THE PIANO TEACHER

CHAMBER OPERA IN ONE ACT

by

TUDOR FERARU

B.Mus., “G. Dima” Academy of Music, Romania, 2001
M.Mus., University of Western Ontario, 2003

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF MUSICAL ARTS

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
(Composition)

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
(Vancouver)

October 2008

© Tudor Feraru, 2008
ABSTRACT

The thesis for the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Composition consists of an original musical work, accompanied by an analytical document. “The Piano Teacher” is a chamber opera in one act, based on a libretto by the composer, adapted from the fantastic tale “With the Gypsy Girls” by Mircea Eliade. With a duration of approximately fifty minutes, the work calls for four singers (tenor, soprano, bass-baritone, mezzo-soprano) and fifteen instrumental parts (flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, French horn, trumpet, trombone, percussion, piano, harp, two violins, viola, cello, contrabass). The aim was not only to set to music a symbolic story, but also to adopt a personal approach to the operatic genre. This approach proposes a less explicit plot, as well as minimal stage design. In adapting the story, the central character—the teacher—receives an extensive music-dramaturgical role, while the other characters are assigned relatively equal supporting roles. The opera comprises a prelude and twelve short scenes, most of which unfold uninterruptedly. A thorough discussion of the nature, influences, and vocabulary of the opera accompanies the musical score. The analytical document concentrates on particular musical ideas, as well as on several cyclical elements, providing detailed exemplification to illustrate their use. Both the score and the analysis suggest possible approaches to the stage production of the opera.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract ..............................................................................................................................ii  
Table of Contents ..............................................................................................................iii  
List of Music Examples ..................................................................................................viii  
Acknowledgements ...........................................................................................................xi  
Introduction .......................................................................................................................1  
PART I. “THE PIANO TEACHER” ...........................................................3  
  Instrumentation and Score Directions .................................................................4  
  Prelude .....................................................................................................................5  
  Scene 1 ...................................................................................................................8  
  Scene 2 ...............................................................................................................33  
  Scene 3 .................................................................................................................50  
  Scene 4 .................................................................................................................71  
  Scene 5 .................................................................................................................96  
  Scene 6 ...............................................................................................................101  
  Scene 7 ...............................................................................................................113  
  Scene 8 ...............................................................................................................117  
  Scene 9 ...............................................................................................................129  
  Scene 10 .............................................................................................................141  
  Scene 11 .............................................................................................................167  
  Scene 12 .............................................................................................................195
PART II. ANALYSIS OF THE CHAMBER OPERA ........................................233

1. Literary Source and Text Setting ..............................................................234
   1.1 The Original Tale .............................................................................234
   1.2 The Characters ..................................................................................235
   1.3 Elements of the Plot .........................................................................236
      1.3.1 The Streetcar ......................................................................236
      1.3.2 The Clock ..........................................................................237
      1.3.3 Coffee ................................................................................237
      1.3.4 The Game ..........................................................................237
      1.3.5 The Labyrinth ....................................................................238
      1.3.6 Parallel Universes ..............................................................238
   1.4 The Message of the Story .................................................................239
   1.5 The Adaptation .................................................................................240

2. Libretto ...........................................................................................................241

3. Style and Aesthetics .......................................................................................268
   3.1 Configuration of Musical Ideas ........................................................268
   3.2 Cyclical Elements .............................................................................269
   3.3 Stylistic Considerations ....................................................................269
   3.4 Aesthetic Considerations ..................................................................271

4. Formal Structure and Duration .......................................................................273
   4.1 Scene Structure .................................................................................273
   4.2 Summary of Form ............................................................................274
      4.2.1 Prelude and Overall Formal Design ..................................274
4.2.2 Scene 1 .................................................................275
4.2.3 Scene 2 .................................................................276
4.2.4 Scene 3 .................................................................276
4.2.5 Scene 4 .................................................................277
4.2.6 Scene 5 .................................................................278
4.2.7 Scene 6 .................................................................279
4.2.8 Scene 7 .................................................................280
4.2.9 Scene 8 .................................................................281
4.2.10 Scene 9 ..............................................................282
4.2.11 Scene 10 .............................................................282
4.2.12 Scene 11 .............................................................284
4.2.13 Scene 12 .............................................................286

5. Pitch, Rhythm, and Motivic Organization .............................................290
   5.1 Pitch and Rhythm ......................................................290
   5.2 Motivic Organization ..................................................291
       5.2.1 Augmented Triad-Based Motives ..........................292
       5.2.2 ‘Clock Strike’ Motives .........................................296
           5.2.2.1 First Clock Strike ......................................296
           5.2.2.2 Second Clock Strike ..................................297
           5.2.2.3 Third Clock Strike .................................298
           5.2.2.4 Fourth Clock Strike ..............................299
           5.2.2.5 Fifth Clock Strike ..................................299
           5.2.2.6 Sixth Clock Strike ..............................300
5.2.2.7 Seventh Clock Strike ............................................301
5.2.2.8 Eighth Clock Strike ...........................................302
5.2.2.9 Ninth Clock Strike .............................................303
5.2.2.10 Tenth Clock Strike ...........................................304
5.2.2.11 Eleventh Clock Strike ......................................306
5.2.2.12 Twelfth Clock Strike ........................................307
5.2.3 ‘Layered’ Chords ....................................................307
5.2.4 Melodic Motives ....................................................311
  5.2.4.1 Category “α” Motives ...........................................311
  5.2.4.2 Category “β” Motives .........................................313
  5.2.4.3 Category “γ” Motives ...........................................313
5.2.5 Textural Motives ....................................................315
5.2.6 Character-Associated Motives ....................................320
  5.2.6.1 The “Oliverson” Motive .......................................321
  5.2.6.2 The “Old Woman” Motive ...................................322
  5.2.6.3 The “Girl” Motive ..............................................322
  5.2.6.4 The “Octavia” Motive .........................................323
  5.2.6.5 The “Streetcar” Motive .......................................324
5.2.7 Evolution and Superposition of Motives .........................326
  5.2.7.1 Motivic Evolution ...............................................326
  5.2.7.2 Motivic Superposition ........................................327
5.3 Summary of Pitch, Rhythm and Motivic Relationships ..........330
6. Orchestration and Vocal Writing ........................................331
# LIST OF MUSIC EXAMPLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Accompanying augmented triad – strings. Prelude, measure 3</td>
<td>292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Melodic instance of augmented triad – woodwinds. Scene 2, measure 31</td>
<td>293</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Melodic instance of augmented triad – voice. Scene 4, measure 68</td>
<td>293</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Figured augmented triad – clarinet. Scene 6, measure 42</td>
<td>293</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Approximate-pitch intonation of augmented triad – voice. Scene 3, measure 69</td>
<td>294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Augmented triad in combination with whole-tone scale – harp. Scene 9, beginning</td>
<td>294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Augmented triads in larger harmonic context – strings. Scene 2, measure 58</td>
<td>295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Augmented triads (direct, inverted form) – marimba, strings. Scene 7, measure 23</td>
<td>295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Augmented triad scattered – voice, <em>pizzicato</em> strings. Scene 9, ending</td>
<td>296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. First clock strike – piano. Prelude, measure 20</td>
<td>297</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Second clock strike – piano. Scene 2, measure 1</td>
<td>297</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Third clock strike – ensemble. Scene 2, measure 76</td>
<td>298</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Fourth clock strike – piano. Scene 4, measure 1</td>
<td>299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Fifth clock strike – woodwinds, triangle. Scene 5, measure 1</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Sixth clock strike – <em>tutti</em>. Scene 5, measure 27</td>
<td>301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Seventh clock strike – marimba, piano. Scene 7, measure 3</td>
<td>302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Eighth clock strike – triangle, piano. Scene 8, measure 5</td>
<td>303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Ninth clock strike – piano, triangle. Scene 8, measure 68</td>
<td>304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Tenth clock strike – harp, piano. Scene 9, rehearsal no. 13</td>
<td>305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Eleventh clock strike – ensemble. Scene 11, measure 1</td>
<td>306</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
22. Twelfth clock strike – tubular bells. Scene 12, measure 160 ……………………….307
23. Rapid figuration of layered chord – piano. Scene 2, measure 44 …………………….308
24. Broken form of layered chord – piano. Scene 3, measure 32 ……………………….308
25. Rapid figuration, complementary entries – harp, piano. Scene 4, measure 117 ……309
27. Arpeggiated figuration – clarinet, oboe. Scene 10, measure 85 …………………….310
28. Solid upper chordal layer – strings (harmonics). Scene 11, measure 106 ………….310
29. Category α motive, diatonic – voice. Scene 1, measure 7 …………………………….311
30. Category α motive, chromatic – voice. Scene 1, measure 25 ………………………..312
31. Category α motive, chromatic – voice. Scene 1, measure 52 ………………………..312
32. Category α motive – vocal motive presented by marimba. Scene 1, measure 180 …312
33. Category β motive – voice. Scene 3, measure 9 ………………………………………313
34. Combination of category α and category β motives – trumpet. Scene 6, measure 44 …313
35. Category γ motive, extended to phrase size – voice. Scene 1, measure 36 ………….314
36. Category γ motive, doubling of voice – French horn. Scene 2, measure 50 ………..314
37. Category γ motive, instrumental interlude – bassoon. Scene 8, measure 1 …………315
38. Category γ motive, inversion – flute, bassoon. Scene 8, measure 57 …………………315
39. Textural recapitulation of Scene 1 (m. 109) – winds. Scene 10, measure 135 ………316
40. Recapitulation of Scene 1 (m. 52) – winds replace strings. Scene 11, measure 47 …317
41. Unison texture of fourths motive – flute, piano. Prelude, measure 6 …………………317
42. Timbral variation of “fourth motive” texture – clarinet, harp. Prelude, measure 14 …318
43. “Fourth motive” statement, octave doublings – woodwinds. Scene 2, measure 67 …318
44. Textural variation of “fourths motive” – harp, strings. Scene 6, measure 47 …………..319
45. Vertical expansion of virtual unison – voice, strings. Scene 6, measure 28 …………..319
46. Fourth-based sliding chord – strings. Scene 7, measure 1 ………………………………320
47. “Oliverson” motive, rhythmic – voice. Scene 1, measure 151 …………………….321
48. “Oliverson” motive, rhythmic – voice. Scene 2, measure 42 …………………………….321
49. “Oliverson” motive, rhythmic – voice, piano. Scene 3, measure 143 …………………….321
50. “Old Woman” motive, melodic – flute, clarinet. Scene 2, measure 5 ……………………322
51. “Old Woman” motive, melodic – flute, clarinet. Scene 6, measure 3 ……………………322
52. “Girl” motive, direct form – voice. Scene 2, measure 22 ……………………………….323
53. “Girl” motive, loose inversion – voice. Scene 2, measure 72 ……………………………323
54. “Octavia” motive, intervallic association – voice. Scene 2, measure 62 …………………323
55. “Octavia” motive, intervallic association – voice. Scene 8, measure 33 …………………324
56. “Streetcar” motive – winds, triangle. Scene 1, measure 205 ……………………………325
57. “Streetcar” motive – trombone, triangle. Scene 6, measure 55 ……………………………325
58. Initial motive, whole-tone tetrachord form – voice. Scene 1, measure 7 …………………326
59. Aria accompaniment, top line derived from motive – harp. Scene 11, measure 84 ………326
60. Fragment of tetrachord motive-based aria – voice. Scene 11, measure 100 ……………327
61. Motivic superposition – voice, wind instruments. Scene 2, measure 70 ………………..328
62. Motivic superposition, instrumental – French horn, strings. Scene 6, measure 48 ……328
63. Motivic superposition, condensed material – tenor, baritone. Scene 11, measure 73 …..329
64. Final quartet, fugato – soprano, mezzo, tenor, bass. Scene 12, measure 211 …………..334
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to give special thanks to the following:

Dr. Stephen Chatman, my doctoral supervisor, for his invaluable assistance in the writing of this Thesis, as well as for his continuous encouragement through all my years in the Doctor of Musical Arts program

Dr. Keith Hamel and Dr. Dorothy Chang, members of my advisory committee, for their precious advice and constant support

All those at the University of British Columbia who helped me achieve this; my extraordinary experience as a doctoral student would not have been possible without their assistance

Westminster John Knox Press, for granting me permission to use and adapt the copyrighted text upon which this Thesis is based

All my friends and family who encouraged and supported me, especially my parents and my wife, Cornelia
INTRODUCTION

This Thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts in Composition. A substantial part of the body of the Thesis consists of an original work, entitled *The Piano Teacher*, Chamber Opera in One Act. My reasons for approaching the operatic genre were manifold. Although I have composed much vocal-instrumental music in the past, opera as a genre represents a completely new creative exploration for me. Therefore, the creation of this doctoral Thesis was both a personal aspiration and a challenge to my career as a composer.

A special affinity with the subject matter of *The Piano Teacher* was one of the factors that inspired me to begin working on this project. Composing an opera in the twenty-first century poses numerous challenges, such as the imperative necessity of creating a work that is both original and relevant to the long operatic tradition. The main priority of my compositional undertaking has been to achieve a good marriage between music and theatre. There are not many examples of stories involving symbolism set to music. Part of my creative challenge was to demonstrate that this particular literary category can inspire outstanding musical-dramaturgical effects.

During the initial development of this work, I sketched an outline of the plot and created my own Libretto. While some of the musical materials were chosen before the actual compositional process began, most themes and motives were incorporated intuitively.
during the creative process, as a result of working with the literary text. Contrary to my initial plan of creating a complete piano-vocal version first and orchestrating the entire work later, I was able to write the opera in full score from the outset. This approach allowed me to conceive relationships between vocal and instrumental parts in a more direct and sophisticated fashion. A piano-vocal rehearsal score can be easily arranged, if necessary, at a later time.

The full score is followed in this Thesis by a detailed analytical document, which discusses techniques and procedures employed while composing the opera. It also provides insight into particular structural elements, as well as into the relationship of music and text. While the Libretto and study of the literary source chronologically precede the composition itself, a detailed and accurate description of dramaturgical aspects, compositional techniques and influences only became possible once the creation of the full score was completed. To the reader, the analytical document may provide a helpful perspective on the original story and may clarify the motivation and usage of certain technical elements, thus assuring a better understanding of the musical work.

Both the score and the analysis suggest various possible staging approaches and performance styles. However, the Thesis intends only to provide a general framework, within which an eventual stage production of the opera, with all its creative and logistical components, may take place.
PART I

“THE PIANO TEACHER”
Instrumentation and Directions:

Instruments of the Orchestra:

- Flute (doubling Piccolo)
- Oboe (doubling English Horn)
- Clarinet in B flat
- Bassoon
- French Horn in F
- Trumpet in B flat
- Trombone (tenor)
- Percussion (Triangle, High & Low Toms, Suspended Cymbal, Marimba, Tambourine, Tubular Bells - one player)
- Piano
- Harp
- Violin 1
- Violin 2
- Viola
- Violoncello
- Double Bass

Voices:

- **Soprano** (The Girl, Evelynne)
- **Mezzo-Soprano** (The Old Woman)
- **Tenor** (Oliverson)
- **Bass-Baritone** (The Streetcar Conductor, The Old Man, The Neighbour, The Cabman)

---

**approximate pitches (vocal line)**

- **spoken, strict rhythm**

- **singer knocks with hand (not sung)**

- **vocal part: highest pitch possible (almost a scream)**

- **vocal glissando, starts with approximate pitch**

- **press and hold the piano keys, no sound is heard**

---

1.v. = 'lasciar vibrare' (let vibrate)

**mezza** = press the sustain pedal half way

---

**THE SCORE IS WRITTEN IN 'C'**
The Piano Teacher  
- Opera in One Act -  

by  
Tudor Feraru  

Based on the fantastic tale "With the Gypsy Girls"  
by Mircea Eliade  

Prelude

Larghetto  
\[ \text{\textit{Fl.}} \]

\[ \text{\textit{Ob.}} \]

\[ \text{\textit{Cl.}} \]

\[ \text{\textit{Pno.}} \]

\[ \text{\textit{Vl. 1}} \]

\[ \text{\textit{Vl. 2}} \]

\[ \text{\textit{Vla.}} \]

\[ \text{\textit{Vcl.}} \]
Scene 1

Lento

Cl.
Bsn.
Hr.
Trp.
Pno.

Vl. 1
Vl. 2
Vla.
Vct.
D.B.

Allegro non troppo

mf
mp

\( \text{ allegro non troppo } \)

\( \text{ Lento } \)

\( \text{ Cl. } \)
\( \text{ Bsn. } \)
\( \text{ Hr. } \)
\( \text{ Trp. } \)
\( \text{ Pno. } \)

\( \text{ Vl. 1 } \)
\( \text{ Vl. 2 } \)
\( \text{ Vla. } \)
\( \text{ Vct. } \)
\( \text{ D.B. } \)
(sitting on the streetcar)

This heat is awful!

It has not been this hot since...

since...
But when a man is cultured

He can stand any thing.
(he begins searching through his pockets)

(he hands Oliverson a ticket)

Excuse me; I never know where I put it.
That's all right. We've got time... We haven't passed by...
48

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn.

Hr.

Trp.

Cymb.

Oliv.

Cond.

Vl. 1

Vl. 2

Vla.

Vcl.

D.B.

Everybody is the Gypsy girls' yet.

pp

 mf

 mf

 mf

 mf

 mf

 mf

 mf

 mf
talk ing a bout them. A fine look ing house, and what a
gar - den! What a gar - den! It's so shad - y and cool
Does anyone there.

Lucky girls. They are the Gypsy girls.

know who they are? I wonder where they...

Cond.
came from.
Andante

\[\text{poco libero}\]

I ride this street car three times a week. I'm a pi -

\[\text{poco libero}\]
99

\[ \text{Oliv.} \]
\[ \text{an \ - \ o \ teach \ - \ er. \ Un \ - \ for \ - tu \ - nate \ me,} \quad \text{that is not what I was} \]

\text{Vl. 1} \quad \text{Vl. 2} \quad \text{Vla.} \quad \text{Vcl.} \quad \text{D.B.}

\[ \text{espressivo} \]

\[ \text{I made for.} \quad \text{I have the soul of an artist.} \quad \text{I give piano lessons,} \]

102

\[ \text{Oliv.} \]

\text{Vl. 1} \quad \text{Vl. 2} \quad \text{Vla.} \quad \text{Vcl.} \quad \text{D.B.}

\[ \text{sotto voce} \]
take the street car every where...

These days, people don't learn to play the piano anymore.
...son, all the way back on the streetcar.

(he steps out of the streetcar)

It was a pleasure meeting you.
"Watch out, Oliver!"

"Looks as if... as if you are starting to get old."

[to himself]
You are losing your memory. Some...
how this reminds me
it all reminds me
Fl.

51

Ob.

51

Cl.

51

Bsn.

51

Hr.

51

Trp.

51

Oliv.

51

Cond.

51

Vl. 1

51

Vl. 2

51

Vla.

51

Vel.

51

D.B.

51

something. It wasn't as hot as this, but it was summer,
Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn.

Hr.

Mar.

Oliv.

Cond.

Vl. 1

Vl. 2

Vla.

Vcl.

D.B.

it was summer just the same.
It was long ago, and it was summer...
(he starts walking down the street)
Andante
\( \text{\( q = 84 \)} \)

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn.

Hr.

Trp.

Trb.

Perc.

Oliv.

ff (streetcar passing by)

\( \text{(turning his head)} \)

ff

Too late!...

When you are

young and an artist, you can bear anything more
easily. For so many years I have been going past this garden, without even taking a closer look at it.
Scene 2

Andantino

Pno.

Hrp.

Old W.

Oliv.

Vl. 1

Vl. 2

Vla.

Vcl.

D.B.
Old W. (suddenly stepping in front of him)

Are you looking for the Gypsy girls?

Won't you come in to the
Gypsy girls?
(she pulls Oliver inside, and sits down at the coffee table)
heart’s desire for today? A Greek girl? A Jewish girl? A
No, not a German girl!
Well then, a Greek girl, a Jewish girl, a
Gypsy girl. It will cost you three hundred crowns.

Three piano lessons?
You are a musician? Then I'm sure you will be satisfied.
artist. Unfortunately I became a piano teacher.

but my ideal has always been art for its own sake. I live for the
(he searches through his pockets)

I'm sorry. I can never find my soul.
There is no hurry. We have got lots of time.

wallet when I need it.
It's not even three o'clock yet.

I have to contradict you. It must be almost four;
it was three when I finished the lesson with Octavia.
Then the clock must have stopped again.

(he counts out the bills and hands them to the Woman)
Now re-member them well. Do not get them mixed up: a Greek girl, a

Oliv.
Scene 3

Allegretto

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn.

Girl

Oliv.

(he catches the sight of a girl)

Ev.

(to himself)

Oliv. (he catches the sight of a girl)

I haven't thought of her for twenty years.
She was the woman of my life.

We are the ones you chose. A Greek girl...
Now let's see if you can guess which is which. Let's see if you...
I'm thirsty!
I'm terribly thirsty...

(...she starts laughing)

Coffee. It's hot; drink it slowly.

I am so thirsty.
Woman sent you some coffee, coffee, Drink it slowly,

(as if hallucinating)

terribly thirsty... thirsty, so thirsty,
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Pno.
Hrp.
Girl
Oliv.
Vl. 1
Vl. 2
Vla.
Vcl.
D.B.

56
We were laughing because you were afraid. You were afraid! You were afraid!

got into you.

Perhaps you don't know whom you have before you. I'm not just anybody.

I am Oliver, the artist...
Unfortunately a pianist.

Teacher. You remind me of my tragedy. Ev - enyne never be-

---

teach. er. you re - mind me of my trag - e - dy. Ev - e - lynne nev - er be-

---
Vl. 1
Vl. 2
Vla.
Vcl.

Vl. 1
Vl. 2
Vla.
Vcl.

Ob.
Cl.

Girl
Oliv.

misterioso

65
69

Trb.

came my wife. Some-thing hap-pened, some-thing ter-rif-ble hap-pened... but

what? What could have hap-pened? What could have hap-pened?

65
69

cresc.
cresc.
cresc.
mf
Andante

\( \text{\textit{past}} \)

The past is nostalgic, quasi recitativo

It is with artists: they never have any luck, they...
never have any luck.
Allegretto

Fl.  p

Ob.  p

Cl.  p

Bsn.  p

Girl  mf

Ever since you came here you've kept changing the subject. You are afraid to

Oliv.

//

Fl.  simile

Ob.  

Cl.  

Bsn.  

Girl  f
guess which is which. Which one is the Gypsy girl?

Oliv.  

You think I live up in the clouds
Then guess! Which one is our
and I don't know what a Gypsy girl looks like?

Gypsy girl? Which one is the Gypsy girl?

Since I am an
art - ist, I con - sent to be put to such a child - ish test as this, and I re - pond: YOU____

You did - n’t guess it! You did not guess it!

are the Gyp - sy girl!

What
on earth have you done to me?  I feel as if I have been drugged. Drugged...
You did not guess who I am. I am the Greek girl.

Oh,

You were a fool.

Greece! When I was in love with Ev-lynne...
shouldn’t have been dreaming, you should have loved her.

(whispering absent-mindedly) loved her...
Oliv.  
She was so beauti-ful. We were both beau-ti-ful...
Andante

Fl.

\[ \text{Every thing was just the same, a day as hot as this, a} \]

Oliv.

\[ \text{sotto voce} \]

Vl. 1

\[ \text{sotto voce} \]

Vl. 2

\[ \text{sotto voce} \]

Vla.

\[ \text{sotto voce} \]

Vcl.

\[ \text{sotto voce} \]

D.B.

\[ \text{sotto voce} \]

Pno.

\[ \text{tre corde sotto voce} \]

\[ \text{(looking around)} \]

\[ \text{terrible summer day. Oh, if only had a piano! A piano...} \]

Vl. 1

\[ \text{rall.} \]

Vl. 2

\[ \text{rall.} \]

Vla.

\[ \text{rall.} \]

Vcl.

\[ \text{sotto voce} \]

D.B.

\[ \text{sotto voce} \]

\[ \text{Attacca} \]
Scene 4

Moderato
\( \frac{d}{4} = 92 \)

Cl.

Pno.

Girl

Oliv.

It's getting late... Come with

Vl. 1

Vl. 2

Vla.

Vcl.

D.B.

/svg

Gran parte del texto no está en inglés, pero parece ser una canción o composición musical. La partitura incluye indicaciones de compás, dynamicos y signos musicales como los de un piano suave (p) y un allegro. También hay una referencia a un personaje llamado "Girl" que toma la mano de "Oliv." y dice "It's getting late... Come with."
I've drunk so much coffee. I have the soul of an artist!
Poco a poco cresc.

Girl
(to herself)

He is confused all over again.

I am not
at all confused. It was the tragedy of my life.
will play you something...

Now I remember!
I know what happened! I was young, I was
handsome, and I had the soul, I had the soul of an artist. An a-
Moderato, come prima

That's the way artists are, they never have any luck.

He will never able to straighten himself out.
Stop that! Remember how you chose us. Now guess us! Guess us!

fate!
You'll see how nice every thing can be. Which one is the Gypsy girl?
Which one is the Gypsy girl?

I'm not in the mood to play games.
un-der-stand how it all hap-pened. If I had on-ly had an-

y mon-ey... But it was sum-mer and ter-ri-bly hot. Hot...
For three days I could not find any money...
now what are we to do? For time is passing, time is passing.

You want me to tell you
which one the Gypsy girl is? I will tell you.
YOU are the Gypsy girl!
What is the matter with him? Why can't he guess us? He's lost his way; he is lost in the past.
Jewish girl...

If you had guessed right, ev-

dolce, senza cresc.

ry - thing would have been won-

derful.

We
would have sung for you, and danced for you, and we would have taken you through all the...
rooms. It would have been wonderful.

Cymb.

Perc.

Pno.

Hrp.

Girö

Oliv.

Vcl.

molto risoluto
(she begins clapping her hands and dancing to the music)
Scene 5

Larghetto

(looking for the girl, who has sneaked into the dark)

Where are you? Are you hiding?
Per - haps you think I'm a - fraid. I a - greed to play hide - and - seek on - ly be - cause

I was sor - ry for you. I pre - tend - ed to be tak - en in.
(he reaches out into the darkness, encounters a wall and clings to it with outstretched arms)

It's all part of the game.

(he reaches out into the darkness, encounters a wall and clings to it with outstretched arms)
(he grabs a curtain and starts pulling on it frantically; eventually gets himself wrapped up with the curtain)
(he falls to the ground and remains still)
Lights back on

Scene 6

Andantino

\( \text{\textit{Old W.}} \) (sitting at the coffee table)

Go on, sir, tell me more.

\( \text{\textit{Oliv.}} \) (collapsed in an armchair)

There is nothing more to
We were both penniless. I started giving piano lessons...
I've had too much coffee. I'm afraid I won't sleep tonight.
Tell me more. What else did you do? Then we began to play 3 hide and seek.

I am a serious minded person, I am an
artist and a piano teacher. I came here out of curiosity.
Then I felt the curtain wrap itself around me... I give you my
Yes, it was very 

word of honour, it was like a shroud and it was hot!
Oh! How time flies. I forgot the portfolio with my music.
I was saying to myself today: 'Oliver, watch out, I'm afraid, I'm afraid...

Well, I was telling myself something of the sort, I don't quite remember what.
(he gets up, bows, and goes out the gate)
(he walks to the back and sits down on what looks to be an empty streetcar)
Scene 7

*Tranquillo*

$\textit{mf}$

Scene 7
Can you tell me what time it is?

Five minutes after
What rotten luck! They'll be eating dinner when I get there...

(he sets off slowly)
(he approaches the entrance to a house)

(he rings the doorbell)

(he rings the doorbell)
Scene 8

Allegretto comodo

\( \mathcal{F} \) = 60

\textit{Oboe changes to English Horn}

\textit{giocoso}
(through the half-open door)

I forgot my portfolio. I got to talking and I forgot

What can I do for you?

Old Man

E.Hr.

Cl.

Perc.

Pno.

Oliv.

5

9
got it. I know exactly where I left it: right next to

the piano.

You've got the wrong address. This is number eighteen.
Old Man: Allow me, I've known this house for years. I come here three times a week.

Old Man: How strange... I have never seen you before. And I've lived here all...
Old Man

impossible!

I was here just a few hours ago, when I

my life.

gave Octavia her lesson.

I can tell you where the piano is.

121
I'll take you there with my eyes closed.

We have no piano.
And Miss Octavia moved away very long ago. It will be

It’s very strange. I don’t believe a
eight years this fall.
word. There is something wrong somewhere. I'll just have to come back tomorrow.

Good - bye.
(he starts looking at the skies)
Flute changes to Piccolo

(to himself)

You're losing your memory,
getting the addresses all mixed up.
(he sits down on the streetcar again, and looks out as if through an open window)
Scene 9

Senza misura (quasi recitativo)

$\sim 62$

E.Hr.

Pno.

Hrp.

Oliv.

Cond.

Vl. 1

Vl. 2

Vla.

Vcl.

D.B.

In another hour or two, night will fall. The cool of
night...
At last!

We'll be able to breathe again.

What a long day!
So many things have
(he hands over a bill to the Conductor)

(he approaches Oliverson)

This isn't good any...
What is wrong with it?

more. You'll have to change it at the bank.
How strange!

It went out of circulation a year ago.
It was good this morning. They accepted it at the Gypsy girls'.
If you cannot find any good money, you will have to get off.

Strange things are happening in this country!
But then, what's the use? I've had a terrible day. Of course,
I am a bit absent-minded. I have the soul of an...
Meno mosso

(he steps out of the streetcar and starts walking slowly)

art - ist...
English Horn changes back to Oboe

poco a poco decresc.

Night has fallen.
Scene 10

Vivace
\( \frac{\text{\textit{Vivace}}}{\text{\textit{Vivace}}} \)
\( \frac{\text{\textit{Vivace}}}{\text{\textit{Vivace}}} \)

Hr.

Trp.

Trb.

Oliv.

Neighb.

Vl. 1

Vl. 2

Vla.

Vcl.

D.B.
(he reaches the entry to his house)
(he tries in vain to unlock the door with his key)
Oliv. (knocking again)

Vl. 1

Vl. 2

Vla.

Vcl.

D.B.

Cl. (knocking even harder)

Oliv.

Vl. 1

Vl. 2

Vla.

Vcl.

D.B.
(through the open window, irritated)  

Excuse me. I don't

What's all the commotion?
know what has happened to my wife. She is not answering the
door. My key doesn’t work, so I can’t get into the house.
The lyrics are partially visible and appear to be:

Oliv.:

I don't believe I've had the pleasure of meeting you.

My Neighb.:

house.
Andante

\( \text{\textit{L}r.} \) 

\( \text{\textit{Trb.}} \) 

\( \text{\textit{Pno.}} \) 

\( \text{\textit{Oliv.}} \) 

name is Oliver ...

My name is Oliver ...

\( \text{\textit{Neighb.}} \) 

\( \text{\textit{Vl. 1}} \) 

\( \text{\textit{Vl. 2}} \) 

\( \text{\textit{Vla.}} \) 

\( \text{\textit{Vcl.}} \) 

\( \text{\textit{D.B.}} \)
You must have the wrong...
Neighb.

My name is Oliver son...

The address.

//

Oliv.

- an no teacher!

You claim you live here?...
You've got the wrong address. Your house?!

My name is Ol - ____________ - ____________...
Primo Tempo
\( \frac{\wedge}{2} = 280 \)

Picc.

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn.

Pno.

Oliv.

Neighb.

Vl. 1

Vl. 2

Vla.

Vcl.

D.B.

\( \text{I want to find out where Hilda is,} \)
what has happened to her.

Inquire at the police station.

Why the police station? Do you know something?
Neighb.

Oliv.

Vla.

Vcl.

D.B.

(he goes back inside)

No, I don't know any thing, but I want to sleep.

I am sleepy too.

(yawns)
Larghetto

Pno.

Oliv.

Vl. 1

Vl. 2

Vla.

Vcl.

D.B.

---

123

quasi recitativo

worn out.

I've had a terrible day. Unfortunate me...

sotto voce sempre
But I don't understand what has happened to Hilda. Why doesn't she answer the door? Perhaps she felt sick and fainted...
(he turns his back to the door and sits down on the steps in front of it)
he leans his had in his hands
(he makes visible efforts not to fall asleep)

'tWatch out, Ol - i - ver - son, Some - thing ver - y se - ri - ous has
Piccolo changes back to Flute

(appearing clearly exhausted)

Oliv.  

happen, and they won't tell you. Get hold of yourself, try to re-

 mem-
ber?  

It's terribly late...

(he stands up and walks away)
Scene 11

Adagietto
\( \frac{\text{B}}{\text{C,E,G,F}} \) l. v. sempre

(he walks slowly, until he finds himself close to a horse-pulled cab)
(he walks suddenly out of the dark) What are you doing in the streets so late, sir?

I was looking for my wife, Madame...
Oliver.

Oliv.

Version.

Do you know her?

Cabman

Oh, yes, what a time she had...

Vl. 1

Vl. 2

Vla.

Vcl.

D.B.

pesante

pesante

pesante

pesante
To this ve-r-y
misterioso

day no-one knows what happened.
The police searched for
him for several months but never found any trace of him.

\[ \text{poco rubato} \]

pesante
Poor Madame Hilda, she waited, and waited, and
finally went back to her family.
She sold every thing and left.

I myself had some thought of buying their piano.
(rather pensive than surprised)

Fl.

Oliv.

How long ago did she leave?

Cabman

A long time ago. It will be

Vl. 1

sostenuto

Vl. 2

sostenuto

Vla.

sostenuto

Vcl.

sostenuto

D.B.

mf
Cabman: twelve years in the fall.

Oliv.: How strange... And what if I told you that this morning I was talking to her?

Cabman: precipitato

Oliv.: We've had lunch together.

Cabman: Then she must have come back.
she never left. There's something very wrong somewhere. Right now I am quite tired,
but to-mor-row morn-ing I will find out what this is all a-bout.
(he wants to walk away, but the Cabman follows him)

Where are you going, sir?

To the Gypsy girls.
I have an account to settle.

I'm sorry, I haven't got any

Then get in. I will take you there.
I'll take you there for free. I will take you there free of money. I haven't got any money...
I haven't got any money. I've been penniless all my life...

charge. Too late to be sorry now. I will take you there for...
(he takes a seat on the cab)
(he sits down on the cab, next to Oliverson)
Oliv.

Cabman

\textit{molto cantabile}

\textbf{whether I have passengers or not, I drive this way every night.}
I love the scent of flowers. What a beauty!
Let us go this way. I know of a hidden way.
short - cut. This way we go past a grave-yard.
This way we go past a grave-yard. There must
be all kinds of flow-ers.  Eve-ry-day there is a fu-ner-al, lots of flow-ers lie on
all the scents are freshening up again.
Here we are; but the gates are closed.
(he gets off the cab and goes up to the gate, which turns out to be the entrance to the Gypsy girls' house)

(he turns back to Oliverson)
Scene 12

Andantino
\( \frac{4}{4} \) 76

Fl.
\( \frac{3}{4} \)

Cl.
\( \frac{3}{4} \)

Bsn.
\( \frac{3}{4} \)

Hr.
\( \frac{3}{4} \)

Trp.
\( \frac{3}{4} \)

Trb.
\( \frac{3}{4} \)

Old W.
\( \frac{3}{4} \)

Oliv.
\( \frac{8}{8} \)

Old W. (she is sitting at the same little table)

Oliv. (he sees the gate open in front of him)

It's me, Ol-i-ver-son.

Vi. 1

Vi. 2

Vla.

Vcl.

D.B.

195
You played some monstrous tricks on
It's you, the musician. The German girl might still be here. She never
me!
The German girl? Excuse me, I'm all worn out. I've had a ter-
Now be careful, do not get lost. Go straight today.
down the hall-way and count sev-en doors. When you get to the sev-enth, knock three
(she yawns and falls asleep in the chair)

(times.)

(he begins walking around, counting the doors)  (to himself)
watch out, you've got ten all mixed up again. Not thirteen, but seven.

(he starts going back, in circles)
(suddenly he sees a young woman looking through the gate)

a tempo

(she appears from the darkness)

Ex - cuse me, I made a mis - take count - ing the
I've been waiting for you for a long, long time!

(aside)
If I had not gone out with her that night, nothing would have happened.
Or if I'd had any money...

Now it's late, isn't it?

Ver_
---

It doesn’t matter now. Come on, let us go!

But I don’t even have a house anymore.

---

risoluto

esitando
I don't have any thing. What a ter ri -
You were always absent-minded. Let us go.

ble day.
Let us go. You are the

He is so absent-minded... But where?
Leave it there. You won't.

Oh, my hat!
Andantino

\( \frac{3}{4} \) quaver

You still don't understand
what has happened to you?

I've had a terrible day...

But now I think I am starting...
(she crosses the street and pulls Oliverson gently into the cab)

Where to, my lady? And how do you want me to drive?

Drive us to the woods, and go the long way.

a tempo

a tempo
We are in no hurry.

There is no hurry, drive
night... Slowly... I'll take you there the longest
wasn’t hearing you speak, I would think I was dreaming.
Evel. (smiling at Oliverson)

We are all dreaming. That's how it all begins. As if in a

Vl. 1
Vl. 2
Vla.
Vcl.
D.B.
Poco meno mosso

*legatissimo sempre*

As if in a dream...

*molto tranquillo*
Evel. (aside) \textit{molto tranquillo}
\begin{align*}
\text{As if in a dream...}
\end{align*}

Old W. (aside) \textit{molto tranquillo}
\begin{align*}
\text{As if in a dream...}
\end{align*}

As if in a dream...
A dream...

As if in a dream...

A dream...

As if in a dream...

Dream...
(The cab pulls away slowly, into the darkness)
PART II

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAMBER OPERA
1. LITERARY SOURCE AND TEXT SETTING

The opera is a setting of the composer’s own Libretto, based on an English version of the fantastic tale *With the Gypsy Girls* by Mircea Eliade.\(^1\) The translation was published in the United States, as part of a volume entitled *Tales of the Sacred and the Supernatural*.\(^2\) A significant amount of time was dedicated to researching the tale’s origin, and adapting it into an operatic Libretto.\(^3\) The musical-dramaturgical adaptation entailed a reduction in the number of characters and amount of dialogue, resulting in a script suitable for a fifty to sixty-minute staged work.

### 1.1 The Original Tale

*The Piano Teacher* tells a story of initiation, in which the characters are symbolic figures of fate rather than human individuals. The plot is organized around what appears to be a logical sequence of twelve episodes, which take place within a period of approximately twelve hours. However, the unfolding of the action is fragmentary. Time and space are

---

\(^1\) Romanian-born fiction writer, historian, and one of the pre-eminent interpreters of world religions. Eliade was born in 1907 in Bucharest, and became a prolific author of fiction and non-fiction alike, earning international fame with “The Myth of the Eternal Return” (1949), an interpretation of religious symbols and imagery. His literary works show much interest in the world of the unconscious, while the central theme of his novels is erotic love. In 1956, Mircea Eliade joined the faculty of the University of Chicago and continued to live in the United States until his death in 1986. “With the Gypsy Girls” was originally written in Romanian, and published in 1960 with the title “La Țigânci.” From “Mircea Eliade Biography and List of Works,” available online at http://www.litweb.net/biography/179/Mircea_Eliade.html, last accessed April 14, 2008.


\(^3\) With permission from Westminster John Knox Press.
subjected to a subtle layering of both the real and the imaginary.\textsuperscript{4} Dialogues serve as the principal element of the narrative, incorporating key metaphors, which illustrate smooth transitions between real and fantastic situations. In general, traditional plot elements are absent and the succession of events is labyrinthine rather than accumulating.

1.2 The Characters

The entire development centers on the protagonist, a middle-aged male piano teacher, who experiences a series of bewildering occurrences, and eventually is projected into a mystery world of dreaming, confusion, hallucination, and strange recollection.\textsuperscript{5} Eliade chooses an ordinary individual as his main character, suggesting that the path to initiation is open to virtually anyone. The first episode of the tale places the plot firmly in the realm of the possible. However, one witnesses signs of a shattering reality very early in the opera. Examples of these initial signs are the extreme afternoon heat, the teacher’s exhaustion, the delirious remarks, and the constant recollection of unusual events. Subsequent episodes accentuate the bizarreness of the situation, through symbolic references, hypnotic monologues, and confusing exchanges of dialogue.

Oliverson, the piano teacher, mistakenly sees his visit to the Gypsy Girls’ as an ordinary call to a house of pleasures. However, the “girls” are attempting to initiate him in a world of games, temptation, and non-temporality. The strong-featured female characters, as

\textsuperscript{4} Eliade preferred the corresponding concepts of profane and sacred.

\textsuperscript{5} For complete reference, see chapter 2. Libretto at page 241.
well as a number of essential dramaturgical elements help to create a symbolic-
mythological atmosphere. The beguiling Old Woman symbolically guards the entrance to
a sacred space. She can also be viewed as a mediator between the outside world and
eternity. The three girls—Greek, Jewish, and Gypsy—represent three cultural paradigms,
and at the same time, three levels of temptation. Their presence is shrouded in mystery,
and their demeanour does not convey even a hint of vulgarity. For practical reasons, all
three are impersonated by a single female singer.

The streetcar Conductor and the Cabman—both impersonated by the same performer,
again for practical reasons—also have symbolic presence. They facilitate Oliverson’s
mobility, and most importantly his passage from reality to spirituality.

1.3 Elements of the Plot

1.3.1 The Streetcar

The streetcar is the first element of the palpable world of the opera to manifest dual
functionality. It is both the vehicle of choice for a travelling piano teacher and the symbol
of chances and opportunities of life. One can either take the chances or miss them. More
than just links between plot episodes, the streetcar scenes function as antechambers to the
imaginary.
1.3.2 The Clock

The clock theme, like a red thread, unifies the story. The teacher catches himself watching the time much too frequently, obsessing about being late, and eventually realizes that many years have passed imperceptibly in just a matter of hours. Despite the fact that the clock has stopped,\(^6\) Oliverson finds himself projected into an unfamiliar future, in which his paper money is out of circulation, the student’s address is wrong, and his own wife has long moved away. The constant shifting of time contributes to the overall impression of confusion, suggesting the plot’s timeline has fissured, creating two parallel universes.

1.3.3 Coffee

Much of the interaction between characters takes place while drinking coffee, and the protagonist is admittedly having too much of it. Apart from introducing the ritual of passing time while slowly sipping, coffee symbolizes the magic elixir meant to awake Oliverson and open his mind to unlimited knowledge.

1.3.4 The Game

The story gradually reveals the true reason for meeting the three girls. Agreeing to play their game is a mandatory concession. Without fully understanding what is at stake, the piano teacher allows himself to be drawn into a childish game of both guessing identities

\(^6\) The Old Woman: ...Then the clock must have stopped again. See Libretto, page 246.
and hide-and-seek. The game represents a trial, and winning it would enable him to walk through the doors of the sacred world. Oliverson repeatedly fails to guess the right girl, and more gravely, he fails to admit his mistakes. He constantly reminds himself that, in his youth, he had missed two other important chances: to become an accomplished artist, and to hold on to the love of his life. Entering the girls’ spiritualized space might bring him redemption, yet he is unable to look beyond the mask of reality.

**1.3.5 The Labyrinth**

Punishment comes in the form of spiritual wandering. The teacher must continue to stray without consolation, lost somewhere between memories of the past and a fractured reality of the present. The labyrinth motive appears at many different levels throughout the story, from the pointless search for escape in a no-exit room, to the character’s inner struggle to make sense of everything that is happening to him. The game episode culminates with a frustrated Oliverson abandoning play, falling to the ground on a dark stage, and finally becoming enshrouded by the heavy curtain he was attempting to climb. This image may symbolize his spiritual death, his incapacity to transcend the profane existence, and ultimately his alienation from both worlds—real and imaginary.

**1.3.6 Parallel Universes**

The closing scenes of the opera take Oliverson through a flower-scented graveyard and then back to the girls’ house. By this time, virtually every line of the Libretto is laden
with symbolism. The Cabman who once drove a hearse, the funeral that just took place, and the graveyard gates that turn out to be the very entrance to the girls’ house—all point to the fact that the protagonist has stepped into a different universe. Somewhat surprisingly, Evelynne, the lost love of his youth, is waiting for him once again. He may not understand what has happened to him, but when the clock strikes midnight, Oliverson accepts a final invitation to walk the path of eternal love. The two characters disappear together in circumstances that, intentionally, are not revealed as either factual or imaginary. Notwithstanding the inevitable ambiguity, there probably could not be a more appropriate ending to a fantastic tale.

1.4 The Message of the Story

Possible interpretations of the tale and its message are:

- The story captures the last day in the life of a mediocre music teacher, who is incapable of comprehending his own symbolic passage into a different universe.

- The sacred stream of the narrative is omnipresent—concealed within the profane—meaning that all humans experience it at certain points; therefore, any chronology of events, including life followed by death, becomes irrelevant;

- The protagonist’s inner conflict and wonderment is representative of the condition of all artists. Dreaminess, absent-mindedness, and even amnesia can save one from the nuisances of day-to-day life;
- It is also possible to interpret this as a true love story. The hero must experience a spiritual cycle of extraordinary events in order to redeem his long lost love. The tale suggests that the path to eternal love is open to anyone willing to travel it.

1.5 The Adaptation

The original tale spans forty-six volume pages, out of which I compiled an approximately three thousand-word Libretto. The opera employs four singers, two of whom impersonate multiple characters. Their names, as well as the title have been changed, a few less relevant episodes have been omitted, and a significant amount of prose has been converted into direct speech. Nevertheless, the Libretto attempts to retain the integrity of the original literary work, its symbolic character, as well as its powerful message.
2. LIBRETTO

The Piano Teacher

- Opera in one act -

based on the original tale “With the Gypsy Girls”

by Mircea Eliade

The Characters:

Oliverson, a piano teacher

*Tenor*

The Girl (impersonating the Greek girl, the Jewish girl, the Gypsy girl, and Evelynne)

*Soprano*

The Old Man (impersonating the streetcar Conductor, the Neighbour, and the Cabman)

*Bass-Baritone*

The Old Woman (hostess at the Girls’ house)

*Mezzo-Soprano*

Imaginary characters:

Hilda, Oliverson’s wife

Octavia, Oliverson’s piano student

---

The Set: a streetcar interior at the back; an empty street with a bench in the middle; the Girls’ house interior to the left, separated from the street by an iron grillwork gate; an open-top, horse-pulled cab to the right.

The action does not take place in a precisely determined historical context. What the stage production should convey is the impression of a very hot summer afternoon in a capital city, possibly somewhere in Southern Europe.

At the time music begins, Oliverson is taking a seat on the streetcar, mopping his forehead with a handkerchief, and fanning himself with a straw hat. He is wearing a light-coloured dress suit.

Oliverson

*This heat is awful! Awful! It hasn’t been this hot since… since…*

*But when a man is cultured, he can stand anything.*

The Conductor, who had been listening with a smile, hands him a ticket. Oliverson puts his hat on and begins searching through his pockets.

*Excuse me; I never know where I put it.*

The Conductor

*That’s all right. We’ve got time…We haven’t passed by the Gypsy girls’ yet.*
Oliverson

*Everybody is talking about them. A fine-looking house, and what a garden! What a garden! It’s so shady and cool there.*

The Conductor

*Lucky girls. They are the Gypsy girls.*

Oliverson

*Does anyone know who they are? I wonder where they came from. I ride this streetcar three times a week. I’m a piano teacher. Unfortunate me, because that is not what I was made for. I have the soul of an artist.*

*I give piano lessons and I take the streetcar everywhere.*

The Conductor

*These days, people don’t learn to play the piano anymore.*

Oliverson (panicking)

*Oh! I knew I forgot something… My music! I forgot the portfolio with my music. In all this heat, back you go, Oliverson, all the way back on the streetcar.*

The Conductor

*It was a pleasure meeting you.*
Oliverson steps quickly out in the street. He sinks down on a bench, pulls out his handkerchief and begins mopping his face.

Oliverson (to himself)

“Watch out, Oliverson… it looks as if you are starting to grow old. You are losing your memory.” Somehow, this reminds me of something. It wasn’t as hot as this, but it was summer just the same. It was long ago, and it was summer…

He gets up and starts walking down the street. Then he hears the streetcar passing by and turns his head.

Too late!... When you are young and an artist, you can bear anything more easily.

He goes up to the iron grillwork gate on the left and begins gazing in at the garden.

For so many years I have been going past this garden, without even taking a closer look at it.

All of a sudden, an old woman steps out in from of him and takes him by the arm, pulling him gently into the yard.

The Old Woman

Are you looking for the Gypsy girls? Won’t you come in to the Gypsy girls?
Inside, the Old Woman sits down at a short-legged table, with a cup of coffee in front of her.

What is your heart’s desire for today? A Greek girl, a Jewish girl, a German girl?

Oliverson

No, not a German girl!

The Old Woman

Well then, a Greek girl, a Jewish girl, a Gypsy girl. It will cost you three hundred crowns.

Oliverson

Three piano lessons!?

The Old Woman

You are a musician? Then I’m sure you will be satisfied.

Oliverson

I am an artist. Unfortunately, I became a piano teacher, but my ideal has always been art for its own sake. I live for the soul.

He starts searching through his pockets.

I’m sorry. I can never find my wallet when I need it.
The Old Woman

*There is no hurry. We have got lots of time. It’s not even three o’clock yet.*

Oliverson

*I have to contradict you. It must be almost four; it was three when I finished the lesson with Octavia.*

The Old Woman (rather indifferently)

*...Then the clock must have stopped again.*

Oliverson counts out the bills and hands them over to the woman.

The Old Woman

*Now remember them well. Do not get them mixed up: a Greek girl, a Jewish girl, a Gypsy girl.*

Oliverson starts walking into the room, and stops suddenly after a few steps. He catches the sight of a young girl standing in front of him.

Oliverson

*Evelyne!?*

(to himself)

*“I haven’t thought of her for twenty years. She was the woman of my life.”*
The Girl (mimicking triple personality)

*We are the ones you chose. A Greek girl… a Jewish Girl… a Gypsy girl. Now let’s see if you can guess which is which. Let’s see if you know which one the Gypsy girl is.*

Oliverson (as if hallucinating)

*I’m thirsty! I’m terribly thirsty…*

The Girl (gradually bursting out laughing)

*The Old Woman sent you some coffee. It’s hot; drink it slowly.*

Oliverson

*I would be curious to know what got into you.*

The Girl

*We were laughing because you were afraid. You were afraid! You were afraid!*

Oliverson (sitting down in an armchair)

*Perhaps you don’t know whom you have before you. I’m not just anybody. I am Oliverson, the artist... Unfortunately, a piano teacher. You remind me of my tragedy. Evelynne never became my wife. Something happened, something terrible happened… but what? What could have happened? The past is past. That’s the way it is with artists: they never have any luck.*
The Girl

*Ever since you came here, you’ve kept changing the subject. You are afraid to guess which is which. Which one is the Gypsy girl?*

Oliverson

*You think I live up in the clouds and I don’t know what a Gypsy girl looks like?*

The Girl (growing more irritated)

*Then guess! Which one is the Gypsy girl? Which one is the Gypsy girl?*

Oliverson (eventually pointing randomly at the wall)

*Since I am an artist, I consent to be put on such a childish test as this, and I respond: YOU are the Gypsy girl!*

The Girl (circling around him)

*You didn’t guess it! You did not guess it!*

Oliverson (as if waking up from a dream)

*What on earth have you done to me? I feel as if I have been drugged.*

The Girl (stepping into the direction Oliverson had pointed at)

*You did not guess who I am. I am the Greek girl.*
Oliverson

Oh, Greece! When I was in love with Evelynne...

The Girl

You were a fool! You shouldn’t have been dreaming, you should have loved her.

Oliverson

She was so beautiful. We were both beautiful… Everything was just the same, a day as hot as this, a terrible summer day.

Looking desperately around him, as if trying to find something:

Oh, if I only had a piano!

The Girl (taking his hand)

It’s getting late…Come with me!

Oliverson

I’ve drunk so much coffee. I have the soul of an artist!

The Girl (to herself)

He is confused all over again.
Oliverson

I am not at all confused. It was the tragedy of my life...

He sits down in front of what looks to be a keyboard, ready to attack con brio:

I will play you something… Now I remember! I know what happened! I was young, I was handsome, and I had the soul of an artist. An abandoned girl simply borrowed my heart.

Her name was Hilda… An evil hour! That’s the way artists are, they never have any luck.

The Girl (to herself again)

He will never be able to straighten himself out.

Oliverson (raising his arms)

Ah, fate!

The Girl

Stop that! Remember how you chose us! Now guess us! You’ll see how nice everything can be. Which one is the Gypsy girl?

Oliverson

I’m not in the mood to play games. I have remembered the tragedy of my life. And now, I understand how it all happened. If I had only had any money…But it was summer and terribly hot. For three days, I could not find any money…
The Girl

*And now what are we to do? For time is passing, time is passing.*

Oliverson

*You want me to tell you which one the Gypsy girl is? I will tell you.*

Raising his arm and pointing at the opposite wall:

*YOU are the Gypsy girl!*

The Girl

*What is the matter with him? Why can’t he guess us? He’s lost his way; he is lost in the past.*

Turning around to face Oliverson, and smiling at him:

*I am the Jewish girl. If you had guessed right, everything would have been wonderful. We would have sung for you, and danced for you, and we would have taken you through all the rooms. It would have been wonderful. Wonderful…*

The Girl begins clapping her hands and dancing to the music, while Oliverson looks at her in amazement. Finally, she sneaks back into the dark.

Oliverson

*Where are you? Are you hiding?*
He extends his arms and proceeds slowly and cautiously.

*Perhaps you think I’m afraid. I agreed to play hide-and-seek only because I was sorry for you. I pretended to be taken in. It’s all part of the game.*

He begins to mop his face with the sleeve, and continues searching at a faster pace. When he encounters the wall, he clings to it with outstretched arms. Reaching out, he grabs a curtain and starts pulling on it frantically. Eventually he gets himself wrapped up with the curtain, just as if stuffed into a bag. [Music becomes very agitated, and the stage sinks in complete darkness.]

When the orchestra cools down and the lights turn back on, Oliverson finds himself collapsed into an armchair, looking very exhausted. In front of him, the Old Woman is sitting at the little coffee table.

The Old Woman

*Go on, sir, tell me more.*

Oliverson

*There is nothing more to tell. We were both penniless. I started giving piano lessons…I’ve had too much coffee. I’m afraid I won’t sleep tonight.*

The Old Woman

*Tell me more. What else did you do?*
Oliverson

*Then we began to play hide-and-seek. I am a serious-minded person, I am an artist and a piano teacher. I came here out of curiosity. Then I felt the curtain wrap itself around me... I give you my word of honour, it was like a shroud. And it was hot!*

The Old Woman

*Yes, it was very hot...*

Oliverson

*Oh! How time flies. I forgot the portfolio with my music. I was saying to myself today:*  
*“Oliverson, watch out. I’m afraid...I’m afraid...” Well, I was telling myself something of the sort, I don’t quite remember what.*

He gets up rapidly, bows slightly instead of saying goodbye, and goes out the gate.  
Fanning himself with the hat, he walks to the back and sits down on what looks to be an empty streetcar.  
(to the streetcar Conductor)  
*Can you tell me what time it is?*

The Conductor

*Five minutes after seven.*
Oliverson

*What rotten luck! They’ll be eating dinner when I get there…*

He sets off slowly, approaches the entrance to a house on the street, and rings the bell.

The same old man impersonating the Conductor opens the door.

The Old Man

*What can I do for you?*

Oliverson

*I forgot my portfolio. I got to talking and I forgot it. I know exactly where I left it: right next to the piano.*

The Old Man

*You’ve got the wrong address. This is number eighteen.*

Oliverson (impatiently)

*Allow me, I’ve known this house for years. I come here three times a week.*

The Old Man (politely)

*How strange… I have never seen you before. And I’ve lived here all my life.*
Oliverson (surprised)

Impossible! I was here just a few hours ago, when I gave Octavia her lesson. I can tell you where the piano is. I’ll take you there with my eyes closed.

The Old Man

We have no piano. And Miss Octavia moved away very long ago. It will be eight years this fall.

Oliverson

It’s very strange. I don’t believe a word. There is something wrong somewhere. I’ll just have to come back tomorrow. Goodbye.

He walks away and starts looking at the skies.

(to himself)

“Oliverson, watch out, you are getting decrepit. You’re losing your memory, getting the addresses all mixed up.”

He sits down on the streetcar again, and looks out as if through an open window.

In another hour or two, night will fall. The cool of night…At last! We’ll be able to breathe again. What a long day! So many things have happened…

The Conductor had stopped in front of him and was waiting there. Oliverson hands him over a bill.
The Conductor

This isn’t good anymore. You’ll have to change it at the bank.

Oliverson

What is wrong with it?

The Conductor

It went out of circulation a year ago.

Oliverson

How strange! It was good this morning. They accepted it at the Gypsy girls’. I give you my word of honour…

The Conductor

Where in the world have you been keeping yourself? If you cannot find any good money, you will have to get off at the next stop.

Oliverson

Strange things are happening in this country! I give you my word of honour… But then, what’s the use? I’ve had a terrible day. Of course, I am a bit absentminded. I have the soul of an artist…

He steps out of the streetcar, and starts walking slowly to the opposite side of the street.
(stammering)

Night has fallen.

He reaches the entry to his own house, and tries in vain to unlock the door with his key. Then, he knocks several times. The neighbour next-door opens the window, looking very irritated.

The Neighbour (the same old man impersonating the Conductor)

What's all the commotion?

Oliverson

Excuse me. I don’t know what has happened to my wife. She is not answering the door. My key doesn’t work, so I can’t get into the house. I don’t believe I’ve had the pleasure of meeting you. My name is Oliverson... I am a piano teacher... And I never have any luck.

The Neighbour

You must have the wrong address.

Oliverson

My name is Oliverson... The piano teacher!
The Neighbour

*You claim you live here?*

Oliverson

*I don’t claim; this is my own house.*

The Neighbour

*Your house?!*

Oliverson

*Yes, sir. My name is Ol-i-ver-son…*

The Neighbour

*Im-pos-si-ble…*

Oliverson

*I want to find out where Hilda is, what has happened to her.*

The Neighbour

*Inquire at the police station.*

Oliverson

*Why the police station? Do you know something?*
The Neighbour

No, I don’t know anything, but I want to sleep.

Oliverson (yawning)

I am sleepy too. I may say I’m all worn out. I’ve had a terrible day. Unfortunate me…

But I don’t understand what has happened to Hilda. Why doesn’t she answer the door?

Perhaps she felt sick and fainted…

He turns his back to the door and sits down on the steps in front of it, leaning his had in his hands. After a while, almost making an effort not to fall asleep, he continues.

(to himself)

“Watch out, Oliverson, something very serious has happened, and they won’t tell you.

Get hold of yourself, try to remember! It’s terribly late…”

He stands up and starts walking slowly down the street, until he finds himself close to a horse-pulled cab.

The Cabman (the same man impersonating the Neighbour and the Conductor)

(walking suddenly out of the dark)

What are you doing in the streets so late, sir?

Oliverson

I was looking for my wife, Madame Oliverson. Do you know her?
The Cabman

Oh, yes, what a time she had... To this very day, no one knows what happened. The police searched for him for several months but never found any trace of him. Poor Madame Hilda, she waited, and waited, and finally went back to her family. She sold everything and left. I myself had some thought of buying their piano.

Oliverson (rather pensive than surprised)

How long ago did she leave?

The Cabman

A long time ago. It will be twelve years in the fall.

Oliverson

How strange... And what if I told you that this morning I was talking to her? We even had lunch together.

The Cabman

Then she must have come back.

Oliverson

No, she never left. There's something very wrong somewhere. Right now, I am quite tired, but tomorrow morning I will find out what this is all about.
He wants to walk away, but the Cabman follows him.

The Cabman

Where are you going, sir?

Oliverson

To the Gypsy girls’. I have an account to settle.

The Cabman

Then get in. I will take you there.

Oliverson

I’m sorry, I haven’t got any money.

The Cabman

I’ll take you there for free.

Oliverson

I haven’t got any money. I’ve been penniless all my life…

The Cabman

I will take you there free of charge. Too late to be sorry now. I will take you there for free…
Oliverson takes a seat on the cab and lays down his hat next to him.

The Cabman

*Whether I have passengers or not, I drive this way every night. I love the scent of flowers. What a beauty! Let’s go this way. I know of a hidden shortcut. This way we go past a graveyard. There must be all kinds of flowers. Everyday there is a funeral, lots of flowers lie on graves. And now, toward midnight, all the scents are freshening up again. Here we are; but the gates are closed.*

Oliverson gets off the cab and goes up to the gate, which turns out to be the entrance to the Gypsy girls’ house. The gate opens instantly in front of him. The Old Woman is expecting him, sitting at the same little table.

Oliverson

*It’s me, Oliverson. You played some monstrous tricks on me!*

The Old Woman

*It’s you, the musician. The German girl might still be here. She never sleeps.*

Oliverson

*The German girl? Excuse me, I’m all worn out. I’ve had a terrible day.*
The Old Woman

*Now be careful, do not get lost. Go straight down the hallway and count seven doors.*

*When you get to the seventh, knock three times.*

She stifles a yawn and falls asleep in the chair. Oliverson begins walking in circles around the room, counting the doors.

Oliverson (to himself)

“One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve, thirteen…

Oliverson, watch out, you’ve gotten all mixed up again. Not thirteen, but seven.”

He starts going back, still in circles, dropping his hat and counting out with his fingers. Suddenly he can see the silhouette of a young woman looking through the open gate.

(to her)

*Excuse me, I made a mistake counting the doors… Evelynne!!!*

Evelynne

*I’ve been waiting for you for a long, long time!*

Old Woman (aside)

*She’s been waiting for a long time…*
Oliverson (with a guilty face)

If I had not gone out with her that night, nothing would have happened. Or if I’d had any money… Now it’s late, isn’t it? Very late.

Evelynne

It doesn’t matter now. Come on, let us go!

Oliverson

But I don’t even have a house anymore, I don’t have anything. What a terrible day…

Evelynne

You were always absentminded. Let us go.

Old Woman (aside)

He is so absentminded…

Oliverson

But where?

Evelynne (taking his hand)

You are just the same as ever. You are afraid.
Old Woman (aside)

*He is afraid. Ha, ha, a piano teacher…*

Oliverson (holding back)

*Oh, my hat!*

Evelynne

*Leave it there. You won’t need it anymore.*

Oliverson

*One can never tell…*

Evelynne

*You still don’t understand what has happened to you?*

Oliverson

*I am all worn out. Forgive me. I’ve had a terrible day… But now I think I’m starting to feel better.*

Old Woman (aside)

*What a long day…*

They cross the empty street, and Evelynne pulls Oliverson gently into the cab.
The Cabman

Where to, my lady? And how do you want me to drive?

Evelynne

Drive us to the woods, and go the longest way. Drive slowly. We are in no hurry.

Old Woman (aside)

There is no hurry, drive slowly...

Evelynne and Oliverson hold hands together, and look in each other’s eyes as if in love.

The Cabman (aside)

I drive this way every night...Slowly... I’ll take you there the longest way.

Oliverson

Evelynne! Something is happening to me, and I don’t quite understand what.

If I wasn’t hearing you speak, I would think I was dreaming.

Evelynne (smiling at him)

We are all dreaming. That’s how it all begins. As if in a dream...
Old Woman, The Cabman, Evelynne, Oliverson (everybody aside)

As if in a dream...

The cab pulls away slowly, disappearing into the darkness.

[The lights die out gradually, as the music comes to an end.]

CURTAIN
3. Style and Aesthetics

*The Piano Teacher* represents a synthesis of traditional and contemporary compositional techniques. Sources of inspiration range from well-known operatic masterpieces of the early twentieth century to current avant-garde vocal music, and from American postmodern stage compositions to the traditional folkloric repertoire of Eastern Europe. A common element of all these media, which became a linking feature of the opera, is the primacy of melodic interest over the harmonic context.

3.1 Configuration of Musical Ideas

The opera is structured as an extended recitative, interspersed with segments resembling traditional arias or duets, as well as with instrumental interludes. Certain sections and scenes display greater consistency of musical language, while others concentrate on theatrical aspects and on the eloquence of words, while using a wider palette of techniques. As the opera unfolds, a gradual evolution of the musical ideas occurs. It is reflected best in the configuration of instrumental parts, specifically in their melodic contours, which shift from an initial mainly stepwise/small-interval motion to more frequent, defining leaps/wide gestures toward the end. Formal evolution throughout the opera materializes in notable syntactic development as well. In this sense, expositive musical statements characterize early scenes, while recapitulative statements
predominate in most of the late scenes. Synthesis of formal articulations also becomes more evident in the second half of the opera. It may manifest through increased motivic juxtaposition, or through structural polyphony.  

3.2 Cyclical Elements

The opera employs a suite of cyclical elements, translated into recurring motives, chords, rhythmical patterns, and even timbral associations. Although reminiscent of traditional thematic styles, these elements do not have the impact and scope of, for example, the *leitmotifs* generally associated with Romanticism. Nevertheless, they serve the same purpose of unifying the work’s structure and its means of expression.

3.3 Stylistic Considerations

At the surface, a neo-classical spirit infuses the work, involving the clear opposition between recitative and aria, relatively contrasting scenes, recapitulative form, as well as allusions to conventional compositional procedures. The vocal lines are traditional, comprising mostly rigorous belcanto-like intonation, with minimal free or approximate

---

8 Structural/morphologic stratification (or polyphony) may be described as an overlapping of motivic or thematic ideas, implying that one idea commences before the previous idea has concluded. A particular case would involve two or more ideas commencing at approximately the same time, preserving their initial morphology along the way, and eventually mediating a common conclusion. Valentin Timaru, *The Symphonism of Enescu* (Bucharest: Editura Muzicală, 1992), 19.

9 See 5.2 Motivic Organization at page 291, for a detailed analysis of central, recurring motives.

10 Such as the passacaglia bass line of Scene 8, measures 13–56. See page 119.
pitch, and a negligible amount of spoken word. The instrumental parts are relatively
traditional, too, although not simplistic; employment of extended performance techniques
remains isolated. Generally, the vocal nature of lines influences instrumental parts,
placing them within an area of cantabile playing. Another traditional technique that
might help to point the opera toward a “neo” label is its continuous motivic development.
More than just a relic of past musical styles, this motivic approach relates profoundly to
the character evolution. In addition, it leads to a compositional strategy of thematic
convergence. On a more profound level, and as a result of staging and character
interaction, The Piano Teacher does not easily constrain itself to a strict stylistic
categorization. The composer has not surrendered to any stylistic preconceptions; as a
result, the music of the opera borrows from different stylistic elements and explores a
variety of musical currents, ranging from expressionist atonality to modal chromaticism,
and to postmodern neo-simplicity.

A single, univocal stylistic approach would also make it difficult to convey the contrasts
of atmosphere from scene to scene or the ever-changing rapport between various
characters. The history of the operatic genre itself indicates that stylistic purity can be
viewed as representing a mere prejudice, which may lead to a lack of creative fertility. In
this context, opting for a reasonable synthesis of styles seems more a necessity than an
alternative. Therefore, the stylistic environment of the opera incorporates diverse
elements of musical language, which are characteristic to a variety of currents or
aesthetics, as follows:
whole-tone scales and augmented chord-based structures, which are typical to Impressionism;

- fourth-based structures, harmonically constitutive diminished octaves and approximate pitch (Sprechgesang), which are representative of Expressionism;

- intense chromaticism, heterophony, tetrachordal melodic design, layered chords,\(^{11}\) and extended ostinato patterns, which define what is widely known as chromatic modalism;

- bitonality and polytonality, which represent a distorted tonal-functional system;

- repetitive figurations and limited pitch content, which reflect remotely a minimalist or post-minimalist approach.

Stylistic unification is achieved at the macro-structural level, through the introduction of a clock strike series,\(^ {12}\) recurrence of ostinato designs and generative chords.\(^ {13}\)

### 3.4 Aesthetic Considerations

Aesthetically, the opera is constructed as a subtle succession of comic and tragic situations. However, both categories are only vaguely suggested, leaving the plot’s message open to a multitude of possible interpretations. The overall impression of mystery and transcendence remains dominant throughout the entire work, while every particular situation, gesture or dialogue is enhanced by an adequate musical rhetoric.

\(^{11}\) Superimpositions of different triadic structures, with or without the inclusion of a totality of their constituent pitches (major/minor, major/major, augmented/minor, diminished/diminished, etc.).

\(^{12}\) See 5.2.2 ‘Clock Strike’ Motives, page 296.

\(^{13}\) See 5.2.3 ‘Layered’ Chords, page 307.
As part of a symbolic unwinding of musical events and procedures, the motivic-intervallic evolution covers a wide span, beginning with the linear/horizontal type—symbolizing history, chronology, the profane world—and concluding with the ascending/vertical type—symbolizing eternity, transcendence, the sacred world.
4. FORMAL STRUCTURE AND DURATION

4.1 Scene Structure

The opera unfolds relatively seamlessly through twelve short scenes, following precisely the sequence of twelve episodes in the original tale. Each of these scenes is characterized by specific motivic development, as well as unique instrumentation. However, formal delineation of the twelve scenes becomes less evident during performance, as most of them are meant to be played *attacca*. Occasional orchestral interventions not only provide a transitional role, but also enhance the continuous flow of music during set changes. The duration of each scene varies between one and eight minutes, generally depending on the amount of dialogue involved.

The twelve scenes coincide with the following episodes:

1. Oliverson’s first streetcar ride
2. Arrival at the Girls’ house and conversation with the Old Woman
3. Meeting the three girls
4. Guessing game and losing track of time
5. Playing hide-and-seek and getting lost in the dark
6. Second conversation with the Old Woman
7. Second streetcar ride
8. Stopping by the student’s house
9. Third and last streetcar ride
10. Going back home
11. Return by cab to the Girls’ house
12. Finding Evelynne and “departing”

4.2 Summary of Form

4.2.1 Prelude and Overall Formal Design

A brief instrumental Prelude, functioning as a capsulated anticipation of the most prominent recurring motives, begins the work. It is then alluded to at certain points throughout the opera. The first scene follows the Prelude without interruption. In general, the passing of time is illustrated by a series of sporadic, symbolic clock strikes, in the form of chords/clusters plunked out on the piano, or played by various instrumental combinations. A constant, cross-scene increase in tension culminates with the hide-and-seek episode, at which point the logical thread of the plot begins to unravel. This particular moment serves as both the musical climax and dramatic focal point of the entire work. It is supported by dense orchestral accumulation, and by increased rhythmic drive. Toward the middle of the opera, the intensity of the music begins to decrease, and the sound becomes more surrealistic.

The denouement occurs on a note of resignation, with all the characters singing more lyrically, and the orchestra imperceptibly returning to the ideas and atmosphere of the
initial scenes and of the Prelude. In this sense, the work is cyclical, reflecting subtly the tale’s message, as well as a central theme of Eliade’s literary and theoretical work: the “eternal return.”

4.2.2 Scene 1

Scene 1 presents a lively sung dialogue between Oliverson and the streetcar Conductor. The two vocal lines introduce several melodic motives that would prove central to the entire work. The mostly chordal instrumental accompaniment is designed to emphasize certain key words and stresses in the text. Short segments of free imitative polyphony, echoing the sung parts, intersperse the entire scene. These segments are assigned exclusively to the wind instruments, as a means of creating atmosphere.

Formally, the first scene consists of four sections, each one introducing a change of tempo: fast–slow–fast–slow [Allegro non troppo, measure 4 / Andante, measure 95 / Allegro, measure 109 / Andante, measure 205]. Musically, the slow sections function as accompanied recitatives, while dramaturgically they are introspective monologues. The slow closing section gradually fades, with instruments exiting one by one, until a very quiet descending piano line is heard. The approximate duration of Scene 1 is four minutes and thirty seconds.

---

14 According to the theories of religious historian Mircea Eliade, “eternal return” is a belief in the ability to return to the mythical age, to become contemporary with the events described in one's myths. It should be distinguished from the philosophical concept of eternal return, which holds that all arrangements of matter in the universe must necessarily recur if given an infinite amount of time. From “Eternal Return (Eliade),” available online at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eternal_Return_%28Eliade%29, last accessed April 22, 2008.
4.2.3 Scene 2

Scene 2 is conceived as a contrasting episode. It is the first “indoor” scene of the plot, away from the scorching heat and city noise. Factors that contribute to the dramatic change of atmosphere are a more relaxed tempo, subtler orchestration, and less active vocal parts. The dialogue between Oliverson and the Old Woman proceeds sluggishly, and is frequently interrupted by instrumental interventions. The scene is through-composed and freely utilizes recurrent melodic materials, as a means of compensating for the lack of any structural demarcation. The eventual climactic accumulation parallels Oliverson’s responses about the three girls’ identities, and provides a dramaturgical and musical sense of direction. The approximate duration of Scene 2 is three minutes and fifteen seconds.

4.2.4 Scene 3

Scene 3 returns to a more sectional approach. It is comprised of a succession of clearly delineated and opposing segments. The orchestral accompaniment is based on two sets of different ostinato patterns. The first one [Allegretto, measure 1] is a four-part repetitive design in the woodwinds section, which creates a rich textural background. It shifts often in both pitch and timbre. The voices base their approximate-pitch intonations on an overall sense of tonal stability provided by these textures. The second ostinato pattern is introduced after a short transition [measure 31] by the piano and harp. These complementary instruments weave a rich harmonic canvas by playing fast, arpeggiated
sixteenth notes [beginning at measure 33]. At this point, the Girl and Oliverson sing in
duet, highlighted by slightly heterophonic doublings of the woodwind instruments. The
four-part repetitive pattern returns at measure 47, in the string section. Both the ostinato
and vocal duet end at measure 75. A variation of the first scene recitative follows
[Andante, measure 76], in conjunction with a new Oliverson monologue. It closes with
the same quiet melodic line, this time in intervallc inversion, played by the harp rather
than the piano.

Besides fulfilling a local function as a transitional segment between two extended
repetitive sections, the slow recitative frames musical-dramaturgical developments across
multiple scenes. It continues to do so later in the opera. The ostinato section recapitulates
with noticeable variations of pitch and orchestration [Allegretto, measure 89]. The scene
closes with a fragmented new appearance of the cyclical recitative [Andante, measure
136]. The approximate duration of Scene 3 is four minutes and fifty seconds.

4.2.5 Scene 4

In Scene 4, the ostinato concept continues, albeit in a different form. A pulsating single
tone acts both as a harmonic foundation, and as a structural benchmark. Formally, the
scene displays three contiguous sections that abound in similarities [Moderato, measure
1, measure 47, and measure 90, respectively]. These sections are organized on three
levels of intensity, corresponding to three different transpositions of the single-tone
ostinato (B♭, F♯, and D). The vocal parts present a fluent and, at times, precipitated
dialogue between Oliverson and the Girl. Vocal lines are formally independent from the orchestral ensemble, and re-echo some of the already established melodic motives. An abrupt orchestral pyramid toward the end of the third section [measures 100–107] reflects the dramatic evolution of the text, and prepares the concluding segment. This extended Coda, which begins at measure 117, marks the reappearance and superimposition of several familiar elements. The pulsating single tone returns to its initial pitch (Bb), this time confined to the violoncello part (in *pizzicato*). A rich figuration pattern, in the form of arpeggiated quintuplets by the piano and the harp is clearly reminiscent of a similar proceeding in Scene 3.

The technique of introducing related materials dispersedly throughout the opera is intended to structurally solidify the work, and convey a sense of unity beyond the contrasting designs of individual scenes. Vocally, the Coda functions as a short aria for soprano. It closes in a full *tutti*, while the Girl dances ostentatiously in response to the ever-louder *ostinato* [measures 145–153]. The approximate duration of Scene 4 is three minutes and fifty seconds.

4.2.6 Scene 5

The music of Scene 5 supports various theatrical events and stage business. After finding himself alone on the stage, Oliverson begins looking unsuccessfully for an exit. The orchestral intervention augments his desperate search, frustration, and eventual entanglement in the curtain. Elements of the Prelude are exploited to create a tense
atmosphere, and to emphasize the dramaturgical importance of this moment. Previously highlighted motives and gestures are restated with different instrumentation, while the final chaotic build-up [measures 25–29] mirrors the Prelude’s ending. Just before all lights go out, the scene closes with a fully orchestrated, percussive rendition of the “clock strikes.” The approximate duration of Scene 5 is two minutes.

### 4.2.7 Scene 6

Scene 6 initiates a major recapitulative process of the first half of the opera. Designed as a distant echo of Scene 2, it employs the same tempo, time signature, motivic gestures, instrumental technique, and involves the same two characters. At the beginning of the scene, lights go back on, and Oliverson has a second conversation with the Old Woman. Melodic elements that previously were presented by tremolo-ed strings are now assigned to the solo harp, while various combinations of woodwind instruments play a series of recognizable motives [e.g. measures 3, 8, 13, 15]. The vocal lines are shaped around the same tunes as before; however, as the scene unfolds, the dialogues become more precipitated and less recognizable. Besides recalling the atmosphere of Scene 2, this delayed recapitulation incorporates several other established elements. It is essentially a cocktail of musical juxtapositions and superpositions. The light accompaniment and the slightly heterophonic instrumental doubling of the voices derive from a vertical expansion of a single melodic line. While the line itself is highly chromatic and contorted, its orchestration remains parsimonious. Gradually, from the string instruments’ pizzicato interjections, a single-pitch ostinato emerges [measures 32–44]. It
echoes the similar patterns found in Scene 4. At the same time, Oliverson’s account of previous occurrences takes the shape of pre-existing melodic developments [e.g. measures 27–30, 40–43], which borrows motives from the second scene. The primary idea of the brief conclusion [measures 48–56] is the manipulation of a line sung earlier in the work, by arranging it for an exclusively instrumental ensemble.

The formal development procedures found in this scene, and elsewhere in the opera, may be commonly described as “structural polyphony” or “morphologic polyphony.” The approximate duration of Scene 6 is two minutes and twenty seconds.

4.2.8 Scene 7

Scene 7 is a short, transitional accompanied recitative. Essentially, it fulfills a colouristic role, since it contains very little sung material. A block of slow string glissandi opens the scene, emulating the sound of a departing streetcar. Eventually, accents in various timbral combinations, including marimba, piano, and cleverly displaced pizzicati, suggest sporadic clock strikes, as well as the chimes produced by an erratically moving minute hand. The scene continues the recapitulative process commenced earlier, with a restatement of the cyclic slow recitative music [measure 14], this time in an exclusively instrumental rendition. As a closing gesture, the marimba and low pizzicato strings play the quiet unison motive (from Scenes 1 and 3), simultaneously in direct and inverted form. The approximate duration of Scene 7 is one minute and thirty seconds.

15 See explanatory footnote at page 269.
4.2.9 Scene 8

Scene 8 begins with a dance-like dialogue among the woodwind instruments and is followed by the already familiar clock strikes. This time, the voices intervene before the increased number of strikes ends, suggesting that keeping track of time is no longer relevant. Oliverson’s interaction with the Old Man causes perplexity, and humour tends to replace the sombre mood of the previous scenes. While the two characters debate who is right and who is wrong, the dance-like music follows its course, in close interaction with the vocal lines.

Beginning at measure 13, a five-measure pulsating ostinato pattern emerges in the low string instruments. Its chromatic stepwise intervals and descending contour allude to a passacaglia bass line. The chromatic ostinato repeats consecutively for most of the scene, while the other parts offer very little new development. Vocal lines are through-composed, therefore undermining any supposition that this scene might constitute a set of ground-bass variations. An almost exact recapitulation occurs at measure 57, with the woodwind instruments presenting the initial dance-like tune in intervallic inversion.

Scene 8 closes with an even longer series of clock strikes, separated by extended moments of silence. The approximate duration of Scene 8 is two minutes and fifty seconds.
4.2.10 Scene 9

Scene 9 features Oliverson’s third streetcar ride. By this time, his speech and state of mind have been severely affected by the strange events he has experienced. To reflect the shift from logic and normal behaviour, this scene is written as a secco recitative, without time signature or barlines. The instrumental parts are more rhythmically precise than the vocal parts. The motivic dialogue is defined by fragmentation and a dearth of melodic entries. At rehearsal number 9, the absurdity of the dialogue reaches a new level, which is punctuated by a lengthy multidirectional glissando by the harp. At this point, Oliverson switches briefly from singing to speaking. Subsequently, the music seems to disintegrate, in terms of both its intensity, and its coherence. A final piano-harp intervention [rehearsal number 13] suggests the existence of two separate clocks, striking out of phase, as if keeping parallel times. The approximate duration of Scene 9 is two minutes and thirty-five seconds.

4.2.11 Scene 10

Scene 10 contrasts sharply the preceding recitative. It introduces a lively mixed $\frac{7}{8}$ meter, very fast tempo, and utilizes a significantly extended orchestral ensemble. In the purely instrumental introduction [Vivace, measure 1], the brass instruments echo a familiar chord progression from the Prelude. String instruments enter one by one, with tremolo eighth notes. Accompanied by the clarinet, piccolo and tambourine, they create a registrally and dynamically expanding/contracting texture. The sound of Oliverson
knocking on the door blends rhythmically and texturally with the percussive effects heard from the orchestra.

The introduction fades out the way it emerged [measures 46–55], at which point a vocal section supersedes [measure 56]. Voices alternate in a very active dialogue, while the strings continue their busy tremolos, and the piano states a very high-pitched counter-melody, in octaves. This is just one of several examples in which the piano is utilized as a purely melodic instrument (legato playing is paramount).

A sudden cut-off signals a new recapitulation of the slow cyclic recitative [Andante, measure 73]. As in other instances, the shift is associated with Oliverson’s trademark self-introduction as a piano teacher who has never been lucky. The accompanied recitative is transformed naturally into a more lyrical middle section, beginning in the same tempo, at measure 85. This particular moment represents actually a distant variation of the middle section from Scene 3. The arpeggiated figurations—originally played by complementary harp and piano—are now assigned to the oboe and the clarinet.

A nostalgic duet between Oliverson and the Neighbour (bass-baritone) echoes freely its third scene counterpart, where the soprano voice had been involved. A recapitulation of the lively section intervenes at measure 100 [Primo Tempo]. This is a recapitulative segment only in character, because the vocal lines present new material, generally shaped by the evolution of the sung text. Another sudden cut-off ends this section abruptly at

283
measure 121. The slow recitative sequels again, and is accompanied this time by very quiet sustained chords in the string instruments (similar to a moment in the first scene).

At measure 135, an elaborate Coda brings a shift from the scene’s mainly string texture to an exclusively wind texture conclusion [Poco meno mosso]. The Coda is a “slow motion,” mock variation of elements from Scene 1. It is meant to create a nostalgic atmosphere and to provide a theatrical framework for the protagonist’s display of exhaustion. The marimba replaces the leading vocal line, as Oliverson is virtually incapable of singing anymore. Scene 10 closes with an introspective monologue [measure 146], sung by Oliverson in a whispered voice. The approximate duration of Scene 10 is five minutes and fifty seconds.

4.2.12 Scene 11

Scene 11 represents a synthesis of many motivic, textural, and orchestral elements previously used in the opera. It is generally through-composed, with frequent interpolations of familiar materials. The opening suggests yet another series of clock strikes, in a typical pointillist fashion [measures 1–7]. Disparate sound events appear in opposition to what were originally organized, intelligible time-keeping references.

In this scene, the bass-baritone impersonates a horse-pulled cab driver, whose entrance startles Oliverson. The two characters engage in a quiet exchange of remarks, while a very dense string ensemble accompaniment punctuates their conversation. Despite the
overall calmness of this scene, a few unexpected, very dissonant interventions allude to the looming tragedy [e.g. measures 14, 26]. While the Cabman’s words reveal an ever-stranger reality, the music becomes more and more chromatic and tense. The string ensemble incorporates an appropriate performance style, *molto vibrato*, *pesante*, as well as frequent *rubato*.

At measure 47, the mood changes dramatically, as if to indicate that Oliverson is beginning to presume what is happening to him. The string instruments drop out, while the winds reiterate a free variation of Scene 1 [measures 48–55]. The vocal lines engage in a flowing duet, which contains randomly ordered segments of earlier vocal parts, mostly from the first scene.

Upon the string ensemble’s re-entry [measure 56], an entirely new development process begins. Many of the previously highlighted materials, such as the *rubato* string accompaniment, polyphonic entries by the woodwinds, and familiar vocal lines blend together motivically and structurally. The tenor-bass duet illustrates the essence of this synthetic development by synchronizing lines that were formerly sung sequentially [measures 74–79]. A frequently recurring instrumental motive closes this section [measures 82–83].

After a brief new *arioso* section [*Poco più mosso*, measure 84], the harp and then piano accompaniments support the Cabman’s fluent and lyrical intervention. Occasionally, the atmosphere of his aria is enhanced by clusters of very quiet string harmonics, which
remotely evoke the clock strikes [e.g. measures 86, 92, 98, 102]. The pace and mood gradually begin to resemble a funeral march, through the addition of woodwind and percussion instruments [measures 112–130]. In support of this idea, the libretto contains a number of macabre references. A dynamic and expressive climax is reached at measure 139, at the end of a short orchestral build-up. The atmosphere becomes softer thereafter, and the scene closes in a note of uncertainty, with a few instruments sparsely echoing one another. The approximate duration of Scene 11 is eight minutes and ten seconds.

4.2.13 Scene 12

Scene 12 highlights the individual characters, and defines their unique attitudes, as they appear at the end of the story. For this purpose, the music uses very little new material; rather, it borrows a wide array of familiar configurations and ideas from previous scenes.

The beginning of this scene finds Oliverson returning to the girls’ house late into the night. The atmosphere is reminiscent of Scene 2, when he first visited the establishment. The woodwind section elaborates on what was formerly a tremolo strings interlude, specifically associated with the presence of the Old Woman [Andantino, measures 1–8]. A series of lyrical imitative entries and sparsely timed pizzicati accompany the relatively familiar dialogue of the vocal lines.

Not only are the vocal parts related to those of an earlier fragment, but they also fulfill a dramaturgical function, by attempting to clarify the original purpose of Oliverson’s visit.
He had initially refused to see the German girl, who now turns out to symbolize the long-lost love of his youth. By allowing the piano teacher another chance at happiness, the plot returns full circle to a time when reality and the imaginary were not yet inseparable concepts.

The music of Scene 12 tries to reflect this turn of events by employing cyclical motives and recognizable techniques. Thus, a modified version of the “labyrinth” theme, originally presented in Scene 3, reappears at measure 27. This time, rather than playing hide-and-seek, Oliverson is counting doors in search of the German girl, whom he tacitly agrees to meet. Unsurprisingly, in addition to losing track of time, he gets lost in space as well. The “labyrinthine” repetitive patterns presented by the woodwinds suggest both his walking in circles, and the ultimate entanglement of his state of mind. The “labyrinth” theme is joined—and gradually overpowered—by shifting, high-pitched violin tremolos, which reintroduce the very first texture of the opera’s Prelude [measures 29–48].

As if reaching the end of a tunnel, Oliverson stumbles upon the German girl, whom he identifies as Evelynne, the woman he had once loved and lost [measure 53]. This moment shifts the dramaturgical and musical balance by glimpsing at the possibility of a return to the pre-initiation state of affairs. The lively sonorities of Scene 1 are revived once again, with a different orchestration\(^\text{16}\) and radically modified vocal lines [Allegretto, measures 54–144]. The central accompanied recitative makes a last return at measure 146, providing Oliverson with a final opportunity to deplore his meagre existence.

\(^{16}\) Individual parts are shuffled among wind instruments; \textit{pizzicato} strings turn to \textit{arco}; the piano replaces marimba; tonal shifts are more frequent; and sustained notes receive an increased role, to the detriment of sharply punctuated \textit{staccati}. 
As a reminder of the passing of a very long day, twelve clock strikes ring out from afar, in the form of tubular bells chimes [measures 160–171]. The series of single and double-pitched strikes follows the design of the layered harmony central to the entire opera. It also emulates the sound of a tower clock, contributing to this midnight episode’s impression of mystery.

The next section illustrates the couple’s departure in a horse-pulled cab, by means of a “trampling” theme [a tempo, measure 175], which reintroduces the rhythmic ostinato pattern initially presented in Scene 4. The successive transposition of the pulsating tone outlines a symbolic return to the original tonal centre (D to F♯, to B♭). This section incorporates a continuous dynamic build-up and a subtle increase in the number of metrical stresses, which mirror the animated exchange of replies. A number of scattered vocal “asides” sung by the Old Woman and the Cabman enhances the dramaturgical intensity of the episode. These short comments integrate naturally into the overall musical flow. They are also designed to bring a feeling of classical sophistication to the work’s predominant texture of dialogues.

The orchestral ensemble unites in a brief, yet powerful, conclusive tutti [measures 207–210], just before dissipating into a quintessentially chamber-like finale [Poco meno mosso, measure 210]. With support from the arpeggiated harp and a subtle piano doubling, the four singers engage in a slow, tranquil quartet, the lines of which are shaped in conformity with the main harmonic motive of the work. The vocal lines also

---

17 For details, see subchapter 5.2.3 ‘Layered’ Chords, at page 307.
18 See the formal analysis of Scene 4, at page 277.
echo the sonority of the twelve clock strikes. The quiet dynamic level, peaceful atmosphere, relatively unstable $\frac{5}{4}$ meter and a vaguely polytonal environment impregnate this final segment of the opera with a feeling of elusiveness. After all voices have exited, the harp continues its fading triplet arpeggio, which eventually is cut off halfway into the pattern. The opera ends with the fading echo of the omnipresent layered chord [measures 229–230]. The approximate duration of Scene 12 is seven minutes and fifty seconds.
5. PITCH, RHYTHM, AND MOTIVIC ORGANIZATION

5.1 Pitch and Rhythm

The Piano Teacher utilizes the resources of a modal-chromatic sound language, based principally on the hegemony and clarity of lines. The pitch structure is entirely intuitive, and the harmonic vocabulary derives from linear and textural writing. Strong preference for small melodic intervals (semitones, whole-tones, and minor thirds) is reflected by both the vocal and the orchestral writing. An increased interest in the contrapuntal aspect of music leads to a high degree of independence for all the vocal and instrumental parts of the opera. Melodic lines may acquire individuality through the opposition of small versus large intervals, fast versus slow moving foreground rhythms, or low versus high register.

Rhythm and meter are treated traditionally. With the exception of Scene 9, where time signature and barlines are missing, all instrumental parts have clearly indicated measures and rhythms. Strict meter is used primarily to help musicians keep their place in the score; however, metrical accents are not always relevant or desirable. Contrast is achieved not only by frequent tempo changes, but also by changing the periodicity of pulse. The most rhythmically distinct sections entail heterophonic textures and are primarily associated with orchestral interludes and instrumental doublings of vocal lines.
5.2 Motivic organization

A relatively limited number of recurring motives unifies the work. These motives, whether melodic, harmonic, or timbre-associated, permeate the entire vocal-instrumental structure. They constantly transform, presenting themselves in various forms. Specifically, there are distinctive motives (gestures, figurations, chords) associated with certain keywords and recurring statements in the Libretto (e.g. “it’s too late,” “I have the soul of an artist,” “we’ve got time,” “a terribly hot day,” etc.). Despite the periodic referencing of central motives, the music of many scenes is through-composed, without any rigorous formal implications. The evolution of the key characters is associated with certain melodic, rhythmic, or harmonic gestures, as well as with particular instrumental colours.

Among the numerous particularities of the musical language used, a few specific elements are worthy of analytical focus and detailed exemplification. They serve as starting points for the compositional process and provide the musical scaffolding on which the entire opera is built. For the sake of simplicity, these “building blocks” have been grouped into several separate categories. However, many of them defy any categorization, while others can be categorized in various ways. The following paragraphs explain these musical elements and their inherent construction and interaction.
5.2.1 Augmented Triad-Based Motives

One of the most frequently encountered harmonic devices in the opera is the augmented triad and related chordal combinations. Their presence can be noticed as early as the Prelude, in both background and foreground textures (Example 1).


Augmented triads are often traded among various groups of instruments, leading to timbral diversification. Accompanying patterns based on the augmented triad appear successively in different sections of the orchestra (Examples 1 and 2).

Many other characteristic features of the work are based on the structure of the augmented triad. Some of them are melodic, such as juxtapositions of major thirds, or the whole-tone scale in either vocal or instrumental parts. These do not occur as singular events, but rather generate an entire typology of recurring gestures (Examples 3 and 4).


![Example 3](image1)


![Example 4](image2)

Some of the linear-horizontal instances of the augmented triad create new possibilities for melodic development by freely alternating their constituents, interpolating foreign elements, or enhancing the tonal ambiguity already present in the “augmented” sonority, through the use of approximate pitch (Examples 5 and 6).

Example 5. Figured augmented triad – clarinet. Scene 6, measure 42.

![Example 5](image3)
Other instances of augmented-type relationships play a tonal-structural role, such as the choice of pitches for successive *ostinato* patterns. In Scene 4, for example, the three main sections are anchored in *ostinato* patterns that are centered on B♭ (measure 5), F♯ (measure 47), and D (measure 90), respectively. The Coda to that scene returns to a variation of the B♭ *ostinato* pattern.

Perhaps the most interesting characteristic of the augmented triad, manifested in the opera, is its tendency to combine and interact with other melodic-harmonic structures. The initial motivation for the extensive usage of this triad was to reflect, through its unmistakable sonority, the theatrical ambiguities and deliberate confusion of the text. Since the characters and their actions are presented in a wide range of nuances, the harmony needs to reflect this by employing a richer palette of possibilities. Examples 7 and 8 illustrate some of the harmonic treatment that the augmented triad receives throughout the work:

In order to incorporate the augmented triad in a more concealed fashion, two methods were used:

1) associating its pitches with a variety of timbres—contrasting sounding instruments, if possible (Example 9); and

2) dissipating the easily recognizable sonority by separating in time its constitutive elements (Example 10).

5.2.2 ‘Clock Strike’ Motives

Although the twelve episodes of the plot are symbolically timed as one hour each, in fact, the individual scenes vary greatly in duration, both dramaturgically and musically. However, the concept of hearing sporadic clock strikes throughout the entire work presents an opportunity to explore various harmonic and colouristic possibilities. As a result, the composition includes twelve sets of timbrally diverse clock strikes, which mark the passing of time, and also create their own micro-variational universe. Some of these strikes fulfill independent introductory roles, while others are more organically integrated within the mainstream formal design of the opera. A description of each of these moments follows.

5.2.2.1 First Clock Strike

The first clock strike appears at the end of the Prelude, in the form of a very loud eight-pitch chord played by the piano (Example 11). The structure of the chord is based upon
two separate layers, incorporating diminished octaves as the outer pitches and a core of minor/augmented-type triadic features. Individual elements of this initial layering dominate the harmonic language of the opera, and at the same time generate the particular form and organization of other sets of clock strikes.


5.2.2.2 Second Clock Strike

The second set of clock strikes opens Scene 2. It is a half-tone transposition of the initial piano chord, with the added harp echoing immediately in a softer dynamic range (Example 12). Despite its similarities, the “two o’clock” strike initiates a variational trend that acquires various degrees of complexity as the work unfolds.


---

19 For details, see subchapter 5.2.3 ‘Layered’ Chords, at page 307.
5.2.2.3 Third Clock Strike

The third set of clock strikes closes Scene 2, as a powerful, percussive climax. It marks the first time the piano is excluded. Instead, wind instruments, suspended cymbal, and a very aggressive harp join in a loud homophonic gesture (Example 13). The pitch structure of the three short ictuses is reminiscent of the one stated at the beginning of the work. A sustained double-bass pedal tone (not seen in Example 13) blends well with the rich reverberation of the fortissimo chords.

Example 13. Third clock strike – ensemble. Scene 2, measure 76.
5.2.2.4 Fourth Clock Strike

The fourth set of clock strikes displays the solo piano again. The return to a single instrument is justified by the bold introductory nature of the moment (Example 14). The lack of timbral variety is compensated by the enrichment of the chord progression itself. While the left hand reiterates the lower harmonic layer, the right hand alternates three different transpositions of the upper layer, producing a very bright and richly reverberating sonority. Crucial factors that enhance the texture are the four *sforzandi* and the continuously depressed sustain pedal.


5.2.2.5 Fifth Clock Strike

The fifth set of clock strikes opens Scene 5 in a disguised fashion. The all too familiar layered chord is absent, as are the poignant *sforzandi*. This time, a quiet chamber-like texture presented by three woodwind instruments, plus discreet triangle chimes, emphasizes the linear-flowing quality of time (Example 15). The five strikes represent a series of mini-variations themselves. While they are equally timed, subtle ornamentation of the clarinet line provides them with a certain sense of evolution.
5.2.2.6 Sixth Clock Strike

The sixth set of clock strikes marks a return to both the initial chord, and the clock’s typical loud dynamic. This moment coincides with the dramaturgical focal point of the opera and occurs after a segment of dense orchestral texture. The powerful tutti, with interlocking instruments and percussion support, closes Scene 5 (Example 16). Rhythmically, this is the first instance of unequally timed individual strikes. They seem to linger on, as if anticipating more radical deviations for the “later hours.” As part of the symbolic developments of the plot, the six clock strikes are meant to coincide with Oliverson’s collapse. They also conclude the first wave of cross-scene intensity build-ups. At the end of Scene 5, all lights go out, and a few seconds of complete silence follow the deafening strikes.
5.2.2.7 Seventh Clock Strike

The seventh set of clock strikes brings back the idea of an echoing instrument. This time, the combined marimba and piano deliver a series of slightly reduced chords, in relatively soft dynamics. The piano’s left hand obsessively repeats a dissonant, offbeat minor ninth,
while the right hand and marimba present alternating transpositions of an augmented triad (Example 17). This delaying technique is later amplified in subsequent clock strikes, leading to a system of independently moving instruments, and ultimately to a disintegration of the entire time-keeping motive.

Example 17. Seventh clock strike – marimba, piano. Scene 7, measure 3.

5.2.2.8 Eighth Clock Strike

The eighth set of clock strikes, much less intense, suggests that the plot has entered its “quiet hours” and conforms to the overall atmosphere of Scene 8. This scene opens with woodwind dialogues and, by the fifth measure, the clock strikes dominate. They are assigned to a combination of triangle and piano, the former clanging on each measure’s downbeat, and the latter providing a delicate offbeat, high-pitched, vertically spaced cluster (Example 18). Remnants of the original augmented octave chords constitute the piano’s gestures. They involve the outer pitches of each layer, with the lower notes staccato and the upper notes sustaining. As early as the fourth strike, the English horn joins in and the two male voices quickly follow suit (not seen in Example 18). This is the
first instance of the clock strikes in which a stratification of materials occurs, preventing a clear marking of the exact time.

Example 18. Eighth clock strike – triangle, piano. Scene 8, measure 5.

5.2.2.9 Ninth Clock Strike

The ninth set of clock strikes is a close relative of the eighth. Its function is to end Scene 8 with a recapitulative gesture that alludes back to the previous set of strikes. The instrumentation remains identical, and thus the correspondence is essentially timbral. However, there are a few modifications, such as the transposed piano part (one whole-tone higher), the ordering of impulses (piano right hand on downbeats, triangle off the beat), and the number of impulses per individual strike (three this time, as the left hand part of the piano is offset from the right hand by a quarter rest). In addition, a sequence of
fermatas—meant to indeterminately extend the pauses in between the strikes—moves the end of this scene to the realm of suspense (Example 19). As a practical matter, the extended moments of silence allow Oliverson to walk across the stage and take a seat on the streetcar, where he is about to commence his opening recitative in Scene 9.


5.2.2.10 Tenth Clock Strike

The tenth set of clock strikes is another example of gestural stratification. As Scene 9 nears its end, with the string section fading in delicate and cloudy harmony, the strikes layer emerges, first in the harp and then in the piano. The two instruments play repetitive melodic intervals independently of each other. While the harp oscillates on a two-voice, equal eighth-note texture, providing the lower layer, the piano enters later with syncopated/triplet repetitions, providing the upper layer (Example 20). The resulting harmonic context is nothing short of the original eight-pitch clock strike chord, albeit in a different transposition. Nevertheless, due to the irregular impulses, a complex rhythmical relationship is achieved between the two instruments. Since the harp initiates its material earlier and moves at a slightly faster pace, the end of its ten clock strikes occurs much
more quickly, leaving the piano to “drag” alone the upper half of the harmony. The impassive repetition of these slow, high-pitched notes resembles closely the steady stream of a “perpetuum mobile.” The idea behind pulverizing the clock strike blocks and placing the pieces completely out of phase owes much to an underlying theme of the opera, the suggestion of parallel times (universes). Stratification occurs again toward the end of the scene, when string instruments and the voice pick up where they had left off.

A quiet *pizzicato* “take off” gesture ends Scene 9, leaving the clock strikes echoing and unspoiled.

Example 20. Tenth clock strike – harp, piano. Scene 9, rehearsal no. 13.
5.2.2.11 Eleventh Clock Strike

The eleventh set of clock strikes opens Scene 11, in accordance with the previous set. Uncoordinated chordal components alternate rather irregularly, while a wider variety of instrumental colours is involved. Pitch layering is not clear anymore, as the vertical and horizontal spacing of the individual notes stretches to the extreme (Example 21).

However, there is a more easily perceptible timbral layering, involving three separate components. The first layer is made up of quiet, widely spaced sustained notes, played by the second violin and the double bass. The second layer belongs to the harp, which plays random elements of the generative chord, in pairs of notes. The third layer involves a combination of contracting/expanding string *pizzicati*, which are rhythmically displaced from the harp by an ever-changing rate. An obstinate and already familiar triangle doubles the *pizzicati*.

5.2.2.12 Twelfth Clock Strike

The twelfth set of clock strikes marks the return to a single-instrument texture. Tubular bells are utilized not only to suggest the vicinity of a church, but also to convey a sense of mystery and the sacred. The bells ring out at a constant, slow pace, in opposition to the less uniform and de-synchronized nature of previous sets of strikes. The pitch content conforms loosely to the layout of the generative chord, while the alternating single-tone and dual-tone chimes display a falling and rising contour (Example 22).


5.2.3 ‘Layered’ Chords

Besides serving as a constant pitch set for the twelve clock strike moments, the “layered chord” plays an important role as a unifying element throughout the opera. Its recurrence is occasioned by a multitude of dramaturgical twists and its appearances vary significantly in terms of their musical context. A range of figurative patterns, assigned to a variety of instruments, highlights the intrinsic relationships of this particular chordal configuration. More often than not, the figurations appear in the piano part, either in the form of short and rapid passages, or as chordal breakdowns (Examples 23 and 24).
At other times, the piano couples the harp, in order to provide complementary harmonic support through the use of the same chord. Each of the two instruments may assume a separate segment of the figuration by taking turns in playing the same layer, or by sharing the same pitch content throughout an entire passage. The former approach is designed to facilitate performance, especially at fast speeds (Example 25), while the latter technique is meant to enhance the colouristic aspect of the figuration (Example 26).


In a number of instances, the chordal-figurative pattern reveals its rich timbral potential by migrating to other instrumental combinations. Example 27 shows an arpeggiated-accompanying scheme, assigned to a pair of alternating woodwind instruments.
Example 27. Arpeggiated figuration – clarinet, oboe. Scene 10, measure 85.

Example 28 shows the upper chordal layer, in solid form, with shifting harmonics played by the string section.

5.2.4 Melodic Motives

On the linear-melodic level, the music of the opera gravitates toward an economical and well-defined set of motives. Without establishing any preference or hierarchy among them, the recurring motivic ideas help consolidate and unify an otherwise diverse work. They are usually introduced by vocal parts and subsequently embraced by a multitude of instruments. Motives forge strong relationships with the sung text; their reappearance is frequently caused by particular text-music associations. However, in addition to the manifest form of any given motivic material, the opera contains numerous concealed or contrived instances of them as well. Among the clearly recognizable melodic ideas, three categories of motives can be established.

5.2.4.1 Category “α” Motives

The first category—generically labelled “α”—includes short, emblematic intonations, typically featuring a succession of small intervals and a contorted melodic design. Depending on the harmonic context, motives of this kind can take either a diatonic or a chromatic shape (Examples 29 and 30).

Example 29. Category α motive, diatonic – voice. Scene 1, measure 7.

\[
\text{Example 29. Category } \alpha \text{ motive, diatonic – voice. Scene 1, measure 7.}
\]
A general preference for semitones and minor thirds is reflected in the appearance of many central musical ideas, and it frequently materializes as a more nuanced alternative to single-pitch vocal intonation (Example 31).

In the case of small-interval motives, variational possibilities might seem endless; nevertheless, the opera utilizes a limited pool of different melodic designs. The importance of motivic unity reconciles divergent tendencies, while the need for variation causes certain ideas to escape timbral constraints. By assuming melodic phrases that are typically assigned to the voices, orchestral instruments enhance the colouristic dimension of the work and very often introduce caricaturizing elements (Example 32).
5.2.4.2 Category “β” Motives

A second motivic category—labelled “β”—is noticeably based on the whole-tone scale. The frequent occurrence of augmented triads and whole-tone hexachords throughout the opera favours this type of melodic structure. Subtle juxtapositions of different whole-tone collections, in different transpositions, define an overall intensely chromatic motivic approach. Generally associated with important musical and dramatic culminations, this category of motives is equally employed by the vocal parts (Example 33) and by various instruments (Example 34).


Example 34. Combination of category α and category β motives – trumpet. Scene 6, measure 44.

5.2.4.3 Category “γ” Motives

Perhaps the motivic typology utilized most extensively in the opera derives from the free manipulation of melodic fourths, primarily perfect fourths. This third category—labelled “γ”—includes a wide range of possibilities, from simple intervallic juxtapositions, to complex harmonic-textural developments, which will be discussed in a subsequent
At certain points throughout the opera, each singing character approaches the fourths-motive, whether it be a short exclamatory intervention, or a smoothly phrased succession of ascending and descending leaps. Through its scope and phrase-building potential, the “γ” motive receives quasi-thematic empowerment (Example 35). Its recurrence is not only cyclical, but often has a structural impact on the respective scene. Not only does it provide repetition and variation, it also creates form.

Example 35. Category γ motive, extended to phrase size – voice. Scene 1, measure 36.

The perfect fourth, as a generative interval, contributes to the shaping of instrumental doubling lines (Example 36), accompanying patterns, as well as to the development of contained orchestral interludes (Example 37). Fourth-based motives take a variety of forms, through transposition, inversion, juxtaposition, interpolation, or rhythmicization (Example 38).

Example 36. Category γ motive, doubling of voice – French horn. Scene 2, measure 50.

---

20 For a detailed description, see subchapter 5.2.7 Evolution and Superposition of Motives, at page 326.
5.2.5 Textural Motives

Complex, cyclic motivic ideas help to define the vertical parameters of the score. While strong relationships among melodic entities are more easily distinguishable, textural-harmonic configurations provide fluency and consistency on a broader level. Generally, each scene utilizes either a unique approach to vocal writing, or a single style of orchestral accompaniment, as if following a precise compositional recipe. Contrasts are designed to occur on a larger scale, from one scene to another, and textural identity is meant to influence every particular moment of the plot. Therefore, dispersed statements of similar motivic materials become clear textural recapitulations as well. Very typical, especially late into the opera, are interpolations of entire polyphonic segments, echoing earlier motivic developments. For example, the fast conclusion of Scene 1, found at measure 109 (Allegro), is re-activated in a much slower tempo, to conclude Scene 10.
(Example 39). The textural and timbral similarities underline pivotal plot moments, and remind the listener of a particular atmosphere.

Example 39. Textural recapitulation of Scene 1 (m. 109) – winds. Scene 10, measure 135.

A related procedure is employed in Scene 11, where the entire accompaniment style and harmonic content matches that of a much earlier fragment (Example 40). Originally, in Scene 1, measure 52, a pizzicato strings pattern accompanies the tenor-baritone duet. The following example shows how a staccato wind section accompaniment provides support for the same two vocal parts, which are engaging in a dialogue of the same nature.
As mentioned above, much interest is invested in fourth-based motives. Consequently, such motivic configurations abound on a polyphonic-textural level as well. The Prelude establishes firmly the importance of textural treatment of the “fourths motive,” by placing various forms of it in the orchestral foreground (Examples 41 and 42).

Later on, numerous combinations of “fourths motives” and other motivic elements reappear, presented by various instruments. A dominant feature of these motivic reiterations is the instrumental unison or octave doubling, meant to highlight the respective orchestral textures (Examples 43 and 44). Timbral variety remains their main attribute, while a variety of rhythmic designs contribute to their contextual integration (Example 45).


\[\text{Example 42. Timbral variation of “fourths motive” texture – clarinet, harp. Prelude, measure 14.}\]
Example 44. Textural variation of “fourths motive” – harp, strings. Scene 6, measure 47.

Essentially omnipresent in the opera’s score, fourth-based textural configurations capture the essence of the modal-chromatic language. They represent both a model of mathematical symmetry, and a melodic stereotype lending itself naturally to vocal music. A less traditional use of this textural paradigm can be noticed in Example 46, in which four string instruments play parallel, slowly rising glissandi, tentatively separated vertically by perfect and augmented fourths.²¹


---

### 5.2.6 Character-Associated Motives

Throughout the opera, a small collection of motives marks the presence, real or imaginary, of different characters. While not exhaustive, this method of musical identification injects coherence into the motivic fabric of the work. The character-associated motives vary in nature and means of presentation. They range from self-

²¹ This particular moment is designed to emulate the sound of a departing streetcar motor.
identifying vocal intonations, to emblematic rhythmic-melodic snapshots and timbrally suggestive gestures.

5.2.6.1 The “Oliverson” Motive

Oliverson, the piano teacher, is associated with a purely rhythmic motive, namely the quintuplet. Not only is his last name set to various forms of this motive, but numerous instances of the words “piano” and “piano teacher” also bear the same motivic “name tag” (Examples 47, 48 and 49).

Example 47. “Oliverson” motive, rhythmic – voice. Scene 1, measure 151.


5.2.6.2 The “Old Woman” Motive

The Old Woman’s presence on stage is marked by instrumental music, in the form of a mysterious duet involving wind instruments. Despite the fact that the ornament-like melodic semitones acquire two different contours, ascending and descending, the three moments dedicated to this character (Scenes 2, 6, and 12) are clearly bridged by their motivic association (Examples 50 and 51).


5.2.6.3 The “Girl” Motive

The three Girls are represented by a combination of melodic and rhythmic identifying procedures. There are two appearances of the Girls’ theme, both within the second scene, and both delivered by the Old Woman. The opposition between the interrogative nature
of the first appearance and the affirmative nature of the second one is reflected musically through intervallic relationships. The two themes are each other’s loose inversion, with notable inconsistencies corresponding to the German and the Gypsy girl (Examples 52 and 53).

Example 52. “Girl” motive, direct form – voice. Scene 2, measure 22.


5.2.6.4 The “Octavia” Motive

Octavia, Oliverson’s music student, appears only as an imaginary character.

Nevertheless, her name is mentioned twice to a melodic line made up of the very interval that she is named after, the octave (Examples 54 and 55). The confusion surrounding her absence, along with the motivic association itself, is meant to generate a humorous moment.

5.2.6.5 The “Streetcar” Motive

Finally, although not a human character of the opera, the Streetcar is an important “plot participant.” Its presence in the story needs musical support, considering its significant symbolism but severe confinement to elements of stage design. Therefore, an exclusively timbral motive, featuring the triangle, reappears every time a scene takes place inside or around the Streetcar (Examples 56 and 57). In various contexts, other instruments contribute to the realisation of the typical streetcar bell ring, or of the running motor noise. These gestures often include fluttered woodwinds and loud brass sounds (Example 56).
Example 56. “Streetcar” motive – winds, triangle. Scene 1, measure 205.

Example 57. “Streetcar” motive – trombone, triangle. Scene 6, measure 55.

Perhaps associating the Streetcar with a recurring musical element compensates for the fact that the streetcar Conductor does not receive a motive of his own. His “chameleonic” appearance—impersonating three other characters—would probably render the identifying idea redundant and confusing.
5.2.7 Evolution and Superposition of Motives

Motivic consistency and overall economy of technical means were the guiding principles while composing The Piano Teacher. Despite the relative variety of motivic choices and elaboration procedures, interdependency and metamorphosis of motives throughout the opera is relatively limited. However, the chapter dedicated to motivic organization could not omit making reference to these less prominently employed compositional procedures.

5.2.7.1 Motivic Evolution

The very first sung line of the opera contains a motivic germ that receives increased attention as the work unfolds. From its original, plain whole-tone tetrachord form, the motive undergoes an emancipation process, at the end of which it materializes as the multiple-phrase lyrical theme of a conclusive aria, as well as the driving force of the aria’s accompanying pattern. Examples 58, 59 and 60 showcase the three steps of motivic evolution, a process of “becoming.”

Example 58. Initial motive, whole-tone tetrachord form – voice. Scene 1, measure 7.

Example 59. Aria accompaniment, top line derived from motive – harp. Scene 11, measure 84.
Another example of motivic evolution is the Cabman’s eleventh scene aria, in which he praises the “cool of night” (Scene 11, measure 84). This fragment represents a distant counterpart to the first scene dialogue, in which Oliverson had complained about the “awful heat” of the afternoon (Scene 1, measure 7). Notwithstanding their contrasts of mood and expression, the two sung fragments stand as structural pillars, framing the crucial developments of the entire work, and mirroring each other by virtue of the same constitutive substance.

5.2.7.2 Motivic Superposition

A different development technique used briefly in the opera takes the form of simultaneous melodic unfolding. It may be viewed as a convergence, or superposition, of two separate motivic statements. There are three instances of this type of motivic cross-referencing, each of them placed at a dramaturgically relevant point.

The first instance, occurring at the end of Scene 2, involves the flute and bassoon, which are in opposition to Oliverson. While the woodwinds play a motivic line initially sung by the tenor, Oliverson repeats chaotically a tune, with identical lyrics, that he heard sung by the Old Woman. A soft French horn doubles his voice in heterophony (Example 61).
Example 61. Motivic superposition – voice, wind instruments. Scene 2, measure 70.

![Example 61](image)

The second instance, occurring at the end of Scene 6, combines layered variants of the same two motivic lines, in a purely instrumental, fading conclusion (Example 62). The first violin and violoncello, in octaves, oppose the second violin and French horn, in heterophony.


![Example 62](image)
The third instance of motivic simultaneity is probably the most carefully constructed one. It unites Oliverson and the Cabman in a slow duet. The eleventh scene begins with an extended segment of dialogue between the two characters. Subsequently, motivic material that had been used in a much earlier exchange between them is fragmented, condensed and reassigned, in order to create a feasible metrical and harmonic superposition (Example 63). In addition to the contrapuntal vocal unfolding, a pair of wind instruments doubles the two voices with slightly heterophonic lines, while low string instruments provide ground harmonic support (instrumental parts are absent from example 63).

Example 63. Motivic superposition, condensed material – tenor, baritone. Scene 11, measure 73.
5.3 Summary of Pitch, Rhythm and Motivic Relationships

Detailed exemplification has shown how the opera’s musical morphology is structured and how separate typologies of the sound language manifest in a coherent context. The pitch system, harmony, rhythm and formal organization, as crucial features of the musical continuum, are the direct result of an essentially melodic-intervallic thinking. While the freedom of linear chromaticism balances the relatively limited choice of harmonic combinations, rhythmic design follows closely the natural inflexion of the English text. Instrumental and vocal parts are treated equally in regard to the selection of rhythmic devices. Both sides feature rational and irrational formulas and both are at times shaped in a free phrase-type sequence. Particular rhythmic patterns and pitch collections combine frequently, contributing to the delineation of character and formal entity.
6. ORCHESTRATION AND VOCAL WRITING

6.1 Orchestral Parts

The orchestral ensemble utilized in The Piano Teacher consists of the following instruments:

Flute (doubling Piccolo)
Oboe (doubling English Horn)
Clarinet in B♭
Bassoon
French Horn in F
Trumpet in B♭
Trombone (tenor)
Percussion (one performer playing High Tom, Low Tom, Triangle, Cymbals, Tambourine, Marimba, and Tubular Bells)
Harp
Piano
Violin 1
Violin 2
Viola
Violoncello
Double Bass
6.1.1 Tutti versus Soli

Key elements of the plot are punctuated with elaborate tutti orchestral music, while other passages feature only certain timbres or combinations of instruments. The choices of these combinations are dictated by colouristic considerations and questions of atmosphere or mood. Occasionally, the orchestral accompaniment employs extended instrumental techniques and unusual combinations of sounds.

Since the orchestration involves only one of each instrument, the parts can be and, indeed, are often virtuosic. The ensemble functions as a collection of solo instruments, with the exception of the string section, which may be slightly amplified. Naturally, not all the instruments play together all the time; therefore, textural layers are either transparent or dense. Particular moments of the plot demand the use of specific ensemble configurations, such as “only woodwind” or “only string” sections.

6.1.2 The Piano as an Orchestral Instrument

A distinctive trait of the instrumental ensemble is the frequent use of the piano as a purely melodic instrument. In certain contexts, the piano, in addition to some wind instruments, provides conspicuous reinforcement to the vocal parts. Typically, this kind of instrumental enhancement of a vocal line is not expressed as a simple doubling, but rather as an emerging/submerging melodic support, quite frequently making use of intricate heterophony.
6.2 Vocal Parts

The vocal parts, including soprano, mezzo-soprano, tenor and bass-baritone, are generally conventional with respect to vocal technique. However, some sections encompass a variety of extended techniques, ranging from approximate-pitch intonation to expressive speech and even screaming. In the vast majority of scenes, vocal lines flow quickly from one another, in a conversational style, which is in keeping with the pacing of dialogues.

Some of the lengthiest sections are settings of monologues (arias), sung by various characters. Each singer presents at least one such solo aria, while the protagonist (Oliverson) carries a heavier vocal role. He intervenes at numerous points with introspective solos. Although a few episodes in the Libretto are specifically designed as duets or larger vocal ensembles, the predominant texture is one of frequently alternating solo vocal lines. This approach maximizes comprehension of the text, which is paramount to understanding the psychological conflict of the plot.

Oliverson, as the title character and focus of the opera’s plot, has the opportunity to interact and sing in duets with each and every character. His reactions and monologues represent theatrical and musical links, which bind the action and place all the characters in indirect relation with each other.
The opera—as an entity—exhibits a rich, diverse sound language, while retaining a singing style relatively similar to the belcanto tradition.

### 6.3 Instrumental Style versus Vocal Style

An important aspect to be considered when composing for vocal-instrumental media is the level of difficulty, especially in relation to pitch and intonation. While the demands of instrumental playing may be more easily extended, a sense of practicality dictates that vocal parts must remain at an acceptable level of technical accessibility.

The opera synthesizes elements of both vocal/operatic and chamber music genres. The final scene presents the entire cast in a unique and symbolic circumstance. All the characters participate in a concluding quartet, whose purpose is to impart the message of the “fantastic” story. Example 64 illustrates how the four singers reunite in a final vocal statement of the most prominent recurring motive of the opera, which also echoes the sonority of the twelfth clock strike.

Example 64. Final quartet, fugato – soprano, mezzo, tenor, bass. Scene 12, measure 211.
Symbolic, too, is the brief participation of the entire orchestral ensemble, which leads to
the quiet and more chamber-like finale. This choice of ending, which incorporates the
vocal-instrumental presentation of a theatrical maxim ("We are all dreaming. That’s how it all begins. As if in a dream…"), as well as the unfolding of a seeming fugato-style quartet, admittedly harkens back to the classical tradition of operatic finales.
7. CONCLUSION

It has been the intent of this project to forge a connection between the four hundred-year-old operatic genre and the symbolic-mythological world of Mircea Eliade’s literary output. *The Piano Teacher*: Chamber Opera in One Act grew as a musical work out of fascination for the supernatural. The score tries to reflect, by means of the sound-theatre medium, an array of mythical themes probing into human destiny. The fantastic tale upon which the opera is based has been a subject of preoccupation for quite a long time. While adapting the story and setting it to music has inevitably caused a partial depletion of meanings, the experience of drawing inspiration from it and composing purposefully to convey its philosophical message has been incredibly rewarding.

One of the greatest challenges faced while writing the music for the opera was choosing the most appropriate musical vocabulary, which, by its nature, would help enhance the stage atmosphere and beauty of the literary text. Although traditional in many respects, the sound language utilized throughout the work often explores less orthodox means of expression. These means, along with the moderate extension of accessibility boundaries, place the opera within a postmodern creative context. Every musical device, gesture, or relationship serves a dramaturgical function, which should not be easily overlooked. Fidelity toward the theatrical and psychological aspects of the opera plays just as important a role as does the quest for musical originality. Accomplishing both would represent the ultimate requisite for achieving compositional success.
Finally, finding delight in the opera’s profound message is perhaps more valuable than understanding its technical-compositional methods. Therefore, the composer’s principal goal was to create a work that hopefully demonstrates artistry, balance, imagination, and historical relevance. A piece of music with so many levels of appeal would, undoubtedly, not only call for recognition, but be welcomed into the body of performed and appreciated works.
BIBLIOGRAPHICAL SOURCES


“Eternal Return (Eliade).” Available online at:


SELECTIVE LIST OF RELEVANT MUSICAL WORKS

(ordered chronologically, by date of composition)

Debussy, Claude: *Pelléas et Mélisande*, opera in five acts, based on a play by Maurice Maeterlinck, 1902.

Bartók, Béla: *Bluebeard’s Castle* [Hungarian: *A kékszakállú herceg vára*], one-act opera, based on a libretto by Béla Balázs, 1911.

Stravinsky, Igor: *The Fox* [French: *Renard*], one-act chamber opera-ballet, with a text by the composer, based on Russian folk tales, 1916.

Falla, Manuel de: *Master Peter’s Puppet Show* [Spanish: *El retablo de Maese Pedro*], puppet-opera in one act, based on an adaptation from Miguel de Cervantes, 1923.

Enescu, George: *Oedipe*, opera in four acts, based on a libretto by Edmond Fleg, 1931.

Berg, Alban: *Lulu*, opera in three acts, based on an adaptation of two separate plays by Frank Wedekind, 1935 (incomplete).

Blacher, Boris: *Romeo and Juliet*, chamber opera in three parts, based on an adaptation from William Shakespeare, 1943.

Hurd, Michael: *The Widow of Ephesus*, chamber opera in one act, based on a libretto by David Hughes, 1971.


Nyman, Michael: *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat*, one-act chamber opera, based on a libretto by Christopher Rawlence, 1986.


Voiculescu, Dan: *The Bald Soprano* [French: *La cantatrice chauve*], chamber opera in two parts, based on a play by Eugène Ionesco, 1992.

Feraru, Tudor: *Cantiones Sacrae*, oratorio for soloists, choir and large orchestra in twelve parts, based on excerpts from the Bible, 2001.