

Continuoso Cycles 1

For string orchestra and harpsichord

Ian Percy

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[Inflections of Antiquity]

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... And then they noticed the light ...

Duration ca. 5 minutes

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It was a delight when *Gli Archi del Cherubino* agreed to perform a new piece composed specifically for them at the Liverpool Hope University *Cornerstone Arts Festival 2015*. Along with friend and colleague (violinist-musicologist) Dr Alberto Sanna, the composer had been involved in a recording project with the orchestra during the scorching summer of 2015 in L'Aquila, Italy and had thoroughly enjoyed the visit, their company and the musical memories retained.

Respectful of the repertoire usually performed by the orchestra, this piece was composed upon a sequence of consonant chords, which expand at each iteration (triad – tetrachord – pentachord – hexachord) to introduce the first six pitches of the cycle of fourths: C – F – B^b – E^b – A^b – D^b. Although the score was initially realised entirely in A^b, the expanding harmony creates pseudo-modulation through the keys of F, B^b, E^b and A^b, whilst blurring the sense of 'home tonic' by rotating phrase resolutions through the modes of the parent scale (producing notation devoid of accidentals).

Once composed, the score was transposed up a semi-tone in order to take advantage of the open strings of the instruments and the increased acoustic resonance that brings from the orchestra. Transposing the score to A eliminated the need to retune the harpsichord before performance.

Building chords upon the whole-tone and perfect-fourth intervals (instead of the largely triadic harmony the ensemble is used to) shaped modal and consonant phrases sympathetic to their usual repertoire, whilst producing original music that is clearly a product of the twenty-first century. The resolution to (and prominence of) the home-tone heard in the final stages of the movement caused initial concern for the composer but seemed appropriate within the context of the subtitle for the work: *Inflections of Antiquity*. The final resolution of the movement to C Phrygian mode is far more in keeping with the contemporary setting of the score as a whole and how the references to antique compositional form and structure are contemporised within the harmonic and rhythmic motion of the combined collective.

The concept of the writing is to present a reductive modal language, which references (inflects) a retrospective soundworld wrapped within a contemporary (or timeless) musical form that looks forwards into the twenty-first century through exploring cycles of pitch-patterns reminiscent of mid 20th century modernism, cycles of gradual process reminiscent of post-modern minimalism and pseudo modulations via modal motion (rather than tonal motion) reminiscent of post-minimalist simplicity, therefore avoiding literal emulation, or the dreaded pastiche.

Continuoso Cycles 1 can be described as reductive, retrospective and minimal music of relative simplicity. The cycle explores the concept of modal pseudo-modulation within tonal stasis.

Continuoso Cycles 1

(Inflections of Antiquity)

for string orchestra and harpsichord

Ian Percy

♩ = 104 ... **misterioso** ...
... and then they noticed the light ...

♩ = 108

A ♩ = 112

The musical score is written for Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, and Harpsichord. It is in 4/4 time and the key of A major (three sharps). The score is divided into three sections based on tempo and dynamics:

- Section 1 (Tempo 104):** Labeled **misterioso**. The Violin II part begins with *molto rubato* and *ppp*. The Viola and Violoncello parts enter with *pp*. The Harpsichord part has a few notes in the third and seventh measures.
- Section 2 (Tempo 108):** Labeled *poco rubato*. The Violin II part continues with *pp*. The Viola and Violoncello parts continue with *pp*. The Harpsichord part has a few notes in the third and seventh measures.
- Section 3 (Tempo 112):** Labeled **A**. The Violin II part continues with *p*. The Viola and Violoncello parts continue with *p*. The Harpsichord part has a few notes in the third and seventh measures.

The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings. The Harpsichord part is written on a grand staff with treble and bass clefs.

B ... with increasing intensity ...

poco rubato

Musical score for a four-part ensemble (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) in G major, measures 12-19. The score includes dynamic markings (*pp*, *p*, *mp*) and performance instructions like *poco rubato* and **B** ... with increasing intensity ...

B ... with increasing intensity ...

embellish, expand, reduce and extemporise ad. lib.

Musical score for a piano accompaniment in G major, measures 12-19. The score includes performance instructions like *embellish, expand, reduce and extemporise ad. lib.* and **B** ... with increasing intensity ...

C ... in cycles of momentum and release ...

poco accel.

22

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

C ... in cycles of momentum and release ...

poco accel.

mf

4 **D** ♩ = 116 ... and the light grew stronger ...

poco accel. ♩ = 120

31

Musical score for strings and woodwinds. It consists of four staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello/Double Bass. The music is in D major and 2/4 time. The score includes dynamic markings: *mf*, *f*, *ff*, *p*, and *mp*. There are also hairpins indicating crescendos and decrescendos. The piece concludes with a fermata on the final chord.

D ♩ = 116 ... and the light grew stronger ...

poco accel. ♩ = 120

Piano accompaniment for the piece. It consists of two staves: Treble and Bass. The music is in D major and 2/4 time. The piano part features chords and arpeggiated figures that support the vocal and instrumental lines. It concludes with a fermata on the final chord.

poco accel.

[♩ = 126]

39

Musical score for four staves (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass). The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 2/4. The score includes dynamic markings: *mf*, *f*, *ff*, and *fff*. The Soprano staff starts with a *mf* dynamic and reaches *fff* by the end. The Alto staff starts with *mf*, reaches *f*, and ends with *mp*. The Tenor staff starts with *f* and ends with *mp*. The Bass staff starts with *mf*, reaches *f*, and ends with *ff*. The music features various rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests.

poco accel.

[♩ = 126]

Piano accompaniment score for two staves (Right and Left Hand). The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 2/4. The music features chords, arpeggios, and melodic lines in both hands.

E ♩ = 112 ... a temporary release of tension ...

F ... with increasing anxiety ...

48

mp *mf* *f*

mp *mf* *f*

mp *mf* *f* *mf*

mp *mf* *f*

E ♩ = 112 ... a temporary release of tension ...

F ... with increasing anxiety ...

poco accel. [♩ = 120] **G** ♩ = 112 ... sometimes we just have to 'let it go' (and go with it) ...

58

ff *f* *mf* *mp* *f*

mp *mf*

f *mp* *mf*

mf *f* *mf*

Detailed description: This block contains a musical score for four staves. The top staff is Violin I, the second is Violin II, the third is Viola, and the fourth is Cello/Double Bass. The music is in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It features a variety of note values including eighth, quarter, and half notes, with many notes beamed together. Dynamic markings are placed below the staves: Violin I has *ff*, *f*, *mf*, *mp*, and *f*; Violin II has *mp* and *mf*; Viola has *f*, *mp*, and *mf*; Cello/Double Bass has *mf*, *f*, and *mf*. Phrasing slurs are used to group notes across measures. The tempo is marked as 'poco accel.' and the metronome is set to 120. A key signature change to G major is indicated by a box with 'G' and a sharp sign.

poco accel. [♩ = 120] **G** ♩ = 112 ... sometimes we just have to 'let it go' (and go with it) ...

Detailed description: This block contains the piano accompaniment for two staves. The right hand (treble clef) plays chords and arpeggiated figures, while the left hand (bass clef) plays a steady eighth-note bass line. The music is in G major and 4/4 time. The tempo is 'poco accel.' and the metronome is 120. A key signature change to G major is indicated by a box with 'G' and a sharp sign.

H ... in consonant counterpoint and confident continuum ...

poco accel.

69

mf *f* *mf* *f* *mf*

f *mf* *f*

H ... in consonant counterpoint and confident continuum ...

poco accel.

♩ = 116

I ... chorus and continuum ...

81

Musical score for four staves (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) in G major (one sharp). The score consists of 16 measures. Dynamics and articulation markings are as follows:

- Measures 1-4: *f* (forte)
- Measures 5-8: *mf* (mezzo-forte)
- Measures 9-12: *f* (forte)
- Measures 13-16: *mf* (mezzo-forte)

Articulation includes slurs and accents over various notes. The Tenor staff has rests in measures 5, 8, 11, and 14.

♩ = 116

I ... chorus and continuum ...

Musical score for piano accompaniment in G major (one sharp). The score consists of 16 measures. Dynamics and articulation markings are as follows:

- Measures 1-4: *ff* (fortissimo)
- Measures 5-8: *mf* (mezzo-forte)
- Measures 9-12: *f* (forte)
- Measures 13-16: *mf* (mezzo-forte)

The score features complex chordal textures and melodic lines in both hands, with slurs and accents.

J

poco accel.

K

♩ = 120

93

Musical score for four staves (Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello/Double Bass). The score is in 2/4 time with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The tempo is marked 'poco accel.' and the metronome is set to 120. The score is divided into two sections, J and K. Section J covers measures 93-100, and Section K covers measures 101-108. Dynamic markings include *f*, *mf*, and *mp*. The Violin I and Cello/Double Bass parts feature prominent melodic lines with slurs and accents, while the Violin II and Viola parts provide harmonic support.

J

poco accel.

K

♩ = 120

Musical score for two staves (Piano). The score is in 2/4 time with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The tempo is marked 'poco accel.' and the metronome is set to 120. The score is divided into two sections, J and K. Section J covers measures 93-100, and Section K covers measures 101-108. The piano accompaniment features complex chordal textures and arpeggiated figures, providing a rich harmonic background for the string parts.

L

poco rit.

104

Musical score for four staves (Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello/Double Bass) in G major, measures 104-110. The score includes dynamic markings (*p*, *mf*, *f*) and a "poco rit." instruction. The Violin I part features a melodic line with slurs and accents, starting with a *f* dynamic. The Violin II part has a more rhythmic accompaniment with *p* and *mf* dynamics. The Viola part provides a steady accompaniment with *mf* and *p* dynamics. The Cello/Double Bass part has a melodic line with *mf* and *f* dynamics.

L

poco rit.

Musical score for the piano accompaniment, measures 104-110. The score includes dynamic markings (*mf*, *f*) and a "poco rit." instruction. The right hand features a complex texture with chords and arpeggios, while the left hand provides a steady accompaniment with *mf* and *f* dynamics.

M ♩ = 116 ... searching for an exit ...

115

f

mf

mf

f

mf

f

f

M ♩ = 116 ... searching for an exit ...

f

poco rit.

N

♩ = 112

... an opening emerges ...
(a closing appears) ...

124

Musical score for four staves (Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello/Double Bass) in G major, measures 124-133. The score includes dynamic markings (mf, f, mp, p) and a 'poco rit.' instruction. The music features a melodic line in the upper staves and a more rhythmic, harmonic accompaniment in the lower staves.

poco rit.

N

♩ = 112

... an opening emerges ...
(a closing appears) ...

Piano accompaniment for measures 124-133, showing the right and left hand parts with chords and arpeggios. The right hand features a melodic line with some arpeggiated chords, while the left hand provides a harmonic foundation with sustained chords and moving bass lines.



poco rit.

♩ = 96

134

p *pp* *ppp*

p *pp* *pp* *ppp*

pp *p* *pp*

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

pizz. *molto rubato*



poco rit.

♩ = 96

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[Inflections of Antiquity]

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