

Mystics

Duo for two pianos

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1. Searching for a Consistent Truth
... For now, then and always ...
2. Rapid Changes have been Foretold
... And the world will watch in awe ...
3. Everything Changes whilst Everything Remains the Same
... Impermanence IS a consistent truth ...

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2015/18

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To celebrate Alexander Scriabin's (1872-1915) anniversary year, his *Mystic Chord*: C – D – E – F[#] – A – B^b – C (Hexachord 6-34: 013579) was used as the primary pitch material within this work. A *Mystic Complement*: D^b – E^b – F – G – A^b – B – D^b (Hexachord 6-34) completed the total chromatic and provided secondary pitch material used for contrast and balance. This duo for two pianos carries the listener through three movements of succinct and focused musical form primarily structured around the functional harmonic interaction between the two source materials.

In the first movement (composed in 2015), both pianos begin playing the primary atonal material: The six pitches of the *Mystic Chord*. At figure F, the 2nd piano introduces the *Mystic Complement* and the two parts heterodyne into a 12-tone soundworld, but effectively play in two different 'atonalities'. Before the movement ends with a final statement of the opening theme, both pianos play the six pitches of the *Mystic Complement* in a relaxed and melodic passage with a modal 'quasi-blues' feel to the atonal pitch collection. The first thematic statement holds a reference to an invisible G, with all the pitches belonging to the G Jazz melodic minor scale and the final statement is in an 'atonal' A. The melodic material at figure N outlines a clear reference to an A^b 'atonal modality', and so the form passes through two semi-tone modulations before resolving a whole-tone above where it started. Whilst one could not help but consciously notice references to Lutoslawski's semi-tonal formal modulations, the form (and eventual pitch-scheme) was a natural consequence of working with the *Mystic Chord* and *Complement*.

The second movement is a very short, fast and loud, rhythmically virtuosic movement sharing four alternate spellings of the *Mystic Chord* and *Complement* to present a 12-tone language in each piano. The briefest of key schemes (home-tones) moves from B to B^b, and so emulates the semi-tone modulations heard in the outer movements. This central movement also serves an important structural function through offering an essential timbral and temporal contrast between the complimentary soundworlds of the first and third movements. Composition for this second movement and final editing of the outer movements was completed in January 2018.

Rotating through predetermined elements of the pitch matrices (and completing the rotations), this lyrical and expressive third movement (composed in 2016) starts in *Chord* material and ends in *Complement* material after passing through the total chromatic twice along the way. The form is fluid and linear with energetic crescendos and similar semi-tone modulations as the first movement. The pitch organisation produced a clear contrast between flats and naturals in the primary and secondary material (*Chord* and *Complement*) and this provided the catalyst for the opening (and closing) piano clusters, where syncopated rhythms separate pentatonic clusters playing all five flat notes (black keys) from diatonic clusters, playing all seven natural notes (white keys). There was also a notable conflict between E flat and E natural in the primary and secondary (*Chord* and *Complement*) material. This pair of notes (and similar semi-tonal conflict and resolution) can be heard at pivotal formal landmarks within the movement and the pitch-scheme. Semi-tone modulation is also used at times to shape the linear motion and resolution of melodic contours.

Mystics Pitch Matrices

Mystic Chord: Primary material: C – D – E – F[#] – A – B^b – C: Hexachord 6-34: 013579 <142422>

	I0	I2	I4	I6	I9	I10	
P0	0	2	4	6	9	10	R0
P10	10	0	2	4	7	8	R10
P8	8	10	0	2	5	6	R8
P6	6	8	10	0	3	4	R6
P3	3	5	7	9	0	1	R3
P2	2	4	6	8	11	0	R2
	RI0	RI2	RI4	RI6	RI9	RI10	

	I0	I2	I4	I6	I9	I10	
P0	C	D	E	F [#]	A	B ^b	R0
P10	B ^b	C	D	E	G	A ^b	R10
P8	A ^b	B ^b	C	D	F	F [#]	R8
P6	G ^b	A ^b	B ^b	C	D [#]	E	R6
P3	E ^b	F	G	A	C	D ^b	R3
P2	D	E	F [#]	G [#]	B	C	R2
	RI0	RI2	RI4	RI6	RI9	RI10	

Mystic Complement: Secondary material: D^b – E^b – F – G – A^b – B – D^b: Hexachord 6-34: 013579 <142422>

	I0	I2	I4	I6	I9	I10	
P0	0	2	4	6	9	10	R0
P10	10	0	2	4	7	8	R10
P8	8	10	0	2	5	6	R8
P6	6	8	10	0	3	4	R6
P3	3	5	7	9	0	1	R3
P2	2	4	6	8	11	0	R2
	RI0	RI2	RI4	RI6	RI9	RI10	

	I0	I2	I4	I6	I9	I10	
P0	D ^b	E ^b	F	G	A ^b	B	R0
P10	B	D ^b	E ^b	F	G ^b	A	R10
P8	A	B	C [#]	D [#]	E	G	R8
P6	G	A	B	C [#]	D	F	R6
P3	G ^b	A ^b	B ^b	C	D ^b	E	R3
P2	E ^b	F	G	A	B ^b	D ^b	R2
	RI0	RI2	RI4	RI6	RI9	RI10	

Note: The *Mystic Complement* is a semi-tone transposition of the *Mystic Chord*. The materials were sometimes used in strict order, but most commonly appear in the score composed as unordered pitch-class cells and self-contained 'collections' of notes.

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1. Searching for a Consistent Truth

(... for now, then and always ...)

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1 ♩ = 60 ... *pensive and hesitant: an ambiguous genesis with a flexible pulse ...* **A** ... *with growing confidence and focus: a thematic introduction ...*

poco rubato, molto espress.

Pno. 1

4 8^{va} 4 4

ppp *mf* *ppp* *p* *ppp* *mp* *pp*

8^{vb} Ped. 8^{vb} Ped. 8^{vb}

allow time for decay to thin ...

1 ♩ = 60 ... *pensive and hesitant: an ambiguous genesis with a flexible pulse ...* **A** ... *with growing confidence and focus: a thematic introduction ...*

poco rubato, molto espress. *arpeggiate/break (ad lib.) all stacked chords/intervals ...*

Pno. 2

4 8^{va} 4 4

mf *mp* *ppp* *mp* *ppp* *pp* *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *ppp* *pp*

ppp 8^{vb} Ped. 8^{vb} Ped. 8^{vb}

allow time for decay to thin ...

2 **B** ... a unified and controlled (thematic) statement of intent ... *poco rubato*

C ... with more passion and energy ... *poco accel.* [♩ = 66] *arpeggiate/break (ad lib.) all stacked chords/intervals ... allow time for decay to thin ...*

D ♩ = 60 ... floating ... *poco rubato, molto espress.*

11 *mp* *mf* *f* *ff* *p*

5 4

5 4

♩

B ... a unified and controlled (thematic) statement of intent ... *poco rubato no arp.*

C ... with more passion and energy ... *poco accel.* [♩ = 66] *arpeggiate/break (ad lib.) all stacked chords/intervals ... allow time for decay to thin ...*

D ♩ = 60 ... floating ... *8va*

mp *mf* *ff* *f*

5 4

5 4

♩

E ... a dramatic statement: high dissonance and transition to twelve-tone ...

poco rit. [♩ = 52] *arpeggiate/break (ad lib.) all stacked chords/intervals ... molto rubato, molto espress.*

poco rubato, molto espress. *allow time for decay to thin ...*

20 *mp* *f* *pp* *ff* *ppp*

5 4 4 4

5 4

♩

E ... a dramatic statement: high dissonance and transition to twelve-tone ...

poco rit. [♩ = 52] *poco rubato, molto espress.* *arpeggiate/break (ad lib.) all stacked chords/intervals ...*

allow time for decay to thin ...

mp *mf* *pp* *ff* *ppp*

5 4 4 4

5 4

♩

F ♩ = 58 ... eighty-eight keys and the total chromatic: a combined linear statement (in hocket) and a stream of consciousness ...

poco rit. [♩ = 50]

poco rubato Note: This linear contour combines in fluid hocket with piano 2 to create a synchronous and symbiotic melodic statement ...

allow time for decay to thin ...

8^{va}-----]

31

p *ppp* *sim.*

8^{vb}-----]

F ♩ = 58 ... eighty-eight keys and the total chromatic: a combined linear statement (in hocket) and a stream of consciousness ...

poco rit. [♩ = 50]

poco rubato Note: This linear contour combines in fluid hocket with piano 1 to create a synchronous and symbiotic melodic statement ...

allow time for decay to thin ...

8^{va}-----]

p *ppp* *sim.*

8^{vb}-----]

8^{vb}-----]

4 **G** ♩ = 58 ... with increased momentum and intensity, but still relaxed and controlled ...
molto rubato, arpeggiate/break (ad lib.) all stacked chords/intervals throughout ...
molto espress.

poco rit.

40 *p* *pp*
Ped. *Ped.* *Ped.* *Ped.*
8va

G ♩ = 58 ... with increased momentum and intensity, but still relaxed and controlled ...
poco rubato, molto espress.

poco rit.

47 *mf* *mp* *pp*
8va *Ped.*

... a positive ray of sunshine in an old black and white movie ...

... a solemn polemic for all that is left behind ...

[♩ = 50] **H** ♩ = 60 ... a lyrical interjection ... *poco rit.* [♩ = 50]

I ... a serene and reductive transition ... *poco rit.*

47 *mp* *mf* *p* *pp* *p*
poco rubato *molto rubato, molto espress.*

... a positive ray of sunshine in an old black and white movie ...

... a solemn polemic for all that is left behind ...

[♩ = 50] **H** ♩ = 60 ... a lyrical interjection ... *poco rit.* [♩ = 50]

I ... a serene and reductive transition ... *poco rit.*
molto rubato, molto espress.

47 *mp* *mf* *pp* *p*
poco rubato *Ped.*

J ♩ = 60 ... a return to thematics (the debate continues) ...

K ... focussed, concise and succinct (a possible solution in sight) ...

poco rit.

(no arp.) poco rubato

Musical score for section J and K, measures 57-66. The piano part features a series of triplets in the bass line, with dynamics ranging from *pp* to *p*. The right hand has chords and some melodic lines. Section K begins with a more focused texture.

J ♩ = 60 ... a return to thematics (the debate continues) ...

K ... focussed, concise and succinct (a possible solution in sight) ...

poco rit.

(no arp.) poco rubato

Musical score for section J and K, measures 67-76. Similar to the previous section, it features piano and bass staves with triplets and various dynamics. Section K continues with a focused texture.

L ♩ = 60 ... assertive, confident and a little more relaxed ...

... with flamboyant passion and energy ...

M poco accel. [♩ = 66]

molto rubato, molto espress. arpeggiate/break (ad lib.) all stacked chords/intervals ...

allow time for decay to thin ...

Musical score for section L and M, measures 77-86. Section L features a more assertive piano part with dynamics from *mf* to *f*. Section M is marked *poco accel.* and features a more energetic piano part with dynamics from *f* to *fff*, including arpeggiated chords.

L ♩ = 60 ... assertive, confident and a little more relaxed ...

... with flamboyant passion and energy ...

M poco accel. [♩ = 66]

molto rubato, molto espress. arpeggiate/break (ad lib.) all stacked chords/intervals ...

allow time for decay to thin ...

Musical score for section L and M, measures 87-96. Similar to the previous section, it features piano and bass staves with triplets and various dynamics. Section M continues with a focused texture.

N ♩ = 60 ... expressive and poignant lyricism with a relaxed pulse: the mystics have spoken ...

molto rubato, molto espress. arpeggiate/break (ad lib.) all stacked chords/intervals throughout ...

77

pp p mp p mp p

8^{vb}.....

N ♩ = 60 ... expressive and poignant lyricism with a relaxed pulse: the mystics have spoken ...

molto rubato, molto espress.

ppp p mp mf pp mp mf mp

8^{vb}.....



rit. [♩ = 40] rit.

88

pp mp p mp pp p pp ppp

8^{vb}.....

rit. [♩ = 40] rit.

pp mp mf pp mp p pp ppp

8^{vb}.....

O ♩ = 60 ... a quiet (and fragile) thematic statement (an issue remains in doubt) ... rit. [♩ = 40] **attacca**

allow time for decay to dissipate naturally ... (no arp.) poco rubato

99

pp 3 p 3 ppp

2/4 2/4 2/4 2/4 2/4 2/4

4/4 4/4 4/4 4/4 4/4 4/4

Ped.

O ♩ = 60 ... a quiet (and fragile) thematic statement (an issue remains in doubt) ... rit. [♩ = 40] **attacca**

allow time for decay to dissipate naturally ... (no arp.) poco rubato

pp 3 p 3 ppp

2/4 2/4 2/4 2/4 2/4 2/4

4/4 4/4 4/4 4/4 4/4 4/4

Ped.

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2. Rapid Changes have been Foretold

(... and the world will watch in awe ...)

2 ♩ = 96 ... the briefest of statements and a flurry of activity ... **P** ♩ = 69 ... the clockworks of contemporary discourse ... **Q** ♩ = 96

4
4

poco rubato, molto espress.

107

Note: The two pianos should combine into a synchronous and symbiotic rhythmic statement here.

2 ♩ = 96 ... the briefest of statements and a flurry of activity ... **P** ♩ = 69 ... the clockworks of contemporary discourse ... **Q** ♩ = 96

4
4

poco rubato, molto espress.

R ♩ = 69 ... a scattering of footfall and a call to order ...

S ♩ = 96 ... hurry, the song is about to begin ... rit. [♩ = 69]

attacca

113

f *ff* *f* *mf* *p* *pp* *ppp*

R ♩ = 69 ... a scattering of footfall and a call to order ...

S ♩ = 96 ... hurry, the song is about to begin ... rit. [♩ = 69]

attacca

f *ff* *f* *mf* *p*

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3. Everything Changes whilst Everything Remains the Same

(... impermanence IS a consistent truth ...)

3 ♩ = 60 ... a new beginning dissolves as an ancient conclusion appears ...

4 *molto rubato, molto espress.* *arpeggiate/break (ad lib.) all stacked chords/intervals ...*

4 *poco rit.* [♩ = 52] allow time for decay to thin ...

119

Ped.

Note: The dynamics for both pianos are proportional to how quietly piano 2 can play the clusters.
 One can dampen the resonance of the piano strings a little with a lightweight scarf, in conjunction with the sostenuto pedal to help control the dynamics, but this reduces the natural harmonics within the pedalled resonances of the clusters.

3 ♩ = 60 ... a new beginning dissolves as an ancient conclusion appears ...

4 *molto rubato, molto espress.*

4 (pentatonic cluster: black keys) (sim.)

poco rit. [♩ = 52] allow time for decay to thin ...

(diatonic clusters: white keys) (sim.)

Ped.

T ♩ = 60 ... reflections from the past are always in the present ... **poco accel.**

U ♩ = 72 ... sometimes contemporary life can seem so complex ... (no arp.)

poco rubato, molto espress.
(no arp.)

130 *pp* *p* *mp* *pp* *ppp* *mp* *f*

pp

T ♩ = 60 ... reflections from the past are always in the present ... **poco accel.**

U ♩ = 72 ... sometimes contemporary life can seem so complex ...

poco rubato, molto espress.
(pentatonic cluster: black keys)
(diatonic cluster: white keys)

ppp *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *ppp* *p* *mp* *mf*

(sim.)

V **accel.** [♩ = 88] **accel.** [♩ = 108] **rit.** [♩ = 60] allow time for decay to thin ...

molto rubato, molto espress. (no arp.) (no arp.)

139 *f* *ff* *fff* *f* *p* *pp*

8^{vb}

V **accel.** [♩ = 88] **accel.** [♩ = 108] **rit.** [♩ = 60] allow time for decay to thin ...

molto rubato, molto espress. (pentatonic cluster: black keys) (diatonic clusters: white keys) (sim.) (pentatonic clusters: black keys)

f *ff* *fff* *p* *pp* *ppp*

(diatonic clusters: white keys) (pentatonic clusters: black keys) (sim.) (diatonic clusters: white keys) *8^{vb}*

12 ... moods can change in the blink of an eye ...
 W ♩ = 60 ... drifting in the melancholy poetic ...
 molto rubato, molto espress.

poco accel. ♩ = 66

poco rit. ♩ = 52

melancholy

148

ppp *p* *ppp* *mp* *pp* *mp* *pp*

W ♩ = 60 ... drifting in the melancholy poetic ...
 molto espress. lyrical rubato

poco accel. ♩ = 66

poco rit. ♩ = 52

molto rubato

poco rubato

pp *p* *mp* *mp* *mf* *mp* *f* *mf* *mp* *p*

ppp *pppp* *mp* *p*

... a plausible solution and the karmic rewards of self-restraint ...

X ♩ = 60 poco accel. ♩ = 66 poco accel. ♩ = 72 rit. ♩ = 60

molto rubato, molto espress.

allow time for decay to thin ...

159

p *mp* *mf* *f* *p* *pp* *ff*

X ♩ = 60 poco accel. ♩ = 66 poco accel. ♩ = 72 rit. ♩ = 60

molto rubato, molto espress.

allow time for decay to thin ...

mp *pp* *mf* *f* *mf* *f* *mp* *ppp*

Y ♩ = 66 *poco accel.* [♩ = 72] *accel.* [♩ = 88] *rit.*

poco rubato *molto rubato, molto espress.*

171

p *mf* *p* *mp* *f* *ff* *mf* *fff* *mp* *p* *pp* *ppp*

8^{va} 8^{vb}

Y ♩ = 66 *poco accel.* [♩ = 72] *accel.* [♩ = 88] *rit.*

poco rubato *molto rubato, molto espress.*

pp *p* *mf* *p* *mp* *mf* *f* *ff* *mf* *p* *pp* *ppp*

... as above, so below: in reprise and dissipation ...

Z ♩ = 66 *rit.* [♩ = 50] *rit.* AA ♩ = 60 ... and so it begins, so shall it be in the end ... *rit.* [♩ = 40]

poco rubato

molto rubato

(pentatonic clusters: black keys)

(sim.)

poco rubato

allow time for decay to dissipate naturally ...

180

p *pp* *p* *ppp* *pp* *ppp* *ppp* *pppp*

8^{va} 8^{vb}

(diatonic clusters: white keys) (sim.)

... as above, so below: in reprise and dissipation ...

Z ♩ = 66 *rit.* [♩ = 50] *rit.* AA ♩ = 60 ... and so it begins, so shall it be in the end ... *rit.* [♩ = 40]

poco rubato

molto rubato

poco rubato

molto rubato

poco rubato

allow time for decay to dissipate naturally ...

p *mp* *pp* *p* *pp* *ppp*

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