹ See Amanda Rose Martinez, "The Improvisational Brain," *Seed Magazine* (2010): seedmagazine.com; Alex Ross, "Taking Liberties," *The New Yorker* 85, no. 6 (2009): newyorker.com; Alexandra Alter, "Making Up the Classics," *The Wall Street Journal* (2008): <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB122781195665062021.html#printMode>

(1978) and “Four North American Ballads” (1978-1979), by Frederic Rzewski¹² presents a detailed account of how he prepared himself to improvise, which will hopefully inspire future pianists. The inclusion of improvisation changes much about how the piece works, usually transforming the piece into an entirely different experience, as the written music must be interpreted anew by the listener when juxtaposed with a improvisation of equal length.

Political Ideas

Socio-political ideas start manifesting themselves in Rzewski’s work in an explicit fashion beginning with *Jefferson* of 1970, written in response to the Kent State killings. Over the years he has composed works dealing with issues and events about the Attica prison riots of 1971 (*Coming Together, Attica*), the Chilean coup of 1973 (*The People United Will Never Be Defeated*), the Alexander Kielland accident in Norway in 1980 (*The Price of Oil*), poor labor conditions and unionizing (*Mayn Yingle, North American Ballads, A Long Time Man, Roses*), homophobia (*De Profundis*), xenophobia (*The Burghers of Rostock*), and war (*War Songs, Apolitical Intellectuals, Stop the War!*). Expressing a political sentiment in a work of art, especially classical music, often attracts negative reactions. Perhaps because of the widespread use of propaganda for both politics and business dealings (a.k.a. marketing, advertising), politics mixed with music often can be discomfiting.¹³ When there is a positive reaction, it is from people who share the point of view expressed; but sharing a point

¹² Robert C. Paul, “Improvisation in twentieth-century solo piano repertoire: as represented in Alvin Curran’s *First Piano Piece* (1967), and pieces from *Squares* (1978) and *Four North American Ballads* (1978-1979), by Frederic Rzewski.” DMA Performance, U of Miami, 1993

¹³ Other authors have also made similar observations, see Asplund 428, Zuraw 19.

of view does not guarantee that people will accept the presence of politics. It seems to be more acceptable in popular song to express a political sentiment, perhaps because less is expected of those styles in terms of musical complexity; however, most popular songs in the latter half of the 20th century and continuing to today have lyrics to carry the political weight. When lyrics are absent, doubt about the music's ability to relay a concrete message seeps in; when lyrics are present, doubt about the quality of the music seeps in.

In many writings about Rzewski, either the political ideas are mentioned in a mostly neutral fashion or he is branded as naive or condescending.¹⁴ In either case, the political is rarely ever connected to the sounds being made.¹⁵ When asked, Rzewski makes it clear that he doesn't want to be branded as a "political composer":

I don't think of myself as being an especially political composer. I am in the habit of trying to relate my work to the world around me, and if this means being a political composer, then I suppose that's what it has to be, but I don't think there's anything especially unusual about it.¹⁶

People keep harping on this political motif, and I've never understood why they think it's so important. If it were pop music, it would be considered natural. But an American classical composer is supposed to be right-wing or an academic or just removed from reality.¹⁷

I don't feel especially qualified to deal with this topic [music and political ideals]. I am not an expert in political questions. I try to keep myself informed and to arrive at

¹⁴ See Small, *Music of the Common Tongue*, 353-54; Rockwell, *All-American Music*, 89-93; Groemer, *Paths to the New Romanticism*, 115-118.

¹⁵ Notable exceptions are Asplund and Bell and Olmstead.

¹⁶ Rzewski, "I am in the habit of trying to relate my work to the world around me: Conversation with Vivian Perlis," *Nonsequiturs*, 184. Previously published as Interview with Vivian Perlis. *Oral History, American Music Series*, Yale University, 2 Dec 1984.

¹⁷ K. Robert Schwartz, "A Composer for the Masses Scales Down His Ambitions," *New York Times*, 1997.

reasoned judgments. I try to support the things that I believe in, and to withdraw my support from the things that I don't believe in. I am concerned... about where the world is going. ... It is unlikely that any one of us... will ever be called upon to play a deciding role in shaping the political destiny of the larger community to which we belong. ... Does this mean that we should not concern ourselves with politics?¹⁸

It is odd that someone who openly uses political texts, titles, and folk or protest songs would then deny being labeled a political composer. Rzewski's tone in the quotes above seem overly defensive, going so far as to accuse "people" of "harping on" the idea. Yet, being labeled "political" and accepting that label for oneself runs the risk of being regarded in a simplistic, two-dimensional manner, reminiscent of party politics where everything is black and white, left or right, us vs. them. Rzewski often speaks or writes with a charged tone. I've pieced together these quotes, not to worship at the altar, but to simply trace a line connecting his varied and often polemic statements about the roles politics and improvisation play in his music and music in general.

In an interview with Charles Amirkhonian for KPFA in 1989, Rzewski describes how he finds inspiration in "real-life situations" and differentiates between being a political activist and being a musician interested in the "human condition":

I could elicit all kinds of reasons for doing what I do, but I suppose that the most important reason for that is that I find it musically inspiring. I find it inspiring to write music about themes and questions which are of real concern to real people. It helps me to write a piece of music if I know what it's about, who it is for, who's going

¹⁸ Rzewski, "Music and Political Ideals: Lecture at the University of Wisconsin, River Falls," *Nonsequiturs*, 188. Previously unpublished lecture given at the University of Wisconsin, River Falls, 27 April 1983.

to play it, who's going to listen to it, and to whom it might mean something, than merely to write in the air or abstract space. I get more ideas thinking about or trying to visualize, to imagine real situations, emotional situations, real-life situations, rather than simply juggling numbers and notes.

...

I do not consider myself a political activist. I've written some pieces of music which express concern with the human condition and deal with controversial subjects and takes a stand on these issues. But this is not the same as being a political activist: A political activist is somebody who lies down in front of a tank and dares the tank to run him over. I have never done this and I don't think I ever will. I've been on some picket lines, I've been to some demonstrations, and I like to shoot off my mouth sometimes, but this is not the same as being a political activist! I'm just not in that category.¹⁹

Rzewski has also described his views of music as a social activity in the article "Private or Collective": "All music can be regarded as in some way a collective form of expression, either representative of a particular attitude or style typical of a particular class at a particular time, or as a moment of a longer social process involving and affecting broad strata of society over long time periods. Tribal heterophony, feudal polyphony, art songs, and computer music all tell us something about the society in which they originate and its connection with other societies."²⁰ If all music is social, then all music must contain political aspects, too, because where there are groups of people — society — then they have to find ways to work together, i.e. govern themselves, which leads to politics — determining who has the power to govern. Art explores those relationships, whether explicitly stated in some

¹⁹ Rzewski, KPFA.

²⁰ Rzewski, "Private or Collective?" *Pieces, an anthology*, ed. Byron, 66.

aspect of the music or not:

We are educated to think of things like music and art as if they were processes that take place in an isolated environment, separated from everything else. ... But rarely do we learn, when we study [composers], what these people were really thinking about, aside from musical questions. We talk about them and listen to their work as though they thought only about music, and were not subject to the conditioning forces of the society in which they lived. ...[O]ne has to examine, not only the immanent characteristics of a piece of music, one has to imagine a piece of music as consisting of not only notes or sounds, but as a process of communication, involving groups of human beings on a very basic level: of course involving the collaborative activity of composers, performers, and audience, but also as a larger process of communication which involves a much larger and more general context.

For instance, if I were to play a piece of music for you right now, ... what we would be experiencing would be not simply a certain combination of a certain sequence of vibrations in the atmosphere, ... but we would be experiencing a live, real human situation, which is determined by, for instance, the place where we are, the reasons why we are here, the things we have in common. This is a social situation here. ... A piece of instrumental music can easily assume political qualities simply because of the objective factors present in the environment at the time of its performance.²¹

Since improvisation and political ideas carry so much weight in Rzewski's oeuvre and in his own views on music, a thorough analysis of *Which Side Are You On* should take these ideas into serious consideration. Unlike jazz pedagogy which has a history of learning to transcribe and analyze solos, classical music pedagogy does not. Because improvisation has played so small a role in 20th century classical, the impetus to study it in the way jazz musicians do has not surfaced. This is compounded by the lack of the technology to enable accurate transcription of a

²¹ Rzewski, "Music and Political Ideals," *Nonsequiturs*, 198-200.

piano improvisation as dense and intricate as the ones recorded by Rzewski, Lisa Moore, and David Jalbert. Only recently, with the rapid advances in digital sound technology, has one been able to change the speed of the recording without also affecting pitch. Now that this is available, we can take a closer look at some actual improvisations and see how they relate to the notated material. It is my hope that by looking at recorded improvisations classical musicians will be inspired by what is possible and the classical music world can once again embrace improvisation as a normal mode of musicking as jazz and other musics have.

Improvisation and Politics in Rzewski's Body of Work

Rzewski's interest in improvisation developed around the same time as his political awareness and the two are therefore tightly intertwined. He has elucidated his ideas about the political agency of music and improvisation's role in it in writings over the course of his career. Rzewski writes that art is effective when it is perceived as truthful, meaning it reflects the world around us, including not only our normal perceptions of reality, but also the "precariousness of existence" and "a momentary glimpse of possible worlds lurking behind the limited field of habitual perception."²² Music does this primarily as a social activity, bringing people together in a social situation — "to share in a common experience"²³ which also reflects the larger social situations in the community and beyond. The task or job of the artist is

²² Rzewski, "Inner Voices," *Perspectives of New Music* 33, no. 2 (1995): 412. Originally given as a lecture at the Hochschule der Künste Berlin, 21 June 1994; this text also appears in *Nonsequiturs*: 68-92.

²³ Rzewski, "Performance: Indeterminate Performance," *Dictionary of Contemporary Music*, ed. J. Vinton: 566. A modified version appears as "Signals from the Past and the Future" in *Nonsequiturs*: 400-410.

to “reproduce and transform the reality around us.”²⁴ Rzewski writes about how both improvised and rehearsed composition work to make this happen, using various analogies.

In improvisation “new universes are constantly being created. The new universe may appear to follow smoothly from the old one, or it may have nothing to do with it. In this way improvisation resembles real life in the real world, unlike most written music, in which the interruptions of real life have been edited out.”²⁵ Alternately, “One could say that composition is a process of selectively storing and organizing information accumulated from the past, so that it becomes possible to move ahead without having constantly to re-invent the wheel. Improvisation, on the other hand, is more like garbage removal: constantly clearing away the accumulated perceptions of the past, so that it becomes possible to move ahead at all.”²⁶

Regarding the creation of political music, Rzewski recalls a conversation he had with John Cage, outlining two possibilities: one uses a text or “one looks for a specifically musical form which is capable, for the duration of the performance at least, of creating a new type of social relation among those present: a new relationship of performers and audience, for instance.”²⁷ For Rzewski, improvisation is that form:

²⁴ Rzewski, “Our Job as Artists,” *Nonsequiturs*: 40. Originally unpublished text from August 1992.

²⁵ Rzewski, “Little Bangs,” *Current Musicology* 67/68 (2002): 382. Also appears in *Nonsequiturs* where the editors note it was originally a “Lecture delivered on 28 March 2000 at the Young Composers’ Forum in Frankfurt, Germany” (p. 50). The editors also mention that the *Current Musicology* version is its first English publication, implying that the lecture was actually given in German.

²⁶ Rzewski, “Little Bangs,” *Current Musicology* 67/68 (2002), 378-9.

²⁷ Rzewski, “Listening to the Sounds of People: Some Recent Examples of Political Music in America,” *Nonsequiturs*: 234. Originally a 1974 CBC broadcast.

Improvised music ... has to do with being present. It also has to do with democratic forms and equality, at least in a group situation. It can function as a kind of abstract laboratory, in which experimental forms of communication can be tried, without risk of damage to persons. ... If there ultimately is some kind of peaceful transition to more generous forms of social organization, music, and specifically improvised music, will play an important role in this process, as it has done in the past.²⁸

Turning towards Rzewski's pre-*North American Ballads* oeuvre, we can trace the development of his concepts as they manifest musically: music's ability to reflect the real world and suggest new possible worlds, accepting the socio-political nature of that ability, and the necessity of balancing rehearsed and spontaneous composition in making those reflections effective.

While Rzewski has mentioned the early influences of his piano teacher and the student atmosphere at Harvard as the seeds of his propensity towards combining the political and the musical,²⁹ it was his work with the experimental live-electronics group *Musica Elettronica Viva* (MEV) in the 60s that watered those seeds. Instead of only performing in concert halls, the members of this group sought out venues where radical student and worker movements existed. Their efforts at connecting with these atypical classical music audiences were not always appreciated:

Very often we were performing for, say, student organizations in European universities, or cultural centers, rock clubs — places where the audience did not consist primarily of hardcore contemporary music concertgoers, but more of, say, dope-smoking Dutch revolutionary students and things like that, who were not at all interested in anything resembling contemporary music. ...[S]ince we typically found

²⁸ Rzewski, "Little Bangs," *Current Musicology* 67/68 (2002), 386-7.

²⁹ Rzewski, Interview with V. Perlis, *Nonsequiturs*: 158, 162.

ourselves performing for this kind of audience, it happened not infrequently that we would find ourselves challenged by vociferous elements in the audience, and put up against the wall, and asked why, what business we had trying to stuff this elitist culture down the throats of people who were setting out to change the world. ... And so I would say it was a situation in which the avant-garde artists, or the artists who thought of themselves as being avant-garde, suddenly found themselves being outflanked on the left by the supposedly uncultivated audience. ...And it was in some ways a very exciting situation, and in some ways a very fertile one, in that we were forced to rethink our whole position regarding the relationship of art to the world around us.³⁰

In the text-based, structured improvisations Rzewski wrote for MEV, the process of rethinking this relationship becomes apparent. *Composition for two players*, a pre-MEV work written in 1963, reads almost like a scientific manual, stripping improvisation down to its most basic, almost-cold reality. The one-page score consists of clock-time guideposts and four symbols that describe the sound relationships to each other:

For two improvisers, using any materials.* [=] means: strict imitation; [≈] means: variation, or accompaniment; [≠] means: opposition, contrast; [∞] means: independence, or introduction of some radically new element. The signs can also mean four different degrees of time-lapse between a sound that you hear and your response to it: [=] now; [≈] a few seconds ago; [≠] a long while ago; [∞] an imaginary or possible time (e.g. the future).³¹

Yet, the crux is not time or how the players react, but that there is a reaction, a relationship, a social reality, that Rzewski assists the performers in molding. The piece could be stripped down even further, in a Fluxus-like manner, to merely one

³⁰ Rzewski, Interview with V. Perlis, *Nonsequiturs*: 182-4

³¹ Rzewski, *Composition for Two Players*, unpublished text score obtained from composer.

of Rzewski's edicts: "Listen for the most striking (to you) aspects of sounds produced by the other player and react accordingly."³²

From the imitation of small-scale interpersonal relationships, Rzewski cast his net wider in the 1967 writing, *Plan for Spacecraft*, a description of "a variety of internal psychological states which may or may not influence the behavior of an improvising performer."³³ While that description seems to limit the scope to each individual performer, the text itself describes the means and necessity of connecting with the other performers and eventually the audience. Rzewski differentiates between merely making sound and working to achieve transformation. "Each person is contained within his own labyrinth. The object of the music-making is to escape from the labyrinth. ... The musician must grow wings and enter into someone else's labyrinth."³⁴ Describing the psychological states of the musicians and audience and their possible musical results, Rzewski uses the words redemption, transformation, struggle, work, magic, and exorcism; these ideas are revisited in Rzewski's subsequent works, and have, as we shall see, particular resonance for "Which Side Are You On."

In the *Parma Manifesto* (1968), Rzewski describes the necessity of art — specifically improvisation — to set the example for personal and societal change.

The most direct and efficient form of communication is dialog. Dialog in its highest form is creation out of nothing: the only true creation.

... An art form which aims for highest efficiency in times of highest urgency must be based on dialog. It must reject

³² Ibid.

³³ Rzewski, Interview with V. Perlis, *Nonsequiturs*: 178

³⁴ Rzewski, *Plan for Spacecraft*, unpublished text score obtained from composer in 2006. Now also available in *Nonsequiturs*, 292-300.

the possibility of the impartial observer, present but not involved in the communication process, as contradictory to idea of communication itself.

... In times of emergency men find it possible to perform operations necessary to survival without bureaucracy, police, money, and the other obstacles which normally obstruct the way to efficient behavior. In such moments the organism, acted upon by forces beyond its control, is able to act, to respond to reality in an efficient manner. It is forced to move, to create space for itself, in order to survive. When confronted with the possibility of destruction, it discovers the alternative of creation. ... Such an art form must be improvised, free to move in the present without burdening itself with the dead weight of the past.

... Improvisation is the art of creating out of nothing: a lost art form. it is necessary to rediscover this form and re-invent its rules now. it is necessary to embark upon a disciplined search for a new harmony. Harmony is a process in which speaker and listener agree to communicate. The responsibility for undertaking this voyage of discovery is everyone's who may come into contact with these words.³⁵

Although Rzewski eventually changed focus from free improvisation and group composition performance situations to more strictly notated chamber music, he retained the impetus to include the possibility of dialogue in the form of improvisation in later works. However, at this point in Rzewski's life, improvisation has taken on a sense of urgency: it's the next step for society's need to communicate, to unify, to become more conscious, to live in the now, not burdening itself with the dead weight of the past. This urgency is also apparent in various letters to colleagues he wrote at the time:

³⁵ Rzewski, *Parma Manifesto*, unpublished text score obtained from composer in 2006. Now also available in *Nonsequiturs*, 154-156.

What I am really thinking of is a kind of improvisation which takes as its point of departure the kind of thing we do sometimes at parties. Those improvisations sometimes get off the ground, and sometimes not. I think you can develop that same situation in a public piece like a concert with lots of discipline and a basically new form of music-making can result. ... I think things are moving in this direction and it is a question of a few years before this kind of music will take over and we will find ourselves in a new era, a new stage of music, which has left serialism and composition and all of that bullshit behind in the 19th century where it belongs. It's a question of getting the idea of the SOLITARY GENIUS out of the system, throwing that whole myth out with all the decadent Darmstadt garbage which still dominates the scene, and which is basically nothing but another form of musical dictatorship which calls itself "strict composition" and dresses up in 19th century tails and white tie and whose secret science is merely a way of preventing people from discovering music.³⁶

I feel that we are on the verge of a fundamentally new form of music-making, in which the principle of CONSTRUCTION, which has motivated music for hundreds of years, is supplanted by another, totally different one of INTERPRETATION, rediscovery of the moment.³⁷

I feel sure that we are being swept away by something very big, powerful and for me very new. The catharsis which this sort of experience creates can't be argued away as something inferior or merely preparatory to composition, or illusionary: it must be true. I am now trying to work out a set of working principles which will guide us towards a new economy of energy, so that instead of prolonged dissatisfaction [sic] we will have real orgasm. I feel confident that before too long we will be able to work out the basis for an entirely new kind of musical form, a form based on the instantaneous interpretation of life-situations rather than on construction. My model is the ten commandments... With the difference that, whereas the commandments tell you

³⁶ Rzewski, "On the Road: Letters 1967-1968 — Letter to Alvin Curran 1 July 1967," *Nonsequiturs*: 332-4. Emphasis his. Previously unpublished.

³⁷ Rzewski, "On the Road: Letters 1967-1968 — Letter to Alvin Lucier 19 July 1967," *Nonsequiturs*, 346. Emphasis his. Previously unpublished.

how to behave in any life-situation in such a way as to lead the ethically good life, the musical rules will have the object of creating a *beautiful* experience.³⁸

Once the musicians have left their “labyrinths” and connected with one another in the name of reaching the audience, a possible extension of that might be to change the relationship between the musicians and audience: To reach the audience, get the audience directly involved. Two works toward that end were *Zuppa* (1968) and *Sound Pool* (1969). Rzewski points out that “they’re not really compositions; they are musical situations which are described by means of a text.”³⁹ During this same period he composed *Les Moutons de Panurge* (1968) for a colleague in the Netherlands, which combines a more rigorous structure with traditional notation for the trained musicians to play, as well as instructions for the non-musicians:

Nonmusicians: are invited to make sound, any sound, preferable very loud, and if possible are provided with percussive or other instruments.

The nonmusicians have a leader, whom they may follow or not, and who begins the music thus:

(♩ = 150) *f* ♯ ♯ ♯ ♯ ♯ ... etc.

As soon as this pulse has been established any variations are possible.

Suggested theme for nonmusicians: “The left hand doesn’t know what the right is doing”.

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The piece involves applying an additive process of building a given unison melody; but instead of writing this process out, the performers have to work it out in real-time, virtually guaranteeing that people will make a mistake and get out of synch. The instructions dictate that once no longer in unison, one is to stay “off,”

³⁸ Rzewski, “On the Road: Letters 1967-1968 — Letter to Cornelius Cardew 25 July 1967,” *Nonsequiturs*, 350. Italics his. Previously unpublished.

³⁹ Rzewski, Interview with V. Perlis, *Nonsequiturs*, 182.

⁴⁰ Rzewski, *Les Moutons de Panurge*, W. Icking edition: <http://icking-music-archive.org/scores/rzewski/mouton.pdf>. This edition and the manuscript version published in Asplund (423) both state the date of the piece as 1969; the notes in *Nonsequiturs* say 1968 (440, 450)

slowly creating confusion and cacophony. Reflecting back on conceiving the work, Rzewski wrote:

One could imagine, furthermore, that people present, not just musicians, could participate in the joyful noise by singing, shouting, or playing simple percussion instruments in the manner of the hippie music that often erupted spontaneously in gatherings of people at that time.⁴¹

MEV continued its existence beyond the 60s, but the lives of its members started to change, including Rzewski's. In multiple places, Rzewski talks about how he found himself at the beginning of the 70s with a wife and three children and not a lot of money.⁴² Feeling pressured by the realities of his situation, he decided to move the family to New York City to make a living mainly as a freelance pianist. During this time, his music takes a decided, obvious turn towards more traditional classical music values, but also begins to wear its socio-political underpinnings on its sleeve.

The big free-for-all improvisations of the 60s give way to more judicious uses of improvisation, often in a small ensemble or solo context and with light instructions, increasingly juxtaposed with notated music, as opposed to being the entire piece itself. The notated music often explores classical forms both old and newly invented, but even the new forms are more of piece with classical music norms. This aspect of Rzewski's music delves deeply into structure at all levels, almost in a serialist way, but the audible result can be quite tonal, often employing traditional songs as materials for these explorations of structure. Since he has returned to writing for traditional concert hall audiences and not radical student

⁴¹ Rzewski, "Les Moutons de Panurge," *Nonsequiturs*, 442.

⁴² Rzewski, "Jefferson," *Nonsequiturs*, 444 (notes from 1997); Rzewski, "Falling Music," *Nonsequiturs*, 446 (notes from 1994)"; Rzewski, Interview with V. Perlis, *Nonsequiturs*: 182, 186; Rzewski, Interview with F. J. Oteri, New Music Box 2002.

groups, audience participation — not really accepted in the concert hall context, except maybe clapping rhythmically at a pops concert — as a way of exploring socio-political relationships is replaced by titles, texts, and musical materials that deal with contemporary socio-political events instead.

The main lesson learned from MEV — the ability to represent socio-political situations musically using both improvisation and composition — finds a new, different kind of power in this more classical context. Even in works where there is no explicit political content, Rzewski's consciousness of the socio-political nature of all music forms the foundation for his use of structure to create a certain musical social situation, e.g. using the same rigorous structure as *The People United Will Never Be Defeated*, *Thirteen Instrumental Studies* moves "from structure to freedom";⁴³ the four movements of *Squares* all have the same structure but represent different characters; *Four Pieces* is also a follow-up to *The People United Will Never Be Defeated* but is more of a "meditation on Chile ... after the coup."⁴⁴ A closer look at some of the major politically themed works of the 70s leading up to *North American Ballads* shows how Rzewski synthesized his experiences in MEV with his return to the concert hall scene and newly-developed world awareness.

One of the first pieces in which Rzewski satisfied his needs both for a paying gig and for creating a work that still dealt with socio-political situations was *Jefferson*. It is also one of the first pieces inspired by a specific event and to use a political text. Composed in 1970 for a series of recitals in which he was the accompanist for soprano Carol Plantamura, *Jefferson* was inspired by the Kent State massacre. In the liner notes for a recording released in 1997, Rzewski describes the connection

⁴³ Rzewski, "Thirteen Instrumental Studies," *Nonsequiturs*, 456.

⁴⁴ Rzewski, "Four Pieces," *Nonsequiturs*, 458. Previously unpublished text from 2005.

between a real-world political event and a political text that has personal value and how he uses both traditional classical compositional values and the new radical values explored in MEV to create a work that reflects a “revolutionary situation”:

The bloody confrontation, the increasingly tyrannical evolution of the government, and its readiness to use violence against its own people convinced many that a potentially revolutionary situation existed in the United States, and indeed in the world. ... I wanted to write a series of vocal pieces based on text that had special meaning for me ... In this case I chose the opening sentences of the *Declaration of Independence*, a text I had read in school but hadn't paid much attention to since. Suddenly it seemed relevant. It spoke of the legitimacy of revolution: 'Whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it.' Its lofty rhetoric was clearly the source of much of the current political jargon, and in fact provided a cloak of respectability for the antiwar movement. Governments are not to be overthrown for 'light and transient causes;' on the contrary: 'all experience hath shown, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed.' Just as the French and English revolutions wore the Roman toga or spoke the language of the Bible, the revolution of today could invoke the words of the Founding Fathers. ... The hypnotic repetitions in the piano part are a kind of sublimated condensation of the things I was doing in MEV improvisations. At the same time, a rigorous structuralism in the writing techniques seemed necessary, both to provide a rational counterweight to the otherwise unrestrained freedom of the chant, and to reflect the sober and careful construction of the text. ... We performed *Jefferson* in a number of venues, and made a few radio recordings. The reception was generally less than enthusiastic. The tonal language was unacceptable in contemporary music circles, and in the milieu of the political left — in many ways equally orthodox — the piece was denounced as 'capitalist realism.' It was put in a drawer and was not performed at all for twenty-five years (partly also because of the extreme difficulty of the piano part).⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Rzewski, “Jefferson,” *Nonsequiturs*, 444-6.

The “less than enthusiastic” response to *Jefferson* did not deter Rzewski from either the use of tonal languages or reflecting socio-political issues. Both appear in two works inspired by a prisoner riot in New York, and were originally thought of as two movements of a single work: *Coming Together* and *Attica*. Using the same melodic transformation techniques and openness to spontaneous orchestration as *Les Moutons*, the two pieces “form a pair of dark and light images of”⁴⁶ the fall 1971 riots at the Attica state prison in the eponymous town in western New York, which resulted in a violent government assault on the prison.

Modeling Political Experiences in Music

Composer-performer Christian Asplund has written about how certain works by Rzewski model socio-political phenomena, enabling those participating to experience them, as opposed to merely composing about them. One important difference between *Coming Together* and *Les Moutons* is that in the latter, it is expected that the ensemble will fall apart and eventually arrive at an improvisation; but in the former the improvisations are to be “freely”⁴⁷ interjected while still keeping track of the piece and following its rules, in which the given G-dorian melody “is played by one or two instruments of the ensemble, while the others add only individual notes or melodic fragments from time to time, according to rules specific to each section.”⁴⁸ Quoting Rzewski, Asplund notes that doing so “requires a

⁴⁶ Rzewski, “Coming Together/Attica,” *Nonsequiturs*, 450.

⁴⁷ Christian Asplund, “Frederic Rzewski and Spontaneous Political Music,” *Perspectives of New Music*, 33, no. 2 (1995): 421.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 450. Asplund is referring to the version published in *Soundings* 4 (1974), which contains performance instructions and a letter to publisher Peter Garland. There is also a self-

struggle,"⁴⁹ resulting in a visceral experience, not unlike trying to stage a revolt against a repressor:

The experience of performing this piece is a strange and beautiful mixture of anarchy and linearity; a highly constrained gesture that is governed not by an individual nor even so much by law but by an awareness of and adherence to the progression of the line, the text, and time in all the performers. ... Each player makes a contribution (a "melody") that is unique and spontaneous while the sum of these melodies is absolutely unified, though multifaceted, not according to a grid or any exterior superimposed structure be it metrical, harmonic, or serial, but around a line that is the piece. Rzewski thus models the very important concept of the inevitability of the course of history and the ability of the proletariat to be coordinated in their actions without the imposition of power structures characteristic of bourgeois institutions. However, this coordinated effort requires vigilance, struggle and constant awareness of where history is in its progression.⁵⁰

Asplund imposes a hard-line Marxist reading of the work, but that is not the only choice available. The music and performance directions reflect the ideas in the text — “the inevitable direction of my life” — as well as the situation the text refers to: substitute “repercussions of standing up against the status quo” for “course of history,” “abused-prisoner” for proletariat and “New York state government” for “bourgeois institutions” and you have a more politically neutral, yet still accurate reading of what is being experienced in a performance of this piece. Rzewski has professed an affinity for Gramscian philosophy,⁵¹ yet, it seems more important that

published version available at the Werner Icking Music Archive, which has different performance instructions and omits the letter to Peter Garland.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 421. Quoting FR’s letter to Peter Garland.

⁵⁰ Asplund, “...Spontaneous Political Music,” *Perspectives of New Music*, vol. 33, no. 2, (1994): 421-2.

⁵¹ Rzewski, Interview with Daniel Varela, *Perfect Sound Forever* (2003), <http://www.furious.com/PERFECT/rzewski.html>. Asplund (428) and others (Zuraw, 31;

people understand the injustice and feel they can spontaneously come together to affect change than that they identify with a particular philosophical stance:

I think that is better to recognize the worst areas that are a real danger and find some optimistic way to do things. Personally, I think that a world revolution is inevitable and even imminent but we cannot predict the form it would take... I think that revolution does not consist—most of the Marxist movements in the 20th century faults in changing the world, but I think that the revolution today must be seen in a new way that leaves the world alone and lets people do what they do without trying to make them better.⁵²

Asplund's article deals only with the works up to and including *Coming Together*, but his concept of modeling can also be applied to works that follow. *The People United Will Never Be Defeated* takes the two types of socio-political works Rzewski has created before — highly structured works using texts with obvious political content and little improvisation (*Jefferson*, *Apolitical Intellectuals*, *Attica*, etc), and loosely structured, mostly improvised works with no verbal political content that model socio-political situations (MEV works) — and fuses them together, not in an ensemble piece, but in a massive solo piano work. Written for the US Bicentennial celebrations in Washington DC, the work is a set of theme and variations on the eponymous protest song written by Chilean composer Sergio Ortega. Rzewski emphasizes that this is not a folk song,⁵³ but a composed work of “New Chilean Song” that tries to be “a symbol of the broad unity of social classes” via combining

Groemer, 115-6) mention Rzewski's supposed allegiance to Marxism without ever citing a source; this interview is the only source this author could find where Rzewski declares any adherence to a particular philosophical bent.

⁵² Rzewski, Interview with Daniel Varela, *Perfect Sound Forever* (2003), <http://www.furious.com/PERFECT/rzewski.html>.

⁵³ Rzewski, KPFA.

elements of traditional, contemporary, and classical musics.⁵⁴

Rzewski also attempts a similar synthesis in the variations, employing a variety of styles, structural elements, quotations of other protest songs (“Bandiera rossa” and Hanns Eisler’s *Solidaritätslied*), and the opportunity to improvise. Unlike previous works involving improvisation, Rzewski was writing for pianist Ursula Oppens, who at the time couldn’t improvise and was not ready to learn for such a big occasion.⁵⁵ Yet, to remain true to his own aesthetic and beliefs about improvisation’s role in socially conscious music, he had to include improvisation. A compromise had to be made between the classical music world as it was (and still is for the most part) and the way Rzewski wanted it to be: the opportunity to improvise, therefore, became optional. With or without improvisation, the piece is at least fifty minutes. Rzewski suggests that the length “may be an allusion to the idea that the unification of people is a long story and that nothing worth winning is acquired without effort.”⁵⁶

Criticism and Context

These kinds of differences in Rzewski’s post-MEV music — making improvisation optional instead of essential, renewed interest in classical forms, deep structural complexity, tonal songs, and including political texts — have been a cause of consternation for some writing about Rzewski’s music. A common accusation is

⁵⁴ Rzewski, “The People United Will Never Be Defeated!” *Nonsequiturs*, 452-54. Notes from 1979 and 1994.

⁵⁵ Ken Terry, “Frederic Rzewski and the Improvising Avant Garde,” *DownBeat* 46, no. 1 (1978): 21. Oppens has since come to terms with improvising. See Joshua Kosman, “Improvising with a Pencil,” *Piano & Keyboard* (1993): 37.

⁵⁶ Rzewski, “The People,” *Nonsequiturs*, 454.

that Rzewski suffers from political naïveté.⁵⁷ Instead of continuing to play rowdy, difficult group improvisations for radicalized students and workers (whom, we recall, needed some convincing of MEV's populist authenticity), he turned to the concert hall, started to write mostly tonal music, and then superficially titled pieces with some pertinent leftist topic *du jour*. We can look deeper into his own writings and interviews, but also explore critical writings on his work, as well as writings on improvisation and culture, for further insights.

One of the earliest major interviews of Rzewski that addresses the differences in his pre- and post-MEV work came from German composer Walter Zimmermann, who traveled around the United States in the early 70s interviewing composers working outside the classical mainstream. Zimmermann asks about Rzewski's "concrete" style: "... we were just talking about the MEV group, that it was very anarchistic, that you've from what I've seen from your scores changed to a more constructive and concrete kind of music. Which motivations did you have for this change from anarchism to let's say concrete music which is definitely orientated?" Rzewski's terse reply, "I would call it realism, basically,"⁵⁸ is interpreted as "socialist realism"⁵⁹ by critic John Rockwell who bases his scathing critique of Rzewski mainly on this interview. For Rockwell, Rzewski's desire to compose "realistic" music is at odds with his position as a classical composer: "The workers don't *want* to listen to highbrow avant-gardism, no matter how sincerely leftist a composer may believe

⁵⁷ See Small, *Music of the Common Tongue*; Rockwell, *All-American Music*; Wason, *Tonality and Atonality...*; all of which are cited more specifically later in this chapter.

⁵⁸ Walter Zimmermann, "Frederic Rzewski." *Desert Plants: conversations with 23 American composers*. Vancouver, ARC Publications, 1976: 304.

⁵⁹ Rockwell, *All American Music*, 89.

himself to be.”⁶⁰ Yet, Rzewski is doomed to fail in his attempts at “a conscious employment of techniques which are designed to establish communication,”⁶¹ because writing in anything other than an avant-garde style is supposedly composing “beneath himself.”⁶²

Rzewski, however, doesn’t see the divide between popular and classical musics in the same way Rockwell does. To Rzewski, exchanges between folk and classical have always been a two-way street, and posits that it is perhaps disingenuous to even speak about folk versus classical as separate cultures:

[I]t’s not a question only of high art borrowing from folk traditions but at the same time the converse applies, as well. There are many examples in folk music of tunes which have been borrowed from art music and then returned to the folk tradition in a new form, so there is a constant dialogue between these things. There’s no fundamental opposition or contradiction between these two traditions. It would be an oversimplification to say, “well, art music is the music of the ruling class,” and so on. This is nonsense. The two things are... If anything, it’s even an oversimplification to speak of two kinds of culture; of course, there are many different shades of gray.⁶³

Ultimately, for Rockwell, the music fails because the revolution never happens:

Rzewski has [not] made much of an impact on the working classes, or on the third-world masses, or on China, or whomever it is [he is] ostensibly celebrating in [his] music. Nor [has he] made much headway with intellectuals, since [his] experimental, neo-romantic or neo-popular idioms are not really as interesting as real experimentation, romanticism or pop.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ Rockwell, *All American Music*, 92.

⁶¹ Zimmermann, *Desert Plants*, 306.

⁶² Rockwell, *All American Music*, 94.

⁶³ Rzewski, KPFA.

⁶⁴ Rockwell, *All American Music*, 93.

Rockwell's discussion of Rzewski's music is weakened by this kind of personal attack on Rzewski's politics, which Rzewski warns Zimmermann against: "[I]t's best not to talk about individual, personal styles, but rather in terms of a larger movements. ... [Y]ou have to see it from a social and political viewpoint rather than from a personal and aesthetic one."⁶⁵ One does not have to agree with Rzewski's politics, but taking Rzewski's advice to Zimmerman to heart for a moment can provide insights into Rzewski's work that rejecting his music due to an aversion to revolutionary politics cannot. A broader social and political viewpoint helps to put Rzewski's possible motivations into perspective.

Historian Philip Jenkins' book *Decade of Nightmares* outlines a trajectory from the 60s to the 80s, which Rzewski's music follows similarly. Jenkins attempts to account for the change from late 60s idealism to 80s conservatism in social and political culture. He focuses on the socio-political American landscape from roughly 1975 to 1985. The change, he argues, was not merely a knee-jerk backlash to radical ideas put forth in the 60s (although there is some of that), but was caused instead by several unforeseeable factors that allowed and encouraged more conservative values to dominate. Economic decline and acts of terrorism both at home and abroad created a feeling of malaise. Liberal ideas that looked good on paper turned into conservative policy when put into practice. Prison reform meant to end discriminatory practices — for example, a black man and a white man receiving different sentences for similar crimes — resulted in very strict sentencing. "When this worthy-sounding reform was duly accomplished, it laid the foundation for the

⁶⁵ Zimmermann, *Desert Plants*, 305.

incarceration boom ... exactly the opposite of what its proponents wished.”⁶⁶

Women’s new visibility in society made their concerns more publicly known:

“Women working outside the home were more conscious of dangers such as rape and sexual harassment and were particularly vulnerable to fears about child abuse.”⁶⁷ Feminist ideas of protecting women and children resulted in censorship and a renewal of conservative sexual mores. Post-1975, “Americans adopted a more pessimistic, more threatening interpretation of human behavior, which harked back to much older themes in American culture. At home and abroad, the post-1975 public was less willing to see social dangers in terms of historical forces, instead preferring a strict moralistic division: problems were a matter of evil, not dysfunction.”⁶⁸ Jenkins describes these perceived dangers and their effect on the prevailing mood further:

A public conditioned to accept conspiratorial and alarmist claims in one area is more willing to listen to similar ideas on other themes, especially when activists try repeatedly to link seemingly unrelated causes. Sensationalist incidents of child sexual abuse, serial murder, or cult atrocities appeared in the headlines at just the same time as events such as the Iran hostage crisis, the Miami race riot, and the gasoline shortages, and contributed to the sense of pervasive national malaise, decadence, and social failure. Seen alongside international crises and threats, these issues encouraged a sense of imminent apocalypse, a term that can be used with little exaggeration to describe the national mood of 1980.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ Philip Jenkins, *Decade of Nightmares: The End of the Sixties and the Making of Eighties America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006, 21

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁶⁸ Jenkins, *Decade of Nightmares*, 10-11.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 16.

North American Ballads was written right at this apex of crisis and malaise. While Rzewski himself does not become more conservative, Rzewski's compositional trajectory follows what Jenkins describes to a large extent. The 60s were a very experimental time for him. He moved back to the States just before the economic crises of 1974, because of his own personal economic crisis: he was broke and had a wife and three kids to support. He experienced, as Jenkins describes about the baby boomers, the turn towards conservatism that having a family brings on. The experimentalism, while near and dear to his heart, did not pay the bills, per se. He made his living primarily as a pianist and took on some composition opportunities, but increasingly for more traditional classical scenarios. Yet, he still tried in some ways to develop the radical ideas of MEV and similar experiments. The 70s are a time of digestion and synthesis, of compromise and conservation, for him, too. *North American Ballads* is perhaps his most conservative work sonically, yet possibly his most played work⁷⁰ — along with *The People United Will Never Be Defeated*, it has come to be considered part of the classical piano repertoire, with multiple recordings by many different pianists. In the same way that the 70s was not entirely a knee-jerk reaction to the 60s, that the 70s and 80s conservatism was the product of many economic, social and political factors, and that many of the 60s radical ideas came to fruition in some way or another, so does Rzewski's music develop during this period to embrace some of the conservative, traditional aspects of classical composition while continuing to promote and develop the radical experiments of the 60s.

⁷⁰ Joshua Kosman, "Improvising with a Pencil," *Piano & Keyboard*, March/April (1993): 37. Quoting Oppens: "Rzewski's most popular pieces are the *North American Ballads*, and I think those are going to enter the repertoire, to the point where in every school there typically will be a pianist working on them."

Musicologist Christopher Small also views Rzewski's concert-hall-position as being at odds with his professed desire "to write music about themes and questions which are of real concern to real people".⁷¹

For all its technical sophistication, there is nothing new in the view of the world and of human relationships offered by 'the new music,' since all the relationships of the concert hall reproduce in if anything intensified form those of the industrial state. ... The impression of social naivety is, for this listener, always given most intensely in the performance of those musical works whose composer has attempted to engage explicitly with social concerns, and most especially when the composer strikes left-wing or populist political attitudes... The naivety of such posturings is cruelly exposed when they are compared with the streetwise sophistication of black American musicians and their musicking. It is a dangerous and irresponsible naivety, which conceals from the composer — and his audience — the fact that he is serving the values, and thus the interests, of those to whose advantage the modern state is organized; no matter what message the composer may *think* he is conveying, the act of performance within the structure and the conventions of the concert hall or opera carries its own message. It is not that the medium *is* the message, or even that the medium conveys a message that can swamp that which is intended; rather, it is that anyone who genuinely desired social change would not subject his message to such a conservative medium as the concert hall. ... That is the price exacted for the subsidy given by states and wealthy organizations to classical musicking: that the performance celebrate those values which legitimize the position of the privileged of the state.⁷²

⁷¹ Rzewski, KPFA.

⁷² Small, *Music of the Common Tongue*, 353-54.

Musicking

Yet it is Small's ideas about musicking that best support the presence of the political in Rzewski's music and, coupled with Asplund's ideas about modeling, show how the political ideas are musical ideas, and not just surface elements in the titles of the pieces or in using quotes of protest songs. To music is to participate in a musical event at any level: writing, improvising, listening, making sounds, audiating — all are forms of musicking. Musicking uses "the language of gesture"⁷³ to enact or embody a set of values as a form of self-definition, especially when those values are ideal and not actually taking place in the participant's day-to-day life. "The language of gesture" is a non-verbal, action-oriented way of communicating via the senses about the relationships of the present, continuous moment. Small defines "values" as relationships we desire, "the right set of relationships."⁷⁴ In the same way that Rzewski, as quoted above, views music as a social, and therefore political act, Small, too, arrives at similar conclusions:

If musicking is indeed an aspect of the language of biological communication, then it is part of the survival equipment of every human being. To music is not a mere enhancement of spare-time enjoyment but is an activity by means of which we learn what are our ideal social relationships... If music is to explore, affirm, and celebrate one's link with the great pattern which connects the whole living world, then all musicking is serious musicking. Whoever engages in a musical performance, of whatever kind, is saying to themselves and to anyone who may be taking notice, *This is who we are*, and that is a serious affirmation indeed. ... for whatever else it might be, all musicking is ultimately a political act.⁷⁵

⁷³ Small, *Musicking*, 50-63.

⁷⁴ Small, *Musicking*, 183.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 210, 212-13. Emphasis his.

As we have seen, Rzewski recognizes the socio-political nature of musicking and chooses to make it an explicit aspect of his compositions, not just in the titles, texts, and quotation of other political songs, but through the act of performance, as Asplund explains:

I am intrigued by Frederic Rzewski's ability, in his pieces from the 1960s and 70s, to model socio-political phenomena and to teach specific lessons about these phenomena on both intuitive and intellectual levels to both performers and listeners. Performers in particular will literally experience these socio-political phenomena in the course of performing these pieces. Rzewski seems to have achieved Brecht's ideal of a gestic music without dryness or lack of credibility.⁷⁶

Since Rzewski is as concerned about the experience of the performers and their enlightenment and arousal to action as he is about the audience, it is logical that his choice of performers, ensemble configuration and performative power structures is as carefully thought out as is his audience. ... The relationships of collectivity, trust, and mutual improvement that Rzewski facilitates between performers, audience, and composer are the most profound aspects of his work.⁷⁷

Asplund is talking about the specific performance situations Rzewski's early works create, but Small's concept of musicking supports the idea of modeling in a broader musical context, in the sense that all music making models some sort of relationship.

We are moved by music because musicking creates the public image of our most inwardly desired relationships, not just *showing them to us* as they might be but actually *bringing them into existence* for the duration of the performance. This will clearly involve our deepest feelings, and thus the act of musicking, taking place over a duration of time, teaches us what we really feel about

⁷⁶ Asplund, "...Spontaneous Political Music," *Perspectives of New Music*, vol. 33, no. 2, (1994): 418-19.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 430.

ourselves and about our relationships to other people and to the world in general, helping us to structure those feelings and therefore to explore and evolve our own identity. ... [M]usicking can exhilarate us with a vision of that ideal which is not just intimated to us but actually brought into existence for as long as the performance lasts. While it does we *can* believe in its realizability...⁷⁸

Rzewski, Small, and Asplund seem to be in agreement as to music's ability to demonstrate other "possible worlds"⁷⁹ of social transformation. In many ways, as Asplund points out, music is didactic in that regard. But didacticism is often regarded as some sort of power relationship in which the composer is telling people what to think. An alternative view is that the purpose in modeling socio-political situations musically is explicitly not to tell people what to think, but instead to provide a forum for people to figure it out for themselves. This is where improvisation comes into play. Like Rzewski, Small also views improvisation as having a different function than rehearsed music making:

It is [the improviser's] task to create not just a single set of sound perspectives which are to be contemplated and enjoyed by listeners, but a multiplicity of opportunities for participation along a number of different perspectives. ... Here we see a social purpose in the performance of music which goes far beyond the evocation of an individual response to a sound-object such as we find in the western classical traditions. ... It is only by keeping possibilities open, by modifying the performance as it goes along that it becomes possible to pick up the sense of an occasion, to bring it into focus and enhance it for the greater social and spiritual benefit of all. ... To improvise, then, is to establish a different set of human relationships, a different kind of society, from that established by fully literate musicking.⁸⁰

This quote can be compared to Rzewski's essay "Little Bangs":

⁷⁸ Small, *Common Tongue*, 69-70. Emphasis his.

⁷⁹ Rzewski, "Inner Voices," *Nonsequiturs*, 414.

⁸⁰ Small, *Common Tongue*, 295-96.

...[N]ew universes are constantly being created. The new universe may appear to follow smoothly from the old one, or it may have nothing to do with it. *In this way improvisation resembles real life in the real world, unlike most written music, in which the interruptions of real life have been edited out.*⁸¹

Equally pertinent is his caveat below on “abandoning one's reasoning powers” in improvisation “for this would leave one open to exploitation.”⁸² Here, too, Rzewski emphasizes music as an act, and makes many of the same points about the types of change western classical music might consider making as Small does in *Music of the Common Tongue*:

The recent wave of interest in improvisation on the part of composers (many of whom are undeniably motivated by a concern with fashion) nevertheless reflects a genuine crisis of the art and a desire to reexamine its basic premises. Wherever the art of music is cultivated primarily by a specialized class of people known as ‘musicians,’ it has tended to develop on esoteric, competitive, and authoritarian character; it has become ‘classical,’ removed from the people. Musical performance, like athletics, has then been regarded as a competitive skill in which excellence consists in conforming to standards set by a competitive system. In a truly collective art form, individuality would flourish; the distinction between ‘classical’ and ‘popular,’ like that between ‘composer’ and ‘performer,’ would be abolished, but far from being destroyed in the process, each term would be assimilated into a higher unity. Good performers know that music is an active and not a passive experience; they know too that this act consists mainly of listening. Listening is an act of self-discipline. When the listener, i.e., the ‘audience,’ becomes performer, then it may be possible for music to become an art of collective self-discipline. ... The orgiastic, Dionysian aspects of performance are not, nor have they ever been, the only nor even the principal features of musical

⁸¹ Rzewski, “Little Bangs,” *Current Musicology* 67/68 (2002): 382. Emphasis mine. Quoted earlier in the paper on page 18.

⁸² Asplund, “...Spontaneous Political Music,” *Perspectives of New Music*, vol. 33, no. 2, (1994): 433.

culture. Nor is it thinkable or desirable that music should limit itself to the abstraction of pure improvisation, free of the ordering power of the mind. The most extreme experiments in the abandonment of structure have shown that something more than absolute freedom is necessary if one wishes to avoid the alternative of terror. At the same time, they have helped begin the process of liberation.⁸³

Small's thoughts on making music so closely echo Rzewski's, it seems odd that Rzewski would be singled out as irresponsibly naive.⁸⁴ Where Rzewski seems to fall short for Rockwell and Small, is that these musical acts do not happen in a void. Where the music happens is just as much a part of the meaning and the value as the act itself: "meaning is to be found not in 'the music' but in the act of taking part in a musical performance."⁸⁵ Small and Rockwell are on the mark when they point out that Rzewski's music by and large gets played in a forum — the concert hall — that has traditionally and still does celebrate Western conservative capitalist ideals. However, far from being naive, Rzewski has shown acute awareness of the contradictions inherent in presenting his music in a venue not necessarily conducive to the style of musicking it requires. Discussing how *The People United Will Never Be Defeated* came about, Rzewski described his need to "explore, celebrate, and affirm"⁸⁶ his values and his desired relationships through music, but as a freelance musician in New York City, he took what came along in terms of performance opportunities. It was better to say something in the "wrong" place, then to say nothing at all.

⁸³ Rzewski, "Performance: Indeterminate Performance," *Dictionary of Contemporary Music*, ed. Vinton, 567-68.

⁸⁴ Small, *Common Tongue*, 353.

⁸⁵ Small, *Musicking*, 160.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, A phrase used repeatedly throughout the book.

There were very large demonstrations at which this song [El Pueblo Unido Jamas Sera Vencido] was sung by fifty thousand people. I was exposed to them in Rome. I knew these people. I met them. Then I would come back to New York, and there was nothing. You would see nothing. There might be fifty communists in Union Square chanting slogans which nobody understood about Pinochet. There was nothing in the newspapers. The information had not yet come out about ITT and Anaconda Copper, and the CIA, and so forth, that all happened later. There was a period of about two years where there was kind of a press blackout on this whole thing, the whole question. Whereas, hundreds of thousands of people on the other side of the ocean were protesting and chanting and demonstrating their solidarity with the Chilean people. So there I was: I felt that I had to write this piece about the American Revolution [as requested by the commissioning organization, The Kennedy Center] and at the same time I was also confronted with this fact which moved me personally very strongly, for a number of reasons. So that's why I wrote this piece — I felt that it was necessary to do something. I felt I should do something about it. And if possible, to sensitize people to the question. And as unlikely as it might seem to try to bring into a concert hall — a classical concert hall with classical concert goers — a discussion of political questions of this kind, it was at the same time the only thing that I knew how to do. So I tried to do it.⁸⁷

Eleven years earlier, a similar question concerning this kind of contradiction between intent and audience was posed to Rzewski in *Downbeat* magazine about the same piece. Again, Rzewski shows awareness that the combination of leftist political ideas in the concert hall is problematic, but suggests that the contradictions will not be solved by avoiding them.

Isn't there a contradiction between this populist view of music and the fact that only a small, intellectual elite is interested in Rzewski's work? "Of course. Certainly there's a contradiction there, and it's only by facing these contradictions and attempting to deal with them on a conscious level that one has any hope of changing things.

⁸⁷ Rzewski, KPFA.

“The important thing is to get past the notion that an individual can, with his own resources, make any significant progress on solving a problem which is social in nature. This is one of the biggest hurdles that artists have to overcome — the idea that art alone can solve problems that really need other forms of action. Art can help; it can be useful in solving problems. It always has been and it always will be — but only as long as it recognizes its own limitations.”⁸⁸

Whereas Small and Rockwell attempt to deal with the political contradictions head-on, often at the expense of discussing the sounds, classical music academia tends to go toward the other extreme, also failing to connect the music to the politics in any concrete way, preferring to perceive music as purely abstract. A 1988 *Perspectives of New Music* article on *The People United Will Never Be Defeated* articulates this stance succinctly:

Rzewski, the political musician, has designed this musical language with communication to an audience uppermost in mind, although I am not sure that he and I would agree on just who that audience is — or should be, at any rate. There is no doubt that this piece does reach an audience which is considerably broader than that of most contemporary ‘serious’ music. Some may be drawn to it temporarily for political reasons, but I believe that its lasting appeal remains musical, not political. In fact, I suspect that a large portion of its audience may be absolutely captivated by the piece musically, and at the same time be ambivalent, or even antipathetic, to Rzewski’s political program. The point is that the piece’s ultimate staying power is going to be determined by musical — not political — considerations. And on that score there is no doubt that *The People United* will be of interest for quite some time, as I hope to show in what follows.⁸⁹

⁸⁸ Terry, “Frederic Rzewski and the Improvising Avant Garde,” *DownBeat*, 46, no. 1 (1978): 40.

⁸⁹ Robert W. Wason, “Tonality and Atonality in Frederic Rzewski’s Variations on ‘The People United Will Never Be Defeated!’” *Perspectives of New Music*, 26, no. 1 (1988): 109-10.

What follows is abstract theory and only abstract theory, leaving the songs used for musical material to bear the weight of exploring values: “Clearly the tune carries the requisite political message.”⁹⁰ This reader was left wondering what the author believes to be the requisite political message. The implication is that the political is completely superficial and that its only benefit is that it draws in people who aren’t normally interested in classical music. While it is true that if there were no redeeming musical qualities the music would have little “staying power,” the Smallsian argument would be that it would have little staying power, too, without the political — that is, without the social elements of the music. “When we take part ... in a musical performance that we find beautiful, it must be because the inner relationships of the performance accord, or fit, in some way with those relationships which we imagine to be ideal.”⁹¹ Elsewhere, Small comments on how we ultimately connect with the values represented in the act of musicking:

[I]t is not necessary to belong to a given social group in order to enjoy its musicking; were this not so, no traffic whatsoever could take place between cultures. What is necessary, however, is for the outside participant to feel some empathy with the people whose musicking it is, to feel some comprehension of and sympathy with their values, even if that sympathy is not fully conscious.⁹²

Small proposes the opposite of what Wason suggests: we come for the sounds, we return for the values, not vice versa and regardless whether we’re aware of it. To Wason’s credit, the notes to his article concede that discussion of the political tends

⁹⁰ Robert W. Wason, “Tonality and Atonality in Frederic Rzewski’s Variations on ‘The People United Will Never Be Defeated!’” *Perspectives of New Music*, 26, no. 1 (1988): 113.

⁹¹ Small, *Musicking*, 219.

⁹² Small, *Common Tongue*, 74-5.

to be used against Rzewski: “But criticism of Rzewski’s music has all too often been preoccupied with his politics,”⁹³ citing Rockwell as example number one. However, his proposed solution, “Let us get on instead with a discussion of the music itself”⁹⁴ — and we understand from his paper that he means a discussion of politics would be a distraction from the real business at hand — misses the opportunity to discover why a composer would bother to attempt to embed political ideas in music and how those ideas are connected to the structure.

Political is Musical

The value of a piece of music is not solely derived from its architecture. More importantly, Rzewski has made it clear not only in his compositions but also in his many academic writings that the political must be considered musical, the musical must be considered political, and neither suffers for it. Theory can be used to further our understanding of the political elements; the political ideas can elucidate aspects of the musical structure. If we want to discuss his music thoroughly, we have to take both the music and the politics at face value and consider both seriously, not dismissively. Instead of assuming mixing politics and classical music is a fool’s game at the outset, I want to investigate in this paper why Rzewski feels the need to be explicit about politics, and how he actually does this musically. Such an investigation should attempt to take Rzewski’s political inclinations seriously, to accept them for what they are, not burden them with what they are not, to take at face value what Rzewski says about his motivations, and to not pass judgment on

⁹³ Wason, “Tonality and Atonality...” *Perspectives of New Music*, 26, no. 1 (1988): 139.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 139.

his choice of how to music.

Many of Rzewski's 70s works serve as an example of how he melds socio-political awareness with classical musicking; *Which Side Are You On?* is a particularly rich and succinct example. There has been some great writing about *North American Ballads*; however, this movement has gotten short shrift in the name of looking at the piece as a whole, and has certainly been overshadowed by the sprawling musicological treasure trove that is *The People United Will Never Be Defeated*. Performing it as a stand-alone movement has also been eschewed in favor of the more blatantly programmatic, visceral, and virtuosic *Winnsboro Cotton Mill Blues* which doesn't require improvisation, or *Down by the Riverside* which is a more well-known song. We would benefit from each movement having its own in-depth study, but *Which Side Are You On* has a combination of rich ingredients processed with fascinating results that make it a great case study of how the political and social manifest as the musical, and how improvisation serves that end.

The primary ingredient of this movement is Reece's song "Which Side Are You On," which has also lacked in-depth study, especially concerning how its political meanings relate to Rzewski's work. In the next chapter, I give Reece's song the same treatment that I give Rzewski and his work: a description of the political atmosphere surrounding the composition of the song, an exploration of the political ideas in the song, and an analysis of how those are ideas are presented in the structure of the music.

Chapter II — History and Analysis of the Protest Song “Which Side Are You On?”

Rzewski’s piece uses a pre-existing song for its materials, Florence Reece’s “Which Side Are You On?” Reece’s song, too, is based on a pre-existing song, whose precise origins are unclear. I wish to investigate in this chapter the musical and political aspects of Reece’s song, so that there is a fuller understanding of the musical materials for Rzewski’s piece. In the first chapter, I looked at the situation that surrounds Rzewski’s piece because it provides information about what kinds of political ideas go into his piece. Here I do the same thing with the song his piece is based on. The political ideas that are embedded in Reece’s song do not disappear when used in Rzewski’s piece. On the contrary, they are brought to the forefront. I want to show that Rzewski is not only manipulating notes, but also the political ideas in Reece’s song. In addition, I want to show that improvisers are also transforming these same things in their performances.

First, I set the scene for Reece’s composition, by describing what the political atmosphere was like and what drove her to write a song about it. Having a detailed history gives us a better understanding of Reece’s creative impetus and the political ideas in the song. Then I describe Reece’s situation specifically and how her song became part of a larger cultural movement aimed at creating awareness of the situation. I point out the struggles of everyone involved come down to a matter of self-determination and self-definition, which, as Small points out, is the most basic struggle of political power.

Part of this process of self-determination involves using musical materials already familiar to her and those in her immediate social group. I detail what those materials are, where they come from, and what their significance is, first via an

analysis of Rzewski's setting of the song, then a thorough exploration of the musical sources for the song. I examine the history of the tune Reece borrowed to explore the political ideas in the borrowed tune to see how they are used in Reece's song. I discuss what makes her song politically and musically effective, drawing on ideas about what constitutes a folk song and a propaganda song. This chapter prepares for the subsequent discussion of Rzewski's piece in chapter III: Several layers of embedded meanings are uncovered, which are all subsumed into but still active in his work.

Political History

In 1931, J.H. Blair, the sheriff of Harlan County, Kentucky came to Florence Reece's house looking for her husband, Sam, a miners-union leader. Sam was not home, so the sheriff left a message for him in the form of vandalizing his home. In her ire, Mrs. Reece "tore a sheet from a wall calendar and wrote the words to 'Which Side Are You On?'" to a tune she already knew.¹

I felt like I just had to do something to help. The little children, they'd have little legs and a big stomach. Some men staggered when they walked, they were so hungry. We were getting real low on everything. We didn't even have any paper, so when I wanted to write 'Which Side Are You On?' I just jerked the calendar off the wall and sat down and wrote the words down on the back. I was asking the miners, all of them, which side they were on. They had to be on one side or the other; they had to be for themselves or against themselves.²

This is how the origin of "Which Side Are You On?" is usually told. It's a nice, simple story with obvious good guys and bad guys. Yet, the details it leaves out are

¹ Fowke and Glazer, *Songs of Work and Protest*, 55.

² Ron Stanford, "Which Side Are You On?" *Sing Out*, 20 (1971): 15.

the political and social issues that created the situation. These issues are dealt with in the musical structures of Reece's song. Discovering how the musical aspects are also social and political, requires more than just a quick, easy-to-swallow story. What follows is a summary of the situation in Harlan County, KY that inspired Florence Reece to write her song. A more detailed explanation of how mining and unions came to Harlan County is in Appendix A.

The details of the situation have similarities to Rzewski's situation: the urgency of trying to create awareness, issues of who the audience is, issues about its effectiveness in bringing about change, issues of context, and issues about political affiliations. The origin of the tune is important because it has its own story and musicking history, which may have had a bearing on Reece's choice to use it, even if subconsciously. These layers of meaning and history all come into play in Rzewski's piece.

Within the first 30 years of the 20th century, Harlan County, KY went from being a small, isolated farming community to an industrialized, almost caste-like society due to the combination of coal, cheap labor, and lack of unions.³ The workers attempted to unionize, but several factors contributed to their slow and stunted growth. The mining companies had formed towns around the company, where previously there hadn't been that kind of official community.⁴ The companies not only provided jobs, but also functioned as government, municipal services, housing, and general store. The people themselves, farmers turned into miners, viewed

³ Paul Frederick Cressey, "Social Disorganization....," *Amer. Soc. Review*, 14 no. 3 (1949): 390.

⁴ John W. Hevener, *Which Side Are You On?: The Harlan County Coal Miners, 1931-39*. Urbana IL: University of Illinois Press, 1978: 15.

unions as Northern, leftist, and anti-Christian; a viewpoint the company owners could easily exploit.⁵

Despite these factors, unions found some people sympathetic to their ideas, and eventually two major unions were able to establish themselves in the area: first the United Mine Workers of America (UMW) and then the National Miners' Union (NMU). The onset of the Great Depression made unions even more appealing to unemployed, blacklisted, disaffected miners. The NMU was formed by the American Communist Party and was able to position itself as an alternative union when the UMW's strike efforts in the first half of 1931 turned sour.

Starving and poor, miners in the city of Evarts formed a mob to bring their complaints to the government, resulting in violent conflict with the police force, which became known as "The Battle of Evarts." The UMW did not step up to provide strike relief, instead working with the county government to bring in troops to control the angry miners. The NMU formed soup kitchens in an attempt to alleviate the worst of the miners' woes. Seeing the presence of the NMU as a further threat to their already dwindling power, the UMW used their new connections to the government to push the NMU out of Kentucky.

At the height of post-Battle of Evarts anti-Communist crackdowns, Florence Reece, whose husband Sam was an NMU member, wrote "Which Side Are You On."⁶ A miner's daughter originally from Tennessee, she married Sam at age 14. They were run out of Tennessee because of Sam's involvement with the union and

⁵ Cressey, "Social Disorganization...," *Amer. Soc. Review*, 14 no. 3 (1949): 390-1; Hevener, *Which Side Are You On?*, 55-6.

⁶ Hevener, *Which Side Are You On?*, 60-1.

settled in Kentucky.⁷ Unfortunately, they were not able to leave the negative associations with unionism behind. In a 1971 interview, Florence Reece described the frustrations of dealing with others' guilt-by-association mentality, when all she and her husband wanted was to be treated properly:

The thugs came into our house several times ... while Sam was run off. ... This one young fellow was leaving, and as he was going out the door he said, 'As long as these Communists is here, we'll continue.' They must have thought I was one. Now I thought to myself, 'Communist, what's a Communist?' Communist and I.W.W. — that's two things I kept wondering what it was, and I knowed [sic] I hadn't heard about it in church. So if a Communist and I.W.W. was what I was doing, then I wanted to find out more about it, so I asked people what it was. Some of them would shake their heads, and some would just look at me — nobody knew. So I decided that all the miners wanted to do was to go back to work and get a contract so they could feed their children.⁸

Reece's song was eventually incorporated into a larger movement concerned with social justice. The Communist Party and other radicals concerned with social justice caught on to the power of the songs Reece and her colleagues Aunt Molly Jackson and Sarah Ogan Gunning were writing. "By the last half of the thirties ... New York's radical left had discovered the use of such ballads as significant propaganda tools."⁹ Similarly, established writers Theodore Dreiser and John Dos Passos created a muckraking journalism committee to report on the situation firsthand in November 1931. They struggled with issues of art's efficacy to create awareness, as Rzewski did forty years later:

⁷ Stanford, "Which Side Are You On?" *Sing Out*, 20 (1971): 15.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁹ Hevener, *Which Side Are You On?*, 67.

Although a few members of the [Writer's] committee were committed radicals, most were troubled liberals stung by the Depression-induced poverty, the unemployment, and the apparent breakdown of capitalism. Many were wrestling with the whole question of the artist's role in society: should he stand above it, completely committed to art for art's sake, or should he become actively involved in shaping a better civilization? All were seeking an answer, but few had yet found any. Their observations among the Kentucky miners had an important impact on these sensitive individuals.¹⁰

The Writers' Committee on one hand helped spur a strike that made matters worse locally, but on the other hand created awareness of the problem on a much wider level. These artistic gestures were part of a larger campaign to create awareness for social injustice and eventually did cause the state and federal governments to assess the situation and make positive changes.¹¹

Beyond a two-dimensional good guys vs. bad guys scenario, there are in Harlan various groups of people — often with “membership” in more than one group — jockeying for power. These groups all view the situation differently. The company owners see themselves as bringing modernity to the South and becoming a financial power equal to that of the North. The county government sees themselves as protectors of capitalist democracy. The northern mining unions see themselves as the salvation of working classes everywhere. The miners see themselves as honest people looking for honest work. Everyone sees themselves as the “good guys.” Everyone is vying for their own piece of political power at its most basic — self-determination.

¹⁰ Hevener, *Which Side Are You On?*, 63.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 70-1.

The right to perform is inextricably linked to the right of self-definition, and the right to self-definition is the first step on the long road to real political power. Not only for performers, but for their audiences too, since the power to music in a way that articulates one's own values is the power to say, 'This is who we are,' for listeners no less than for performers.¹²

The Harlan County miners are a community who had to fundamentally change their lives — their social, political, and economic structures — to cope with the arrival of the modern industrial state. The changes were so rapid, that everything broke down completely. These are the kinds of changes that Rzewski models in both the written music and in the choice of employing improvisation. Reece, like Rzewski, uses something familiar to her to spontaneously create something new that draws a line in the sand and says “this is who we are.”

Analysis and origins of Rzewski's version of the melody

Like other broadsides and ballads, the form, rhythm, harmony, and melody of “Which Side Are You On” are simple. Simplicity makes for easy memorization and dissemination — perfect for telling a story or rallying others around a cause. Rzewski recalls his initial attraction to the song was “the way Florence Reece's words fit into the pre-existing tune, so that the music becomes an illustration of what the words are saying.”¹³

Come all of you poor workers,
Good news to you, I'll tell
How the good old union
Has come in here to dwell

¹² Small, “Why Doesn't...,” *American Music*, 19, no. 3 (2001): 349.

¹³ from an email with the author, 31 July 2006.

Which side are you on?

We're starting our good battle
We know we're sure to win
Because we've got the gun thugs
A-lookin' very thin

Which side are you on?

If you go to Harlan County
There is no neutral there
You'll either be a union man
Or a thug for J. H. Blair

Which side are you on?

They say they have to guard us
To educate their child
Their children live in luxury
Our children almost wild

Which side are you on?

Gentlemen, can you stand it?
Oh, tell me how you can
Will you be a gun thug
Or will you be a man?

Which side are you on?

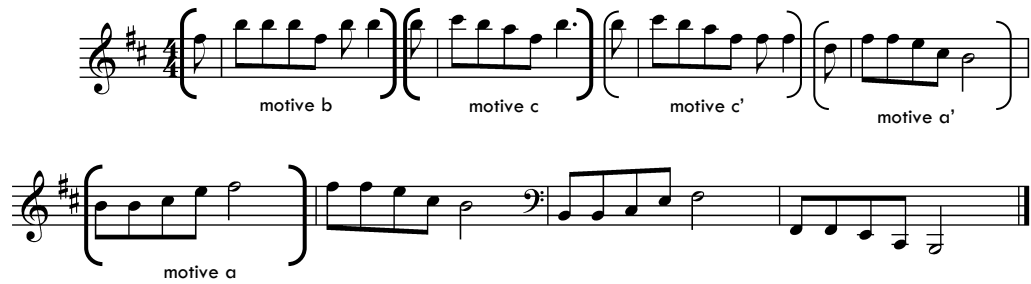
My daddy was a miner
He's now in the air and sun
He'll be with you fellow workers
Till every battle's won

Which side are you on?¹⁴

The uncanny connection between the words Reece chose for the melody she already knew is apparent even when the song is unfamiliar; in Rzewski's wordless treatment it's obvious which melody fragment corresponds to the title.

¹⁴ Florence Reece, *Coal Mining Women*, Rounder Records 4025. Transcribed by author.

Example 2.1: Rzewski's setting of the melody, derived from m26-33. Heavy brackets indicate main motives. Light brackets indicate variants.



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Example 2.1 is the melody as it appears in Rzewski's piece, parsed into motives. As seen below, there is no authoritative notated version of Reece's song. The notated and performed versions all have slight variations from one another. I am centering the analysis of Reece's song around Rzewski's version, to show where he derived his melody and to establish the core materials for the subsequent analysis of his piece.

I will discuss the motives by set class or pitch interval succession because associating these properties with the motives becomes the primary focus when analyzing Rzewski's piece and the improvisations within it. I also use these terms below to discuss the background of Reece's song. The song consists basically of two sets: Motive a [B C# E F] is sc(0257) with interval succession 2-3-2; and motive c [F# A B C#] is sc(0247) which appears in the song as its inversion (0357) with interval succession 2-2-3. Motive b, the dyad [F# B], is $i5$ and a subset of both of these sets. The two sets are subsets of the major pentatonic set sc(02479). Motive a' marks the one appearance of what would be a third scale degree in minor, making the complete set for the song sc(024579), the major hexachord.

Although it is not what is first heard in a literal rendition of the song, motive a does open Rzewski's piece, occurs the most often in the song and the piece, and, as mentioned before, has an automatic association with the title. The chorus is made up

entirely of this motive in its original and inverted form at T_7I , which contains the same pitch-classes as the upward statement of O_0 . The set $sc(0257)$ is both melodically and inversionally symmetrical, which creates an audible sense of sidedness.

Having sides and taking sides is a key aspect of the situation that Reece is in, as exemplified in the lyrics she wrote. In performance of this song and of Rzewski's work, sidedness is experienced musically in many ways, which I will elaborate upon throughout the course of this study. The primary way sidedness is experienced is in this simple melody, a motive that is played forward and backward (two sides), and is also the inversion of itself (two more sides). As Rzewski points out above, the music embodies the meaning of the words.

The song is clearly centered around the pitch-class B and has a minor sound. Yet, it is somewhat ambiguous harmonically because of the lack of emphasis on a minor third scale-degree, its use of a subset of the complete diatonic set, and its severely limited motivic material. In the next chapter, I discuss how Rzewski takes advantage of this situation, among other things, to move between two different sound worlds that expand on the idea of sides. The harmonic ambiguity is present in some versions of the song and not in others. This is also the case for the tune upon which Reece based her song, analyzed later on in this chapter.

"Which Side Are You On?" has been subject to variation over the years, as seen in the various print and recorded versions. There is conflicting information about from what source Rzewski learned the song. Bell and Olmstead (1986) write that Rzewski picked the tune out of Fowke and Glazer's 1973 collection of work

songs.¹⁵ As shown below (Example 2.2), Rzewski's version of the song differs significantly from the Fowke and Glazer version, particularly motive a. I could only find one source that mentions this difference; however, without documentation, the author assumes that Rzewski altered the melody.¹⁶

Rzewski has said more recently that perhaps he knew the song from hearing Pete Seeger sing it.¹⁷ Rzewski's version is closest to the version printed in Seeger's autobiography (Example 2.2), with a few small differences, indicated by arrows. Motive c begins on $\hat{7}$ instead of $\hat{1}$ and motive a' begins on $\hat{2}$ instead of $\hat{3}$. The word "workers" is not syncopated here, either. This version has no appearance of $\hat{3}$ whatsoever, depending entirely on harmonization to convey a minor tonality. The Lomax/Guthrie/Seeger version of 1967 (Example 2.2) has the same differences as the later Seeger version, plus others. Motives c and c' both start with $\hat{7}$. Motive a' is the same as Rzewski's version with the pick-up on $\hat{3}$, unlike Seeger's later version. The chorus of this version and of Fowke & Glazer's (Example 2.2) share an asymmetrical melody, in which the upward initial statement is the inversion of the sc(0247) — making it similar to what is labeled motive c above — and the downward statement is sc(0257). In the example below (2.2), I differentiate between these two versions of the chorus material via (set):interval order, e.g., (0257):2-3-2 and (0247):3-2-2.

¹⁵ Bell and Olmstead, "Musica Reservata in Frederic Rzewski's *North American Ballads*," *Musical Quarterly*, 72, no. 4 (1986): 455. "from which Rzewski borrowed the melodies." They do not say where they obtained that information.

¹⁶ Cornett-Murtada, "Quotation, revolution, and American culture: the use of folk tunes and the influence of Charles Ives in Frederic Rzewski's *North American Ballads for solo piano*" (DMA Performance diss., Univ. North Carolina Greensboro, 2004), 52-4.

¹⁷ email with the author, 31 July 2006.

Example 2.2: Three published versions of “Which Side Are You On?": Pete Seeger, *The Incomplete Folksinger*; Alan Lomax, Woody Guthrie, & Pete Seeger, *Hard-Hitting Songs for Hard-Hit People*; Edith Fowke & Joe Glazer, *Songs of Work and Protest*. Differences from Rzewski’s version are marked with arrows. Chorus types are marked with sc:interval-succession.

Seeger 1972. Reprinted by permission of the publisher. Copyright 1972 by Bicycle Music Company, New York NY.

Lomax, Guthrie, Seeger 1967. Reprinted by permission of the publisher. Copyright 1967 by Oak Publications, Lincoln NE.

Fowke and Glazer 1973. Reprinted by permission of the publisher. Copyright 1973 by Dover Publications, Inc. Mineola, NY.

WHICH SIDE ARE YOU ON?

Words by FLORENCE REECE

Recorded versions also differ, including Seeger's versions from each other.¹⁸ On the 1941 recording with his group The Almanacs, the banjo plays the chorus melody in the instrumental introduction as sc(0257):2-3-2 up and down, yet when the group sings the chorus, they sing sc(0247):3-2-2 up and down. In a later live solo recording from 1962, Seeger sings sc(0257):2-3-2, but the audience sings sc(0247):3-2-2. Reece herself has been recorded and sings the chorus once through – in contrast to the printed versions, where the phrase is sung twice – with sc(0357):3-2-2 both up and down.

Origins of Reece's song

The origin of the tune Reece used is also disputed and has been ascribed to the Baptist hymn "Lay the Lily Low," the hymn "I'm Going to Land on That Shore," and the British ballad "Jack Munro," also known under many other titles.¹⁹ Reece admitted herself when interviewed about forty years later that she couldn't remember exactly where she knew the tune.²⁰ A recording of an interview from 1978 with Ms. Reece is available on the Digital Library of Appalachia, in which she sings "I'm gonna land upon that shore / And be saved forever more" on a tune similar to

¹⁸ Seeger, Pete. 1987. *Which Side Are You On? Pete Seeger's Greatest Hits*. Legacy/Sony, 065711; Seeger, Pete. 2005. *Which Side Are You On? Which Side Are You On?* Acrobat Music, ACRCO 167. The 2005 disc features recordings made by Seeger's group The Almanacs in 1940-41. The 1987 disc features recordings Seeger made in 1962.

¹⁹ See Lynch, *Strike Songs of the Depression*, 141-2, for the disputation. For various attributions, see Liner notes, *Coal Mining Women*; Grattan, *American Women Songwriters*, 155; Stanford, 15; Fowke & Glazer, 55; and Lynch refers to it as "Jackie Frazier," 61. As seen below, none of the song examples in this paper are actually called "Jack Munro"; however, that seems to have become the umbrella term for variants of this melody across several sources.

²⁰ Lynch, 141-2; Stanford, 15.

the melody of WSAYO.²¹ While sources for the purported hymns “Lay the Lily Low” and “I’m Going to Land on That Shore” are scarce, if existent, variants of “Jack Munro” were common in both England and America and many sources refer to it.

The lyrics (Ex. 2.3) tell of a man (Jack) who goes off to war, whereupon his lover, who is upset about being left behind, dons a uniform and sets off for the battlefield to find Jack.

It is distinguished from other ballads in which the girl goes in disguise to seek her lover ... by her actually going into battle in her disguise, by her declaration that her waist is not too slender, her fingers not too small, that she is ready to face the cannonball, and (in the more complete versions) by her rescuing her wounded lover on the battlefield.²²

“Which Side...” shares aspects with these variants both lyrically and musically, supporting the idea that this is the song Reece knew but couldn’t recall. The sources for “Jack” vary in location greatly, from as close as one or two counties away from Reece’s county of Harlan, to Wisconsin, Arkansas, and Missouri.²³

Lyrically, the song follows one of two formulas. One opens with a version of the line “There was a ____ merchant,” in which the blank is filled with an adjective, usually “wealthy”; however, as seen in Example 2.3, it can be otherwise. “Merchant”

²¹ Florence Reece, Interview with John Sundale and students from Paideia school in Atlanta GA. Digital Library of Appalachia: <http://www.aca-dla.org/cgi-bin/showfile.exe?CISOROOT=/Warren43&CISOPTR=2200&filename=2201.mp3>

²² Newman Ivey White, *Frank C. Brown Collection...*, Vol. 2. 1952. Durham, NC: Duke University Press: 314.

²³ Jameson, *Sweet Rivers of Song*, 44; Helton, *Digital Library of Appalachia*, <http://www.aca-dla.org/u/?Berea,1748>; Peters, *Folk Songs out of Wisconsin*, 152; Murray, *Max Hunter Collection*, <http://maxhunter.missouristate.edu/0359/>, <http://maxhunter.missouristate.edu/0056/>, <http://maxhunter.missouristate.edu/0554/>; Krause, *Going Up the Missouri*, audio recording.

versions also rhyme “dwell” and “tell” in the opening verse, which Reece also does in her song: compare Munro’s “The truth to you I’ll tell” with Reece’s “good news to you I’ll tell.” The other common version of “Jack Munro” opens with some variant on “Jack’s gone a-sailing.” “Sailing” versions tend to have a refrain of nonsense syllables or phrase that rhymes with “lay the lily low,” when it isn’t exactly just that.

Because versions of “Jack Munro” are different from each other and from “Which Side” modally and rhythmically, it helps to compare them by looking at the contours of the phrases instead of pitch sets. Example 2.4 shows the contour segments and interval content of Rzewski’s version of the “Which Side” melody.

Example 2.3, lyrics from two “Jack Munro” variants.²⁴

“Jackaro” from Breathitt County, KY.

There was a silk merchant,
In London he did dwell;
He had one only daughter
The truth to you I’ll tell,
Oh, the truth to you I’ll tell.

She had sweethearts a-plenty,
She courted both day and night,
Till all on Jackie Fraisure,
She placed her heart’s delight,
Oh, she placed her heart’s delight.

...

He sailed east and he sailed west,
All across the deep blue sea,
So safely he got landed,
In the wars of Germany, [etc.]

...

She went down to the tailor’s shop,
And dressed all in men’s gray,
And labored with the Captain,
To bear her far away, [etc.]

“Your waist is too long and slender,
Your fingers too long and small,
Your cheeks too red and rosy,
To face the cannon ball, [etc.]”

“It’s true my waist is slender,
My fingers, they are small,
It would not change my countenance
To see ten thousand fall.”

“Kind sir, your name I’d like to know
Before aboard you go,”
She smiled in all her countenance,
“They call me Jackaro.”

...

She went out to the battlefield,
She viewed it up and down;
Among the dead and wounded,
Her darling boy she found.

She picked him up all in her arms
And carried him to the town,
Enquiring for a doctor,
To heal his bloody wound.

So here’s a handsome couple,
So quickly did agree.
How stylish they got married,
And why not you and me?

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“Jack Went A-Sailing” from an unnamed
place in Appalachia.

Jack went a-sailing
With trouble on his mind.
To leave his native country,
And his darling girl behind.
Sing ree and sing low,
So fare you well, my dear.

She dressed herself in men’s array
And apparel she put on;
Unto the field of battle
She marched her men along.
Sing ree and sing low,
So fare you well, my dear.

Your cheeks too red and rosy,
Your fingers too neat and small,
And your waist too slim and slender,
To face a cannon ball [etc.]

My cheeks are red and rosy,
My fingers neat and small,
But it never makes me tremble,
To face a cannon ball.

The battle being ended,
She rode the circle round
And through the dead and dying,
Her darling dear she found.

She picked him up all in her arms,
She carried him down to town,
And sent for a London doctor,
To heal his bleeding wounds.

This couple they got married,
So well they did agree;
This couple they got married,
And why not you and me?

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²⁴ “Jackaro,” ed. Jameson, *Sweet Rivers of Song...*, 44-5; “Jack Went A-Sailing,” ed. Sharp & Karpeles, *Eighty Appalachian Folk Songs*, 56.

Example 2.4: Rzewski's setting of the melody, with analysis of contour segments and interval content.

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From a contour standpoint, there are two ideas in this song: 1) a fanfare with the leap up to a repeated tone (motive b), and 2) a downward motive — though sometimes inverted — moving mostly stepwise, but with one skip in it (everything else). Motive c is an inverted motive a with motive b's leap at the end; motive c' is an inverted motive a with motive b's repeated tone at the end. Motive a' begins with a diminished motive b upward leap. Using contour segments, the similarities between motives a, a', c, and c' become more apparent, with the recurring 3-2-1-0, 4-3-1-0, and 0-1-2-3. The interval content makes this clearer, however, since 3-2-1-0 could theoretically span a huge range, but not be heard as a similar contour. The interval contents of motives c, c', a', and a all feature 2-2-3 or 2-3-2. These contours and interval contents appear in the examples of "Jack Munro" variants below.

Example 2.5: Comparison of potential source song “Jack Went A-Sailing” to Rzewski’s setting of “Which Side Are You On”. This version of “Jack Went A-Sailing” appears in Sharp & Karpeles’ *Eighty Appalachian Folk Songs*.

(Sharp and Karpeles 1968)

JACK WENT A-SAILING

contour: 1 2 1 1 0 1 1

Jack went a - sail - ing With trou - ble on his mind, To
 leave his na - tive coun - try And his dar - ling dear be - hind. Sing -
 ree and sing low, So — fare you well, my dear.

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Out of the examples of Jack Munro variants here, example 2.5 “Jack Went A-Sailing” transcribed by Sharp and Karpeles²⁵ is the most unlike “Which Side,” yet there are still similarities to be found, particularly in melodic contour. In “Which Side,” motive c’s contour is <2-3-2-1-0-2>, c’ is <2-3-2-1-0-0-0>. This is mapped onto scale degrees $\hat{1}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}-\hat{7}-\hat{5}-\hat{1}$ and $\hat{1}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}-\hat{7}-\hat{5}-\hat{5}$. In this version of “Jack,” the subset of sc(0247), sc(025), that makes up motive c and c’, is mapped onto different scale degrees $\hat{5}-\hat{6}-\hat{5}-\hat{3}-\hat{5}$ and $\hat{5}-\hat{6}-\hat{5}-\hat{3}-\hat{3}$, but the contour is quite similar, <1-2-1-1-0-1> and <1-2-1-1-0-0-0>. Lyrically, this version falls into the sailing + nonsense chorus category.

²⁵ Cecil J. Sharp and Maud Karpeles, *Eighty Appalachian Folk Songs*, Winchester, MA: Faber and Faber, Inc., 1968: 56.

Example 2.6²⁶, a version from Ohio, begins and ends on G, and has no Es or Ebs to be a third scale degree; yet, I hear this song as having a C tonic. The first two phrases end on C. There's a half-cadence of sorts in measure 8 — if the

Example 2.6: Comparison of potential source song “Jack Went A-Sailing” to Rzewski’s setting of “Which Side Are You On”. This version of “Jack Went A-Sailing” appears in Eddy’s *Ballads and Songs from Ohio*.

(Eddy 1939)

35
JACK WENT A-SAILING

A

JACK, THE SAILOR

From Mrs. Galen W. Summer, Canton, Ohio.

The musical score is in 2/4 time and G major. It consists of four staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody is annotated with a contour segment: 3 2 1 0 1 2 1 2. Below the first staff, the interval content is given as: 1. There was a wealth-y mer - chant, In Lon - don he did dwell, And he. The second staff continues the melody with the lyrics: had an on - ly daugh - ter, And the truth to you I'll tell, And sing. The third staff features a chorus with the lyrics: tra la la la la la le de lay, Tra la la la lay, And sing. The fourth staff continues the chorus with the lyrics: tra la la la la la le de lay, Tra la la la lay. —. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and bar lines. There are also arrows pointing to specific notes in the first staff, and labels for 'motive a' and 'motive c'.

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song were in G, then measure 9 would bear that out melodically, but measure 9 is clearly a resolution to C, which is anticipated on the last note of measure 8. Each phrase of the chorus begins with C. The first phrase outlines the same i5 interval built on the same scale degrees $\hat{5}-\hat{1}$ as “Which Side” on the downbeats of measures 1 and 2 (see arrows), but is fleshed out with sc(0257) built on $\hat{4}$. The next two bracketed phrases are built on the same sc(0247) as motive c and c’ with similar contours: motive c is <2-3-2-1-0-2> and bracket 1 is <3-2-1-0-1-2>, motive c’ is <2-3-2-1-0-0-0> and bracket 2 is <1-2-3-2-2-1-0-0>. The last three brackets in the chorus are

²⁶ Mary O. Eddy, *Ballads and Songs from Ohio*, New York: J. J. Augustin, 1939: 106.

exactly like motive a, built on the same scale degrees. Measures 10 and 12 have the downward sc(0247):3-2-2 from motive c, but upon $\hat{6}-\hat{5}-\hat{4}-\hat{2}$. This version falls into the merchant + dwell/tell category, but also contains a nonsense syllable chorus. The chorus does not follow a lay-the-lily-low rhyme scheme; however, it does contain several instances of motive a, sc(0257).

Example 2.7: Comparison of potential source song “Sing Lay the Lily Low” to Rzewski’s setting of “Which Side Are You On”. This version of “Sing Lay the Lily Low” appears in Peters’ *Folk Songs out of Wisconsin*.

(Peters 1977)

The image shows a musical score for the song "Sing Lay the Lily Low" in G major, 3/4 time. The score is divided into three systems. The first system contains the first line of music with the lyrics "My Jack has gone a - sail - ing and trou - ble's on his". Above the staff, a contour segment is indicated as 1 2 1 1 0, with arrows pointing to the notes. Below the staff, interval content is indicated as 1 2 3 2 2 1 0 0 1. The second system contains the second line of music with the lyrics "mind. A - leav - ing of his coun - try his dar - ling girl be -". Below the staff, interval content is indicated as 5 2 2 0 2 3 0 3. The third system contains the chorus "hind Sing lay, sing lay, sing lay the li - ly low." with "motive a sc(0257)" labeled above the first two measures and "motive a" labeled above the last two measures.

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Example 2.7 is a version from Wisconsin.²⁷ The first phrase here, like the Eddy, has an “embellished” sc(05) — basically the move from dominant to tonic indicated by arrows pointing to $\hat{5}$ and $\hat{1}$. Variants of motive c and c’ follow. The melody for the text “his darling girl behind” is a subset of sc(0257), sc(025), missing the C; it is a subset of the set on the same scale degrees that the equivalent phrase in “Which Side” has (“has come in here to dwell”). The first “sing lay, sing lay” is sc(0257), with the contour transposed to <2-3-0-1>. The song ends with a downward motive a. This version has a sailing + nonsense syllable chorus format, including the phrase “lay the lily low.”

²⁷ Harry B. Peters, *Folk Songs out of Wisconsin*, Madison, WI: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1977: 152.

Example 2.8: Comparison of potential source song “Lily Munroe” to Rzewski’s setting of “Which Side Are You On”. This version of “Lily Munroe” appears in Lomax’s *The Folk Songs of North America*.

(Lomax 1975)

82. LILY MUNROE

As collected and arranged by Alan Lomax. SEE: Belden, 171; Brown II, 314; Guide (*Polly Oliver*); JEFFS IV, 84, VIII, 9; Ord, 233; Randolph I, 215. This song appears in broadsides in Britain and probably America, but in its present form is widely current in U.S. but not found in England, although related to *William Taylor, Polly Oliver*, etc.

Piano arrangement by MATYAS SEIBER

Freely ♩ = 126

contour segment:

GUITAR- FREELY or 4, 5A
BANJO- FREELY or 1-2

interval content:

There was a weal-thy mer-chant In Lon-don's town did dwell He had an on-ly

daugh-ter, The truth to you I'll tell. Lay the li-ly o, O lay the li-ly o!

CHORUS

motive a

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Example 2.8²⁸ is the most similar to “Which Side.” The title blends “Jack Munro” and “Lay the Lily Low” into “Lily Munroe.” The opening lyric contains motive b sc(05) on “merchant.” Motives c and c’ appear in the form that are used in the version of “Which Side” that appears in the Lomax/Guthrie/Seeger book. The chorus, “Lay the lily o,” is also almost exactly like “Which Side,” but with a slight embellishment on the last “lily.” Lyrically, it is a merchant + dwell/tell, with nonsense chorus.

Socio-political aspects of Reece’s “Which Side Are You On?”

Having presented some examples of what is in all likelihood the source material for Reece’s song, I wish to speculate how Reece adapted the song. She simplified the melody to a few ideas. The power of this simplification is most apparent in the chorus. In both songs, the verses present a scenario; they function to

²⁸ Lomax, *The Folk Songs of North America*, Garden City, NY: Dolphin Books, 1975: 164.

move the story forward. The refrain in “Jack Munro” is a placeholder; it provides no narrative or even meaning, as it is filled with melodically meandering nonsense syllables. Its purpose seems to be to provide the listener with a few moments to ruminate upon the verse. Reece’s song tightens up the refrain and gives it a heightened function: melodically, it’s simpler, more direct, and evokes a question-and-answer syntax. The listener is still expected to ruminate on the verses, but with a laser-like focus on the relationship between the listener and the issue being described.

Perhaps it’s not surprising that a song about a strong woman fighting to save her lover would be taken up by a strong woman fighting to save her husband, her family, and her community. Reece changed the focus from being on one person who braves a battle to save her lover, to one person who must identify with a group in order to brave a battle. The focus expands from individual to group. Expanding the focus is key to the persuasive kind of song she tried to write. Reece wanted to include more people in the circle of “this is who we are.” Yet, it is not only the lyrics that draw a circle of inclusion. The musical tradition that Reece’s song is a part of, the choice of basing her song on a pre-existing melody, and the form of the song itself all contribute on equal footing with the lyrics to contribute to the song’s political power.

Reece’s song can be viewed as both a folk song and a propaganda song. Both of these categories imply certain audiences and stylistic features. In some ways, “Which Side Are You On” falls short of the requirements for membership in both categories; however, it succeeds in the ways that are most important. Sociologist R. Serge Denisoff outlines criteria for folk and propaganda songs in a 1968 article. Folk songs have unknown authors and composers, are “orally transmitted,” and must

change over the course of many transmissions.²⁹ Propaganda songs are composed by known entities operating outside the folk community whose style is being emulated.³⁰

Although Reece became identified as the composer of the song, she remained a member of the community from which the musical style developed; therefore, this song still operates within the genre of folksong. Denisoff points out that most 20th century propaganda songs do not meet the criteria to be folk songs.³¹ He fails to note that early 20th-century rapid technological developments in travel, sound recording and media distribution, combined with socio-political developments in nationalistic fervor made it quite difficult for any new song to gain wide recognition without its creator also gaining recognition. Reece — along with her contemporaries Aunt Molly Jackson and Sarah Ogan Gunning — must be considered a bona-fide folk singer with a bona-fide folk song, despite lack of anonymity. This aura of authenticity makes her song persuasive not only to her community, but also to the outsiders wishing to take up her cause.

A “folk” status is applicable to “Which Side” in three other important ways. She adapted the melody from an existing, anonymous folk song. Any composer could do this, but for Reece, this was an entirely spontaneous gesture. Second, she adapted an existing ballad style. Fowke and Glazer quote extensively from A. L. Lloyd’s book *Come All Ye Bold Miners*, in which he refers to the come-all-ye: “a style of ballad [with] alternative eight and six-syllable phrases of Irish street-song.” From

²⁹ R. Serge Denisoff, “Protest Movements...,” *The Sociological Quarterly* 9, no. 2 (1968): 229.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 230.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 229.

about 1850 onwards, the come-all-ye became “the standard form for pit-disaster ballads.”³² “Which Side” uses a seven- and six-syllable phrasing and begins with “Come all of you good workers,” reminiscent of this style. Anti-union violence becomes a type of mining disaster through Reece’s adaptation of the standard lyrical form for singing about mining disasters. Lastly, as detailed above, “Which Side” has gone through the folk-process, experiencing minor variations as evidenced in print and audio recording.

Although Denisoff emphasizes the outsider status of composers of propaganda songs, this seems to be more of a trend in 20th-century propaganda songs than a requirement. Propaganda songs are better defined by their purpose and target audiences, which Denisoff also clarifies. “The primary usage of the propaganda song is to create political or social consciousness favorable to the position of the movement or individual using the propaganda song.”³³ The song does this via one or more of the following ways: attracting support and interest from those outside the group or “movement”; strengthening the resolve and creating solidarity among the group; suggesting a course of “action to achieve a desired goal,” which is stated and framed as a “problem situation.”³⁴

Propaganda songs are generally viewed negatively, due to their history of abuse by totalitarian regimes. Denisoff proffers the more neutral designation, “song of persuasion.”³⁵ Call it propaganda or persuasion, the desperation of the times called for ways of making people inside and outside the community understand the

³² Fowke & Glazer, 61.

³³ Denisoff, 228.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 229.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 229.

necessity of changing the situation. The persuasion occurs not only through the lyrics, but also through the enactment of the folk traditions the song embraces.

When talking about songs of persuasion, or any art form of persuasion, the question of its effectiveness is bound to arise. As seen above, Dreiser's Writers' Committee did help raise awareness of Harlan County's situation on a national level. It is unfair, however, to say a politically-motivated work of art is a failure when it doesn't result in specific legislation. As Small might remind us, music's efficacy does not lie in bringing about social change, but in exploring values and relationships. The "success" of Reece's song is not that it helped end miners' woes — maybe it did, maybe it didn't — but that it helped people explore their relationship to the situation and create a sense of community. Perhaps that is the only thing one can definitively say about any piece of music: people sympathetic to it are a *de facto* community. Yet, this is worth taking into account, because no action can be taken as a group without a sense of group cohesion. As Pete Seeger has said, "A singing movement is a winning movement."³⁶

Designations of "folk," "propaganda," "ballad," and so forth imply certain ideas about who and how people are musicking with a given work, just as much as "classical" does. These issues are equally political as they are musical. Over the course of the next two chapters, I will look at how Rzewski and his performers are manipulating ideas about musicking present in Reece's song, and how the musical transformations of the song reflect that.

³⁶ Pete Seeger, introduction to *Rise Up Singing*, ed. Peter Blood and Annie Patterson. Bethlehem PA: Sing Out Corporation, 1992: iii.

Chapter III — Analysis of Rzewski’s composition “Which Side Are You On?”

In the previous chapter, I proposed that the political experience in Reece’s song was created not only by the literal meaning of the lyrics, but also by the music: the structure of the melody, the form of the song, the use of a pre-existing melody, and the use of pre-existing lyrical tropes. These aspects of Reece’s song support the political sentiments in the lyrics and reflect the complexity of the political issues inherent in her situation. In this chapter, I want to show how Rzewski’s composition works in a way similar to Reece’s, but in a larger piece. The first chapter dealt with the political atmosphere and personal history that led up to Rzewski’s composition *North American Ballads*. Here, I will look at the salient musical ingredients in the movement “Which Side Are You On?” to demonstrate that his manipulation of the ingredients present in Reece’s song provides a basis for modeling a political experience, namely, a situation with multiple sides.

Instead of corresponding music gestures to characters or events in order to present a moralistic story, Rzewski’s piece remains abstract and therefore more available for exploring values. The piece does not recreate the experience of being a blacklisted miner, in the same way that “Coming Together/ Attica” does not recreate the experience of being in jail; nor does Reece’s song recreate her situation. The power of the music is that it remains abstract enough for the listener to figure out their own relationships and values.

[M]usic allows each participant to interpret its significances individually and independently without the integrity of the collective musical behaviour being undermined. ... Music’s powers of entrainment, together with its ambiguity, may allow each [participant] to explore forms of interaction with others while

minimizing the risk that such exploration might give rise to conflict...¹

As seen in the previous chapter, the lyrics of the song describe a situation of “you’re either with us or against us” — one side or the other. The motive that corresponds to the title is a symmetrical set, sc(0257), which is stated melodically upwards and answered by its melodic retrograde, which is also the inversion of the set class. This main idea is symmetrical and sided in and of itself; the way Reece uses it musically also provides a sense of sides. Rzewski expands on this sense, juxtaposing opposing sonorities, textures, and form. The listener experiences various sides musically.

Sidedness

Sidedness is represented in the piece by pairs of musical elements. Aspects of harmony, texture, form, and style are separated out into dualities, one of which is present at any given moment in the written music. Figure 3.1 gives a synopsis of the form of the movement. The piece as a whole consists of composed music and improvised music. The composed part of the piece is split into two sections, or sides. The first section, from measures 1-91, is polytonal; the second from measures 92-130 is monotonal. Because of repeats, the second section takes about the same amount of time as the first. The polytonal section has three sets of dualities in the areas of harmony (tonal/atonal), texture (homophonic/polyphonic), and rhythm (unitemporal/multitemporal). I begin with brief examples of these smallest

¹ Ian Cross, “Music and Meaning, ambiguity and evolution.” *Musical Communication*, ed. Dorothy Miell, Raymond MacDonald, and David J. Hargreaves. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005: 36.

structures first, then move into the larger structures. Improvisation is discussed in the next chapter.

Figure 3.1: The form of the movement is governed by dualities that provide a sense of sidedness.

composed m1-130, Finale	polytonal m1-91, Finale	harmony	tonal	m1-14 atonal, polyphonic, multitemporal m15-21 tonal, polyphonic, unitemporal m22-25 atonal, homophonic (chorale-texture), unitemporal m26-33 tonal, polyphonic (canon at the 5 th below), unitemporal m34-36 atonal, polyphonic, multitemporal m37-39 tonal, polyphonic, unitemporal m40-50 atonal, polyphonic, multitemporal m51-60 tonal, homophonic (song texture), unitemporal m61-91 atonal, polyphonic, multitemporal
			atonal	
		texture	homophonic	
			polyphonic	
		rhythm	unitemporal	
			multitemporal	
monotonal m92-130				
improvised				

tonal/atonal

The overall aural effect throughout the whole movement, and even the whole work, is the juxtaposition of tonal and atonal sound worlds. The make-up of this effect often belongs to a different categorical pair; for example, the sense of tonality is created through non-standard harmonic techniques. Yet, the audible result is just as important as its underlying structure.

In example 3.1, atonality gives way to tonality at measure 15. A sampling of sonorities are marked in measures 10-14. While there are a few instances of triads and dyads that would feel at home in a tonal context, here they do not have any tonal function. Measures 12-14 feature large tone-clusters, also contributing to the atonal sense. Measure 15 introduces a key signature, triads, appoggiatura — all things that look and sound tonal. This sense of tonality is tenuous at best; alternating Eb minor and F minor chords do not truly establish a sense of key. The key signature

itself implies Bb minor, yet the agogic accent of the quarter note E-flats in the bass voice suggests something in the Eb minor realm. By measure 22, the music returns to a state of atonality. Despite the apparent lack of commitment to establishing a tonal center, the perception is that something tonal is happening or might happen.

Example 3.1: m10-17. Atonality followed by tonality, as shown by a sample of vertical sonorities occurring on the beat.

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homophony/polyphony

In example 3.2, tonal song-texture changes to atonal polyphony similar to what is heard in the opening of the piece. Measures 54-60 feature song-texture homophony, using an ostinato figure in the bass. An “alto” voice appears occasionally, in m56-57 and m59-60, but it doesn’t affect the overall sense of homophony. Measures 61-63 employ different tempos, syncopation, and registral differentiation to create a distinctly polyphonic texture.

A rapid succession of textures occurs in example 3.3, as the music moves from tonality to atonality back to tonality. Measure 21 is the end of the previous section

(starting in m15) using tonal polyphony. Measures 22-25 suddenly switch to atonal homophonic chorale texture (planing), with a brief rhythmic variation in m24. Starting in measure 26, the music returns to tonal polyphony with three independent voices.

Example 3.2: m54-63. Juxtaposition of tonal song-texture homophony and atonal polyphony.

The musical score consists of four systems, each with a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment (bass clef).
 System 1 (measures 54-55): The vocal line begins with a melodic phrase. The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note pattern. Dynamic markings include *pp* (pianissimo) and *ppp* (pianissimissimo) *sotto voce*. A tempo instruction reads "slow back to original tempo".
 System 2 (measures 56-57): The piano accompaniment continues with a consistent eighth-note texture. The vocal line has a more active melodic line. The dynamic marking is *pp* *sempre*.
 System 3 (measures 58-59): The piano accompaniment features a more complex, rhythmic pattern. The vocal line has a melodic line with some chromaticism. Dynamic markings include *mp* (mezzo-piano) and *cresc.* (crescendo).
 System 4 (measures 60-63): The piano accompaniment has a more varied rhythmic texture, including some triplet figures. The vocal line continues with a melodic line. Dynamic markings include *mf* (mezzo-forte) and *f* (forte).

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Example 3.3: m21 -29. Rapid changes between textures — polyphony, chorale texture, polyphony.

The musical score for Example 3.3 consists of three systems of music, measures 21 through 29. The first system (measures 21-23) is in 3/4 time and features a polyphonic texture with markings: (rit.), a little slower, poco, dim., and pp subito. The second system (measures 24-26) is in 4/4 time and features a chorale texture with markings: poco accel., rit., poco, brightly, p, very freely, espressivo, and poco. The third system (measures 27-29) is in 3/4 time and features a polyphonic texture with markings: mf and poco rit.

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unitemporal/multitemporal + metered/unmetered

In the area of rhythm, there are two interdependent pairs of sides, one dealing with tempo relationships and the other with the presence of meter. Comparing the opening atonal passage from m1-14 with the tonal passage that immediately follows, m15-21: Both are contrapuntal and both have an obvious pulse, but it is audible that the individual voices in the first passage are more independent than the voices in the second.

Part of what makes the voices sound less independent in the second passage is the presence of a regular meter. The voices in the first passage are so independent that despite the audible beat, there is no sense of beat grouping. The lack of meter

and the frequent syncopation of entrances create a sense that the voices are actually moving at different tempos, even though this passage uses the same basic 2:1 ratios of rhythmic durations that the following passage uses, i.e. quarters vs. eighths vs. sixteenths. The opening section is multitemporal and the one that follows is unitemporal.

I am choosing to view this as a tempo issue, over something more common like polyrhythm or polymeter, because the motives retain their original metric impulse most of the time. Rzewski occasionally freely varies the rhythm — m43-44 is a good example of where he creates a sense of speeding up and slowing down — but most of the time the motives are kept very even. There are moments in the piece of metered multitemporality (m36, m49, m84-86) and moments of unmetered unitemporality (m78-79, m81-82); however, unitemporality depends heavily on a sense of meter and multitemporality leans mostly on the side of unmetered. I'd like to focus on a short passage that puts these sides in bold relief.

One example of the juxtaposition of unitemporality and multitemporality may be found in example 3.4. Measure 66 is unitemporal and metered. Because the original melody is mostly in eighths, tempos are calculated against the original at the beginning of the piece, quarter note = 100bpm. The melody in m66, therefore, is at this tempo. Multitemporality begins immediately in m67: The right hand melody uses dotted sixteenths, making the dotted eighth the unit of beat, about 133bpm; the left hand melody in m67 uses dotted eighths, making the dotted quarter the unit of beat, about 67bpm. In m68, the right hand has three dotted eighth quintuples as the unit of beat, making its tempo about 37bpm; the left hand has dotted quarter quintuples as the unit of beat and a tempo of about 55bpm.

Example 3.4: m66-69. Multitemporality. Numbers indicate beats per minute.

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polytonal/monotonal: polytonal

Tonality governs the structure of the whole piece. The pair of atonality/tonality as discussed above considered only the aural effect of the music, and not the harmonic techniques of how it is composed. With this duality, the focus is on the harmonic techniques underlying how the music is put together. The hint to this pair is in the instructions for improvising, where Rzewski suggests that the form of the composed part of the work has many tonalities in the first part and one in the second: “3. Improvisation may use techniques employed in *written music* (polytonal transpositions of theme, etc.) or not; but in any case should represent a different ‘side’ of the same form (*many different tonalities in the first part, one tonality in the second*).”²

The “first part” Rzewski refers to corresponds to m1-91, and the second being m92-130. The examples so far have all been from this first part. In the first part, the atonal sections are polytonal in the sense that each motive statement can be viewed as being in different transpositions of the song, that is, in one of 12 minor modes. From the perspective of polytonality, the vertical sonorities become less important

² Rzewski, *North American Ballads*, 43. Emphasis mine.

than harmonic relationships between the individual melodic strands of motives. These harmonic relationships can be explored by the tonality of each motive.

Example 3.5: m1-2. Each motive has its own key area. The first box is in Eb; the second in E.

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The key area of each motivic statement is named by determining what the key would be if that motivic statement appeared in the context of the whole original song, as opposed to the implied tonal area of the pitch-class set that comprises the motive. In example 3.5, the second statement of motive a in the bass in m1 is in Eb minor. The next bass statement, motive b, is in E minor — B is the lowest note in that figure, but in the context of the original song, that pitch is the 5th scale degree. Since Rzewski seems to think of this usage of the material as polytonal, as suggested in the guidelines for improvising, it follows that other sections of the piece should be considered in this fashion. Using a polytonal perspective, the section yields information about how the voices relate to one another, as well as about the harmonic structure. I will explore the harmonic structure of the opening in more detail later in the chapter.

The tonal-sounding moments in the first part are not tonal in a standard harmonic practice sense. Rzewski arranges the song “Which Side Are You On?” twice: once early in the piece from m26-33 and again in the finale. The aural effect of both settings is tonal, but a closer look reveals that polytonality is in use here, too.

Rzewski uses two closely related transpositions of the hexachord set used in the song to create the illusion of tonality.

This illusion is achieved each time by using only one closely-related mode in addition to B minor. The song itself is based on a six-note group: B C# D E F# A (ex. 3.6).

Example 3.6: m26-33. First canonic statement of melody, in B minor.

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In this setting, the polytonality is more audible than in the finale, as the melody is set canonically a perfect fifth below, using an E-minor hexachord: E F# G A B D (ex. 3.7).

Example 3.7: m26-33. Second canonic statement of melody, in E minor.

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The two notes the two hexachords do not share, G and C#, complete the two scales into B-minor and E-dorian. This section can be roughly analyzed in a tonal fashion; however, the frequency of second inversion chords and the repeated notes in the melody thwart a tidy standard harmonic analysis (example 3.8). Yet, enough of the vertical harmonies sound like familiar chords – mostly i, iv, and v – that the

effect is tonal. The VII chord in the first measure could be heard as a iv chord, with an appoggiatura in the bass. Problems arise in m29 (where the question marks are) where the vertical sonorities on first three eighths consist of the pitches

Example 3.8: m26-33. Complete canon with harmonic analysis.

very freely,
p espressivo

*i*⁶ VII *iv*⁶

27 *mf* *poco rit.*

*v*⁴ *i*⁴ *iv*⁶ *v*⁶ *i*⁶ *iv*? *v*? *i* *v*⁴

30 *a little slower, con rubato* *p*

i *v*⁶ *i* *v* *iv*

33 *i*

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B, E, and F#. The collective melodic motion to the octave Bs helps provide a sense of dominant-tonic progression. It is also possible that because the E-minor version of the melody is a canonic response – a rhythmically and harmonically displaced echo

– to the B-minor melody that falls on the dominant beats, it is simply perceived as an ‘other,’ and not taken into harmonic account.

The bass line solidifies the sense of tonality. It almost sounds like a third part to the canonic imitation in the upper voices, but it is not in strict canonic imitation. Free imitation allows the bass line to choose notes that support a sense of B-minor. The similarity to the melody unifies the section more strongly than if the bass line were simply outlining harmonies in more traditional chord voicings or melodic patterns. This developmental variation is achieved through small changes in the contour and intervallic make-up of the motive that makes up the chorus (example 3.9).

Example 3.9: m26-33. Motivic transformation of the bass line to the canonic section.

The musical score for Example 3.9 consists of three staves. The top staff shows a melodic fragment with the interval content: 1 4 2. The middle staff (measures 27-30) has contour segments: 2 4 3, 2 3 4, 2 5 2, and 2. The bottom staff (measures 30-33) has contour segments: 2 3 1 0, 5 2 2 1, 2 3 0 1, and 3 2 1 0. The key signature is one sharp (F#).

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The chorus is made up of upward and downward statements of $sc(0257)$, whose interval class succession is 2-3-2. The bass in m26 begins with a four-note statement of an inverted $sc(0157)$, (0267) with the same contour <3210> as the downward “which side are you on” of the chorus and spans the same intervallic space of $i7$, but since the first interval is diminished, the interval content is now 1-4-2.

Over the next three measures, the first two units of the contour are switched, creating a contour of <2310>. When the line is rhythmically augmented in m30-1, <2310> is transformed back into the original <3210>, first by transforming the last two units (<10> to <01>) in the upper voice and then flipping the first two and the last two (<23> to <32> and <01> to <10>) in the lower voice. The melodic interval class content changes parsimoniously for the most part, but even the radical change in interval content in m29 is mitigated by the return to the set sc(0257) and the continuation of the contour <2310>. The bass line further unifies the arrangement by mimicking the overall downward movement of the melody, moving from D5 in measure 26 to E2 in measure 32, where the chorus melody is taken up by the bass voices.

In the setting of the song in the Finale (example 3.10), Rzewski again uses two closely related hexachords. This time the two are in a T_3 relationship, as opposed to the T_5 relationship between the canonic melodies in the previous example. Several factors contribute to the aural perception of this section as being tonal, despite its polytonal structure.

The B-hexachord and the D-hexachord share 4 pitches in common — fewer than the T_5 relationship — but the T_3 relationship allows them to run in parallel 3rds/6ths in chorale-texture homophony. The texture creates that powerful driving sound, like a giant choir singing the song one last time.

Example 3.10: Finale. Complete setting of song (verse + chorus) using two closely related hexachords.

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The pitches from the D-hexachord that clash with a sense of b-minor make but a few brief appearances, C-natural twice and F-natural once. The chorus of the song does not contain these pitches, making the chorus entirely diatonic to b-minor. The voicing and density of the two melodies reinforce the perception of b-minor, too. Examples 3.11 and 3.12 show the B-hexachord and D-hexachord melodies, respectively. Looking at the D example, there are only at most two octaves of D melodies. The B example shows that there are 3-4 octaves of B melodies. The B melody also contains “shouts”: multi-octave, single pitch-class punctuations at the end of each phrase. The D melodies are always in the middle voices, surrounded by the B melodies, regardless of the many register changes.

Example 3.11: Finale. Extraction of B minor melody.

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Example 3.12: Finale. Extraction of D minor melody.

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The different senses of tonality are achieved with the same materials used in the same way. The aural effect is of stark contrast, achieved via a unified compositional technique. The fact that everything is really polytonal on paper does not negate the contrast that is heard. The opposite is also true: the audible contrast does not negate the underlying unity. Both contradicting states are experienced simultaneously — the unity and the disjunction — and that is part of the political and social relationships brought about in performance. The tonal/atonal pair happens in tandem with the polytonal, and later in the piece, in contrast to the monotonal.

polytonal/monotonal: monotonal

The second half of the written music, as Rzewski suggests, is a monotonal rendering of the verse melody. This section can also be considered monostylistic, and even monoharmonic — the ostinato functioning as a drone. In order to balance out the polytonal side in terms of length, the melody has to be stretched out in some fashion. What the polytonal side has in breadth and range of emotion, the monotonal side has in focus and economy.

The tonality of the monotonal side is in C-minor, a half-step higher than the tonal song arrangements in the first part and the finale. Because there is no sixth scale-degree in the melody of the song, Ab is left out of the key signature (which appears, rather randomly, in m106). The only harmonization that occurs is a C-minor triad. There is no implication of dorian or aeolian or a true tonal minor as there are in the polytonal-as-tonal settings of the melody. When the chorus comes in at m127, Ab finally happens, but the sense of C-minor is fleeting because of the use of planing, the introduction of Db in m128, and the non-tonal harmonies in m130.

Bell and Olmstead suggest the relationship of B and C as opposing tonal centers represent yet another pair of sides.³ This plays out in the settings of the song in the polytonal and monotonal parts of the written music, but also in the improvisation, which will be dealt with in the following chapter.

The development of the melody in this section is different from any technique used in the polytonal side. Whereas almost everything in the first part is a manipulation of a complete motive from the song, here the melody is cut up into

³ Bell and Olmstead, “Musica Reservata...” *Musical Quarterly* 72, no. 4 (1986): 451, 453.

smaller sub-motives and then simply presented in order with repetitions.

Accompanying the melody is an ostinato made up of an elision of two motive a's.

This section is notated in 3/4 but to my ears, this notation obscures the accents that occur on the final sixteenth of each measure, where the true downbeat lies in the recordings. I have chosen to re-rotate this section in 12/16 to illustrate both the feel on the recordings and to make the expansion of the original melody clearer (example 3.13). In the original notation, the notes that make up the melody in the RH first have a staccato and a tenuto marking in m96-108, and then have accent marks in m109-123. In my re-rotated example, I have retained only these markings that are important in delineating the melody; they fall on the first and fourth dotted-eighth beats and the first and 12th sixteenths, respectively.

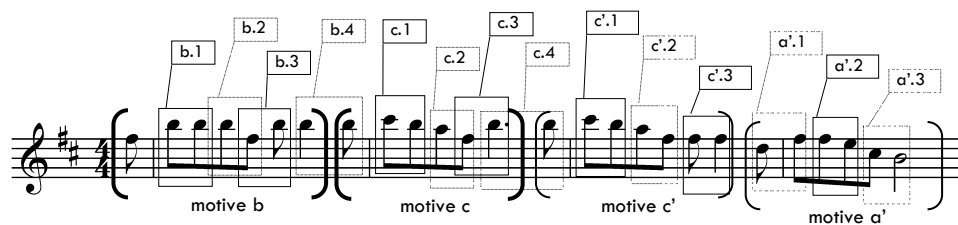
Example 3.13: m96-123. This section has been re-notated to show metric feel of the performance and to clarify the expansion of the melody.

The musical score consists of 11 staves. The first six staves are in bass clef, and the last five are in treble clef. The key signature is two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 12/8. The music is characterized by a steady eighth-note accompaniment in the bass clef and a more complex melody in the treble clef. The melody features many eighth and sixteenth notes, often with accents and slurs. There are several repeat signs and first/second endings throughout the piece. The final measure of the piece is marked with a '4x' above it, indicating a fourth ending.

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The next example (3.14) shows the melody of the chorus broken down into sub-motives. The dotted lines are for ease of seeing the different boxes and carry no meaning. Each sub-motive has two notes. I've labeled them according to the original motive they occur in; when they consist of notes from the end of one motive and the beginning of the next, they are labeled according to the motive the first note is in. Many of the sub-motives are the same, e.g. b.3 and c.3; b.1, b.4, c.4, and c'.3. I've chosen to consider them as distinct entities because they are used in the context of the song, and not as independent compositional units.

Example 3.14: Original melody broken down into submotives.



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Example 3.15 is the melody extracted from the ostinato and simplified into a simple-duple meter for ease of reading. Here the sub-motives are presented in order. Each sub-motive is repeated twice, the first note of the sub-motive serving as an anacrusis to the second note. A few of the motives are slightly modified, represented by a strikethrough in the sub-motive label. Most of the modified sub-motives are a repeated note, the exception being the final a'.3 which originally is the tonic approached by its upper neighbor. The first note of the sub-motive is changed to an

approach from the lower neighbor. The whole verse is played twice, the second time with a shortened anacrusis and with more of the modified sub-motives.

Example 3.15: m96-123. Extraction of melody, simplified rhythm, labeled with submotives, as delineated in ex. 3.14.

The musical score consists of two systems of notation, each with four staves. The first system is in bass clef, and the second system is in treble clef. Both systems are in 4/4 time and a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The melody is extracted and simplified, with various submotives labeled in boxes and connected to the notes by lines. The submotives are: b.1, b.2, b.3, b.4, c.1, c.2, c.3, c.4, c'.1, c'.2, e'.3, a'.1, a'.2, a'.3, b.1, b.2, b.3, b.4, c.1, c.2, c.3, c.4, c'.1, c'.2, e'.3, a'.1, a'.2, a'.3, e'.3. The notation includes quarter notes, eighth notes, and rests, with some notes beamed together.

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Sidedness in context

In order to understand sidedness, there has to be something the sides have in common: a situation or an object. In considering a shape, it might seem a little odd to separately consider the sides from the object. In considering a situation, however, it

does make sense to consider what has spawned these various factions and why it might cause the different “sides” to form, to think they way they do, to act the way they do. As noted in the previous chapter, Appendix A goes into more detail about the mining situation. The town of Harlan, the mining industry, the will to power are unifying elements; they are what the sides have in common.

In making a work of art, the artist needs to create the object or situation that has these sides. It can be as simple as a frame or it can be a complex structure. Those choices are also a political act, in the sense that no matter what the artist chooses, it says something about their relationships and values. As Rzewski notes, this happens in writing history as well as creating art:

[W]e are dealing with this musical forum here as if it were history, that is to say, a situation which is collectively produced by human beings, a situation in which basically nobody knows what they're doing. And the forum is then given to the assimilated information ex post facto. We read history books and everything that happens seems to make perfect sense: the First World War came first, and the Second World War came second; it's all very logical. But we can only do that after it happens...⁴

The sides in this work do not exist in a void, independent of one another. They combine and interact. In Rzewski's piece, the situation to which these sides belong is not the song, but the structures supporting those manipulations of the song-material. The transitions between sections hold a lot of information about how the piece works, how these seemingly disparate elements connect, and what the political experiences beyond mere sidedness are. Example 3.16 returns to the opening to look at its harmonic structure. The opening atonal section connects with the tonal section that follows via polytonal networks, voice leading, and rhythm.

⁴ Rzewski, KPFA.

Each motive is labeled in this way: motive:key-area. With a few exceptions, each motive is adjacent to motives in keys that are T_0 , T_5 , T_2 , or T_3 away, yielding relationships of 6, 5, 4, or 3 common tones, respectively. Such transpositions can be considered closely related. From this, networks of closely related keys are discernable and particular keys are emphasized via T_0 relationships, designated with arrows. Strings of T_0 relationships create movement chromatically downward toward Eb, the tonic of the section beginning in m15, starting from the three G statements spanning m2-5, followed by three F# statements within m4-7, two F statements within m7-8, and ending with the two E statements in m8-9 and a second two within m12-14. The simultaneous octave C statements in m9-10 and the A# / Bb statements in m12-14 create a small-scale secondary downward emphasis to the dominant of Eb. These downward motions smooth out the transition from the atonal-sounding section to the tonal-sounding section that follows.

Example 3.17 zooms in on measures 12-15 to show how the music smoothly moves from atonality to minor tonality via melodic direction. In measure 12 in the right hand there is a four-voice, planed statement of motive a (with many enharmonic spellings), indicated by arrows. The top three voices end their statement in measure 14 on a D# minor chord in second inversion (box), which is the enharmonic equivalent of Eb minor, the tonic chord in the following section. The fourth voice ends on E5, which resolves downward by implication to Eb3 (dotted arrow). In the left hand, a two voice planed statement begins on beat two of m12 on G1 and Bb2, ending in m13-14 on D2 and F3. The two voices move in contrary motion to octave Ebs in m15 (dotted arrows). In the pick-up to m14 in the left hand, a third statement of motive a moves upward to end on B4 in m14; this B resolves by octave transposition to the Bb3 in the tenor melody in m15. The final statement of

Example 3.16: m1-17. Networks of common key areas create a sense of harmonic motion. Motives are labeled by motive:key area, e.g. the first box is motive a in F minor. Arrows indicate juxtaposition of motives in the same key.

Frederic Rzewski

Spirited (♩ = 96/100)

14 *poco rit. - - A little slower* *mp* *mp picking up* *poco a poco cresc.*

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motive a begins in the right hand in m14 (solid arrows), starting on C#5 and ends on the Gb4 in m15. Voice leading dovetails the juxtaposition of atonality in measure 14 and tonality in measure 15.

Example 3.17: m12-15. Use of voice leading to modulate from atonality to tonality.

The musical score for Example 3.17 shows measures 12 through 15. It features two staves: a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The key signature changes from B-flat major in measure 12 to C major in measure 15. The time signature changes from 4/4 in measure 12 to 2/4 in measure 15. The score includes dynamic markings of *p* (piano) and *pp* (pianissimo), and tempo markings of *poco rit.* (a little slower). Voice leading arrows connect notes between the two staves, and a box highlights a specific chord in measure 14.

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Rhythm and meter also play a role in the transitions between atonality and tonality. The opening atonal section presents the whole song with each phrase floating independently: isolated by being in a different key, often in a different tempo, free from any indication of meter, then surrounded in a wash of motives of the song in many other keys and tempi. As the section progresses, the rate of rhythmic change slows down, specifically starting in m9. The rhythms become less syncopated. The motives enter on the beat instead of on a subdivision. Movement slows down drastically in m12, when the number of voices is at its most dense. Measures 13-14 employ only quarter, half, and whole notes — the most basic rhythmic units. At this point, moving into a distinct meter and sense of tonality feels natural, like a logical next step.

Similar elements occur in transitions moving from tonality to atonality (example 3.18). I've chosen to look at this passage from a b-minor perspective, despite the lack of cadence in that key, because of its importance in the piece itself:

the two tonal settings of the song are in b-minor and this key plays an important role in the improvisation as well. G#-minor is established in m51-57 via a pedal tone. The harmonic motion starts to move faster starting in m58-59 with f#-minor and e-minor as the predominant harmonies. Both measures have small flourishes using other remote harmonies, an enharmonic augmented-sixth-like chord (Ab Cb Ebb F#, respelled as the friendlier G# B D F#) and a Neapolitan-like F-major chord (N/iv), respectively. The harmonic rhythm goes into overdrive in m60, whipping through a deceptive cadence that goes off into nowhere and setting up the dissolution of tonality over m61-62. These two measures ease the transition by using predominantly tonal sonorities in non-tonal ways. By m63, atonality is firmly established.

As in the previous example, there are important rhythmic aspects to the transition here, too. In m51-54, when the harmonic motion is at its slowest, only the first beat of each measure is accentuated with a low G#. Measures 55-57, while still harmonically static, become rhythmically more active, with a combination of sixteenth note subdivisions, occasional harmonic decoration (non-functional A#-minor figures), and accentuation on each beat. This driving pulse continues through m58-59. Through m60-63, as the harmony leaves the world of tonality, the sense of meter also slowly disappears. In measure 60, the 9/8 time disrupts the metric pulse set up back in 55; the three block chords on the last three eighths in particular, create a feeling of stepping on the brakes, but not quite slamming on them. The dotted-quarter beat hangs on for two more measures, with some voices starting to foreshadow full rhythmic independence.

Example 3.18: m58-63. Use of harmonic rhythm in modulation from tonality to atonality.

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Example 3.19 presents a series of quick transitions from tonal to atonal and back to tonal. From m15-20, the music oscillates between F-minor and Eb-minor chords and in m21 the harmonic activity picks up the pace. It sounds as if the music might modulate to another key, possibly Cb major. Here, too, rhythm contributes to signal a transition. Rzewski couples multitemporality to the harmonic change. In m19-20, the bass moves in hemiolas, creating a much slower triple meter and the lower voice in the right hand is moving in groups of three sixteenths. There are three tempos in these two measures: a dotted-half beat (the lower left-hand voice), a dotted-quarter beat (the top voices in each hand), and a dotted-eighth beat (the right-hand lower voice).

Instead of a modulation, tonality is dropped entirely in favor of atonality. Yet, in m22-24 there is a B-minor statement of motive a in the bass voice, and in m25 the B-minor statement is in the top voice. The hint of Cb is fulfilled by its enharmonic

equivalent, B. Rhythmically, the passage can't quite get started. The sense of beat and meter is repeatedly interrupted by fermatas and fluctuations in tempo. When tonality returns in m26, the rhythmic motion locks into a steady meter along with it.

Example 3.19: m21-26. Use of rhythm in rapid transitions between tonality and atonality.

21 *dim.* *(rit.)* *a little slower* *poco* *poco*

pp subito *poco* *poco*

Eb minor: III⁷ i⁶ N 014 } 0347
 Cb major: V⁷ iii⁶ IV ii⁷ }

poco accel. - - *poco* *rit.* - - *poco*

24 *brightly* *poco* *poco* *p* *very freely, espressivo*

0148 } 0237 } B minor: i iv

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Different “factions” band the various sides in the piece together in different ways. This is particularly apparent in the transitions between sections — e.g., a section of multitemporal, polyphonic, atonal polytonality going to a section of unitemporal, polyphonic, tonal polytonality. The relationships between every musical aspect are constantly in flux.

When relationships change rapidly, the individual elements take on new roles in order to cope with the changes. Voice-leading, for example, becomes more than just a device for creating flowing music (although that happens, too). In examples 3.16 and 3.17, voice-leading is a line that leads through the atonal opening section into the tonal section — the edge along which the various sides connect. The piece

has barely begun and yet there is an element from the outset that leads to the next situation.

In the political situation of Reece's song, the UMW wanted to support the miners, but when its own existence and power was threatened by a different union, suddenly it had a whole new relationship to the mining companies and the miners. As Asplund points out in his article,⁵ Rzewski often models political situations musically, so that listeners and especially performers experience them through performance. Without being programmatic or using a narrative or dialectic form, Rzewski uses basic musical structures to create the experience of rapidly changing relationships between several related elements. It is not a re-enactment or dramatization of the exact story, but instead a new experience of the same kind of situation.

As discussed in chapter 2, Reece is manipulating ideas about musicking, in so far as she is using a familiar tune and adapting a familiar song/lyric format. The familiar tune — suspected to be the secular ballad "Jack Munro" — comes with certain expectations about musicking. The song comes out of Reece's own cultural background and will therefore speak directly to her peers. Even if it were from a hymn as she purported, basically the same cultural and musicking background would be under consideration. As Small points out, anyone else it happens to speak to are people who are sympathetic to its inherent musicking qualities, even though those "outside" people might end up musicking with the song in a totally different way. She adopts lyrical tropes and form from a type of mining protest song, which adds another set of musicking qualities, that also speak to her peers.

⁵ Asplund, "...Spontaneous Political Music," *Perspectives of New Music*, vol. 33, no. 2, (1994): 418-41.

Rzewski manipulates inherent musicking signifiers in a similar, but expanded way. The different musical sides that Rzewski creates combine to make those surface elements that called “style”: e.g., atonal polyphony, tonal canons, minimalism. People both sympathetic and unsympathetic to these various styles are part of an average concert hall crowd — yet another experience of sidedness and the way different factions interact with one another. Reece uses these different musicking cues to draw a circle of inclusion, to invite all who are sympathetic to those modes of musicking to attend to her cause. In Rzewski’s piece, these different modes of musicking are used to create the sense of sidedness, to experience how these sides interact (in opposition or in tandem), and to draw the circle of inclusion, in order for those musicking with the piece to experience the kind of situation people in Harlan County experienced.

In Rzewski’s composed music, these ideas play out through various levels of structure: the motivic, harmonic, rhythmic, textural, and form. At each level, there is an experience of sidedness and changing relationships between sides. As Rzewski writes in his own work, the piece can be left at that and create a certain kind of socio-political experience via the notated music, or all of these elements can be explored via another side of musicking: improvisation.

Chapter IV — Improvisation

Political experiences are embedded in the musical materials of both Reece's song and Rzewski's written music. A key political experience modeled in both works is sides — self-definition in relationship to others, us-them. Reece's song used various musical and formal elements to create the sense of sides, a sense of inclusion, and a feeling of inevitability in her song that reflect and support those same ideas in the lyrics. Rzewski's piece takes those elements and applies other structures to develop the sense of sides and how different factions interact.

After about six minutes of composed music, Rzewski suggests a free improvisation of a similar length. He gives some verbal guidelines regarding form and tonal material, and provides a sample ending, a composed "Addendum." There is the assumption that one may use motives of the song, however, there are no chord changes or determined form as in traditional jazz. More than a cadenza, it is meant to be the other half of the movement, co-created by the performer.

The improvisation models a political experience, too, using the same ingredients in similar ways. However, as discussed by Rzewski and Small, the improvisation works differently from the written music: Old ideas are dropped, new worlds are created, and a new social order comes into being. Improvised music, in particular, can model potential social-paradigms and alternatives to the status-quo.¹

Larry Bell and Andrea Olmstead point out in their *Musical Quarterly* article that the directive in the improvisation guidelines "Improvisation should begin as a

¹ These ideas are also discussed here: Bohm, *On Dialogue*, 3; Rzewski, "Inner Voices," *Nonsequiturs*, 414; Rzewski, "Little Bangs," *Current Musicology* 67/68 (2002): 382; Small, *Common Tongue*, 70; Small, *Common Tongue*, 295-296; Asplund, "...Spontaneous Political Music," *Perspectives of New Music*, 33 no. 2 (1995): 418-19. Rzewski's and Small's ideas about improvisation are also discussed in chapter 1.

sudden radical change' ... resembles the language associated with political change." They consider the improvisation to be a "recreation of a labor-management dispute."² The idea of dispute goes against the ideas that Rzewski has expressed about the function and nature of improvisation that was presented in chapter 1: "If there ultimately is some kind of *peaceful* transition to more generous forms of social organization, music, and specifically improvised music, will play an important role in this process, as it has done in the past."³ A dispute is not the kind of action that creates new worlds or a sense of progress.

Dialogue

Using the writings of physicist and philosopher David Bohm as a guide, I'd like to present a view of improvisation as creating the experience of dialogue. In some ways, the mere existence of the opportunity to improvise in this work is enough to evoke dialogue: it is now another person's turn to speak and for us to listen without judgment. Dialogue, however, is more than simply taking turns in conversation.

In his book *On Dialogue*, David Bohm presents dialogue as a way for people to question their basic assumptions and create new commonalities between themselves. In his view, communication is different from dialogue, in that the goal in communication is to make a pre-existing idea common, as in, I say x and you accept x as your own. "[O]ne meaning of 'to communicate' is 'to make something common,' i.e., to convey information or knowledge from one person to another in as

² Bell and Olmstead, "Musica Reservata..." *Musical Quarterly* 72, no. 4 (1986): 453.

³ See the quote on p17 from Rzewski, "Little Bangs," *Current Musicology* 67/68 (2002), 386-7. Emphasis mine.

accurate a way as possible.”⁴ With discussions or negotiations, “the people who take part are not really open to questioning their fundamental assumptions. They are trading off minor points.”⁵

According to Bohm, in order to have a dialogue, the participants need an open-ended forum where they can say what they want about anything, enabling the participants to “realize what is on each other’s minds without coming to any conclusions or judgments.”⁶ In this way, dialogue can look “into the process of thought *behind* the assumptions.”⁷ Bohm stresses that all participants in a dialogue must be ready to change, to drop old ideas in order to be open to new ones: the dialogue means through which “suggests a *stream of meaning*... will make possible a flow of meaning in the whole group, out of which may emerge some new understanding. It’s something new, which may not have been in the starting point at all.” The result of dialogue is the new ideas the participants co-create.⁸

What makes the improvisation dialogue is that it performs so many of the same functions: The performer has a forum to say what he or she wants spontaneously, so it is akin to hearing musical thought processes in action. All participants who are musicking with this piece, from the composer, to the performer/improviser, to the listeners, must be willing to drop old ideas and change. Rzewski has to accept that the improviser is going to do what they want guidelines or no — for example, in his recording, pianist David Jalbert deviates from the

⁴ David Bohm, *On Dialogue*, New York: Routledge Classics, 2004: 2.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 19, 23.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 9. Italics his. See also the chapter “Suspending Assumptions,” 22-4.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 3, 6-7. Italics his.

directions in interesting ways, as I discuss below. The improviser has to accept whatever comes out and work with that, as do the listeners. By “accept” I do not mean that one has to like it, rather that once something has been played, it is part of the piece and cannot be taken back. As Rzewski notes, “Improvisation is the redemption of accident, a magical process in which the unintended is perceived as part of the design.”⁹ Although only one person is improvising, in a performance all are musicking together. Each participant in the performance — that includes the audience — is co-creating new meanings about both the composed and improvised music with the performer.

We are all looking at everything together. ... Accordingly, a different kind of consciousness is possible among us, a *participatory consciousness*. ... Each person is participating, is partaking of the whole meaning of the group and also taking part in it. We can call that a true dialogue.¹⁰

The performer enacts the process of dialogue for the audience. “It is [the improviser’s] task to create not just a single set of sound perspectives which are to be contemplated and enjoyed by listeners, but a multiplicity of opportunities for participation along a number of different perspectives.”¹¹ Even if the performer is practicing or a listener is hearing the piece as a recording, the enactment of dialogue can still happen. “Even one person can have a dialogue within himself, if the spirit of the dialogue is present.”¹²

⁹ Rzewski, “Inner Voices,” *Perspectives of New Music* 33, no. 2 (1995): 409

¹⁰ Bohm, *On Dialogue*, 31.

¹¹ Small, *Common Tongue*, 295.

¹² Bohm, *On Dialogue*, 7.

Analyzing recordings of improvisation

In this chapter, I analyze four transcriptions from four different commercially available recordings. Two are performances by Frederic Rzewski himself, one recorded for the Swiss label hatHUT, the other for the label Nonesuch. I refer to these recordings by their record label. The other recordings are by former Bang on a Can All-Stars pianist Lisa Moore, and Canadian soloist David Jalbert. Appendix C contains the transcriptions in full, save for Rzewski's hatHUT recording, for which there is a partial transcription.

The political experience that is modeled in the written music, as I discussed in chapter 3, is sidedness. In the improvisation, sidedness is transformed into dialogue. The ingredients that made up the sides in the written music interact in new ways and take on new meanings. Sidedness is represented in the written music melodically, harmonically, rhythmically, texturally, and formally, in discrete pairs. In the improvisation, these pairs are recombined, losing their separateness and are transformed into something new.

The analyses show the transformation of the original ideas in their new environment and how these changes create the experience of dialogue. The directions for improvisation provide the open forum required for dialogue to happen. The improvisation-cum-dialogue enables the participants to look at musical thought processes. Analysis can go deeper into this aspect of dialogue. The theory illuminates which ideas from the written music the improvisers are emphasizing or leaving aside, what ideas are important to them, what new ideas come to mind.

Rzewski's improvisation for the hatHUT recording mimics the form of the written music in that it rapidly changes styles for the first half and settles into the ideas from the Addendum for the second half. It starts out with a canon of the song

similar to the passage from m26-33 in the written music, quickly transitioning into rapidly alternating moments of percussive compound melody and snippets of song texture. Rzewski does not stick with any idea for very long, until he eventually segues into a longer section of dense, edge-of-tonality counterpoint, which then thins out into the C mixolydian Addendum.

Rzewski's improvisation for the label Nonesuch has, perhaps unsurprisingly, much in common with the earlier hatHUT recording: it also begins with a canon, explores a wide-range of styles and key areas, and develops into a section of dense counterpoint that thins out into the Addendum. However, Rzewski explores his ideas more thoroughly in the Nonesuch recording improvisation, spending significantly more time with each, and smoothing out the transitions between them. The canon at the opening, for example, is twice as long here than in the hatHUT improvisation. Rzewski still moves through many key areas, but much of the improvisation uses song-texture with a running-sixteenth accompaniment.

Moore's improvisation is strikingly different from both the written music and from the other improvisations. She sticks very closely to the two pitch sets prescribed the directions, B minor and C mixolydian. Major seconds, modal harmony, and drone-like pedal tones predominate, but a brief section of cluster tremolos provide contrast. Stark style shifts are eschewed in favor of a consistency in mood, but the improvisation does not lack for invention and interest.

Jalbert's improvisation strays from Rzewski's instructions, yet the overall effect is most like a traditional cadenza. It begins with an arrangement of the song in B minor with Alberti accompaniment. A second variation of the song with cluster-harmonies begins but develops into a C major chorale with little interjections of motive a. The interjections become a transition into a brief march in Bb major,

followed by sextuplet runs up and down the keyboard. The last part of the improvisation uses rapid statements of motive b in a song-texture in F minor, first interrupted by quotes from the written music in G# minor, then by motive b statements in B minor. Jalbert leads into Rzewski's Finale, not with the addendum, but with pounding gestures of motive a and b simultaneously. Every section sounds clearly delineated.

Each improvisation has its own character and its own way of modeling dialogue. The improvisations all deal with the ideas of sidedness inherent to Reece's song and Rzewski's written music, but the performers emphasize different aspects, leave different ideas out, and bring in new, personal ideas. One area in which these differences are readily apparent are they ways in which the performers carry out the instructions in the guidelines for improvisation provided by Rzewski. I look first at the ideas in the directions for improvisation and how the performers interpret them, then at other aspects of the improvisations that create a sense of dialogue.

Guidelines for the improvisation

The opportunity for improvisation is presented to the performer with the following text:

Optional free improvisation, subject to the following conditions:

1. Improvisation should begin as a sudden radical change, with no "transition." That is, there should be no ambiguity about where the written music ends and where the improvisation begins. The manner in which this sense of a leap to a different kind of order is evoked is left to the interpreter. A few simple limitations, however, apply:
2. Begin by alluding in some way to the tonality of B minor. This may be brief. End with a rather long section in C mixolydian (scale: C-D-E-F-G-A-Bb-C).

3. Improvisation may use techniques employed in written music (polytonal transpositions of theme, etc.) or not; but in any case should represent a different “side” of the same form (many different tonalities in the first part, one tonality in the second).
4. Improvisation, if played, should last at least as long as the preceding written music.
5. If no improvisation is played, pass immediately to the finale.¹³

The performers deal with these guidelines in various ways; analysis shows more clearly how much weight the ideas in the directions had in their minds, and how they incorporate these ideas — or do not.

The reason for the improvisation being optional has been attributed to the reluctance of the classical music world to embrace improvisation:

It is noted that Rzewski values improvisation immensely; his decision to make these improvisatory episodes optional reflects his understanding of the current status of improvisation in classical music circles. He would rather have his compositions performed without the improvisatory episodes than not be performed at all.¹⁴

Yet, being optional is also in keeping with Bohmian dialogue in that the participants should feel free of obligations, including an obligation to speak: “[W]e are not going to decide what to do about anything. We must have an empty space where we are not obliged to do anything, nor come to any conclusions, nor to say anything or not say anything.”¹⁵

The directions state that the improvisation should last at a minimum as long as the written music, which is generally six to seven minutes. Having roughly equal

¹³ Rzewski, *North American Ballads*, 43.

¹⁴ Beckman, “The Traditional and the Avant-Garde in Late Twentieth Century Music: A Study of Three Piano Compositions by Frederic Rzewski.” (Doctor of Arts diss., Ball State University, 1996), 44. Footnote 59.

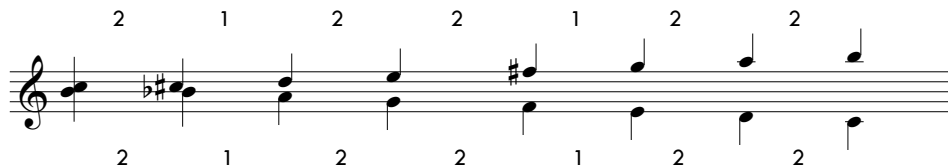
¹⁵ Bohm, *On Dialogue*, 19.

parts written and improvised music helps maintain the sense of sides. None of the improvisers strictly achieve this in their recordings. Rzewski is the only improviser out of the four examples in this paper to approach equal length in his improvisation recorded for hatHUT. In contrast, Jalbert’s improvisation lasts about two and a half minutes.

Rzewski suggests in the directions that the improvisation as a whole is part of creating a sense of sidedness: “a different ‘side’ of the same form.”¹⁶ As mentioned above, the length of the improvisation should help to balance out the written music, so that it feels like a significant part or side to the piece, as opposed to a short, cadenza-like diversion. Within the improvisation itself, Rzewski requests that it creates a similar sense of sidedness in its form, comparing it to the form of the written music. The written music, as discussed in the previous chapter, was split into two large sections, a polytonal section (m1-91) and a monotonal section (m92-130).

To this end, Rzewski recommends specific pitch materials to be used in a specific way: B minor and C mixolydian, both of which are members of the diatonic set [013568T]. C mixolydian is in an I¹ relationship to B minor, a quasi mirror that continues the sidedness idea. (example 4.1)

Example 4.1: The mirror-like relationship between B minor and C mixolydian helps evoke sidedness.



¹⁶ Rzewski, *North American Ballads*, 43.

The pitches they have in common, D-E-G-A, are motive a, set 0257. B minor represents a strong contrast, a break from the written music, which has just finished its long section in C minor. For the C mixolydian section, Rzewski provides an optional Addendum. I look next at how the improvisers establish B minor and the sense of contrast with the written music, then discuss the Addendum and the end of Jalbert's improvisation, which does not use the Addendum.

In his improvisation recorded for hatHUT (example 4.2), Rzewski begins with a polytonal, mensural canon. It is reminiscent of m26-33 in the written music, which also uses a canonic treatment. He establishes a sense of B as the tonic by putting it in the bass; the canonic answer is in the closely related key F#. The pitch set for the left hand, ABC#DEF#, and the pitch set for the right hand, EF#G#ABC#, are two major hexchords in a T⁵ relationship, which combine to make the diatonic set in B dorian mode. These two hexachords are the same used in the version of the song Rzewski uses in the written music.

The melody is reduced to simply motive b, motive c', and motive a' in both voices, as marked by the solid brackets in the example. The amount of motive used varies in each voice, e.g., when the answer enters with motive b in the right hand, it only uses two notes from that motive. Since motive b consists of two leaps of [05], those two notes are enough to signify that part of the song.

The mensural aspect of the canon is not strict; the numbers above the notes indicate duration in sixteenths, including rests. In all the transcriptions, specific tempo relationships are hard to discuss, since all transcriptions are interpretations of things heard by the transcriber. Furthermore, the performances involve liberal amounts of rubato. Still, some things are made clear by the numbers, even when they are approximate: the answer (RH) is generally slower than the call (LH), but speeds up

over the course of its statement. Meanwhile, the call rhythmically expands and contracts, including an elongation of motive c' (dotted brackets). Neat, whole-number ratios between the two statements diminish as the canon progresses, yet, that does not diminish the multitemporal or canonic effects.

Example 4.2: Rzewski hatHUT improvisation, ca. 6:44-7:02. Establishment of B-minor.

Rzewski incorporates several elements from the written music right at the outset: a canonic setting, polytonality-as-tonality, and multitemporality. He also clarifies the break from the written music by starting with just one tone, coming out of the dense, planing chords that immediately precede the improvisation. The shortened, simplified phrases have a distilled quality; the essence of the idea is there, but signifies a departure from the original.

His recording for Nonesuch several years later (example 4.3), begins in a similar fashion: that same solitary B3, a polytonal mensural canon, and same melodic distillation — motive b, motive c', motive a'. The mensural proportions are less complex. The left hand again has B minor, helping to establish B as the tonic.

The right hand has this time D as its tonic. Instead of using one set in two transpositions, he uses the hexachord plus a pentatonic to complete the gamut: (LH) ABC#DEF# + (RH) GABDE = B minor.

The major hexachord is the pitch set that makes up the song. The pentatonic is a subset of that, but also the result of combining motives a and c. Rzewski the improviser is taking materials that the listeners are now familiar with and presenting them anew. The combining of two sets to create a diatonic set happens in the written music – in m 26-33 and in the finale – but here it is done in yet another way. Restating ideas in a slightly different manner creates a point of comparison between it and the original idea; this is a step in the dialogic process towards creating new, shared content. It is also seeing a thought process — Rzewski is interested in this phenomenon, because he recreates it in his improvisation.

Example 4.3: Rzewski, Nonesuch improvisation, ca. 7:25-7:51. Establishment of B minor.

The image displays two systems of musical notation for a piano piece. The first system, starting at 7:25 with a tempo of 80, is in 4/4 time. The right hand (RH) contains motives labeled 'b', 'c', and 'a'. The left hand (LH) contains motives labeled 'b', 'c'', and 'a''. A dotted box highlights a specific passage in the LH labeled 'motive a''. The second system, starting at 7:40, is in 5/4 time. The RH contains motives labeled 'a', 'a', and 'a', with the first 'a' being 'motive a', with lowered anacrusis'. The LH contains motives labeled 'a' and 'a'. The notation includes various rhythmic markings such as triplets (r-3) and slurs.

The smaller pentatonic set in the right hand varies the motives slightly. The second motive in the answer (RH) begins with the whole step of motive c', has the same contour, and similar rhythmic idea, but the actual pitch content is that of

motive a. The motive a' that follows begins with a lowered anacrusis on E, where it would normally begin on F.

Lisa Moore opens her improvisation (example 4.4), too, with motive b, motive c', and motive a, but to a completely different effect. The sense of B-minor is there, but without reference to standard-harmonic-practice style tonality. She uses the set class from the song, (024579), but starting on D, resulting in the pitch collection DEF#GAB.

The melody itself is centered on E, but the harmonization of the melody creates the centricity of B. The bass line in the left hand has three downward lines starting on B1-B2 octaves down to D1-D2 octaves as indicated by dotted brackets (the complete third time is not included in this example). Between the melody and the bass line is a pulsating drone on D4, which changes to B3 around 7:06.

Intertwined among this are variations on motive c, often appearing in the prime set class form (0247), indicated as "motive c set." Motive c itself is the inversion of this set, (0357). In both its prime and inverted forms, the motive immediately recalls the diatonic or pentatonic sets it is a subset of, which motive a does not do because of its lack of interval class 3 or 4. Every time motive c appears in this example, it has a B in it, reinforcing that pitch's prominence.

After the closely voiced opening statement, Moore immediately begins to develop her ideas. Between 7:06 and 7:18, motives a and c in various guises dominate, linked together to form an effusive melody. The texture thins out to reveal a break in the bass line for two announcements of motive b, before returning to the lamento-bass-like line.

The melody picks up the motive b idea, and develops it. The trademark leap of the motive is at turns larger and smaller. The first half of this spinning out is

made up of the pitches from motive a', rearranged into sc(05) leaps, with the initial pitch of the motive moved to the end to function as an anacrusis to the second half. The second half is made from pitches from motive c.

The break from the written music to the improvisation is set up through a sonority not heard in the written music: close voicings with major seconds and slow descending bass lines. This sound world is combined with an emphasis on using the two motives not associated with the title of the song, seemingly on the other side of the song itself.

Example 4.4: Moore improvisation, 6:52-7:31. Establishment of B minor.

Jalbert is the only one who performs a setting of the complete melody in his improvisation (example 4.5). His interpretation is straightforward, with only a few flourishes. It is an interesting way to begin an improvisation, as it sounds much like a traditional written arrangement of the song. Instead of setting the melody as it appears in Rzewski's written music, Jalbert's tune is the same as the version from Fowke & Glaser. The differences from the setting in the written music are marked with arrows.

Example 4.5: Jalbert improvisation, ca. 6:30-7:02. Establishment of B minor.

The musical score consists of three systems of piano music in B minor. The first system, starting at 6:30, is in 4/4 time and features a tempo of quarter note = 72. It shows the initial establishment of the key signature. The second system, starting at 6:40, continues the melodic and harmonic development. The third system, starting at 6:50, includes a 'rit.' (ritardando) marking and a '5' (quintuplet) in the right hand. A 'v' (accrescendo) marking is present in the bass line. A '5' (quintuplet) is also marked in the right hand. The system concludes with an 'a tempo' marking and a change to 2/4 time. Arrows in each system point to specific notes that differ from the written music.

Rzewski provides a sample ending in C mixolydian (the addendum, example 4.6), which Rzewski and Moore perform liberally, using it as the suggested long section in that key. Because this part of their improvisations is based on what Rzewski has written out, I did not include it in my transcriptions.

Example 4.6: Rzewski, Addendum to improvisation. Establishment of C

Addendum
Possible ending for improvisation:

R.H.: every 2 or 3 bars, one of these figures, in any octave: for a minute or two; in any order.

L.H. ostinato: motive a

Fermatas: CDFG = motive a

(L.H. ostinato continues)

pentatonic 02479

motive c

accel. a - - - (♩ = ♩)

(attacca finale)

(Dec. 1978)

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The ostinato that begins the Addendum consists of two motive a, one nested within the other. The first motive a, designated by arrows, is on the pitches CDFG, with the D transposed up an octave. The nested motive a, designated by brackets, is made up of FGBbC, re-ordered as BbCFG.

Over this ostinato are iterations of motive a, all starting and ending on C, D, F, or G, alternating with upward and downward motion: CDFG, CBbGF, GACD — DCAG, FGBbC, GFDC. It's a palindrome, like the motive itself. The total pitch collection is FGABbCD, sc(024579) The passage is centered on C, but without an E its tonality is not made explicit.

The final push into the finale is a sudden burst of planed, accented, staccato chords. Each chord is the pentatonic set, sc(02479) – which encompasses both motive a and motive c – voiced so that the right hand plays major triads in 2nd inversion over the left hand's perfect fourths, which are motive b's signature interval. The major triads continue the flavor of mixolydian, and help dovetail the move back to B-minor, which is signaled by the introduction of F- and C-sharp. The horizontal motion, too, is the pentatonic set in retrograde.

Accidentals do not carry through the octave, as is the norm in post-tonal music, so this passage does contain both sharp and natural Fs and Cs. B-flat is left out, but there is a sense of mode mixture or the polytonality that Rzewski uses throughout the written music. The aggregate of these last two measures – C C# D E F F# G A B – is a combination of two diatonic sets C major and B minor, which share everything but C, C#, F, and F#.

Jalbert opts out of both the addendum and the long section in C mixolydian, and instead builds up to the finale with rapid changes between F minor and B minor (example 4.7).

Example 4.7: Jalbert improvisation, ca. 8:36–8:50. Key areas in build-up into Finale.

8:36

motive b (with some variation)

F minor 7

B minor

8:40

F minor

B minor

F minor

8:43

F minor

B minor

motive c

motive b

8:47

The left hand plays motive b, starting in F-minor and then dropping by tritones six times, before coming back up to stay in B-minor. The right hand plays motive b in Ab, completing an F-minor-seventh chord. The effect is a dominant substitute, the initial Eb moving down by a half-step to D, the C moving down by a

half-step to B. The F has a dual function of the ersatz dominant-to-tonic movement now represented by a tritone, but also moving up by a half-step to F#. In this way, three of the four notes in the F-minor-seventh chord move by half-steps into the B minor chord. Only the Ab takes a wider step via an augmented second up to the B. Having the Eb in the F-minor chord bridges the C-minor key area to the B-minor. After this point, the Eb falls away. Jalbert expands the voice-leading through registral displacement, the B5 moving to a C4 instead of C6. This foreshadows the multiple choir effect of the Finale.

In the last five bars in the example, Jalbert plays motive a in the right hand over motive b in the left. Motive a is only in the bottom voice of the right hand and it is harmonized diatonically, not to B minor, rather to B phrygian. B-minor is delayed for a moment longer with the presence of C-natural.

Both Rzewski and Bohm have given justifications for supplying a loose structure to a dialogue. Rzewski, as noted in chapter 1, has expressed that some guidance helps avoid the negative aspects of complete freedom or anarchy:

Nor is it thinkable or desirable that music should limit itself to the abstraction of pure improvisation, free of the ordering power of the mind. The most extreme experiments in the abandonment of structure have shown that something more than absolute freedom is necessary if one wishes to avoid the alternative of terror. At the same time, they have helped begin the process of liberation.¹⁷

Freedom does not necessarily mean a free-for-all in praxis: “[D]oing what you like is seldom freedom, because what you like is determined by what you think and that is

¹⁷ Rzewski, “Performance: Indeterminate Performance.” *Dictionary of Contemporary Music*. Edited by John Vinton. 1974: 568.

often a pattern which is fixed. Therefore, we have a creative necessity which we discover ... of how to operate in a group in a new way.”¹⁸

Bohm acknowledges that complete freedom from an agenda or leadership can make dialogue difficult: “[I]n a groups of thirty or forty or more, many may find it hard to communicate unless there is a set purpose, or unless somebody is leading it.”¹⁹ While he emphasizes that there should be no leader of a dialogue, having a facilitator can help start the process: “It may be useful to have a facilitator to get the groups going, who keeps a watch on it for a while and sort of explains what’s happening from time to time.”²⁰ The piece itself functions as the facilitator, providing the material for dialogue, and the conditions for improvisation are simply part of that.

Development of sidedness into dialogue

In between the two harmonic poles set up by the guidelines, theoretically anything can happen. Yet, there’s an expectation set up both musically and verbally that the idea of sides persists and might be developed further. As Bohm points out, people in dialogue tend to say similar things; discovering where those small differences lie is what creates the new shared content:

In ... dialogue, when one person says something, the other person does not in general respond with exactly the same meaning as that seen by the first person. Rather, the meanings are only *similar* and not identical. Thus, when the second person replies, the first person sees a *difference* between what he meant to say and what the other person

¹⁸ Bohm, *On Dialogue*, 27.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 8.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 17.

understood. On considering this difference, he may then be able to see something new, which is relevant both to his own views and to those of the other person. And so it can go back and forth, with the continual emergence of a new content that is common to both participants. ... [I]t may be said that the two people are making something *in common*, i.e., creating something new together.²¹

The improvisations both continue the idea of sidedness and question aspects of it simply by using the same materials in new ways. Some of the most interesting parts are the developments in harmonic and textural structures. These developments consist of both ideas present in the written music as well as new ideas.

Tonality

Rzewski uses several techniques to establish a sense of tonality and a sense of motion between tonalities. As we saw in the written music, the motives often represent a key area, even with such limited pitch material. Because the motive represents a key, combining motives of different transpositions, was seen by Rzewski as a kind of polytonality, whether or not the aural effect was tonal or atonal. This still holds true in the improvisations. In his improvisations he avoids atonality, instead moving rapidly through key areas.

Example 4.8 shows many of these techniques in a ca. 20-second passage. Just before the example, B minor is established via motive a. A rapid, stretto-like succession of motive a's, moves us from the sound of B minor to a cadence in Eb major. The motive loses its association strictly with one key and suggests instead a localized harmonic progression by a 5th. Figure 4.1 shows the pitches outlined by the motive and a tonal analysis. The lack of ic3 or ic4 allows the motive to stand in for

²¹ Bohm, *On Dialogue*, 3. Italics his.

either a major or minor harmony. This technique returns at the end of the passage to move quickly away from E major.

Figure 4.1: Harmonic implications of motive a in hatHUT improvisation ca. 7:41.

	F#-B	F#-B	E-B	A-D	C-G	D-A	D-G	Bb-F	C-G	Bb-Eb
b:	V-I	V-I	IV-I	VII-III						
d:	---	---	---	V-I	VII-IV	I-V	I-IV	VI-III	VII-IV	
Eb:	---	---	---	---	---	---	VII-III	V-II	VI-III	V-I

The sense of Eb major at quarter = 92 is almost immediately replaced by its parallel C minor, as established in the right hand melody. However, even that tonality is undermined somewhat by the harmonization in the left hand, an F pedal made up of motive b's borrowed from F minor and Bb minor. The accompaniment is then developed using a diatonic subset [02459], primarily returning to Eb major and voiced with contours similar to the motive b's in the previous measure. Moving into Ab major, the rhythmic motion increases and the motives are developed into new shapes. After a bold statement of motive b in Db in the bass, the music arrives in E major, then back in the call and response exchanges of motive a.

In example 4.9 from Rzewski's Nonesuch recording, he links together motives of different transpositions to rapidly move through key areas, similar to what we saw in the hatHUT recording. Here he uses motive c and c' instead motive to achieve this effect. The last note of c' becomes the first note of the next c'. Like motive a, motive c also outlines ic7, enabling easy movement around the circle of fifths.

In six sequences of motive c we move from Eb minor to D minor, where the tune is presented almost in full. The last phrase of the verse, however, moves around the circle again, suddenly shifting to A minor. The harmonic motion is then sped up even more by eliding an E minor statement of motive a with an A minor statement of motive b (ca. 9:15). After two motives in B minor, the melody takes a surprise turn into Ab, with motive a rearranged into a series of descending fourths. The melody moves forward by two more fifths through Eb and Bb and it seems like a return to the key area at the beginning of the passage. Instead, the direction changes and progresses through the circle of fourths to Db.

Example 4.9: Rzewski Nonesuch improvisation, ca. 9:02-9:33. Movement through tonal centers, LH melody.

Lisa Moore’s improvisation (example 4.10) forgoes a wide-ranging tonal palette for a deeper exploration of the key areas suggested in the guidelines. As she moves from B minor to C mixolydian, she mixes the two together. B minor and C mixolydian are both diatonic collections, the 2-sharp and 1 flat versions, respectively. By using subsets, different tonics, and dovetailing, the music moves smoothly from one mode to the other.

The boxes coincide with phrasing and are labeled with pitch set aggregates. She starts with a diatonic subset $sc(024579)$ with one sharp then the next phrase includes the diatonic set with two sharps. The next two sets are subsets of the diatonic set and she uses them to gradually move away from two sharps. The first is an inversion of $sc(023579)$ with one sharp — $sc(024679)$ CDEF#GA, followed by a subset of that set, a pentatonic with no sharps, CDEGA. In the next phrase, she seems to hang on to the pentatonic for a little longer before introducing Bb flat and F. Here is the same set as before, inverted $sc(023579)$, but now with BbCDEFG. The

passage converges in an octave line that combines the two I-forms of sc(023579) with one 1 flat and one sharp, before continuing firmly in C mixolydian. Throughout this passage motives from the song are used, though often in ellisions or in re-orderings. Although they may not play as strong a role structurally, they still connect the improvisation to the original material.

Example 4.10: Moore improvisation, ca. 8:02–8:46. Movement between key areas.

8:02

rit.

diatonic set, 2 sharps

023579 inv., 1 sharp

motive c

motive a

motive b

motive c

motive b

motive c

8:13

pentatonic set

motive a <2013>

motive c set

023579 inv., 1 flat

motive a <2301>

motive c set

8:23

♩ = 80

rit.

0123568T = inv. 023579 (1 flat) + inv. 023579 (1 sharp)

8:38

a tempo

motive a voiced as motive b

motive a

5:3

diatonic set, 1 flat: C mixolydian

Jalbert uses motive a and motive b in this passage (example 4.11) to establish a C major tonality, taking advantage of the motives' harmonic ambiguity with their lack of 3rd scale degree. The moment is reminiscent of Rzewski's setting of the song in the written music (m26-33), in which Rzewski used closely related transpositions of the song to create a tonal-sounding canon. The motives are set mostly in parallel homophony. The tonal centers of the original motives are mainly from C, E, and G, members of the tonic triad, and two statements of F in the bass.

Example 4.11: Jalbert improvisation, ca. 7:30-7:46. Establishing C major tonality.

The musical score for Example 4.11 consists of two staves, treble and bass clef. The piece begins at 7:30. The tempo is marked as ♩ = 56. The key signature is C major. The score is divided into measures with time signatures 3/4, 9/16, 4/4, 3/4, and 2/4. Motive a is a four-note ascending sequence (C-E-G-A). Motive b is a four-note descending sequence (G-F-E-D). The score includes several annotations: 'motive a w/ octave transposition' in the treble staff at the beginning; 'motive a' in both staves; 'motive b inversion' in the bass staff; 'motive b' in the treble staff; and 'motive b normal + inversion' in the bass staff. The harmonic progression is indicated below the staves: C major: IV I vii° IV I vii° IV I vii°6/4 I V I vii°6/4 I IV.

The passage opens in a four-voice texture with motive a set against an inverted motive b, with a freely harmonized voice in the “alto,” using G, A, B, and C. The harmonies throughout the example form a basic three-chord tonic-dominant-subdominant progression, but with the dominant substitute vii°. By voicing this chord in the 2nd inversion, Jalbert can continue the inverted motive b using the same pitch classes, F and C, for the whole passage. This foreshadows, perhaps, the move towards F as signified by the motive a at the end of the passage. It also can be seen as the “other side” of the motive.

Example 4.12: Jalbert improvisation, ca. 7:30-8:01. Movement through tonal centers.

The musical score is divided into three sections:

- 7:30 - 7:46:** Tempo $\text{♩} = 56$. The score shows a sequence of chords and triplets. Annotations include "diatonic set: C" and "diatonic set: G minor".
- 7:46 - 7:51:** Tempo $\text{♩} = 72$. Marked with *accel.* and "motive a". Annotations include "movement down by step", "diatonic set: Eb major", "sc(024579): Db major", and "diatonic set: Bb major".
- 7:51 - 8:01:** Tempo $\text{♩} = 88$. Marked with *rit.* and *a tempo*. An annotation "Bb tonic" is shown with a dotted line and arrows indicating the tonal center.

Example 4.11 shows how Jalbert establishes C major. From there (example 4.12), he uses motive a to move to Bb major, similarly to how Rzewski uses it in the hatHUT example (4.8). In figure 4.2, each iteration of motive a creates a micro-progression of movement by fifths or fourths.

Figure 4.2: Harmonic implications of motive a in Jalbert improvisation, ca. 7:46.

	C	F-Bb	G-D	Bb-Eb	C-G	Ab-Db	Eb-Bb	G-C	F-Bb
C:	I	IV-							
Bb:	V/V	V-I	VI-III	I-IV	II-VI			VI-II	V-I
Ab:					III-VII	I-IV	V-II	VII-III	

The antiphonal pairs of bass and treble make complete diatonic sets or subsets, the lowest note of which serves as a tonic. These tonics move down by step

(solid arrows), starting in the Eb group — Eb Db C Bb — helping to reinforce the move to Bb as the new tonal center. Although there are some “borrowed” pitches foreign to Bb major after 7:51, Bb remains the tonic until 8:12 and the tonal sound is distinctly major.

Texture

Both Jalbert and Rzewski have passages where one motive is used and developed to create a running sixteenth note accompaniment texture. This kind of technique is also seen in the written music in measures 54-63. Rzewski and Moore employ a percussive, hand-alternating compound melody — a texture that does not appear in the written music. Moore uses it briefly in a section of rapidly changing blocks of different textures. Rzewski uses it in both improvisations, but extensively in his recording for hatHUT.

Example 4.13, from Rzewski’s improvisation for Nonesuch, shows the use of one motive in a song texture. The melody is in the bass and consists primarily of transpositions of motive a. The accompanying figures are also primarily motive a, but several developmental devices are employed. The passage begins with each iteration moving upwards. The unity of motion helps create the perception of motive a, even when the figure is not strictly motive a. Three of the same motive a, GACD, set the scene. The leap up to F in the fourth figure creates a different set, FGAC, which is motive c reordered. Motive c’s interval class content is <223>, which are the same members as motive a’s. The intervallic similarity combined with the melodic direction established by the first three figures and the speed of execution, retains enough of the salient features of motive a, that the perception is unity instead of difference.

The passage continues in this way, alternating figures of motive a and figures with parsimonious changes to the pitch content, interval content, and occasionally melodic contour, yet still that retain a sense of motive a, mainly through melodic direction. Continuing on from the same spot in the 6/4 measure, the next figure transposes the interval class content from motive a's <232> to <323>. Another type of parsimonious change follows, moving one of the inner voices down from C to Bb, serving as a voice-leading bridge to the motive C set then back to motive a.

With motive a re-established, the melodic direction changes, and new ways of motivic development are introduced, e.g., pattern extension, elision, reordering. As the melody moves away from motive a into motive c, so too, do the accompaniment figures move further away from motive a into freer patterns. It's as if motive a is in dialogue with itself, making statements, testing hypotheses, exploring the limits of what it means to be motive a and how far it can go before it becomes something else entirely. The fact that these are normal compositional devices strengthens the socio-political experience of dialogue. This is how ideas are worked out and expanded — thought processes observable in real-time, as opposed to the written music, which is the end result of finished thought processes.

Example 4.13: Rzewski Nonesuch improvisation, ca. 7:58-8:18. Using motivic development to create an accompanying line in song-texture.

The image displays four systems of musical notation for piano accompaniment, spanning from 7:58 to 8:18. Each system consists of a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The music is annotated with various labels and fingering numbers:

- System 1 (7:58):** Features a tempo marking of $\text{♩} = 104$. Annotations include "motive a" (twice), "motive c: cseg <1230>", "transposed interval content", "inner voice movement", and "motive c set". Fingering includes 2-3-2, 2-3-2, 2-3-2, 2-3, 5, 3-2-3, 3-2-3, 1-4-3, 3-2-2, 2-3-2, 2-.
- System 2 (8:04):** Annotations include "transposed interval content", "motive a: cseg <0132>", "motive a + motive a ellision", and "motive a pattern extension". Fingering includes 3-2, 2-3-2, 3-2-3, 2-5-2-3-2, 2-3-2, 2-3-2, 2-3-2-3-2-2.
- System 3 (8:09):** Annotations include "second interval augmented + inverted", "transposed interval content", "pattern extended", and "transposed interval content". Fingering includes 3-2, 2-3-2, 2-4-2, 5-1-4, 3-2-3, 3-2, 2-3-2, 2-3-2-3, 3-2.
- System 4 (8:13):** Annotations include "second interval augmented" and "motive c". Fingering includes 3, 2-3-2, 2-3-2, 2-3-2, 2-6-2, 2-5-2, 3-2-5, 2-3-4.

Jalbert uses similar techniques in a song-texture passage (example 4.14). He uses motives a and b to accompany melodies made of the same motives, along with freely improvised Alberti-like gestures. Here, too, the melody is in the bass voice, starting with three, three-octave statements of motive a' which vary slightly from the version Rzewski uses in the piece — the approach to motive a is from i2 instead of i4. These statements are accompanied by upward, running sixteenth note compound melody figures. Nested in these figures are statements of motive a and motive b.

Motive b in the melody is then accompanied by the motive a set in running sixteenths, stretched over two measures and ordered again in Alberti-fashion. The insistent repetition of motive b in the melody spills over to the accompaniment by 8:24, with motive b and its inversion interlocking on both eighth and sixteenth note levels.

A percussive compound melody occurs often in both of Rzewski's improvisations. This is different from the antiphonal sort of compound melody used to move through key areas looked at above, in that left and right hands alternate rapidly in broken polyphony (example 4.15).

The right hand begins in a similar fashion to the antiphonal passages we saw earlier. Each motive a statement represents a localized tonality and creates a sense of harmonic progression. The first three statements are centered on F, C, and F. The left hand uses motive c and a, centered around Db, C, and G to create a long line downward underneath this, taking away the short, individual motive a statements' ability to direct the sense of harmony. The two lines converge in octaves on C, Bb, and G at the beginning of their third motive statements. When they break apart from there, the right hand now has the long line created from four elided motive a statements alternating Eb and Bb centers. The left hand supports the sense of Eb, leaving motive b with a simple downward major scale segment.

Example 4.14: Jalbert improvisation, ca. 8:17-8:27. Use of motives to create accompaniment

8:17 $\text{♩} = 144$

motive b

motive b

motive b

motive a

motive a' variant

motive a: CDFG

8:20

motive b

motive b, inverted

motive b, stacked

8:24

motive b inversion

motive b

Example 4.15: Rzewski Nonesuch improvisation, ca. 8:32-8:40. Use of motives in a compound melody.

8:32

motive a

motive a

motive a

motive a

motive c

motive a

motive a

motive a

motive c cseg: <1230>

motive b

8:37

motive a

motive a

motive a

motive a

motive a cseg: <1023>

motive a

Example 4.16: Rzewski, hatHUT improvisation, ca. 8:18-8:25. Use of canon with compound melody.

The image displays two systems of musical notation for a piano piece. The first system, starting at 8:18, is in 7/8 time with a tempo of 66. It features a compound melody with two voices: a 'second canonic voice' in the right hand and a 'first canonic voice' in the left hand. A 'motive c set' is identified in both hands. A 90-degree angle is marked between the two voices. The second system, starting at 8:22, is in 4/4 time with a tempo of 120. It shows the continuation of the canon. Annotations include 'rhythmically truncated' pointing to an F# note, 'permanently shorter' pointing to an E note, and 'motive b' pointing to notes in both hands. A 'motive c set' is also present in the right hand.

Rzewski uses compound melody to create a mensural, canonic passage, using mostly the motive c set (example 4.16). Dotted brackets indicate the two voices for the duration they are in this relationship. The faster moving initial voice is in the bass, each note lasting, in effect, for a dotted-eighth note. The slower moving voice enters in the right hand a sixteenth note later, lasting a dotted-quarter note. This voice is doubled an octave below, but instead of functioning as a third voice, it simply adds color; it's too fast to perceive separately.

The rhythmic and pitch deviations are indicated by callouts and arrows, respectively. At the third pitch in the top voice the mensuration begins to change. The F# at 8:22 ("rhythmically truncated") lasts only a dotted eighth, the E a dotted quarter again, and from the D onward ("permanently shorter"), the individual right hand melody notes last a dotted eighth each. The C4 in the bass is not picked up by the upper voice, which instead uses a D. Where the left hand has F# and B in a

motive b statement, the right hand has a G and F# in the equivalent moment in the following measure. The left hand contains an F# that the right hand does not.

Example 4.17, also from the hatHUT recording, is of a compound melody with a slow moving bass line made up first of motive c-based materials, then motive b-based material. The right hand melody is more free and ornate. The bass line speeds up around 7:33 as the “answers” in the RH become shorter, becoming briefly the alternating texture in my first compound melody example (4.14). The alternation slows back down and morphs into an antiphonal texture using motive a, as seen in example 4.8.

The first four instances of motive c at 7:29 are not actually motive c, but instead derived from either the set class (0247) or motive c’s contour, CSEG <3210>. In the left hand is a statement with motive c’s contour. A ‘real’ motive c statement in this case might be C Bb Ab F Bb, but the first note is B-natural instead of C. At the same time in the right hand is a retrograde motive c-like statement, <0123>, using Gb Bb C Db . Starting in the 5/4 bar, the left hand uses motive c but with a different contour. The right hand begins with pitches derived from the motive c set, but moves into a freer accompaniment using pitches from a subset of Bb minor.

At 7:33 Rzewski reduces his materials down to motive b. The two measures arrange two of motive b symmetrically around Bb, F-Bb in the 13/16 measure and Bb-Eb in the 5/8 measure. The harmony flips from Bb minor to Eb minor, at which point the texture changes to rapid alternation. A few other pitches common to both keys appear: first, a lone Gb in the right hand, the Db in the left hand and another Gb in the right. These brief instances do not detract from the sense of motive b being the primary material.

The following 15/16 measure returns to the previous texture with the bass notes spread out, but the space between them immediately shrinks. The collection of pitches in this measure, Eb F Gb Ab Bb, form the beginning of an Eb minor scale. The following measure with the antiphonal motive a statements form a pentatonic set, A B C# E F#, centered around B. The combination of the texture change and the pitch collection create the sense of a modulation. The combined pitch collection of the two measures — enharmonically spelled, B C# D# E F F# G# A A# — contain all the members of the B major scale.

Rzewski uses compound melody technique again later in the improvisation (example 4.18), but with starkly reduced materials that then grow into melody and accompaniment. Motive b is set against itself, B and E, with the two-note idea in the left hand and its inversion in the right. This motive is vertically filled in with members of the motive a set, E F# A B, separated out into two whole-step dyads. The lower dyad, E F#, develops into motive c, accompanied by the upper dyad, A B. Out of the two pitches in motive b grow all the ingredients from the song.

Example 4.17: Rzewski hathHUT improvisation, ca. 7:29-7:41. Use of compound melody.

The musical score is divided into four systems, each with time markers and tempo markings:

- System 1 (7:22):** Features a 6/4 time signature. The right hand contains a melodic line with a quintuplet of eighth notes labeled "motive b". The left hand has a bass line with a similar rhythmic pattern. A "motive c contour" label is placed below the right hand.
- System 2 (7:29):** Starts with a tempo marking of $\text{♩} = 100$. The time signature changes to 9/16. It includes labels for "motive c contour", "motive b", "motive c set", and "Bb minor subset: 02357". A "motive c <1023>" label is located below the right hand.
- System 3 (7:33):** The time signature changes to 18/16. It features "motive b" labels in both hands and a "pentatonic set" label below the right hand.
- System 4 (7:36):** The time signature changes to 15/16. It includes "motive b" and "motive a" labels in both hands. A "triple" (3) marking is shown below the left hand.

Example 4.18: Rzewski hatHUT improvisation, ca. 8:54-9:03. Use of compound melody.

The musical score consists of three systems of piano music. The first system, starting at 8:54, features a treble clef staff with a 3/8 time signature, followed by a 9/16 time signature, and then a 12/16 time signature. The bass clef staff is mostly silent. The second system, starting at 8:56, shows both staves with a 12/16 time signature, then a 6/16 time signature, and then a 12/16 time signature. The third system, starting at 8:59, shows both staves with a 12/16 time signature, then a 7/16 time signature. Annotations include 'motive b inverted' in the first system, 'motive a: EF#AB' and 'motive b' in the second system, and 'motive c' in both the second and third systems.

About one minute into her improvisation (example 4.19), Moore uses rapid changes in texture to move away from the sound-world she set up in the beginning. The first chorale-texture block is similar in style and seems like a return to the opening, with the octaves in the left hand and the major 2nds in the right. Instead of continuing on that path, the music suddenly breaks away with an upward, mostly parallel gesture of running sixteenths. This leads smoothly into a compound melody. The upper voice drifts up into silence, while the lower voice has a brief solo. The passage settles into a multitemporal polyphony, reminiscent of the written music, but with diatonic sonority.

Example 4.19: Moore improvisation ca. 7:53-8:13. Rapid changes in texture.

The musical score consists of two systems. The first system starts at 7:53 and features a tempo marking of $\text{♩} = 72$. It is divided into three sections: the first section is labeled 'homophony: chorale texture' and is in 4/4 time; the second section is labeled 'homophony: parallel harmonization' and is in 3/4 time; the third section is labeled 'polyphony: compound melody' and is in 2/4 time. The second system starts at 8:02 and features a tempo marking of *rit.* followed by *a tempo*. It is divided into two sections: the first section is labeled 'monophony' and is in 2/4 time; the second section is labeled 'polyphony: multitemporal' and is in 13/16 time, with a tempo marking of *a tempo*. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and triplets.

Quotation

In this example (4.20) from Jalbert's improvisation he juxtaposes quotations from Rzewski's written music with the fanfare gesture he sets up just prior to this moment (as seen in example 4.14). The quotations are played an octave higher than the original, which makes the switch between Rzewski's music and Jalbert's music less jarring than it might be with a wider contrast in register. The G# minor of Rzewski's passage alternates with the F minor of his own improvised idea. Enharmonically, the harmonies share one common tone, Ab/G#.

Example 4.20: Jalbert improvisation, ca. 8:27-8:36. Use of quotation.

8:27

8:31

Rzewski, m51-53.

Slightly faster; molto leggero
(♩ = ca. 80)

12pp

New shared content

The written music and the improvisation instructions set up expectations. The improvisation takes those ingredients and does something different, sometimes only slightly, sometimes very. Within the improvisation, aspects of the piece are heard anew: the ways the motives can be manipulated, harmonic language, textures, styles. It is all still recognizable as being part of the same work.

The analyses show that the improvisers are often saying *similar* things as the written music but not exactly the same thing, using *similar* techniques as the written

but not exactly in the same way. The accumulation of these small differences becomes something new. The improvisational process recreates the dialogic process: presentation of ideas in a variety of ways, mostly similar, some wildly different; examination of the differences provides insight into the why and wherefore of the ideas; these insights generate new content.

The new ideas or the development of old ideas in the improvisation are not solely what create a sense of dialogue. The experience of dialogue also happens when the new ideas and developments in the improvisation affects the interpretation of the written music. The improvisation — because it is such a large part of the work — forces the reconsideration of the ideas presented in the written music. The ideas in the written music are not rendered invalid by the improvisation; rather, the written music and the subsequent improvisation combine to add new meaning. Because the improvisation is different every time, the understanding of the written music is different every time. Every piece is performed differently every time. Even every recording is regarded differently every time. But this is far more radical and visceral. Composition is a done deal; improvisation is real-time transmittal of thought processes. The combination of the two is the new, shared content that results from dialogue.

Chapter V — Conclusion

Rzewski's "Which Side Are You On?" uses a combination of masterfully composed music and free improvisation to create an experience of dialogue about the ideas in Reece's song, "Which Side Are You On?". In the original protest song, both the lyrics and the musical structure illustrate a sense of sidedness, while simultaneously drawing a circle of inclusion for those musicking with the song. Rzewski first elaborates on the sense of sidedness in the written music, using contrasting pairs of musical elements throughout all structural levels. The improvisation then elaborates on the sense of inclusion by enacting aspects of dialogue; the various factions illustrated in the written music are experienced anew, as they are recombined, expanded, or discarded by the improviser.

What makes both Reece's song and Rzewski's piece effective as political and musical works is that the political elements are embedded into the musical structure as abstract entities. Instead of promoting an ideology, the music models basic human experiences — taking sides, changing sides, struggle, engaging in dialogue — that those musicking with the work "bring into existence for the duration of the performance."¹ These experiences are then used to explore relationships and values associated with these experiences, which may or may not have something in common with Reece's or Rzewski's own values. As Zuraw notes, "Performers of his music are not merely called upon to expound his ideals, they are expected to

¹ Small, *Common Tongue*, 69. Rzewski uses similar phrasing in "Some Recent Examples of Political Music in America," *Nonsequiturs*, 236: "[O]ne looks for a specifically musical form which is capable, for the duration of the performance at least, of creating a new type of social relation among those present: a new relationship of performers and audience, for instance. This second alternative would allow for the possibility, according to Cage, of communicating a political content in its most universal form."

converse with the composer and participate in the debate of his politics possibly engendering a viewpoint that, potentially, may not reflect his own.”² Reece’s lyrics, for example, may deal directly with miners’ issues with government, but the musical experience remains abstract: sidedness, call to action, storytelling. The abstraction of the music allows musickers to attach their own meanings to it.

In Rzewski’s piece, the absence of lyrics, the complexity of the composition, and presence of improvisation make the experience that much more abstract. This is a strength because the lack of ideology helps set up the “open space” for dialogue to develop.³ The music cannot be reduced to a simple political slogan.

Further investigation

In the first chapter, I touched upon issues of meaning and audience in Rzewski’s work. Small writes in depth about the problems that can arise when the values and meanings in the music seem to be in conflict with the values engendered by the performance venue or situation.⁴ I have attempted to show that Rzewski is not pushing a particular ideological agenda. Rather, as Small also notes, the meanings of a work are created during performance:

The study of composition and its techniques ..., of reception, distribution, recording, categorization and social status, are finally subordinate to the one great question which subsumes them all: what does it mean when this performance takes place at this time, in this place, with these participants? Only when that question is properly addressed (and any useful answers must concern themselves with the social relationships that are

² Michael Zuraw, “From Ideology into Sound” (DMA Performance diss., Rice University, 2003), 49.

³ See Bohm, *On Dialogue*, 19.

⁴ Small, *Music of the Common Tongue*, 353-54.

established by the performance) can we gain any real understanding of the politics of music and begin the task of regaining that power of self-definition through music that is the heritage of every human being.⁵

There are the fundamental, abstract political experiences embedded in the music, and then there are the political meanings and social relationships that are created when the abstract experiences combine with real musicking situations. I suggest in chapter 4 that the experience of dialogue is possible even if one is simply preparing the piece in a practice room. At the time of this writing, classical musicking is happening in a wide variety of ways and situations, not limited only to the concert hall. While it is beyond the scope of this paper to inventory past performances of this work and speculate at possible meanings, further studies of the changes taking place in classical musicking and effect it has political and musical meanings is worthy of attention.

This kind of research is becoming more possible as the body of work that deals with politics and improvisation in classical music grows. Writers like Small, Asplund, Bell & Olmstead have provided positive examples of how to discuss political ideas. Small and Asplund in particular talk about where the political ideas actually manifest (Small) and how music can actually create a political experience through its structure (Asplund). Bell & Olmstead connect the political ideas with theoretical analysis. David Little's 2011 dissertation provides an overview of explicitly political compositions from 1900-2000.

I mentioned in chapter 1 that jazz scholarship has long included transcriptions, both analytically and pedagogically. Looking at transcriptions of improvisation in a classical context is equally interesting and necessary for the same

⁵ Small, Book review, *Music and Letters*, 69, no. 3 (1988): 423.

reasons: analytically — how improvisation works musically, and pedagogically — how one learns to improvise. I was attracted to studying this piece because I wanted an example of how improvisation can fit in a through-composed, non-jazz context. Derek Bailey’s book provides an overview of improvisation across many genres and cultures. Robert Paul’s dissertation is a detailed account of his learning to improvise to prepare for performing works by Rzewski and Alvin Curran.⁶ Yet lacking in general in discussions of classical improvisations is the combination that is seen in studies of other genres of transcriptions and discussions of style, drama, and politics for specific instances of improvisers’ work. Building a body of work that does this is a process I hope to contribute to with this paper.

Analyzing improvisation within a compositional framework is not without issues. Like attempts at neutral discussions of politics, personal bias shows up in transcription choices, too. Creating a score from an improvisation is a bit like a singular witness’ description of a crime scene. There is always a question of accuracy and objectivity. It is plausible that one ends up writing down merely what one wishes to hear. For example, my notating something in 25/16 reflects my personal taste in the connection between notation and sound. Someone else’s transcriptions would emphasize different aspects of the performance.

Musicologist Peter Winkler goes into great detail about all of the problems inherent in transcription in his article “Writing Ghost Notes.”⁷ I experienced everything he writes about: notating a passage one way one day, only to change it

⁶ See Bailey, *Improvisation: Its Nature and Practice in Music*; and Paul, “Improvisation in 20th Century Solo Piano Repertoire”.

⁷ Peter Winkler, “Writing Ghost Notes, The Poetics and Politics of Transcription,” *Keeping Score: music, disciplinarity, culture*, 169-203.

the next; hearing notes that one is not entirely sure is there, because the sound comes and goes with changing the speed; spending hours on what turns out to be a few seconds of music; attempting to use electronic means to aid transcription only to realize that one's ears do it much better; alternating between "excessive complexity and oversimplification" in notating rhythms.⁸ I, too, came to the conclusion that none of my transcriptions are definitive. Everything about transcription is a reflection of the transcriber's tastes and cultural conditioning. Yet, this is all an argument for more transcriptions, rather than fewer. In the spirit of dialogue, more transcriptions provides more differences of opinion that can be compared to come up with new ideas about the role of improvisation in classical music.

Discussions of the political elements of a work illuminate important aspects of the structure of the music. Particularly in the case of this movement and Rzewski's oeuvre, an understanding of how political ideas work within the structure of the music helps to explain the presence and function of improvisation. Instead of being regarded as merely novel, but ignorable, additions to a composed work, improvisation and political experiences can now be seen as essential to musical power of the piece.

⁸ Winker, "Writing Ghost Notes," *Keeping Score*, 191.

Appendix A — How mining and unions came to Harlan County.

In a very brief amount of time at the turn of the 20th-century, Harlan County, Kentucky transformed from a self-sufficient, agricultural backwater to a highly stratified, industrial society. Railroads into the county arrived first in 1911 and mining companies followed soon afterward.¹ Between World War I and the Great Depression, the mining industry grew rapidly in Harlan County not only because there was high-quality coal, but a general lack of unions enabled the operators to set their own hours and wages. This confluence of factors meant they could grow their business because labor and freight were cheap.

The absence of union power meant strikes were ignored, which resulted in longer stretches of uninterrupted mining. During WWI most of Harlan County had unionized, but those unions were often unrecognized by the mine operators. When there was any sort of nationwide strike out of solidarity, the mine operators would sabotage the local miners' efforts to unionize, removing security and safety measures, firing union members, and capitalizing on workers' own fears. Operators told employees that by not participating in strikes, they would be able to take advantage of the times when northerners did strike, and that the northern unions were looking to take away southerners' hard-earned money via union dues. The operators themselves were not immune to these types of regional prejudices, believing that unionism was "a northern conspiracy to destroy the southern coal industry."²

¹ Cressey, "Social Disorganization....," *Amer. Soc. Review*, 14 no. 3 (1949): 390.

² Hevener, *Which Side Are You On?*, 9.

The mine owners and operators were able to further suppress unionism by establishing “unincorporated company towns,”³ in which they ran the government, the police, and courts. Employees were required to live in company housing in these towns and were often also required to buy all of their home goods at the company store.⁴ Hevener sums up the pre-depression situation:

“Via their ownership of the unincorporated company towns that housed nearly two-thirds of the county’s population, the mine owners exerted a powerful combination of economic, political, and social control over the lives of miners and their families. ... The operators fancied themselves as benevolent patriarchs caring for their children; so long as the camp’s occupants did not violate the operator’s moral code that prohibited prostitution, theft, and in some camps, drunkenness, and did not flirt with unionism, they provided them a reasonable amount of social security.”⁵

The mine owners put in a lot of effort to keep unions from gaining any real power, but their efforts were helped by the community’s own resistance to unions, which were often seen by the white, fundamentalist Christian, self-sufficient frontiersmen as a northern, communist, anti-religious, pro-racial-mixing affront to their values.⁶ Cressey emphasizes the social impact of a rapid transition from an agricultural to industrial society, which left many without the social and practical tools to understand the situation they were in. Hevener echoes this sentiment,

³ Hevener, *Which Side Are You On?*, 15.

⁴ Readers may recall the concept of being permanently in debt to the company store was engraved in the American imagination by “Tennessee Ernie” Ford’s hit recording of the Merle Travis song “Sixteen Tons”: “Sixteen tons and what do you get?/Another day older and deeper in debt/Saint Peter, don’t you call me, ‘cause I can’t go/I owe my soul to the company store.” Fowke & Glazer, 52-3.

⁵ Hevener, *Which Side Are You On?*, 18-20.

⁶ Cressey, “Social Disorganization...,” *Amer. Soc. Review*, 14 no. 3 (1949): 390-1; Hevener, *Which Side Are You On?*, 55-6.

saying the average Harlan County miner “could not comprehend that increased production of cheap southern coal would glut the already saturated coal market, undermine union strength in the North, hasten the depression of the entire coal industry, and ultimately bring unemployment and substandard wages home to Harlan.”⁷

Although there was a general anti-union attitude prevalent in the community, there was always some union presence in the area, even if very small. The United Mine Workers of America (UMW) was founded in 1890 in Pennsylvania⁸ and began establishing itself in Kentucky in 1917.⁹ Although it was able to stage successful enough strikes in Kentucky to halt operations and force a negotiation, the federal government didn’t require the companies to officially recognize the union. Once World War I was over, the companies were able to stymie any further displays of worker solidarity, mainly by blacklisting any union members. The last pre-depression local in Evarts, KY — one of three incorporated towns in the county not owned by a mining company — became the dormant seed from which Great Depression unionism grew.¹⁰

Once the Great Depression was under way, miners were motivated by their ever-worsening situation to try to take back control of their own lives, and unionism started to look appealing. “More than just a simple economic struggle to raise wages, shorten hours, and gain job security, the union movement of the 1930s was a power struggle to curb the operators’ authoritarian control of the county’s economic,

⁷ Hevener, *Which Side Are You On?*, 9.

⁸ “United Mine Workers of America,” *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

⁹ Hevener, *Which Side Are You On?*, 6.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 6-8.

political, and social life.”¹¹ This authoritarian control was personified in county sheriff John H. Blair, who hired a combination of company bigwigs and convicted criminals as deputies. Blair, too, saw the raising of labor issues as an infiltration of leftist ideals. “Sheriff Blair ... aroused a vicious antiradical hysteria and fastened upon the United Mine Workers an odium of radicalism and violence from which it required a decade to escape.”¹²

The catalyst for the re-emergence of the UMW was a major wage cut in February 1931. First the UMW revived itself in secret, then publicly in March. But the strike spearheaded by the UMW dragged on for months; conditions worsened and the UMW did not have the funds to provide relief. This provided an entry point for another major northern union to establish itself in the region: the National Miners’ Union (NMU). Formed in 1928 in Pittsburgh by the American Communist Party “to challenge the dominance of the area’s coal operators, to contest the ascendancy of the United Mine Workers of America, and to marshal the working-class militancy under its leadership,” the NMU was made up of mostly new arrivals from southern and eastern Europe “who possessed the least economic security of any laboring groups in the area.”¹³

By May 1931, things had only gotten worse and a mob of angry miners clashed violently with the Harlan County law enforcement in the city of Evarts, a calamity known thereafter as “The Battle of Evarts.” The government tried to blame the Battle on “outsiders” — namely, the leftist IWW and communist NMU — but

¹¹ Hevener, *Which Side Are You On?*, 22.

¹² *Ibid.*, 50.

¹³ Howard, “The National Miners Union...,” *The Penn. Mag. of Hist. and Bio.*, 125, no. 1/2 (2001): 91-2.

those groups did not really establish themselves in the area until after the Battle, “when the United Mine Workers refused to contribute strike relief, joined with county officials in a call for troops to quell the disturbance, and abandoned its campaign to organize the miners.”¹⁴ The UMW were reluctant to lead another strike, having witnessed their previous strike resulting “in violence, mass arrests, total defeat, and the permanent blacklisting of [approximately] a thousand miners.”¹⁵ The blacklisted miners and miners from other counties who hadn’t been involved in the previous strike wanted to continue the fight and felt the UMW were giving up on them: not leading, not working hard enough to get better deals, and over-compromising.

They turned to the NMU — actually radical and leftist, unlike the UMW — who came “at the behest of a tiny group of strikers who had been impressed by the militant rhetoric of the *Daily Worker* and who in early June had asked its editor to send NMU organizers.”¹⁶ By July, local NMU miners met at the Pittsburgh headquarters to plan another strike.

Although the NMU were known for their militant communism and goals of hastening the eventual downfall of capitalism,¹⁷ they too, became reluctant to stage another strike and instead put their efforts towards creating soup kitchens. As Hevener points out, the Battle of Evarts was not instigated by radical communist ideas, but by people starving. The NMU members, while interested in the growth of their party and the spread of their ideas, were also equally concerned with the

¹⁴ Hevener, *Which Side Are You On?*, 43-6.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 55.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 57.

¹⁷ Howard, “The National Miners Union...,” *The Penn. Mag. of Hist. and Bio.*, 125, no. 1/2 (2001): 92.

Kentuckians' plight:

Ignoring the party line... NMU activists set essentially nonrevolutionary goals. They understood the folly of trying to 'smash' or replace the UMW. Acting realistically, they were more interested in the immediate needs of the workers — higher wages, shorter hours, improved working conditions — than with revolt or sedition.¹⁸

Unfortunately, the NMU's focus on food over ideology did not prevent them from being seen as a giant threat to Harlan County life by not only the local government and mining company owners, but also by the UMW:

"[T]he United Mine Workers viewed the NMU as the hated challenge of the most troublesome sort of dual unionism because of its Communist association. To coal operators it embodied the kind of militant unionism that threatened the legitimacy of their economic dominance; and to the middle class it stood for the subversive danger of an un-American, alien ideology. To some regional Communists the new miners' union signified the revolutionary hope for their Marxist vision of the future, but for most Reds, and for most radical miners as well, it meant a militant alternative to the languid UMW."¹⁹

Not wanting to lose status and membership, the UMW joined forces with their enemies — the company owners and the local authorities — to oust the NMU from Harlan County:

"The Harlan coal operators, county officials and the local press quickly acted to make the [NMU's] Communist connections the central issue. Instead of feeding people, alleviating suffering, and attempting to secure employment for blacklisted miners, the Harlan powers chose to suppress ideas, to halt the distribution of relief, and to jail or expel from the county both the radical organizers and their followers. Erroneously attributing

¹⁸ Howard, "The National Miners Union...," *The Penn. Mag. of Hist. and Bio.*, 125, no. 1/2 (2001): 92.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 96.

the ... violence to radical agitation rather than to starvation and repression, county leaders sought to prevent a second outbreak of violence by using hunger and coercion, the causes of the first. Rationalizing their actions as necessary for social peace and the preservation of their very civilization, the coal operators, the sheriff, the courts, the press, civic groups, veterans' organizations, vigilantes, and the United Mine Workers combined to destroy the radical movement."²⁰

The strike of 1931 fizzled out "through a combination of union impotence and management's firm position."²¹ While previously blacklisted union miners were allowed to go back to work, they were still caught between their demands not really being met and needing to eat and provide for their family; essentially, they were "starved back into the pits."²² The NMU left Harlan County for other counties, initially to better results, but also faded away because its communist affiliations didn't mesh with existing values of the people, as noted above, and because most of its members were unemployed or blacklisted, which meant that their strikes weren't really strikes if they did not involve employed people walking off the job.

²⁰ Hevener, *Which Side Are You On?*, 58.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 48.

²² *Ibid.*, 48

Appendix B — List of errata in the score

m2 — The dotted eighth rest in RH should be a normal eighth rest with no dot.

m8 — Time signature should be 2/4 not 3/4.

m16 — Time signature should be 6/8 not 4/8.

m47 — RH, “alto” voice, first note (F) should be a half note, not a quarter.

m58 — RH, first dotted-quarter beat contains three sixteenths and two eighths, which adds up to 7 sixteenths instead of six. I propose that the two eighths are supposed to be two dotted-sixteenths.

m58 — RH, last dotted-quarter beat contains three sixteenths and a dotted-sixteenth.

The dotted sixteenth should be a dotted-eighth.

m62 — LH upper voice, tied sixteenth should have a dot.

m66 — Time signature should be 1/2 or 4/8 or 2/4 but not 4/2.

m83 — LH, eighth notes should have no dots.

m109 — RH, third beat, first sixteenth, should be staccato, not tenuto.

Finale — Third measure, left hand, there should be a bass clef after the quarter note.

Addendum — Last measure, time signature should be 2/4.

Appendix C — Transcriptions of recorded improvisations

Frederic Rzewski, hatHUT	157
Frederic Rzewski, Nonesuch	169
Lisa Moore	182
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Frederic Rzewski, hatHUT

6:44 $\text{♩} = 92$

f

6:54

p *f* *p*

7:02 *rall.* *a tempo*

f

7:10 *accel.* $\text{♩} = 112$ $\text{♩} = 80$

Detailed description of the musical score: The score is for a piano piece by Frederic Rzewski. It consists of four systems of music. The first system (measures 6:44-6:54) starts with a tempo of quarter note = 92. It features a complex rhythmic structure with time signatures changing from 2/4 to 6/4, 4/4, and 3/8. Dynamics include forte (f). The second system (measures 6:54-7:02) continues with time signatures 3/8, 7/8, 4/4, and 3/4. Dynamics include piano (p) and forte (f). The third system (measures 7:02-7:10) includes a 'rall.' (ritardando) section followed by 'a tempo'. It features a triplet in the right hand and a triplet in the left hand. Dynamics include forte (f). The fourth system (measures 7:10-7:10) starts with an 'accel.' (accelerando) section, followed by a tempo change to quarter note = 112, and then a final section with quarter note = 80. The time signatures in this system are 2/4, 5/4, 4/4, and 6/4.

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Frederic Rzewski, hatHUT

7:22 *accel.*

Musical score for measures 7:22-7:28. The piece is in 6/4 time. Measure 7:22 features a bass line with a dotted quarter note and an eighth note, and a treble line with a quarter note and an eighth note. Measure 7:23 shows a change to 4/4 time. Measure 7:24 has a treble line with a quarter note and an eighth note, and a bass line with a quarter note and an eighth note. Measure 7:25 features a treble line with a quarter note and an eighth note, and a bass line with a quarter note and an eighth note. Measure 7:26 has a treble line with a quarter note and an eighth note, and a bass line with a quarter note and an eighth note. Measure 7:27 features a treble line with a quarter note and an eighth note, and a bass line with a quarter note and an eighth note. Measure 7:28 has a treble line with a quarter note and an eighth note, and a bass line with a quarter note and an eighth note. A five-measure slur is placed over measures 7:26-7:28.

7:29 $\text{♩} = 100$

Musical score for measures 7:29-7:32. The piece is in 9/16 time. Measure 7:29 features a bass line with a quarter note and an eighth note, and a treble line with a quarter note and an eighth note. Measure 7:30 has a bass line with a quarter note and an eighth note, and a treble line with a quarter note and an eighth note. Measure 7:31 features a bass line with a quarter note and an eighth note, and a treble line with a quarter note and an eighth note. Measure 7:32 has a bass line with a quarter note and an eighth note, and a treble line with a quarter note and an eighth note.

7:33

Musical score for measures 7:33-7:35. The piece is in 13/8 time. Measure 7:33 features a treble line with a quarter note and an eighth note, and a bass line with a quarter note and an eighth note. Measure 7:34 has a treble line with a quarter note and an eighth note, and a bass line with a quarter note and an eighth note. Measure 7:35 features a treble line with a quarter note and an eighth note, and a bass line with a quarter note and an eighth note.

7:36

Musical score for measures 7:36-7:41. The piece is in 13/8 time. Measure 7:36 features a treble line with a quarter note and an eighth note, and a bass line with a quarter note and an eighth note. Measure 7:37 has a treble line with a quarter note and an eighth note, and a bass line with a quarter note and an eighth note. Measure 7:38 features a treble line with a quarter note and an eighth note, and a bass line with a quarter note and an eighth note. Measure 7:39 has a treble line with a quarter note and an eighth note, and a bass line with a quarter note and an eighth note. Measure 7:40 features a treble line with a quarter note and an eighth note, and a bass line with a quarter note and an eighth note. Measure 7:41 has a treble line with a quarter note and an eighth note, and a bass line with a quarter note and an eighth note. A three-measure slur is placed over measures 7:39-7:41.

Frederic Rzewski, hatHUT

7:41 $\text{♩} = 92$

7:47

7:54 *rit.* *a tempo*

8:00 $\text{♩} = 80$ *accel.* $\text{♩} = 136$

Detailed description of the musical score: The score is for a piano piece by Frederic Rzewski titled 'hatHUT'. It consists of four systems of music. The first system (measures 7:41-7:46) is in 21/16 time, with a tempo marking of quarter note = 92. The second system (measures 7:47-7:53) is in 4/4 time and features numerous triplet markings. The third system (measures 7:54-7:59) starts with a 2/4 time signature, includes a 'rit.' (ritardando) marking, and then changes to 4/4 time with an 'a tempo' marking. The fourth system (measures 8:00-8:05) begins with a 10/8 time signature, has a tempo marking of quarter note = 80 and an 'accel.' (accelerando) marking, and then changes to 4/4 time with a tempo marking of quarter note = 136. The score uses a variety of rhythmic values, including eighth, sixteenth, and thirty-second notes, as well as rests and triplet markings.

Frederic Rzewski, hatHUT

8:04

Musical score for measures 8:04-8:09. The piece is in 4/8 time. The right hand features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, while the left hand provides a rhythmic accompaniment with eighth notes. The key signature has one sharp (F#).

8:09

Musical score for measures 8:09-8:12. The time signature changes to 12/8. The right hand has a melodic line with eighth notes and rests, including a 4-measure phrase and a 5-measure phrase. The left hand has a bass line with eighth notes and rests. The key signature has one sharp (F#).

8:12

$\text{♩} = 80$

Musical score for measures 8:12-8:14. The time signature is 4/4. The right hand features a complex rhythmic pattern with a 9-measure phrase and a 3-measure phrase. The left hand has a bass line with eighth notes and rests. The key signature has one sharp (F#).

8:14

rit.

Musical score for measures 8:14-8:17. The time signature is 7/8. The right hand has a melodic line with eighth notes and rests, including a 3-measure phrase and an 11-measure phrase. The left hand has a bass line with eighth notes and rests. The key signature has one sharp (F#).

Frederic Rzewski, hatHUT

8:18 $\text{♩} = 66$ $\overbrace{\hspace{2cm}}^5$ $\overbrace{\hspace{2cm}}^6$ $\text{♩} = 90$ *accel.*

8:22 $\text{♩} = 120$

8:25

8:28

Frederic Rzewski, hatHUT

8:33 *rit.*

Musical score for measures 8:33-8:37. The piece is in 15/8 time. Measure 8:33 features a long, continuous eighth-note run in the right hand, while the left hand plays a simple bass line. At measure 8:34, the time signature changes to 13/8. The right hand continues with eighth notes, and the left hand has a triplet of eighth notes marked with a bracket and '7:4'. The piece returns to 15/8 time at measure 8:37.

8:38 ♩ = 92

Musical score for measures 8:38-8:40. The tempo is marked ♩ = 92. The right hand has a complex melodic line with slurs and accents, including a 9:6 triplet. The left hand plays a steady bass line. The time signature changes to 12/8 at measure 8:40.

8:41

Musical score for measures 8:41-8:45. The right hand features a 7:6 triplet. The piece changes to 2/4 time at measure 8:42, then to 9/32 at measure 8:43, and finally to 7/16 at measure 8:45. The left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment.

8:46 ♩ = 120 *ff*

Musical score for measures 8:46-8:50. The tempo is marked ♩ = 120 and the dynamics are *ff*. The right hand has a melodic line with a slur and a fermata. The left hand has a triplet of eighth notes marked with a bracket and '3'. The piece changes to 9/8 time at measure 8:47, then to 6/8 at measure 8:48, and finally to 7/16 at measure 8:50.

Frederic Rzewski, hatHUT

8:51 $\text{♩} = 112$

Musical score for measures 8:51-8:53. The piece is in 7/16 time. Measure 8:51 features a piano introduction with a half note G3 and a quarter note F3. Measure 8:52 has a piano introduction with a half note G3 and a quarter note F3. Measure 8:53 has a piano introduction with a half note G3 and a quarter note F3. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 112.

8:54

Musical score for measures 8:54-8:55. Measure 8:54 has a piano introduction with a half note G3 and a quarter note F3. Measure 8:55 has a piano introduction with a half note G3 and a quarter note F3. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 112.

8:56

Musical score for measures 8:56-8:58. Measure 8:56 has a piano introduction with a half note G3 and a quarter note F3. Measure 8:57 has a piano introduction with a half note G3 and a quarter note F3. Measure 8:58 has a piano introduction with a half note G3 and a quarter note F3. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 112.

8:59

Musical score for measures 8:59-9:01. Measure 8:59 has a piano introduction with a half note G3 and a quarter note F3. Measure 9:00 has a piano introduction with a half note G3 and a quarter note F3. Measure 9:01 has a piano introduction with a half note G3 and a quarter note F3. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 112.

Frederic Rzewski, hatHUT

9:03

♩ = 112

♩ = 80

tr

10

This system contains measures 9:03 to 9:06. It features a complex rhythmic structure with time signatures 7/16, 9/8, 6/8, and 9/8. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 112, and later as quarter note = 80. A trill is indicated in the first measure, and a decuplet (10) is marked in the second measure.

9:07

This system contains measures 9:07 to 9:10. The time signatures are 9/8, 6/8, 6/8, and 7/4. The music consists of eighth and quarter notes in both staves.

9:13

This system contains measures 9:13 to 9:16. The time signatures are 7/4, 12/8, 6/8, and 6/8. It includes a triplet in the first measure and a quintuplet (5) in the fourth measure.

9:19

rit.

♩ = 72

accel.

tr

3

This system contains measures 9:19 to 9:22. The time signatures are 6/8, 7/8, 4/4, and 6/8. It includes a triplet in the first measure, a tempo change to quarter note = 72, and a trill in the fourth measure. The tempo is marked as accelerating (*accel.*).

Frederic Rzewski, hatHUT

9:27 *rit.* ♩ = 60 *tr* *rit.*

9:37 ♩ = 46 *tr* *tr*

9:45 *tr* *tr*

9:49

Frederic Rzewski, hatHUT

10:41 $\text{♩} = 72$ *tr*

Musical score for 10:41-10:46. The system consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature. It features a melodic line with a triplet of eighth notes. The lower staff is in bass clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a 3/4 time signature. It contains a complex rhythmic pattern with triplets and a 9-measure phrase. A trill (tr) is indicated above the first measure.

10:46 $\text{♩} = 88$ $\text{♩} = 72$ *tr*

Musical score for 10:46-10:52. The system consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a 4/4 time signature. It features a melodic line with accents and a trill (tr) in the first measure. The lower staff is in bass clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a 4/4 time signature. It contains a complex rhythmic pattern with sixteenth notes and rests, including 6-measure and 7-measure phrases.

10:52

Musical score for 10:52-10:57. The system consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a 4/4 time signature. It features a melodic line with a 6-measure phrase. The lower staff is in bass clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a 4/4 time signature. It contains a complex rhythmic pattern with sixteenth notes and rests, including 6-measure and 5-measure phrases.

10:57 *tr*

Musical score for 10:57-11:02. The system consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a 7/4 time signature. It features a melodic line with a trill (tr) in the first measure. The lower staff is in bass clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a 7/4 time signature. It contains a complex rhythmic pattern with sixteenth notes and rests, including 7-measure, 6-measure, 5-measure, 6-measure, and 5-measure phrases.

Frederic Rzewski, hatHUT

11:00 $\text{♩} = 60$

Musical score for measures 11:00-11:03. The piece is in 7/8 time. The tempo is marked $\text{♩} = 60$. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The score features a treble and bass clef. The right hand has a triplet of eighth notes and a dotted quarter note. The left hand has a triplet of eighth notes and a dotted quarter note. There are accents on the final notes of both hands.

11:03

Musical score for measures 11:03-11:07. The piece is in 4/4 time. The key signature has two flats (Bb, Eb). The score features a treble and bass clef. The right hand has a sixteenth-note triplet and a dotted quarter note. The left hand has a sixteenth-note triplet and a dotted quarter note. There are accents on the final notes of both hands.

11:07 *accel.* $\text{♩} = 60$

Musical score for measures 11:07-11:12. The piece is in 16/8 time. The tempo is marked $\text{♩} = 60$. The key signature has two flats (Bb, Eb). The score features a treble and bass clef. The right hand has a sixteenth-note triplet and a dotted quarter note. The left hand has a sixteenth-note triplet and a dotted quarter note. There are accents on the final notes of both hands.

11:12 *rit.* $\text{♩} = 60$

Musical score for measures 11:12-11:16. The piece is in 4/4 time. The tempo is marked $\text{♩} = 60$. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The score features a treble and bass clef. The right hand has a sixteenth-note triplet and a dotted quarter note. The left hand has a sixteenth-note triplet and a dotted quarter note. There are accents on the final notes of both hands.

Frederic Rzewski, hatHUT

11:20 $\text{♩} = 132$ *rit.* $\text{♩} = 120$

11:35 *rit.*

Frederic Rzewski, Nonesuch

7:25 $\text{♩} = 80$

Musical score for measures 7:25-7:40. The piece is in 4/4 time. The right hand starts with a whole rest, followed by a half note G4, a quarter note F4, a half note E4, and a quarter note D4. The left hand begins with a half note G2, followed by a quarter note F2, a quarter note E2, and a quarter note D2. The piece concludes with a triplet of eighth notes (F4, E4, D4) in the right hand and a quarter note G2 in the left hand.

Musical score for measures 7:40-7:51. The right hand features a triplet of eighth notes (G4, A4, B4) in the first measure, followed by a quarter note C5, a quarter note B4, and a quarter note A4. The left hand plays a quarter note G2, a quarter note F2, a quarter note E2, and a quarter note D2. The piece ends with a quarter note G2 in the right hand and a quarter note C4 in the left hand.

Musical score for measures 7:51-7:58, marked *accel.* The right hand plays a quarter note G4, a quarter note F4, a quarter note E4, and a quarter note D4. The left hand plays a quarter note G2, a quarter note F2, a quarter note E2, and a quarter note D2. The piece concludes with a quarter note G4 in the right hand and a quarter note G2 in the left hand.

Musical score for measures 7:58-8:05, marked $\text{♩} = 104$. The right hand plays a quarter note G4, a quarter note F4, a quarter note E4, and a quarter note D4. The left hand plays a quarter note G2, a quarter note F2, a quarter note E2, and a quarter note D2. The piece ends with a quarter note G4 in the right hand and a quarter note G2 in the left hand.

Frederic Rzewski, Nonesuch

8:04

Two staves of music in 4/4 time. The upper staff is in treble clef and contains a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The lower staff is in bass clef and contains a bass line with quarter notes.

8:09

Two staves of music in 4/4 time. The upper staff is in bass clef and contains a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, including a slur and an accent mark. The lower staff is in bass clef and contains a bass line with quarter notes.

8:13

Two staves of music in 4/4 time. The upper staff is in treble clef and contains a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The lower staff is in bass clef and contains a bass line with quarter notes.

8:18

Two staves of music in 4/4 time. The upper staff is in treble clef and contains a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The lower staff is in bass clef and contains a bass line with quarter notes. The system ends with a double bar line and a 12/16 time signature.

Frederic Rzewski, Nonesuch

8:23

Two staves of music in bass clef. The top staff features a complex rhythmic pattern with sixteenth and thirty-second notes, including a four-measure slur. The bottom staff has a simpler melody with dotted rhythms. Time signatures change from 12/16 to 9/16 and back to 12/16.

8:28

Two staves of music in bass clef. The top staff has a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The bottom staff has a bass line with dotted rhythms. Time signatures change from 12/16 to 11/16 and then to 4/4.

8:32

Two staves of music in treble clef. The top staff has a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The bottom staff has a bass line with dotted rhythms. Time signatures change from 4/4 to 25/16 and back to 4/4.

8:37

Two staves of music in treble clef. The top staff has a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The bottom staff has a bass line with dotted rhythms. Time signatures change from 25/16 to 4/4.

Frederic Rzewski, Nonesuch

8:40

Two staves of music in 4/4 time. The right hand features a complex melodic line with slurs and fingering numbers 5 and 6. The left hand provides a simple accompaniment with a few notes.

8:42

Two staves of music in 8/8 time. The right hand has a dense, rapid melodic passage with slurs and fingering numbers 7, 6, 3, 6, 3. The left hand has a more rhythmic accompaniment.

8:46

Two staves of music in 13/8 time. The right hand features a very fast, repetitive melodic pattern with slurs and fingering numbers 6, 7, 5, 5, 5. The left hand has a slower, more melodic accompaniment.

8:50

Two staves of music in 5/4 time. The right hand has a melodic line with slurs and a fingering number 3. The left hand has a simple accompaniment with a few notes.

Frederic Rzewski, Nonesuch

8:52

Musical score for 8:52. The system consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef with a 6/4 time signature, featuring a complex melodic line with many accidentals and slurs. The lower staff is in bass clef with a 4/4 time signature, featuring a simpler bass line. The key signature has two flats. The system ends with a double bar line and a 13/8 time signature.

8:58

Musical score for 8:58. The system consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef with a 13/8 time signature, featuring a complex melodic line with many accidentals and slurs. The lower staff is in bass clef with a 4/4 time signature, featuring a simpler bass line. The key signature has two flats. The system ends with a double bar line and a 10/8 time signature.

9:02

Musical score for 9:02. The system consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef with a 10/8 time signature, featuring a complex melodic line with many accidentals and slurs. The lower staff is in bass clef with a 4/4 time signature, featuring a simpler bass line. The key signature has two flats. The system ends with a double bar line and a 4/4 time signature.

9:04

Musical score for 9:04. The system consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef with a 4/4 time signature, featuring a complex melodic line with many accidentals and slurs. The lower staff is in bass clef with a 4/4 time signature, featuring a simpler bass line. The key signature has two flats. The system ends with a double bar line and a 3/4 time signature.

Frederic Rzewski, Nonesuch

9:08 $\text{♩} = 84$

Musical score for measures 9:08-9:10. The system consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and the lower staff is in bass clef. The time signature is 4/4. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 84. The music features a complex rhythmic pattern with triplets and sixteenth notes. A triplet of eighth notes is marked with a '3' and a slur in the upper staff. Another triplet of eighth notes is marked with a '3' and a slur in the lower staff.

9:10

Musical score for measures 9:10-9:12. The system consists of two staves. The upper staff is in bass clef and the lower staff is in bass clef. The time signature is 4/4. The music features a complex rhythmic pattern with eighth notes and sixteenth notes. The upper staff has a series of eighth notes with accents (>) over the notes. The lower staff has a series of quarter notes.

9:12

Musical score for measures 9:12-9:15. The system consists of two staves. The upper staff is in bass clef and the lower staff is in bass clef. The time signature is 4/4. The music features a complex rhythmic pattern with eighth notes and sixteenth notes. The upper staff has a series of eighth notes with accents (>) over the notes. The lower staff has a series of quarter notes.

9:15

Musical score for measures 9:15-9:18. The system consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and the lower staff is in bass clef. The time signature is 4/4. The music features a complex rhythmic pattern with eighth notes and sixteenth notes. The upper staff has a series of eighth notes with accents (>) over the notes. The lower staff has a series of quarter notes.

Frederic Rzewski, Nonesuch

9:17

Musical score for measures 9:17-9:20. The system consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef with a 4/4 time signature. It features a complex rhythmic pattern with many beamed notes and rests. The lower staff is in bass clef with a 4/4 time signature, containing a simpler melodic line with some accidentals.

9:20

Musical score for measures 9:20-9:23. The system consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef with a 4/4 time signature, featuring sixteenth-note runs with slurs and fingering numbers 7 and 6. The lower staff is in bass clef with a 4/4 time signature, containing a simple melodic line.

9:23

Musical score for measures 9:23-9:25. The system consists of two staves. The upper staff is in bass clef with a 6/4 time signature, featuring sixteenth-note runs with slurs and fingering number 6. The lower staff is in bass clef with a 6/4 time signature, containing a simple melodic line.

9:25

Musical score for measures 9:25-9:28. The system consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef with a 4/4 time signature, featuring sixteenth-note runs with slurs and fingering number 6, ending with a fermata. The lower staff is in bass clef with a 4/4 time signature, containing a simple melodic line.

Frederic Rzewski, Nonesuch

9:29

Musical score for measures 9:29-9:32. The piece is in 4/4 time. Measure 9:29 features a wavy line above the staff. Measure 9:30 has a 7-measure rest followed by a 4-measure rest, then a triplet of eighth notes. Measure 9:31 has a 3-measure rest. Measure 9:32 ends with a quarter note.

9:33 *accel.*

Musical score for measures 9:33-9:35. The piece is in 4/4 time. Measure 9:33 starts with a triplet of eighth notes. Measure 9:34 has a triplet of eighth notes and a trill. Measure 9:35 has a trill.

9:36 $\text{♩} = 96$ *accel.*

Musical score for measures 9:36-9:41. The piece is in 5/4 time. Measure 9:36 has a 4-measure rest followed by a 3-measure rest. Measure 9:37 has a 4-measure rest followed by a 3-measure rest. Measure 9:38 has a 4-measure rest followed by a 3-measure rest. Measure 9:39 has a 4-measure rest followed by a 3-measure rest. Measure 9:40 has a 4-measure rest followed by a 3-measure rest. Measure 9:41 has a 4-measure rest followed by a 3-measure rest.

9:42 $\text{♩} = 64$ *accel.*

Musical score for measures 9:42-9:45. The piece is in 4/4 time. Measure 9:42 has a 5-measure rest followed by a 6-measure rest, then a 5-measure rest. Measure 9:43 has a 5-measure rest followed by a 6-measure rest, then a 5-measure rest. Measure 9:44 has a 5-measure rest followed by a 6-measure rest, then a 5-measure rest. Measure 9:45 has a 5-measure rest followed by a 6-measure rest, then a 5-measure rest.

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9:45 $\text{♩} = 88$ $\text{♩} = 96$

9:51

9:57 $\text{♩} = 72$

10:01

Frederic Rzewski, Nonesuch

10:04

Musical score for 10:04. The piece is in 4/4 time. The right hand features a complex rhythmic pattern with a 12-measure phrase, a 3-measure phrase, a 5-measure phrase, and a 6-measure phrase. The left hand provides a steady accompaniment with quarter notes.

10:07

Musical score for 10:07. The piece is in 4/4 time. The right hand has a 9-measure phrase. The left hand has a 6-measure phrase. The key signature has one flat.

10:10 *accel.*

Musical score for 10:10. The piece is in 6/8 time. The right hand has a 16-measure phrase with a tempo marking of $\text{♩} = 108$. The left hand has a 16-measure phrase. The key signature has two flats.

10:15

Musical score for 10:15. The piece is in 9/8 time. The right hand has a 4-measure phrase with triplets and a 5-measure phrase. The left hand has a 4-measure phrase with triplets and a 5-measure phrase. The key signature has two flats.

Frederic Rzewski, Nonesuch

10:21

Musical score for 10:21. The piece is in 4/4 time. The right hand features a complex melodic line with several slurs and fingerings: a 5-finger slur, a 7-finger slur, a 6-finger slur, another 6-finger slur, and an 8-finger slur. The left hand provides a steady accompaniment with a bass line that includes a fermata.

10:25 $\text{♩} = 72$

Musical score for 10:25. The tempo is marked $\text{♩} = 72$. The piece is in 4/4 time. The right hand has a melodic line with a 3-finger slur. The left hand features a bass line with multiple 3-finger slurs. The piece concludes with a 17-measure rest.

10:30

Musical score for 10:30. The piece is in 17/16 time. The right hand has a melodic line with a 7-finger slur and several 3-finger slurs. The left hand features a bass line with 3-finger slurs. The piece concludes with a 3/4 time signature and a 17-measure rest.

10:37 $\text{♩} = 86$

Musical score for 10:37. The tempo is marked $\text{♩} = 86$. The piece is in 3/4 time. The right hand has a melodic line with a 3-finger slur and a *rit.* marking. The left hand features a bass line with a 3-finger slur. The piece concludes with a 4/4 time signature and a 4-measure rest.

Frederic Rzewski, Nonesuch

10:40 $\text{♩} = 60$

rit. 6 6 6

This system contains measures 10:40 to 10:45. It features a treble and bass clef. The tempo is marked $\text{♩} = 60$. Measure 10:40 has a 7-measure rest in the treble and a 6-measure rest in the bass. Measure 10:41 has a 6-measure rest in the treble and a 6-measure rest in the bass. Measure 10:42 has a 6-measure rest in the treble and a 6-measure rest in the bass. Measure 10:43 has a 6-measure rest in the treble and a 6-measure rest in the bass. Measure 10:44 has a 6-measure rest in the treble and a 6-measure rest in the bass. Measure 10:45 has a 6-measure rest in the treble and a 6-measure rest in the bass. The tempo is marked *rit.* and there are six six-measure rests in the treble and six six-measure rests in the bass.

10:46

6 6 6 6

This system contains measures 10:46 to 10:50. It features a bass clef. Measure 10:46 has a 6-measure rest. Measure 10:47 has a 6-measure rest. Measure 10:48 has a 6-measure rest. Measure 10:49 has a 6-measure rest. Measure 10:50 has a 6-measure rest. There are four six-measure rests in the bass.

10:51 $\text{♩} = 44$

6 6 3 6 3

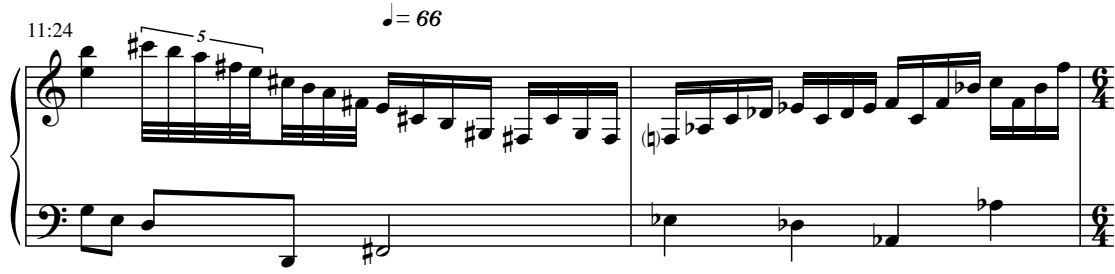
This system contains measures 10:51 to 10:56. It features a treble and bass clef. The tempo is marked $\text{♩} = 44$. Measure 10:51 has a 6-measure rest in the treble and a 6-measure rest in the bass. Measure 10:52 has a 6-measure rest in the treble and a 6-measure rest in the bass. Measure 10:53 has a 3-measure rest in the treble and a 3-measure rest in the bass. Measure 10:54 has a 6-measure rest in the treble and a 6-measure rest in the bass. Measure 10:55 has a 3-measure rest in the treble and a 3-measure rest in the bass. Measure 10:56 has a 6-measure rest in the treble and a 6-measure rest in the bass. There are two six-measure rests, two three-measure rests, and two six-measure rests in the treble and bass.

11:09 rit. a tempo 3 3

This system contains measures 11:09 to 11:14. It features a treble and bass clef. The tempo is marked *rit.* and *a tempo*. Measure 11:09 has a 3-measure rest in the treble and a 3-measure rest in the bass. Measure 11:10 has a 3-measure rest in the treble and a 3-measure rest in the bass. Measure 11:11 has a 3-measure rest in the treble and a 3-measure rest in the bass. Measure 11:12 has a 3-measure rest in the treble and a 3-measure rest in the bass. Measure 11:13 has a 3-measure rest in the treble and a 3-measure rest in the bass. Measure 11:14 has a 3-measure rest in the treble and a 3-measure rest in the bass. There are two three-measure rests in the treble and two three-measure rests in the bass.

Frederic Rzewski, Nonesuch

11:24 $\text{♩} = 66$



11:33 *rit.* $\text{♩} = 36$



Lisa Moore

6:52 ♩ = 54

7:06 ♩ = 72 *rit.* ♩ = 54

7:18 ♩ = 72 ♩ = 112 *rit.*

7:31 ♩ = 66 *rit.* ♩ = 50 *accel.*

Lisa Moore

7:45 $\text{♩} = 78$ $\text{♩} = 60$

Musical score for Lisa Moore, starting at 7:45. The piece begins in 12/8 time with a tempo of 78. It features a treble and bass clef staff. The first measure has a triplet of eighth notes in the treble. At 7:50, the time signature changes to 4/4 and the tempo to 60. The piece ends at 7:55 in 6/4 time.

7:53 $\text{♩} = 72$

Musical score for Lisa Moore, starting at 7:53. The piece is in 6/4 time with a tempo of 72. It features a treble and bass clef staff. The first measure has a triplet of eighth notes in the treble. The piece ends at 8:00 in 2/4 time.

8:02 *rit.* *a tempo*

Musical score for Lisa Moore, starting at 8:02. The piece begins in 2/4 time, then changes to 12/8 at 8:05, then back to 2/4 at 8:08, and finally to 4/4 at 8:11. It features a treble and bass clef staff. The first measure has a triplet of eighth notes in the bass. The piece ends at 8:13 in 4/4 time.

8:13

Musical score for Lisa Moore, starting at 8:13. The piece is in 4/4 time. It features a treble and bass clef staff. The first measure has a triplet of eighth notes in the treble. The piece ends at 8:16 in 4/4 time.

Lisa Moore

8:23 $\text{♩} = 80$ *rit.*

8:38 *a tempo*

8:46 *rit.* $\text{♩} = 60$

8:56 *accel.*

Lisa Moore

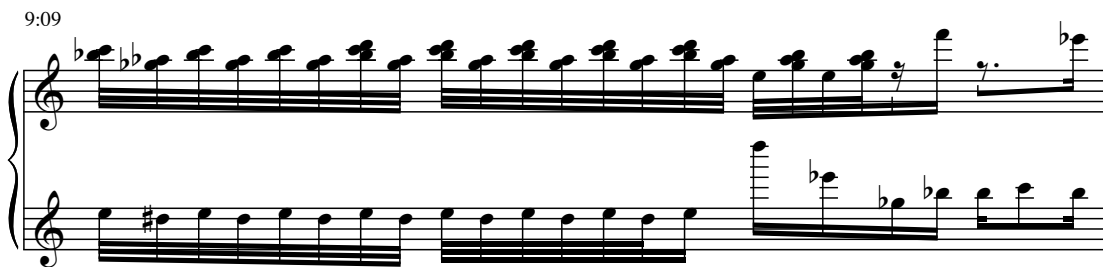
9:03 $\text{♩} = 80$



9:07



9:09



9:12



Lisa Moore

9:14

Musical notation for measures 9:14-9:16. The system consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef with a 7/8 time signature. It features a melodic line with a triplet of eighth notes in the first measure and a dotted quarter note in the second measure. The lower staff is in bass clef with a 7/8 time signature, providing a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes.

9:17

Musical notation for measures 9:17-9:18. The system consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef with a 7/8 time signature, showing a melodic line with a triplet of eighth notes in the second measure. The lower staff is in bass clef with a 7/8 time signature, continuing the rhythmic accompaniment.

9:20

Musical notation for measures 9:20-9:21. The system consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef with a 4/4 time signature, featuring a complex rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes. The lower staff is in bass clef with a 4/4 time signature, providing a simple accompaniment of quarter notes.

David Jalbert

6:30 $\text{♩} = 72$

6:40

6:50 *rit.* *a tempo*

7:02 *rit.*

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David Jalbert

7:16 $\text{♩} = 52$ *accel.* $\text{♩} = 66$ *rit.*

7:30 $\text{♩} = 56$ $\text{♩} = 72$

7:46 *accel.*

7:51 $\text{♩} = 88$ *rit.* *a tempo*

David Jalbert

8:01 *accel.* ♩ = 108

Musical score for measures 8:01-8:08. The piece is in a minor key and starts with a tempo of 108 beats per minute. The music is marked 'accel.' (accelerando). The score is written for piano in bass clef. The first system contains six measures. The first three measures are in 3/4 time, and the last three are in 2/4 time. The right hand features complex chordal textures and sixteenth-note runs, while the left hand provides a steady bass line. Sixteenth-note runs in the right hand are marked with a '6' (sextuplet).

8:09

Musical score for measures 8:09-8:11. This system continues the piece in bass clef. It consists of three measures, each featuring a sixteenth-note sextuplet in the right hand and a single note in the left hand.

8:12

Musical score for measures 8:12-8:13. The first measure (8:12) is in bass clef and contains a sixteenth-note sextuplet in the right hand. The second measure (8:13) is in treble clef and contains a sixteenth-note sextuplet in the right hand. The left hand is silent in both measures.

8:14

Musical score for measures 8:14-8:15. The first measure (8:14) is in treble clef and contains a sixteenth-note sextuplet in the right hand. The second measure (8:15) is in treble clef and contains a sixteenth-note sextuplet in the right hand. The left hand is silent in both measures.

David Jalbert

8:15

Musical score for measures 8:15-8:16. The piece is in B-flat major and 3/4 time. Measure 8:15 features a complex sixteenth-note melody in the right hand with sixteenth-note accompaniment in the left hand. Measure 8:16 continues with a similar texture, featuring sixteenth-note runs in both hands. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 3/4.

8:17

$\text{♩} = 144$

Musical score for measures 8:17-8:19. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 144. The piece is in B-flat major and 3/4 time. Measure 8:17 features a sixteenth-note melody in the right hand and a simple accompaniment in the left hand. Measure 8:18 continues with a similar texture. Measure 8:19 features a sixteenth-note melody in the right hand and a simple accompaniment in the left hand. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 3/4.

8:20

Musical score for measures 8:20-8:23. The piece is in B-flat major and 4/4 time. Measure 8:20 features a sixteenth-note melody in the right hand and a simple accompaniment in the left hand. Measure 8:21 continues with a similar texture. Measure 8:22 features a sixteenth-note melody in the right hand and a simple accompaniment in the left hand. Measure 8:23 features a sixteenth-note melody in the right hand and a simple accompaniment in the left hand. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 4/4.

8:24

Musical score for measures 8:24-8:26. The piece is in B-flat major and 4/4 time. Measure 8:24 features a sixteenth-note melody in the right hand and a simple accompaniment in the left hand. Measure 8:25 continues with a similar texture. Measure 8:26 features a sixteenth-note melody in the right hand and a simple accompaniment in the left hand. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 4/4.

David Jalbert

8:27

Musical score for measures 8:27-8:30. The piece is in A major (three sharps) and 3/4 time. Measure 8:27 features a treble clef with a melodic line of eighth notes and a bass clef with a bass line of eighth notes. At measure 8:28, the treble clef changes to a soprano clef (C1) and the bass clef to a bass clef. At measure 8:29, the time signature changes to 4/4. The piece concludes at measure 8:30 with a final chord in the bass clef.

8:31

Musical score for measures 8:31-8:35. The piece is in B major (two sharps) and 3/4 time. Measure 8:31 features a treble clef with a melodic line of eighth notes and a bass clef with a bass line of eighth notes. At measure 8:32, the treble clef changes to a soprano clef (C1) and the bass clef to a bass clef. At measure 8:33, the time signature changes to 3/4. The piece concludes at measure 8:35 with a final chord in the bass clef.

8:36

Musical score for measures 8:36-8:40. The piece is in B major (two sharps) and 3/4 time. Measure 8:36 features a treble clef with a melodic line of eighth notes and a bass clef with a bass line of eighth notes. At measure 8:37, the treble clef changes to a soprano clef (C1) and the bass clef to a bass clef. At measure 8:38, the time signature changes to 3/4. The piece concludes at measure 8:40 with a final chord in the bass clef.

8:40

Musical score for measures 8:40-8:44. The piece is in B major (two sharps) and 3/4 time. Measure 8:40 features a treble clef with a melodic line of eighth notes and a bass clef with a bass line of eighth notes. At measure 8:41, the treble clef changes to a soprano clef (C1) and the bass clef to a bass clef. At measure 8:42, the time signature changes to 3/4. The piece concludes at measure 8:44 with a final chord in the bass clef.

David Jalbert

8:43

8:47

The image displays two systems of musical notation for piano. The first system, labeled 8:43, consists of two staves (treble and bass clef) in a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The right hand features a complex, rhythmic pattern of chords and eighth notes, while the left hand plays a steady eighth-note accompaniment. A 2/4 time signature appears at the start of the second measure. The second system, labeled 8:47, is in a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The right hand continues with chordal textures, and the left hand has a more active line. A diagonal line with a wavy texture descends from the right hand's staff towards the left hand's staff, indicating a transition or a specific performance technique. A triplet of eighth notes is marked in the final measure of the second system.

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