

A PORTFOLIO OF THREE WORKS (PART I)

A Dissertation

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by

Amit Menachem Gilutz

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A PORTFOLIO OF THREE WORKS (PART I)

Amit Menachem Gilutz, D.M.A.

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This portfolio contains three works for various media composed between 2012 and 2015: *the task of interpretation (a counterpoint to Edward Said)*, for prepared string quartet, gamelan and electronics is a meditation on the possibility and current limitations of multiculturalism; *Miscellaneous Romance no.3 (Paris)*, for two singer-actors, percussion and electronics is a music theater piece exploring romance in Paris's cyberspace; and *1, this useless tool [this folded flower]*, is incidental tape music composed for Enrico D Wey's project on the Asian gay embodied experience in Western culture.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

A native of Israel, Amit Gilutz (b.1983) studied composition in Jerusalem, Ithaca and New-York. His work is interdisciplinary and conceptual, combining political ideas, theatrical effects and movement, as well as textual sources ranging from the work of Walter Benjamin to anonymous online personal ads, aiming at achieving disciplinary cross-fertilization and also reflecting a desire for more democratic forms of music making and audience engagement. Amit is particularly fascinated with the question of music's ability to engage topical events and participate in the practice of social justice. His music has been performed across Asia, Europe and North America, and was recognized by many honors and awards including residencies at Yaddo Corporation and Blue Mountain (2015), a Bogliasco Study Center Fellowship (2014), a nomination for the prestigious 2013 Gaudeamus Prize, a Baden-Württemberg Stipendium (2013-2014), the New York Federation of Music Clubs Brian M. Israel Prize (2013), First Prize in Europe in the World (2013), First Prize and the Ensemble Selection Prize 2013 Aviv Competition, the 2012 Sun River Prize (Chengdu, China), the Prix Nadia Boulanger of the 2010 Ecoles D'Art Americaines de Fontainebleau and the 2007 ACUM Award.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Biographical Sketch	iii
Acknowledgments	iv
<i>the task of interpretation (a counterpoint to Edward Said)</i>	1
Program Note	2
Instrumentation	3
Performance Notes	4
Score	9
<i>Miscellaneous Romance no.3 (Paris)</i>	34
Program Note	35
Instrumentation	36
Performance Notes	37
Libretto	39

Score	42
Improvisation Instructions (parts)	49
<i>1, this useless tool [this folded flower]</i>	55
Program Note	56

the task of interpretation (a counterpoint to Edward Said)

(2012)

PROGRAM NOTE

In writing a piece for gamelan and string quartet -- traditional Indonesian instruments and an ensemble which is perhaps the epitome of traditional Western music -- I wanted to thematize the very idea of combining the two.

Cultures, peoples, languages and so on, are not strictly defined or self contained wholes, but have always existed in constant flux, infiltrating and fertilizing one another, while expanding and creating new (or renewed) forms and ideas. Seen from this perspective, the world is not an aggregate of unbridgeable gaps and differences, but a web of connections, variations, and echoes.

My piece serves as a counterpoint for several quotes by Edward Said, the late Palestinian-American literary scholar. Said untangled some of the connections between orientalism and colonialism; between the West's view of the "Other" and hundreds of years of imperialistic endeavors which still continue today. Framing Said's quotes on how to move beyond this history and present, my piece is set as an imagined encounter which results in an increased range of possibilities for everyone involved: the gamelan instruments are being bowed, while the string instruments become gongs. This idea of mixing and cross-fertilization was at the heart of Said's ethical project, and of his optimism: "this seems to me to be the most interesting human task; it's the task of interpretation; it's the task of giving history some shape and sense; for a particular reason -- to understand my history in terms of other people's history. In other words, to try and understand, to move beyond, to generalize, one's own individual experience to the experience of others. And I think the great goal is in fact to become someone else. To transform itself from a unitary identity to an identity that includes the other without suppressing the difference".

INSTRUMENTATION

String Quartet

Fixed Media

Gamelan (three players):

The piece was written for the Javanese Gamelan at Cornell University. Since exact pitch is only secondary in importance for both the string parts and the gamelan parts in this piece, other gamelans can be used in performance. The following is the original set up and it is provided as a suggestion only:

Gamelan player 1: kempul (3) shared with player 2, slenthem slendro, gender panerus pelog, gender panerus slendro

Gamelan player 2: kempul (3) shared with player 1, bonang (2), gender pelog

Gamelan player 3: slenthem pelog, gong ageng (largest available)

String players: 4 small, hand held gongs

Mallets:

Players 1 and 2: in addition to the traditional mallets used for each instrument, two wooden mallets (such as Kenong mallets) are needed to play the clusters on the slenthem and the gender.

Player 3: the gong ageng calls for a wooden mallet, which can be simply the other side of its normal, cushioned mallet. It also requires a small chain (plastic or metal).

PERFORMANCE NOTES

Preparing the string instruments

Accessories needed:

- 1) 4-6 mini laundry clips (for each instrument)
- 2) 3 metal paper clips (for Violins and Viola)
- 3) 4 unsharpened pencils (for each instrument)
- 4) 4 hard guitar picks (for each instrument)
- 5) two small metal tweezers (for Cello)

The laundry and paper clips tend to break down or become loose with time, so make sure you have some extra ones.



Violins:

The four mini laundry clips are placed on each string between the bridge and the point where the fingerboard starts, very close to, but not touching the fingerboard itself (see picture). This should create a multiphonic sound which is 'gongy' when plucked and when bowed, will produce different pitch combinations depending on bow speed and pressure. On the low three strings, place the clip all the way down on the string, so that the string is firmly held. The E string is too thin for that, so it needs to be pinched by the clips' edge.

The paper clip should grab the A and E strings, behind the bridge (see picture above). Sliding the clip up and down will change its pitch. The violinists should tune their paper clips so that an expressive interval is obtained between the two (something like a minor third, for instance). This interval needs not be in equal temperament tuning.

Viola:

The instructions for the violins apply with two differences:

- 1) Since the C string is thicker, it might require two laundry clips to reach the desirable sound.
- 2) The paper clip should be bigger, and should be placed on the C and G strings, behind the bridge (see picture in previous page).

Cello:

The instructions for the violins apply with three differences:

- 1) Since the strings are thicker, you may need to use a couple of mini laundry clips to reach the desirable sound.
- 2) The C string is not prepared, but rather should be tuned down a major seventh, to a low (contrabass) D.
- 3) No paper clip is used.

When the tweezers are called for, place them gently on the bridge so that they are in contact with the designated string, adding a rattling noise to it (see picture on the right).



Fixed Media

The recordings of Edward Said and the patch for playing them are available as a Pure Data patch. It is divided into seven tracks which are clearly marked in the score.

Depending on the acoustics of the venue, amplification for the string quartet might be needed.

Notation

Timing of events:

Except for the opening section (52 measures) which is written in conventional meter, time in the score is not precisely measured. Instead, each bar is marked with a suggested length in seconds.

Vertical large arrows mark queues for synchronization.

Note that the score is *not* proportional; a certain page might last 11 seconds while another a whole minute or longer. It is important to follow both the second numbers at the beginning of bars (to get a general sense of timing of events), and of the arrow queues (for a more precise synchronization). In those sections when the tape part is played, the text itself appears in both score and parts, and should be used for orientation.

Aleatory:

Boxes with horizontal arrows stemming out of them mean, "continue with what's in the box".

In most cases, this repetition must not be a mechanical repetition (unless designated as such), but rather, follow a certain transformative outline as indicated in the score. In other words, the repetition should always be played in relation the larger scheme of any given section or phrase, leading from one sonic formation to another, in a gradual process.

Strings:

The left hand is never used for fingering, and therefore the entire parts are notated as open strings, even though the pitch of those strings is not the resulting sound.

Because of the preparation, the position of bowing and plucking is slightly different than conventional use:

Sul pont: between the bridge and the laundry clips

Sul tasto, or S.T.: above the laundry clips (on the beginning of the fingerboard)

Sul tasto extreme: anywhere on the neck of the instrument – between the very end of the strings, close to the tuning pegs, and about the middle of the finger board.

Exaggerated bowing ('crushed' sound) is marked in the score by a double down-bow sign.

Further specific instructions are to be found in the score and parts.

Violins and Viola:

Bowing behind the bridge should always be done on the two prepared strings (A and E for violins, C and G for Viola). This appears as a white rectangle, which moves along the staff to designate four positions in relation to the paper clip:

In position 1 (rectangle at the top of the staff), the paper clip should be bowed directly.

In position 2 (at the middle top of the staff), bow just under the paper clip (closer to the tailpiece). This should produce the same pitch as position 1, but in a more bright and nasal color.

In position 3 (middle bottom), bow further down, so that you are touching the end of the string which is wrapped with wire. This should still produce the original pitch, but the timbre becomes more rich and busy.

In position 4 (bottom of the staff), bow even further down to get a rather rough sound by exciting the tailpiece without bowing it directly. Here the original pitch may or may not be discernible.

Gamelan:

The notation for the gamelan is a hybrid notation, showing the general contour on a staff, and also indicating the traditional numbers underneath, whenever needed.

Further specific instructions appear in the score and parts.

the task of interpretation

(a counterpoint to Edward Said)

to the Momenta Quartet and Cornell Gamelan Ensemble

Amit Gilutz (2012)

Slow, ponderous, timeless

The musical score is divided into three systems. The first system (measures 1-5) features Violin I and Violin II. Both parts begin with a 'paper clip 1' marking. The Violin I part starts with a *ppp* dynamic, followed by a *poco* decrescendo to *p* at measure 2, then a *ppp* dynamic at measure 3, and a *p* dynamic at measure 5. The Violin II part follows a similar pattern: *ppp* at measure 1, *poco* decrescendo to *p* at measure 2, *ppp* at measure 3, and *p* at measure 5. Performance instructions include 'pizz. S.T.' (pizzicato sul tasto) and 'sim.' (sordina). The second system (measures 6-11) features Violin I and Violin II. Violin I starts with a *p* dynamic, followed by a *pp* dynamic at measure 7, and a *pp* dynamic at measure 11. Violin II starts with a *ppp* dynamic, followed by a *p* dynamic at measure 7, and *pp* dynamics at measures 10 and 11. A 'pizz. S.T. medium-speed arpeggiation' section is marked in measure 7. The third system (measures 12-15) features Violin I, Violin II, and Viola. Violin I starts with a *p* dynamic, followed by *pp* dynamics at measures 13 and 14, and a *mp* dynamic at measure 15. Violin II starts with a *p* dynamic at measure 13, followed by a *pp* dynamic at measure 14, and a *ppp* dynamic at measure 15. Viola starts with a *ppp* dynamic at measure 15. A 'pizz. S.T. medium-speed arpeggiation' section is marked in measure 13, and a 'paper clip 1' marking is present in measure 14.

18

Vln. I *ppp* *p* *p* *p* *p* *pizz. S.T. sim.*

Vln. II *ppp* *p* *ppp* *p* *p* *pizz. S.T. with fingernails medium-speed arpeggiation*

Vla. *p* *ppp* *p* *p* *p* *f*

24

Vln. I *p* *pp* *p* *p*

Vln. II *mf* *p* *p* *p* *p* *p* *pizz. S.T.* *paper clip 2*

Vla. *pp* *p* *p* *p* *p* *p*

32

Vln. I *p* *p* *p* *p* *p* *pizz. S.T. faster plucking* *paper clip 2*

Vln. II *p* *p* *p* *p* *p* *p* *mf* *pizz. S.T.* *paper clip 2*

Vla. *p* *p* *p* *p* *p* *p* *mf*

38

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

pizz. S.T. faster plucking

with fingernails

ord.

paper clip 3

43

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

paper clip 4

paper clip 3

ord.

paper clip 4

with fingernails

f

ff

48

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

ff

unmeasured (c.36")

Vln. I
53 ~3" stop Pizz. tremolo* (banjo position) ~20" stop (a few seconds after Vln.II)

Vln. II
Pizz. tremolo* (banjo position) ~20" stop (a few seconds after Vla.)

Vla.
Pizz. tremolo* (banjo position) ~17" stop col legno/pencil on strings ~18"

Vc.
col legno/pencil on strings mp mechanical, expressionless** (don't synchronize with viola)

G.1
53 Kempul f 3

G.2
Bonang P flipped f 2

G.3
Gong ageng f

tape
53

swipe gong with cloth mallet in a repetitive motion to create a repetitive 'swoosh' sound

mechanical, expressionless

*In banjo position, use three fingers of each hand to rapidly pluck all four strings.
This should produce a crisp and dense texture, which includes the interference of fingers stopping strings while plucking others.

**Between bars 55 and 65, change the position and range of motion at your own time, without changing the speed or rhythm and without a noticeable break in sound.
Possible positions are: behind the bridge, between the bridge and laundry clips (sul pont.), and on the fingerboard (sul taste) - in narrow or wide range of motion.
To avoid a break and to further vary the sound, you may also use the bow in one hand for the wide dance motion, and an unsharpened pencil in the other, for the narrow range motion.
It is OK to get some pitched sound from the bowing action, but these should never take over the general mechanical hissing sound.
Don't change these often; try to time the changes so as to counterpoint the text in the tape part in a meaningful way. Anything between 2 to 5 such changes will due.

(~15")

(~17")

54 ~6" paper clip 1

Vln. I

ppp *poco*

Vln. II

(continue)

~6" paper clip 1

ppp *poco* (don't synchronize with Vln.I)

Vla.

(continue)

Vc.

54 Slentem S

G.1

1 *f*

G.2

(continue)

G.3

54 Track 1 (13")

tape

History deposits in us - our own history, our family's history, our nation's history - an infinity of traces, all kinds of marks, a whole, umm, book, if you like.

56 (~5") (continue)

(~6") (paper clip 1) pizz. S.T. + (sim., but occasionally add a left hand pizz. of one or two strings)

pp *poco*

Vln. I

(continue)

Vln. II

(continue)

Vla.

(continue)

Vc.

56

G.1

G.2

(continue)

G.3

56

tape

Track 2 (4")

But - there's no inventory,
there's no orderly guide to it.

58 (~6.5'') (continue)

Vln. I

(continue)

Vln. II

(continue)

Vla.

(continue)

Vc.

58 (~15'')

with fingernails

(paper clip 1)

pizz. S.T. (as before, but occasionally add a left hand pizz. of one or two strings)

mf

pp

poco

cresc. molto

58 (~13'')

Slentem S

mf

Bonang P

f

(continue)

G.1

G.2

G.3

58

Track 3 (21.5'')

6.5''

15''

tape

And this seems to me to be the, the most interesting sort of human task; it's the task of interpretation;

it's the task of giving history some shape and sense; for a particular reason, to understand my history in terms of other people's history. In other words, to try and understand, to gene..., to move beyond, to generalize, one's own individual experience to experience of others.

(~34")
 (~13")

Vln. I
 61 paper clip 2 gradually more mechanical and repetitive
p *cresc. poco a poco*
 (continue) paper clip 2 gradually more mechanical and repetitive
p *cresc. poco a poco*
 paper clip 3
mp

Vln. II
 (continue) paper clip 2 gradually more mechanical and repetitive
p *cresc. poco a poco*

Vla.
mp subito
 (continue)

Vc.
mp subito

G.1
 61
 Kempul
 Slenthem S
 gliss.
f

G.2
 3
f
 (continue)

G.3
 61

tape
 61 Track 4 (34")
 ~2" 19" 13"

And I think, um, I think the great, um, goal, is in fact to become someone else; to transform itself from a unitary identity to an identity that includes the other without suppressing the difference.

And that would be the notion of writing an inventory, a historical inventory, which, not only understand oneself but understand oneself in relation to others, and to understand others as if you would understand yourself.

(~15")

with pick (♩ = c. 72)
quick plucking, alternate between S.T. and behind the bridge

Vln. I *ff*

with pick (♩ = c. 64)
quick plucking, alternate between S.T. and behind the bridge

Vln. II *ff*

with pick (♩ = c. 64)
quick plucking, alternate between S.T. and behind the bridge

Vla. *ff*

(♩ = c. 60)
pizz. S.T. slow plucking (always let ring)

Vc. *ff*

sim.

63 **Slenthem S**
gliss. (let ring)
ff

Kempul
wood mallet (let ring)

G.2 *ff*
3

Gong ageng
wood mallet (let ring)

G.3 *ff*

scratch with wood mallet
in circular motion (lead into cello pizz)

p < f *sim.* *f* *p < f*

(~25")

64 (♩ = c.64)

Vln. I *ff* move one paper clip*

Vln. II (♩ = c.64) *ff* move one paper clip*

Vla. (♩ = c.64) *ff* move one paper clip*

Vc. (♩ = c.60) *mf* *f* *mp* *f* *mf* *ff* *fff* *ff* *f* (let ring)

Gong ageng
wood mallet

edge → center → edge

p → *mf*

freely slow down and accelerate slightly

*In each rest, quickly reposition one clip.
Move a different one each time so that eventually the whole sound of the instrument is changed.

Vln. I (~15") rit. stop
 Vln. II rit. stop
 Vla. col legno/pencil on strings as before
 Vc. arco S.T. tweezers on G-string transition gradually* always let ring
 G.3 Gong ageng edge → center → edge
 Dynamics: *pp*, *mp*, *mf*, *sf*, *sffz*, *pp*, *p*, *pp*, *pp sempre*, *cresc. poco a poco*, *senza cresc.*, *sul pont.*

*These boxes represent stations in a gradual and constant transformation.

Try to reach each of them as smoothly as possible (with the exception of moving to sul pont. across the laundry clips in the last box).

67 (~15") (~15") (~7")

Vln. I pizz. tremolo (banjo position, as before) stop abruptly sim.

Vln. II pizz. tremolo (banjo position, as before) stop abruptly sim.

Vla. pizz. tremolo (banjo position, as before) stop abruptly sim.

Vc.

67 Slenthem S (cluster) sim.

G.1 *ff* *ff*

G.2 Gender P cluster - low range

Gong ageng fast tremolo with a small chain stop abruptly

G.3 *mf*

70 (~7'') stop abruptly

Vln. I

Vln. II stop abruptly

Vla. stop abruptly

Vc. pick, quick plucking tweezers on G and C-strings

always let ring

take tweezers off C

arco sul pont. light bow

take tweezers off G

arco S.T. light bow

fff

pp *molto* *fff*

mp *molto*

70 Slenthem S

G.1 *fff*

G.2 *fff*

Gender P cluster - mid range

fff

Detailed description: The score is divided into three measures, each marked with a rehearsal mark (~7''). The first measure (70) features Vln. I and II, Vla., and Vc. with instructions to 'stop abruptly'. The Vc. part includes 'pick, quick plucking tweezers on G and C-strings' and 'always let ring'. The second measure (71) features Vc. with 'take tweezers off C' and 'arco sul pont. light bow'. The third measure (72) features Vc. with 'take tweezers off G' and 'arco S.T. light bow'. The guitar parts (G.1 and G.2) feature 'Slenthem S' and 'Gender P cluster - mid range' with *fff* dynamics. The Vc. part has dynamics of *fff*, *pp* *molto*, and *fff* in the first measure, and *mp* *molto* in the third measure.

The musical score consists of six staves. The first four staves are for string instruments: Vln. I, Vln. II, Vla., and Vc. The last two staves are for guitar: G.1 and G.2.

Section 1 (~15'')
 - **Vln. I & II:** Start with a rest of ~4". Then play chords marked *pp* < *ff*. A note is marked "arco extreme S.T.* in canon with cello**".
 - **Vla. & Vc.:** Start with a rest of ~3". Then play chords marked "extreme S.T.*" with dynamics *pp* < *ff*. Some notes are marked "sim." (simulazione).
 - **G.1 & G.2:** Play a "Gender P cluster - low range" marked *fff*.

Section 2 (~20'')
 - **Vln. I & II:** Start with a rest. Then play chords marked "arco extreme S.T.*" with dynamics *pp* < *ff*. Some notes are marked "sim."
 - **Vla. & Vc.:** Play chords marked "arco extreme S.T.*" with dynamics *pp* < *ff*. Some notes are marked "sim."
 - **G.1 & G.2:** Play a "Slenthem S cluster - high range" marked *fff*.

*Move bow along the neck (between the very end of the strings, close to the tuning pegs, and about the middle of the finger board).
 Bow with a rather light pressure and fast action, to get different harmonics ringing.
 Try to bow four, or at least three strings each time, always going from low to high.

**The second violins' sound should emerge, so to speak, from the cello's. There should be a delay, but also an overlap with each of these sounds.

(~20'')

75

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

p < *ff*

mf > *p*

f > *p*

Constantly slow down, and gradually increase initial bow pressure*

*rit.***

*These boxes represent stations in a gradual and constant transformation.

Try to reach each of them as smoothly as possible (with the exception of moving to sul pont. across the laundry clips in the last box).

**Continue as before, but make rests in between these chords grow longer, without changing the speed of the bowed chords themselves

(~40'')

The image displays a musical score for four instruments: Vln. I, Vln. II, Vla., and Vc. The score is divided into two systems, each with a box highlighting specific bowing and dynamic techniques. The first system (measures 76-78) shows the Vln. I, Vln. II, and Vla. parts. The Vln. I and Vln. II parts start with a box containing 'extra pressure' and 'light bow' with a 'V' symbol above the notes. The dynamic markings are *ff* and *pp*. An arrow labeled 'move to sul pont.' points to the second system. The second system (measures 79-81) shows the Vln. I, Vln. II, and Vla. parts. The Vln. I and Vln. II parts start with a box containing 'extra pressure' and 'light bow' with a 'V' symbol above the notes. The dynamic markings are *fff* and *pp*. The Vla. part also has a box with 'extra pressure' and 'light bow' with a 'V' symbol above the notes. The dynamic markings are *fff* and *pp*. The Vc. part is shown in a separate box below the other instruments, with dynamic markings *ppp*, *mp*, and *ppp*. The bowing techniques for Vc. are 'sul pont.', 'normal bow', 'extra pressure bow*', 'light bow', and 'normal bow'. Arrows indicate the flow of the music between systems and between instruments.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

76

extra pressure → light bow

move to sul pont.

extra pressure → light bow

extra pressure → light bow

extra pressure → light bow

extra pressure → light bow

normal bow → extra pressure bow* → light bow → normal bow

ff *pp* *fff* *pp* *fff* *pp* *fff* *pp* *ppp* *mp* *ppp*

*Increase bow pressure enough for the pitch to bend, but don't reach a dynamic higher than *mp*

(~60")

increase the length of each consecutive fermata without slowing the basic tempo

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

77

Gender Panerus Slendro (♩ = c.60)

(cover entire range from high to low)

p

*accel.**

Gender P (♩ = c.56)

(cover entire range from high to low)

p

*accel.**

Slenthem P (♩ = c.50)

(cover entire range from high to low)

p

*accel.**

*Don't accelerate while playing the descending scale; rather, start each repetition in a new, slightly faster tempo, and stick with it. The fermatas accordingly should grow shorter each time. Ultimately this should lead naturally to the quick improvised passages of bar 79.

(~60'')

Vln. I

(sul pont.) light bow → extra pressure → sim.

pp < *poco* > *pp*

Vln. II

(sul pont.) light bow → extra pressure → sim.

pp < *poco* > *pp*

Vla.

(sul pont.) light bow → extra pressure → sim.

pp < *poco* > *pp*

Vc.

(sul pont.) light bow → extra pressure → sim.

pp < *poco* > *pp*

78 (Gender Panerus Slendro)

G.1

(Gender P)

G.2

(Slenthem P)

G.3

79 (~30") ~15" stop put bow down, pick up pencil (~10")

Vln. I

Vln. II ~10" stop put bow down, pick up pencil

Vla. (♩ = c.68) arco S.T. harmonics gliss. on entire two strings *p*

Vc. (♩ = c.64) arco S.T. harmonics gliss. on entire two strings *p*

(Gender Panerus Slendro)

G.1 *f* let ring *pp*

G.2 (Gender P) * ~10" stop *f* *pp* (let ring)

G.3 (Slenthem P) * ~5" stop *f* *pp* (let ring)

Gong ageng edge center edge *pppp* *fff* *ff*

*Play a rapid passage of equal rhythmic values in the low register of the instrument.

**Play a rapid passage of equal rhythmic values in the low register of the instrument, over 40 seconds, over the entire range of the instrument from bottom to top.

(~60")

Vln. I
pencil*
~5"-10"

Vln. II
pencil*
~5"-10"

Vla.
stop
put bow down, pick up pencil
pencil*
~7"-12"

Vc.
stop
put bow down, pick up pencil
pencil*
~10"-15"

G.1
81 stop

G.2

G.3
center ~10" edge stop

ffff (cover everyone) **p** (let ring)

*Rapid tremolo with the pencil placed in between the two strings; slowly move the pencil along the fingerboard towards the tuning pegs.

82 (~60")

Vln. I (continue)

Vln. II (continue)

Vla. (continue)

Vc. (continue)

stop

pick up gong

Gender Panerus Pelog

82 arco

G.1 slow, free

6 *pp* 7 *pp* 3 *pp* 1 *pp*

G.2 arco

Gender P slow, free

2 *pp* 3 *pp* 6 *pp* 7 *pp*

G.3 arco

Slenthem P slow, free

1 *pp* 2 *pp* 5 *pp* 4 *pp*

83 (~8'') (~13'') (~22'')

Vln. I *f* **gong (low)** > oscillate*

Vln. II stop pick up gong (let ring) *f* **gong (mid-low)** > oscillate*

Vla. stop pick up gong *f* **gong (mid-high)** > oscillate*

Vc. stop pick up gong *f* **gong (high)** > oscillate*

83 (continue) G.1 (continue) G.2 (continue) G.3 (continue)

83 Track 5 (21'')

tape

*After striking it, oscillate the gong lightly from side to side to create a vibrato effect. The initial strike should be strong enough to make the pitch bend.

The challenge now is, is the challenge... I wouldn't call it anything other than coexistence. How does one coexist with people whose religions are different, whose traditions and languages are different, but who are, who form part of the same community or polity? How do we accept difference without violence and hostility?

86 (~6'')

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

86 (continue)

G.1

(continue)

G.2

(continue)

G.3

86

tape

Track 6 (20'')

We have another vision which is a vision of coexistence, which I think requires a kind of creativity and invention, umm, that would replace the authoritarian hierarchal model. But this idea that somehow we should protect ourselves against the infiltration, the infections of the Other, is I think, the most dangerous idea.

[with gender in background]

89 (~50")

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

89 (continue)

G.1

(continue)

G.2

(continue)

G.3

89

tape

Track 7 (33")

[gender continues for about 14"]

I've been interested in a field called comparative literature most.. all of my adult life, and the ideal of comparative literature is not to show how English literature is a secondary phenomenon and French literature or Arabic literature is, you know, kinda poor cousin to Persian literature or any of those silly things, but to show them existing, you might say, as contrapuntal lines in a great composition by which difference is respected and understood without, umm... without coercion. And that's attitude I think that we need.

[with gender in background]

91 (~50'')

Vln. I *p* > don't oscillate

Vln. II *p* > don't oscillate

Vla. *p* > don't oscillate

Vc. *p* > don't oscillate

G.1 91 *rit.* stop (let ring)

G.2 *rit.*

G.3 *rit.* stop (let ring) 7 *pp*

tape 91

Miscellaneous Romance no.3 (Paris)

(2014)

PROGRAM NOTE

Miscellaneous Romance is a modular project based on 'missed connections' ads from online dating websites. These texts are curated and fed into text-to-speech software, generating sound-files which form the base of the piece's tape part. Live performers on stage interact with these tracks through rules laid out in the score. Each new version keeps this general conception while the music and texts are adapted to reflect the locality in which they are performed. *Miscellaneous Romance no.1*, scored for bass clarinet, prepared violin, prepared piano and electronics, and was premiered by Talea Ensemble in 2012 in Ithaca, New York, and subsequently performed by the Argento Ensemble. It was also recorded by improvising artists Annie Lewandowsky and the Cornell Avant-garde Ensemble (CAGE). *Miscellaneous Romance no.2*, for bass clarinet, prepared piano and electronics, was written for a performance by the Platypus Ensemble in Vienna, Austria.

Miscellaneous Romance no.3 was written for Donatienne Michel-Dansac, Lionel Peintre and Richard Dubelski for IRCAM's 2014 ManiFeste-Académie. As a musical source material it makes use of a quintessential parisian love song, Edith Piaf's *La Vie en Rose*. The percussion part as well as the singers' improvisations are all based on this song, a chunk of which also appears in the tape towards the end of the piece. All the texts used in the piece were collected on Paris's cyberspace on websites such as craigslist, except the text for the chanson which appears in a distorted form achieved through repeated automated translation on google's translator.

The piece was created with the support of a Bogliasco Foundation.

INSTRUMENTATION

Two singer-actors

Fixed Media

Percussion:

- Two octave crotales in D-major, in addition to a low F.
- Bass drum
- A mixture of gongs and bells, such as Thai gongs, rin/Tibetan bowls, burma bells, plate bells, on the following pitches:



PERFORMANCE NOTES

Since the piece allows some freedom for the performers there are only parts and a 'meta-score' in table form.

Each singing part contains instructions for improvisations numbered 1-4.

These numbers correspond to the numbers on the row of each performer in the table.

The singers should memorize only the individual instructions and their numbers, and in performance can follow the score (from iPads).

The percussion part consists mostly of loosely written passages, or 'gestures', numbered 1-5. These are fully notated only in the percussion part, and in the score they appear only as a number (for example, "Gesture 1").

The percussionist also activates the electronic track. This is marked in the part with large arrows, except for tracks 5 and 7, which don't happen while the percussionist is playing a gesture, and are therefore marked in the score.

Some specifications:

- 1) General timing appears above the bars of the chart in seconds. These are to be taken as a suggestion, which can certainly be altered by the performers for musical or practical reasons.
- 2) The beginning of each bar in the score should be synchronized; within each bar there is freedom and no need to line up events unless they are specifically marked with an arrow.
- 3) A horizontal dotted line coming out of a number represents that this musical object is a continuous one, and shows until about when it should continue.
- 4) Rests are sometimes emphasized with a fermata sign.

Singers only:

- 1) Numbers 1 and 2 are long and continuous. When 1/2 appears, it means to alternate freely between the two.
- 2) Numbers 3 and 4 are always "one time events", whenever they appear.

- 3) Additional dramatic, musical and expressive instructions appear in small letters in square brackets
- 4) The longer texts which are spoken by the singers appear in a larger font to facilitate reading directly from the score.
- 5) When several texts are overlapping, words and sentences written in bold font should receive special emphasis in the performance and be clearly audible.

Percussion only:

- 1)The “*Gestures*” in the score are surrounded by a bold line to remind the player to move to the part for that section.
- 2)The percussionist, too, participates as a vocalist in the piece with just one single phrase, which is fully written in the score or part whenever it appears (“*Ma planète préférée est Neptune.*”)
- 3)The activation points for the tape tracks are always marked with a thick downward arrow. Most of these happen within the percussion passages (“*gestures*”), and are therefore marked in the percussion part. Tracks 5 and 7 however, happen outside of these passages and are therefore marked in the score.

other technical considerations:

- 1)The singers should read their scores from iPads, used here for a practical reason, but also as a stage prop, emphasizing the theme of connection through the mediation of electronic technology which is explored in the piece.
- 2)The percussion instruments should be arranged in two stations:

Station one: gongs, crotales in F and G

Station two: D-major crotales and bass drum

Each station should also have a pedal for the activation of the electronic track.

- 3)Amplification is required for all speaking voices (of the singers but also of the percussionist where it applies).

LIBRETTO

Seul parmi "les esseulés" Je trouve qu'il est triste de se sentir seule dans cette ville...Suis-je seul? Sous le stress, les claxons, la colère et le temps, ou se cachent-ils? Les gens comme moi, qui veulent quelque fois respirer et laisser le temps couler? Nous sommes faits pour partager. Lieu: Paris.

Annonce n°: 4293931665

Femme à la beauté allemande avec sa grand mère devant une Eglise. Tu m'observais et moi de même. Tu as demandé la direction du Musée Pompidou. J'espère que je pourrai te retrouver là ou tu es. Tu es plus belle que Paris.

Annonce n°: 4367407695

Juin 1989. Tu m'as vu à Paris puis tu m'as cherché et retrouvé à Boston. J'ai raccroché jusqu'à ce que je t'entende enfin dire "S'il vous plaît ne raccrochez pas" puis nous avons discuté. J'étais enceinte de mon second enfant et je t'ai demandé de ne plus rappeler... ce que tu as respecté. Depuis, j'ai toujours regretté cette décision.

Annonce n°: 4322497036

J'essaye de contacter Adil qui est opérateur à la Tour Eiffel. Tout ce que je sais c'est qu'il s'appel Adil, qu'il il est moitié marocain moitié français et a le sourire le plus fantastique que je connaisse. Toute aide est bienvenue.

Annonce n°: 4378581994

Jolie femme en blanc. Moi: Je suis le gars de l'autre côté de la rue qui est debout avec un vélo blanc et qui crie "Ne jette pas le riz! Arrêtez de gaspiller ce riz!" TOI: Tu portais une longue robe blanche et tu revenais de l'Eglise de Notre Dame de Lorette accompagnée d'un type grand qui te tenait la main. Est ce que c'est sérieux entre vous, ou...?

Annonce n°: 4322497036

Serpent! J'ai la nostalgie de la fantaisie avec toi. J'ai attendu une journée entière dans l'espoir de recevoir un message de ta part. J'ai cru que je pourrais trouver le calme et maintenant je trouve un lieu qui est mot plus aimable que l'amertume. J'ai toujours détesté Paris, désormais j'ai une bonne raison de ne plus jamais connaître ses rues. M. Zola avait raison, le monde est plein du gros et du mince.

Annonce n°: 4335409780

On était assis dans un petit café à côté du port, tu étais avec lui, j'étais avec elle. Tu as demandé où je travaillais, je t'ai fait sourire quelques fois, nous étions si proches et déjà si loin.

Annonce n°: 4356387016

Librairie du Palais de Tokyo (Paris). MOI: Le gars avec un coupe vent couleur rouille...Bon, je suis daltonien donc je ne suis pas sûr de la couleur. Certaines personnes disent que c'est rouge sombre, d'autres disent que c'est marron, une fille avec qui je suis sorti récemment a dit que c'est orange donc j'ai décidé de ne plus la revoir car rien de bien ne peut naître d'une relation entre deux daltoniens... finalement la petite amie de mon meilleur ami a dit "C'est de la rouille. C'est une couleur rouillée" bon ok elle ne l'a pas dit exactement comme ça, elle a plutôt dit " Mais d'où sort ce truc que tu portes? On dirait de la rouille".

Bref ma chère ami L. (qui est un cadeau de Dieu, et le fait que je ne crois pas en dieu ne signifie pas qu'il m'est interdit d'utiliser cette expression, puisque de toute façon Dieu n'existe pas..je veux dire, soyons francs...) dit que c'est la couleur exacte: la rouille. Donc me voilà en train de regarder les livres et de te chercher.

TOI: Tu ne m'as pas regardé même une seconde ce qui veut dire que tout cela ne sert vraiment à rien donc vas te faire foutre !!"

Annonce n°: 4322497036

Eyes lower than mine a smile that is lost on her mouth this is the unretouched portrait man I belong.
When he takes me in his arms he whispers I see life in pink he tells me words of love words everyday.

And it makes me something he came into my heart a part of happiness I know the cause that's all for.
Me.
Me for him in life he said.
Swore me to life and when I see so I feel in me my heart rate nights of endless love much happiness
takes its place disorders.
Pain disappears happy?
happy to die when he takes me in his arms he whispers I see life in pink he tells me words of love.
words everyday and it makes me something.

Je ne suis pas un arbre. J'aime parler de la forme bizarre des nuages, des émissions de TV réalité et d'astronomie. Ma planète préférée est Neptune. Peut être que dans 30 ans nous pourrons nous y rendre en touriste, donc je commence déjà à préparer mon voyage.

Annonce n°: 4378178429


SCORE


Miscellaneous Romance no.3 (Paris)

for Donatienne Michel-Dansac, Lionel Peintre and Richard Dubelski

ManiFeste-Académie-2014



Amit Gilutz (2014)


	~2"	~3"	~17"	~51"
soprano	3 [happy, hopeful]			1 ----- [mid-low register]
				baritone 3, 1 ----- [angry][mid-low register]
percussion	Gesture 1 (~25")			
	<u>track 1</u>	<u>track 2</u>	<u>track 3</u>	
tape	<i>Seul parmi "les esseulés".</i>	<i>Je trouve qu'il est triste de se sentir seule dans cette ville...Suis-je seul? Sous le stress, les claxons, la colère et le temps, ou se cachent-ils? Les gens comme moi, qui veulent quelque fois</i>	<i>respirer et laisser le temps couler? Nous sommes faits pour partager. Lieu: Paris. Annonce n°: 4293931665</i>	
				"low choral"-----

	~10"	~7"	~18"	~20"	~15"
sop.	(1)-----		4 [stop]	1/2 ----- [gradually climb up in register]	
bar.	(1)----- 4,1 -----			[stop]	3, 1/2 ----- [gradually climb up in register]
perc.	[naive, sweet] Ma planète préférée est Neptune		Gesture 2 (~60")		
			track 4		
		tape	<i>Femme à la beauté allemande avec sa grand mère devant une Eglise: Tu m'observais et moi de même. Tu as demandé la direction du Musée Pompidou. J'espère que je pourrai te retrouver là ou tu es. Tu es plus belle que Paris. Annonce n°: 4367407695</i>		
			"gongs"-----		

	~20"	~20"	~33"
sop.	-----4, 1/2----- ↙	[into the distance] -----3, 2----- ↗	2-----1----- [keep going up in register] [high register, dim., rit.]
bar.	-----4, 1/2-----	-----3, 2----- [concerned]	2-----1----- [keep going up in register] [high register, dim., rit.]
perc.	[naive, sweet] Ma planète préférée est Neptune	☺ ↓	Gesture 3a
		<u>track 5</u>	<u>track 6</u>
	tape	<i>Jun 1989. Tu m'as vu à Paris puis tu m'as cherché et retrouvé à Boston. J'ai raccroché jusqu'à ce que je l'entende enfin dire "S'il vous plaît ne raccrochez pas" puis nous avons discuté. J'étais enceinte de mon second enfant et je t'ai demandé de ne plus rappeler... ce que tu as respecté. Depuis, j'ai toujours regretté cette décision.</i>	Annonce n°: 43224 97036
			"gongs"-----

	~3"	~8"	~20"	~23"
sop.	3 [angry, desperate]	[listen to speakers fade out]	[suddenly hopeful, cheerful, addressing audience]: J'essaye de contacter Adil qui est opérateur à la Tour Eiffel. Tout ce que je sais c'est qu'il s'appel Adil, qu'il il est moitié marocain moitié français et a le sourire le plus fantastique que je connaisse. Toute aide est bienvenue. Annonce n°: 4378581994	[circle around center, facing away from baritone]
bar.	[listen to speakers fade out]	[circle around center, facing away from soprano]		[witty, humorous]: Jolie femme en blanc. Moi: Je suis le gars de l'autre côté de la rue qui est debout avec un vélo blanc et qui crie "Ne jette pas le riz! Arrêtez de gaspiller ce riz!" TOI: Tu portais une longue robe blanche et tu revenais de l'Eglise de Notre Dame de Lorette accompagnée d'un type grand qui te tenait la main. Est ce que c'est sérieux entre vous, ou...?
perc.	Gesture 3b [while walking]			
tape	(gradual fade out) -----			

	~15"	~10"	~20"
sop.	<p>[angry and sad]: Serpent! J'ai la nostalgie de la fantaisie avec toi. J'ai attendu une journée entière dans l'espoir de recevoir un message de ta part. J'ai cru que je pourrais trouver le calme et maintenant je trouve un lieu qui est mot plus aimable que l'amertume. J'ai toujours détesté Paris, désormais j'ai une bonne raison de ne plus jamais connaître ses rues. M. Zola avait raison, le monde est plein du gros et du mince. Annonce n°: 4335409780</p>		<p>[pensive, with longing, slow and dragging]: On était assis dans un petit café à côté du port, tu étais avec lui, j'étais avec elle. Tu as demandé où je travaillais, je t'ai fait sourire quelques fois, nous étions si proches et déjà si loin. Annonce n°: 4356387016</p>
bar.	<p>Annonce n°: 4322497036</p>	<p>[short]</p> <p>[quick, happy] Librairie du Palais de Tokyo (Paris). MOI: Le gars avec un coupe vent couleur rouille...Bon, je suis daltonien donc je ne suis pas sur de la couleur. Certaines personnes disent que c'est rouge sombre, d'autres disent que c'est marron, une fille avec qui je suis sorti récemment a dit que c'est orange donc j'ai décidé de ne plus la revoir car rien de bien ne peut naître d'une relation entre deux daltoniens... finalement la petite amie de mon meilleur ami a dit "C'est de la rouille. C'est une couleur rouillée" bon ok elle ne l'a pas dit exactement comme ça, elle a plutôt dit " Mais d'ou sort ce truc que tu portes? On dirait de la rouille". Bref ma chère ami L. (qui est un cadeau de Dieu, et le fait que je ne crois pas en dieu ne signifie pas qu'il m'est interdit d' utiliser cette expression, puisque de toute façon Dieu n'existe pas... je veux dire, soyons francs...) dit que c'est la couleur exacte: la rouille. Donc me voila en train de regarder les livres et de te chercher.</p> <p>[gradually getting very loud] TOI: Tu ne m'as pas regardé même une seconde ce qui veut dire que tout cela ne sert vraiment à rien donc vas te faire foutre!!!! Annonce n°: 4322497036</p>	
			
	track 7		
tape	- Various texts gradually fading in ----- 		

~40"	~50"
	<p>[like a robot, positive and expressive but "off". Face is neutral and fixed]</p> <p>Eyes lower than mine a smile that is lost on her mouth this is the unretouched portrait man I belong.</p> <p>When he takes me in his arms he whispers I see life in pink he tells me words of love words everyday.</p> <p>sop. And it makes me something he came into my heart a part of happiness I know the cause that's all for.</p> <p>Me.</p> <p>Me for him in life he said.</p> <p>Swore me to life and when I see so I feel in me my heart rate nights of endless love much happiness takes its place disorders.</p> <p>Pain disappears happy?</p> <p>happy to die when he takes me in his arms he whispers I see life in pink he tells me words of love.</p> <p>words everyday and it makes me something.</p>
	<p>bar. [slowly walk to final position]</p> <p> 1-----</p>
	<p>perc. Gesture 4</p>
(track 7 cont.)	
tape - choir of texts - -----	----- <i>La Vie en Rose</i> plays from afar, together with slowed down versions -----

	~45"				~25"	
sop.	1b ----- ----- [walk off stage slowly]					
bar.	Je ne suis pas un arbre.	[wait for next percussion gesture]	J'aime parler de la forme bizarre des nuages, des émissions de TV réalité et d'astronomie.	[wait for next percussion gesture]	Peut être que dans 30 ans nous pourrons nous y rendre en touriste, donc je commence déjà à préparer mon voyage. Annonce n°: 4378178429	[walk off stage]
perc	Gesture 5a				↓	Gesture 5b
	(track 7 cont.)			<u>track 8</u>		
tape	(slowed down versions of La Vie en Rose continue)					(slow pulsating beat)

SOPRANO

1a. Humming Hum very slow variations on the refrain of “La Vie en Rose”, in A-flat major (the key the percussion and tape part are in). The degree of variation should be such that the original chanson is not to easily recognizable (see examples below).

Sing as if singing to yourself, not remembering the original melody exactly, but sing passionately. Be very expressive, but not very loud. Enjoy the sound of your own voice: feel free to stop on certain notes for fermatas, play with dynamic variation, vibrato, portamento, or any other mannerisms you wish to add (think Edith Piaf but then slow it all down).

1b. Whistle The exact same musical material, but instead of humming sing the pitches, while also whistling at the same time (the pitches produced by the whistling are random).

example:

Very slow *p* *molto espressivo*

another example:

f

2. singing "stats" Use “stats texts” such as the one below; sing them in simple melodic formulas like a recitation in a mass: stay mostly on one tone (“tenor”), and embellish it with neighboring tones; stay in A-flat major; You may add short melismas as well. The expression is pensive and from afar; rhythmically this should be very fluid, with constant alternation between rit and accel.

examples for stats text: *Age: 37 ans, Taille: 170cm, Poids: 69 kg*

These are examples only, in performance you should make up your own. Think about the man/woman of your dreams and describe them, or describe someone you know. You don't have to sing all three categories each time; you are free to sing a shorter phrase according to the general timing considerations in a given section.

example:

accel. *rit.* *accel.* *rit.*

Age trente sept ans taille cent soi-xante cen - ti - mi - ters poid soi - xante neuf ki - lo

3. calls Call “Adil” into the empty space; each time should be different (according to specifications in the score); always stop to listen after the call

examples:

mf *hopfull, happy* [listen] *ff* *into the distance* [listen] *mf* *angry and desparate* [listen]

A - dil? A! Dil! A - dil...

4. Speaking In a cold, robotic, and rather fast speaking voice, occasionally interrupt the singing with a “message number” such as this: “*annonce numéro: quatre milliards deux cent quatre-vingt treize millions neuf cent trente et un mille six cent soixante-cinq*” Here too, don't use just one number but change it, always staying in the range of billions.

BARITONE

1a. Humming Hum very slow variations on the refrain of “La Vie en Rose”, in A-flat major (the key the percussion and tape part are in). The degree of variation should be such that the original chanson is not to easily recognizable (see examples below).

Sing as if singing to yourself, not remembering the original melody exactly, but sing passionately. Be very expressive, but not very loud. Enjoy the sound of your own voice: feel free to stop on certain notes for fermatas, play with dynamic variation, vibrato, portamento, or any other mannerisms you wish to add (think Edith Piaf but then slow it all down).

1b. Whistle The exact same musical material, but instead of humming sing the pitches, while also whistling at the same time (the pitches produced by the whistling are random).

example:

2. singing "stats" Use “stats texts” such as the one below; sing them in simple melodic formulas like a recitation in a mass: stay mostly on one tone (“tenor”), and embellish it with neighboring tones; stay in A-flat major; You may add short melismas as well. The expression is pensive and from afar; rhythmically this should be very fluid, with constant alternation between rit and accel.

examples for stats text: *Age: 37 ans, Taille: 170cm, Poids: 69 kg*

These are examples only, in performance you should make up your own. Think about the man/woman of your dreams and describe them, or describe someone you know. You don't have to sing all three categories each time; you are free to sing a shorter phrase according to the general timing considerations in a given section.

example:

3. calls Call the following phrase into the empty space: “*Arrêtez de gaspiller ce riz!*” each time should be different according to specifications in the score.

4. Speaking In a cold, robotic, and rather fast speaking voice, occasionally interrupt the singing with a “message number” such as this: “*annonce numéro: quatre milliards deux cent quatre-vingt treize millions neuf cent trente et un mille six cent soixante-cinq*” Here too, don't use just one number but change it, always stay in the range of billions.

PERCUSSION

Gesture 1 (~25")

Slow, tender (♩ = c. 60)*

gongs

mp dolce ma cantabile sempre

~6" ~4" ~7" (~51")

(l.v.)

Track 1
Seul parmi
"les esseulés".

Track 2
Je trouve qu'il est triste de se sentir seule dans cette ville...Suis-je seul? Sous le stress, les claxons, la colère et le temps, ou se cachent-ils? Les gens comme moi, qui veulent quelque fois

Track 3 (~51")
"choral" → etc.
respirer et laisser le temps couler? Nous sommes faits pour partager. Lieu: Paris. Annonce n°: 4293931665

*'Drunk beats': beats should not be equal. Rather, play with a slight rubato throughout these passages.

Gesture 2 (~60")

Slow, tender (♩ = c. 60)*

gongs

mp come prima

~3" ~4" ~3" ~6" ~10"

Track 4

Femme à la beauté allemande...

gongs

~3" ~4" ~5" ~4" ~10"

tape

*"Drunk beats": beats should not be equal. Rather, play with a slight rubato throughout these passages. The dotted bar-lines are there to facilitate synchronization with the tape part, though exact synchronization within each bar is not necessary. Additional points of synchronicity are marked with a double headed arrow.

Gesture 3a (~33")

Slow, tender ($\text{♩} = c. 60$)

~6" ~4" ~5"

gongs

mp
come prima

Track 6

tape

~6" ~6"

gongs

tape

Gesture 5a (~45")

Crotales

pp <-> f *baritone:* Je ne suis pas un arbre. pp <-> f *J'aime parler de la forme bizarre des nuages, des émissions de TV réalité et d'astronomie.*

Ma planète préférée est Neptune.

ppp <-> ffff <-> ppp

Peut être que dans 30 ans nous pourrons nous y rendre en touriste, donc je commence déjà à préparer mon voyage. Annonce n°:

4378178429

Track 8

Gesture 5b (~25")

Bass drum
super-ball

mp <-> poco

with constant pulsation, die out (no rit., only dim.)

senza rit. → stop

1, this useless tool [this folded flower]

(2015)

PROGRAM NOTE

A work by Enrico D. Wey (creator and performer), Amit Gilutz (composer and sound design) and Elliott Jenetopulos (lighting design), “this useless tool” is a three part series of solo body-based performance works that rides between dance and theatrical mediums, exploring cultural conceptions of the Asian gay male body through movement, sound and light.

“this useless tool” is a query made through personal filters - the Asian body as sidekick, as invisible minority, as fetishized body, as unwanted body, eunuchized in many eyes. This project is part of Wey’s ongoing research regarding the following: asian american, asian, american, aesthetic, white, neutrality, internalized phobias, masculinity, genet, beefcake magazines... This perceived body serves as a tool as well as a container for the tools we are given to process information: the mind, the genitals, what one is exposed to and what conclusions one comes to, or lack thereof.

Crucial to the articulation of these questions is the musical score that spans over the course of the series. Intertextual layers of meaning, interpretation and reinterpretation are woven into the work through the electronic manipulation of collected sound objects ranging from *Un bel di, Vedremo*, the famous aria from Puccini’s *Madama Butterfly*, to Asian porn. The musical score, which includes also texts by Wey and field recordings, serves as another character together with the body and light.

this folded flower is the first chapter in this series which was premiered in March 2015 at the Abrons Arts Center in New York City.

The work is for fixed media; in lieu of a score a video file is submitted here. Texts by Enrico D. Wey read by Joby Earle.

THIS MUSIC IS SO STRANGE:
CLAUDE VIVIER'S QUEERNESS

A Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of Cornell University

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Musical Arts

by

Amit Menachem Gilutz

February 2016

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THIS MUSIC IS SO STRANGE:
CLAUDE VIVIER'S QUEERNESS

Amit Menachem Gilutz, D.M.A.

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This dissertation examines the life and work of Claude Vivier (1948-1983) using an interdisciplinary approach including musical analysis, queer theory and historiography. I examine Vivier's life and life-myths through the framework of queer theory and show the importance of his involvement with contemporary politics and especially Gay Liberation. I discuss broadly the ways Vivier's sexual identity and politics are reflected in his music. Particularly, I show how feminist thought in the '70s was formative for his attempts to defy linear narrative-making in his music. I also place Vivier's work within a larger constellation of queer culture and specifically consider his unrealized Tchaikovsky project as an artifact of queer worldmaking. Using musical analysis, I then exemplify queer elements, including the idiom of camp, in three specific works: *Journal*, *Kopernikus* and *Glaubst du an die Unsterblichkeit der Seele*.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

A native of Israel, Amit Gilutz (b.1983) studied composition in Jerusalem, Ithaca and New York. His work, which includes electroacoustic as well as acoustic mediums, is interdisciplinary and conceptual, combining political ideas, theatrical effects and movement, as well as textual sources ranging from the work of Walter Benjamin to anonymous online personal ads, aiming at achieving disciplinary cross-fertilization and also reflecting a desire for more democratic forms of music making and audience engagement. Amit is particularly fascinated with the question of music's ability to engage topical events and participate in the practice of social justice. His music has been performed across Asia, Europe, and North America and was recognized by many honors and awards including residencies at Yaddo Corporation and Blue Mountain (2015), the Bogliasco Study Center (2014), the New York Federation of Music Clubs Brian M. Israel Prize (2013), First Prize in Europe in the World (2013), First Prize and the Ensemble Selection Prize in the 2013 Aviv Competition, the 2012 Sun River Prize (Chengdu, China), and the Prix Nadia Boulanger of the 2010 Ecoles d'Art Americaines de Fontainebleau.

In loving memory of Taylan Cihan (1978-2014)

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Biographical Sketch	iii
Acknowledgments	v
PREFACE: In a Relationship with Vivier	ix
INTRODUCTION: Putting the Pink Glasses On (and reading Vivier's library)	1
1. LONELY, QUEER CHILD	
Muscular Reality / Marvelous Lands	12
"Growing Sideways"	16
"Families We Choose"	29
Queer Time	32
Revolution Has Come?	35
Not the Only Gay in the Village	41
Queer Space	47
Two Comments About Vivier's Death	54
2. THE ANTI-MACHO COMPOSER	
Opera is <i>so</i> gay.	59
Being a Gay Composer	77
Essential Linearity	89
"Epicycles and Eccentric Circles"	91
Quintessential Circularity	107

Queer Worldmaking (or, somewhere over the soap bubble)	113
3. LISTENING TO QUEERNESS IN VIVIER	
Camp and Homo-exoticism in <i>Journal</i>	125
“Welcome to the kingdom of mutations”: <i>Kopernikus</i>	148
Cruising the Métro forever: <i>Glaubst du an die Unsterblichkeit der Seele</i>	168
CONCLUSION	204
Bibliography	208

PREFACE

The world is changed through story, each of us giving over
what we know for what we do not yet know (Allison xviii)

In a Relationship with Vivier

Let me tell you a story. When I finished my studies at the Jerusalem Academy in 2006 I was ready for something different. I had the huge privilege of studying with Andre Hajdu -- one of Israel's prominent composers -- already in high school. Andre was born in 1932 and survived the holocaust as a child in the Budapest Ghetto. He graduated from the Franz Liszt Academy of Music after studying composition and piano, as well as ethnomusicology with Zoltán Kodály. In 1956 he fled Communist Hungary, as did his life-long friends, two other Hungarian composers of Jewish descent, György Kurtág and György Sándor Ligeti. The latter was to become one of Vivier's strongest advocates. Andre ended up in Paris, and like Kurtág, had the fortune of studying with Darius Milhaud and Olivier Messiaen at the Conservatoire national supérieur. Paul Méfano, Vivier's mentor who conducted the premieres of *Désintégration* and *Bouchara*, was in Andre's cohort. Also studying at the Conservatoire around the same time was Gilles Tremblay, who was to return to Montréal and become Vivier's first composition teacher.

But after graduating Andre felt oppressed by the Boulez-dominated contemporary music world in France, and thus a detour through occupied Algeria brought him back to Judaism and eventually to marriage, immigration to Israel and starting a family with his now wife Ruth. Although I “came out” when I was sixteen to my family, friends and the larger community at the school where I studied with him, Andre and I never spoke about it at the time, even though we were close. The first time I talked about being gay with Andre was on a bus ride to Jerusalem, after I recorded some pieces from his cycle, *The Book of Challenges*. This must have been in 2002 or so. He asked me why I was heading to Jerusalem and I told him the truth, which was to visit my then-boyfriend, Roy Amotz. He nodded in a typical zen-like gesture which can be interpreted as either approval or disinterest. I asked him if he, being an Orthodox Jew, saw this as a problem. He said that there are religious laws, and there is reality, and that homosexuality was so important for so many artists’ lives, or that so many artists were gay, that what point is there in denying it. I also remember him mentioning -- with a spark in his eyes of someone sharing secret knowledge -- “Proust”. The name sounded familiar but my brain had nothing filed under it yet. In a different bus ride with Andre (or so I remember it), just as when I came out to him (assuming it wasn’t the same conversation), I asked again for his approval. This time it wasn’t approval to have butt sex, but to go and study with his long-time nemesis, Mark Kopytman (1929-2011), at the Jerusalem Music Academy. I had no idea what the nature of the historical rift between

these giants was. But I felt its vibrations still echoing in whispers and rumors. Perhaps Andre saw in Kopytman a local Boulez. One of the rumors was that he left the Jerusalem Academy because of him. All I knew was that I liked Kopytman's music, a lot, and that in some ways he must be the opposite of Andre, but just as strong of a personality (to make a worthy nemesis), so going to study with him seemed to be the right thing to do. Andre, again, radiating his casual zen aura said he also thought it was a good idea, and that who knows, perhaps after all these years he and Mark have become best friends, only they had no way of knowing it. Unlike the improvisatory, anarchic spirit of Andre's teaching, Kopytman was a man of systems. He was already an established composer with a performed opera when he fled Communist USSR and immigrated with his wife to Israel in 1972, and he had even managed to become a medical doctor prior to that. In 1986 he won the Koussevitzky International Record Critics Award for his *Memory*, a piece for orchestra and the Israeli singer of Yemeni descent Gila Beshari. Sharing the prize with him for his *Third Symphony* was Witold Lutosławski. The relationship between the two was to indirectly bring me to Cornell in 2008. A very impressive and somewhat distant person, I studied with Kopytman for three whole years, meeting every week and showing him progress on little compositional assignments growing to solo works, detouring through an orchestral piece, and finishing with a string quartet. This is a staple of traditional conservatory education: Vivier's earliest existing piece is a 1968 string quartet he composed while

studying at the Montréal Conservatory. Both Andre and Mark aimed in their teaching to delve deep into human culture, psychology and history, but their pathways to get there were completely different.

So there I was in 2006, a recent graduate of Kopytman's class at the Jerusalem Music Academy, thinking what to do next. I contacted Ruben Seroussi, a composer from Tel-Aviv -- which is to say, the farthest you can get from Jerusalem, in so many ways -- who I knew was in touch with more recent musical trends in Europe and elsewhere, trends that were unheard of at the upside-down floating pyramid which is the Jerusalem Academy. My lessons with Ruben were few and scattered since, as it turned out, my mind and time were more occupied by the huge bureaucratic undertaking of applying to graduate programs in the US than with artistry. But in those lessons I came across musics I had never heard before, or only had a vague idea existed. Ruben wanted to draw me out of my musical comfort zone, to blow me away with something so powerful that it would break the intellectual and aesthetic dichotomies I was attached to. We sat together in his living room in Givataym, with a score he pulled from a shelf, or a pile, and listened to a tape recording of a piece by Claude Vivier. Vivi-who? Unlike Proust, that name didn't even sound familiar. The music was strange and beautiful, and it did the trick: I never thought contemporary music could be like that, but there it was,

right in front of me, note by note. A soprano accompanied by a chamber ensemble singing a ten-minute long melody. That was it.

Ruben's timely playing of *Bouchara* for me was meant to point to an alternative. But an alternative to what? And how can it be that thirty-plus years after it was originally composed this piece could still be used for that purpose? Doesn't freshness expire? Is uniqueness timeless?

It is that sense of difference -- highlighted by the strong emotional relationships many others hold for Vivier's music -- that is the departure point of this dissertation.

Soprano Barbara Hannigan, for example, told me that when she

first heard excerpts from *Kopernikus* performed by colleagues of mine in Banff, I was shattered emotionally. It was unexpected and upsetting. Some years later, I heard an all-Vivier performance in Amsterdam (*Lonely Child, Kopernikus, Wo bist du licht, Glaubst du, Zipangu*), and it took me days to recover. This is not normal for me, to be so deeply and profoundly affected by music for days on end (e-mail to the author, August 28th, 2013).

The Amsterdam performance Hannigan referred to was the ingenious production of Pierre Audi and Reinbert de Leeuw's version of Vivier's opéra fleuve, which they titled *Rêves d'un Marco Polo*. Here is de Leeuw himself discussing his relationship to Vivier's music:

To me, it is something truly extraordinary, so far removed from anything else, that it holds a very special place for me, which it will always occupy. You can tell immediately once you've set it aside for a while. It draws you in as soon as you go back to playing it. It's such a strong feeling. Everyone working on it now is completely caught up in it, in the language, in his very world. So that is the force of the music. It's truly unique. And what is very special to me, also, is that the emotions it evokes come to the surface so readily (Rêves D'un Marco Polo).

My initial attraction became love that deepened with the years. I had the fortune to travel to different places Vivier lived in, sometimes traveling after him -- as in my research trip to Montréal to meet Thérèse Desjardins and Walter Boudreau and visit the Claude Vivier Archives at the University of Montréal -- and sometimes brought by my own music and studies to places he moved through and lived in: Paris, Utrecht, Köln, Darmstadt. The more I immersed myself in his life and work, the more my love for him grew -- for the human being he was and for his musical legacy. I was struck by the strength of his artistic drive, the explosion of beauty that was his short creative career, lasting only 15 years, including his student years.

When I started writing this dissertation I thought it would be comprised of an analysis of Vivier's last two works which he composed in Paris: *Trois airs pour un opéra imaginaire* and *Glaubst du an die Unsterblichkeit der Seele*. I started taking apart chords and melodies and rebuilding them in sets, rows, looking for tonal traces, looking at time signatures, calculating, naming sections and modes... In short, I was working on a formal analysis of these works, trying to explain what the composer was doing in a way that would be

relevant mainly for other composers who may want to exploit similar mechanisms in their own work. While at first I was happy engaging in this craft-focused endeavor I gradually grew frustrated. I felt as if I was writing a cookbook: if you want to make a semolina cake, mix these ingredients together, let stand for thirty minutes, don't forget the yogurt... (I have nothing against cookbooks, but I will never sit to read one).

I felt something was missing because I wasn't able to place my findings -- a palindrome here, a Fibonacci sequence there -- in a meaningful context. I had a hunch that I could spice up the recipes of my cookbook with the exotic flavors of camp aesthetics, for example, looking at Vivier's work from a queer perspective. Gradually, and without my full intention or control, that perspective became the focal point of my research. Far from being concerned with Vivier's sexuality in the narrow sense of his sexual practices, this perspective enabled me to shift my research towards a cultural and political analysis and helped me place Vivier's work in a historical context that uncovered layers of meaning in his music I was previously unaware of.

When I began my queer journey with Vivier I did not know what queer worlds Vivier navigated, beyond the projection of my partial knowledge and imagination. I did not know who Annie Leclerc was, or how she influenced his thinking. The worlds of fairies and witchcraft, too, were completely unknown to me, and I had hardly an idea of their

association and placement within queer culture. I became a wanderer myself, traveling to imagined lands and weaving webs of associations, excavating knowledges, salvaging pieces of history, and ultimately, receiving the teachings of those who came before me. In that sense my “research” is not only about generating new knowledge, but also about the process of healing that comes with this action of weaving, of creating tissue (thanks Daniel Alexander Jones for the beautiful metaphor). Rather than trying to dominate Vivier’s music with my preconceived ideas of what I *should* say about it, I had to let it patiently teach me what I *could* say.

For part of the very substance of accepting a gay identity in Western culture in our time is by implication the cultivation of that sense of difference, of not subscribing to the straight world’s tendency to project itself onto everything it encounters and to assimilate everything to its own idea of itself, but instead valuing, exploring, and trying to understand different things, people, and ideas, in terms that are closer to the way in which they perceive themselves (Brett 1994, 10).

INTRODUCTION

Putting the Pink Glasses On (and reading Vivier's library)

What does it mean to examine Vivier's life and work from a queer perspective, and why does it matter? To answer these questions let us first examine Bob Gilmore's description of the books Vivier left with Thérèse Desjardins on the eve of his leaving for Paris, in June 1982:

Vivier was also a voracious reader, reading copious amounts of fiction, works of philosophy, cultural studies, books on cinema, and much else. His shelves were full of books by Marguerite Duras, Hermann Hesse, and Roland Barthes, side by side with classic works of literature, recent studies such as *Bruits* (1977) by Jacques Attali, which he heavily annotated, or *Langage, musique, poésie* (1972) by Nicolas Ruwet, together with much poetry, including many volumes by Quebec writers. His collection also contained much in the area of film studies, including Eric Rohmer's influential little book *L'organisation de l'espace dans le "Faust" de Murnau* (1977). There were many books on Asian subjects, arts and culture: Mircéa Eliade's *Patanjali et le Yoga, Le Sacré et le profane, Le Chamanisme*, and *Forgerons et Alchimistes*; and on Russian culture and history, including Isaiah Berlin's *Russian Thinkers* and Marc Raeff's classic *Origins of the Russian Intelligentsia*. There were also books by Albert Camus, Graham Greene, Samuel Beckett, Marguerite Yourcenar, and other recent fiction. And of course he had many books on music, both technical treatises such as Bartolozzi's *New Sounds for Woodwind* or Schoenberg's *Fundamentals of Musical Composition* and numerous scores, including various pieces by Webern and a heavily annotated copy of Bartók's Fourth String Quartet (Gilmore 173).

What Gilmore left out of his inventory is a plethora of books by gay authors or literature related to gay and feminist issues and ideas. When I had the chance to examine the same library, the first books I noticed were some of Jean Genet's major works, his first novel *Notre-Dame-des-Fleurs* as well as *Querelle de Brest*; and immediately after that Proust's *Le cote de Guermantes II* (volume three of *À la recherche du temps perdu*); and there was also Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*; and Oscar Wilde's *Salome*. It is not simply that these authors were gay, or that their work depicted gay themes. These are exceptional texts by a select few who explicitly dealt with gay male subjectivity in their work before the era of gay liberation, or who were known to be gay, as was the case of Wilde, whose 1895 trial "was pivotal for the emergence of lesbian and gay identity" (Marcus 209). According to historian David Halperin, such texts by Genet, Proust and Whitman "constitute significant achievement of queer expression and vital resources for the formation and elaboration of gay identity" amounting to "virtual bibles of gay existence" (Halperin 423).

In addition to these "bibles of gay existence", there were a number of books by bisexual feminist author and political activist Susan Sontag (*Under the Sign of Saturn; I, etcetera; The Benefactor; Illness as metaphor*); openly gay lover of Jean Cocteau and actor Jean Marais's 1975 autobiography *L'Histoire de ma vie; La grosse femme d'à côté est enceinte*, a novel by openly gay and highly influential Canadian playwright and author Michel

Tremblay; *Terre Quebec*, poetry by openly gay Paul Chamberland; *Le Temps voulu* and *Les Loukoums* by Yves Navarre, a French gay author whose work often foregrounds gay issues and who was an advocate of the gay community in Paris during the 1980s; Pierre Jean Jouve's *Le Monde désert*, a novel featuring a male-male-female love triangle; a book of interviews with controversial gay Italian film director Pier-Paolo Pasolini; *Lueur* by Madeleine Gagnon, a prominent feminist Quebec writer; the first volume of '60s feminist icon Anaïs Nin's *Journal*; poetry by openly gay poet Allen Ginsberg; works of bisexual poet Lord Byron; and T. H. White's posthumously published *The Book of Merlyn*.

On the music-meets-sexuality intersection there was Michel-Rostislav Hofmann's 1959 biography of Tchaikovsky; *The Birth of the Ballets Russes* by Prince Peter Lieven, a book about the aesthetic revolution which was the birth-child of impresario Serge Diaghilev's love affairs with principal dancers Vaslav Nijinsky, Léonide Massine and Serge Lifar, and who also collaborated with many other queer artists including Reynaldo Hahn, Henri Sauguet, Francis Poulenc, Manuel de Falla, Jean Cocteau, Coco Chanel and others, and who used much of Tchaikovsky's music as well (Diaghilev is famously quoted as having said that "Tchaikovsky thought of committing suicide for fear of being discovered as a homosexual, but today, if you are a composer and *not* homosexual, you might as well put a bullet through your head" [Vernon 170]); oh, and also the score of

Daphnis et Chloé, commissioned by the Ballets Russes from perhaps gay composer Maurice Ravel.

Finally, there was also literature by historical figures whose sexual identity -- like Ravel's -- was or still is a source for scholarly debate: the complete poetry of 19th-century Quebecois poet Emile Nelligan; poetry by Friedrich Hölderlin; Leonardo Da Vinci's *Notebooks*; the complete works of Shakespeare; Roman poet Virgil, who "wrote approvingly of male love in many works" (Crompton); *Cyrano de Bergerac*; Emily Dickinson; T. S. Eliot; and Homer, a representative of ancient Greek culture, widely acknowledged as an example of an ancient society in which gay relations were acceptable.

To be fair, Gilmore does mention Roland Barthes and Marguerite Yourcenar, both of whom were gay, the latter being the first woman to have been admitted to the French Academy since its founding in 1635. But the fact they were gay is not mentioned. He also names Eric Rohmer's book on *Faust*, but not the fact that the 1926 film's director, F. W. Murnau, was openly gay. Finally, Pasolini's book is mentioned elsewhere in Gilmore's book, but once again, Pasolini's role as an iconic gay film director is unspoken. In fact, not a single individual in Gilmore's book except Vivier himself and those who are mentioned explicitly as having been intimately involved with him is

“outed”; the sexual orientation and identities of people with whom Vivier socialized, collaborated and exchanged ideas, is deemed irrelevant. Consequently, Vivier’s investment and participation in Gay Liberation, its culture and politics, is completely lost.

This amounts to what scholars have regarded as an erasure of LGBTQ people from history, and shoving these individuals, who often paid a heavy personal price for being openly gay, back into the closet. Doing so does not require any malice or homophobic intention whatsoever. All it takes is lack of attention, because the process of historic erasure is largely ongoing by virtue of persistent separation of academic fields, and more so in the relatively conservative discourse of musical history, theory and analysis.

All of this is not to discount Gilmore’s extensive biographical and musicological work, which I think is excellent, and which I heavily draw on for this essay. Without Gilmore’s tedious work much of my analysis would not have been possible. Rather than “read” -- either in the postmodern sense or the sense of an artfully delivered queer insult -- Gilmore, my purpose is in fact to continue his project of illuminating the life and work of Claude Vivier, relying on his generous scholarly work and replying to his “hope... to have provided solid material on which to base other interpretations” (Gilmore xii).

Using a queer perspective to understand Vivier, then, is part of what I see as an ethical project of participating in the writing and rewriting of LGBTQ people's role in history and culture. Going back to my reading of Vivier's library, a few explanations are necessary. First, the relationship between feminism and queer theory and history is profound. Although it is a layered and complex history, for my purpose it will suffice to point out that since homophobia is intimately related to misogyny, gay liberation is deeply linked to and was largely informed by feminist movements, in which lesbian women continuously played key roles anyway (Marcus 200). The sheer volume of writing by women in Vivier's library in itself is revealing. Second, in compiling this list I am not taking a stand in the ongoing debates about the sexuality of some of the mentioned authors. I have no personal knowledge of Da Vinci's or Shakespeare's sexuality, for example, and absolutely no investment in claiming them for a pantheon of gay celebrities (though, I *am* interested in the anxiety such claims provoke, as the "Schubert Wars" of the nineties exposed so spectacularly). The fact that such claims are made both reflects and generates their position within gay culture, regardless of the nature of their sexualities. Lastly, the argument I am making is not an essentialist one: none of the mentioned books in isolation can be said to have found its way to Vivier's bookshelf because the author was gay. To pick an obvious example, Ravel's score is surely not there just because Ravel was (or wasn't) gay, and I assume no book found its

way to Vivier's library *only* because of its author's sexual identity. Obviously, there were other qualities -- aesthetic, scholarly, political, etc. -- that were just as important.

Seen as a whole, however, Vivier's library does clearly tell us, I believe, that he was interested in these works *also* because they were written by gay and feminist authors, because they depicted gay and female subjectivities, and because they were important to the understanding of an emerging gay culture in which he was taking part.

With this in mind, a few more comments on Vivier's library, expanding the notion of what a queer perspective might encompass. Vivier's fascination with Russian culture and especially Communism can also be understood as deeply connected to queer politics of his time. That is because against the backdrop of the Cold War, McCarthyism and the Red Scare, "The Lavender Scare", as it came to be known, lumped together gays and Communists as a threatening Other, a subversive element in society and a national security threat. This was true in Canada as it was in the US and other parts of the Western world. I offer this as possible context through which to understand Vivier's interest in Russian culture and history generally, and the existence in his library of works by Marxist authors and about Marxism and Communism specifically. Here we may once again name Pasolini, who was a devout Marxist; the many books by Marguerite Duras; L. Comby's book *Leon Trotsky*; Marxist French philosopher Henri Lefebvre; Marx and Engels's classic *L'ideologie Allemande*; Bertold Brecht's *Leben des*

Galilei, Herbert Marcuse's *One-Dimensional Man*, which critiques social repression under both capitalism and Communism in the Soviet Union, and others.

Intersections of class, sex, and racial oppression in Western societies are explored in the work of gay writer James Baldwin, whose writing is included in another book in Vivier's library, *New Black Voices: an Anthology of Contemporary Afro-American Literature*.

The Civil Rights movement was another "subversive" element that was soon to become one of the models for the Gay Liberation Movement. To close full circle, Jean Genet, whose name was the first to jump at me from Vivier's bookshelves, was a personal friend of James Baldwin. Genet's solidarity with black liberation is reflected in his 1958 play *The Blacks*, and he publicly expressed his support for the Black Panther Party (Fuller).

But why am I spending so many words describing Vivier's library? Because the reason Genet's books jumped at me from the shelves is that reading Genet, like Proust, was for me, as a queer person, a formative and important experience. In that sense this interpretive essay is also autobiographical, just as all interpretation is: it is negotiating a relationship. But more importantly, the resonance I was feeling at that moment of recognition was not just that of meeting a familiar face, but of seeing it in a new light. It made perfect sense for me that Vivier would have read, and probably was fascinated by

Genet's scenarios of butch sailors penetrating each other with dicks and knives, or Proust's depiction of a queer child's infatuation with his mother. It made perfect sense because I could suddenly hear Vivier's *Glaubst du an die Unsterblichkeit der Seele* as a soundtrack to Genet's *Querelle*, and could understand something new about Vivier's *Lonely Child* through Proust.

I offer this reading of Vivier's library, then, as a preliminary attempt to unpack some aspects of Vivier's cultural world, but also as a metaphor supporting my argument that a queer perspective is highly valuable in approaching this composer. By implication, those "pink glasses" are useful not only for reading his books. I believe many of the themes most commonly discussed in relationship to Vivier -- mother, laughter, stench, love, opera, Bali, childhood, invented language, twisted spectra, death, social awkwardness paired with an ability to easily make friends -- can all benefit from being contextualized and interpreted through a queer theory perspective. Moreover, a deliberate emphasis on queerness as a positive force in his life -- on Vivier not only being an outsider, as he is routinely described, to the urban, bohemian, new-music world he navigated, but also very much an insider to a larger queer collective and its history -- will prove fruitful to understanding his life, as well as his work, if such a separation is even possible or indeed desirable in the case of a composer who so clearly and consciously developed an autobiographical body of work.

I make no attempt to give a balanced or holistic view here. Rather, I am consciously focusing on Vivier's queerness. This emphasis in turn is also an emphasis on politics, since queerness is first and foremost a political, societal issue. Vivier lived during some of the most dramatic seismic vibrations in the history of queer life in Europe and North America. He was twenty-one years old when the Stonewall riots took place, and he died when the HIV/AIDS epidemic was already claiming thousands of its first victims. He was "out", having belonged to the first generation of LGBT people who articulated -- with second wave feminism's "the personal is political" echoing in the background -- the political implications of doing so. By reviewing his biography with a queer emphasis I show that he was deeply involved with these seismic changes, both directly and by implication, and that in turn they also influenced his music.

For the most part, "sexuality" here does not mean Vivier's actual sexual practices. As emphasized by Gilmore throughout his book, Vivier had in fact intimate and sexual relations with both men and women, and he identified himself variously as being "homosexual", "bisexual", "faggot" and "gay". The following discussion is not concerned so much with same-sex desire as such, but in broader relationships between queerness, politics and culture, as they manifested in Vivier's life. I therefore use the terms "queer" and "queerness" loosely and inclusively. When I talk about Vivier's queerness, I do not necessarily mean the fact of his being gay, then, although his being gay is not unrelated to his queerness. As Judith Halberstam explains in her book *In a*

Queer Time and Place, queerness can be used as an umbrella term to signify “nonnormative behaviors that have clear but not essential relations to gay and lesbian subjects” (6).

Just like the items in Vivier’s bookshelves, hardly any single item I examine here, taken in isolation, can be traced to Vivier’s queer identity with certainty. But as a totality I hope to show that Vivier’s queerness was inseparable from his way of being in the world and that it was a vital force in his life. Putting the pink glasses on, then, is also a gesture of mindfully creating a positive reframing and emphasizing the importance of queerness and queer culture for Vivier and by implication, for everyone.

CHAPTER ONE:

LONELY, QUEER CHILD

An extreme sensibility which, alas, because of a pseudo-male environment, can often only suffer. So many are dead, and I myself do not want to die of this strange Malady, which is perhaps why I have written this introspective text in the context of a book on the oppression of a sensibility and the free expression of love... A single law governs my music: love. And it's also this simple law that should govern our human relations (qtd. in Gilmore 232).

Muscular Reality / Marvelous Lands

Vivier did not know who his biological parents were, a fact that had a profound impact over his life and one of the first mentioned in his biographies. The desire to know more about his origins and especially who his mother was, is also often mentioned, as is the fact that Vivier used to fill these gaps with his imagination. The invention of a personal history was addressing a temporal discontinuity, a gap in knowing oneself. He tried out different identities for his parents, imagining them to be professional musicians for example, or his mother being of Eastern European or sometimes Jewish descent.

But these inventions were also a refuge: a “hard” and “muscular” reality was replaced with visions of “marvelous lands” and “strange languages” explored in the fantastical inner-world of a child:

The fact of knowing from the age of six that I had no father or mother gave me a marvelous dream universe; I fabricated my origins as I wanted, pretended to speak strange languages. The reality that I encountered every day was alas of a very hard kind, muscular. I wasn't left alone to dream of these marvelous lands and these charming princesses; the reality I encountered was only violence and pettiness (qtd. in Gilmore 4).

Vivier's painful experience of abandonment and orphanage make it easy to overlook the fact that these are experiences shared by many queer people, whether metaphorically or literally. Moreover, as Philip Brett reminds us, “it is the special characteristic of the homosexual stigma (unlike that attached to being black or Jewish) that it is almost always reinforced at home” (25). In other words, a hostile attitude towards homosexuality and gender-variance is present at most (normal) homes and is transferred from parents to children, adding a layer of emotional complication through the internalization of such notions by queer children. We can say that Vivier experienced orphanage twice then: a literal one at birth, and a metaphorical one as a queer person growing up in a “hard, muscular” reality.

When Vivier wrote this statement in 1978 he was a thirty-year-old composer who had already been writing music evoking strange, marvelous lands and using his unique invented language. So it very well may be that there was a degree of projection of his aesthetic world back to the memory of himself as a child, a degree of self-mythologizing. Here, for example, is an excerpt from the libretto of his 1977 piece *Journal*, using imagery that Gilmore points out “will later become familiar in the Vivier of *Kopernikus* and *Lonely Child*” (Gilmore 133):

My friend, my child, my brother
Finally you have joined me again...
Let's go see the fairy of marvelous stars
Let's go to the planet of Cinderellas and Prince Charmings...

But self-mythologizing is often inevitably part of self-historicizing, and in the business of filling temporal discontinuities one should not expect time, nor memory, to be straight -- this is what Audre Lourde captured so beautifully by coining the term “Biomythography”. The fact that Vivier linked his inner world as a queer child and his mature work as a composer so directly demonstrates exactly the significance of this link. After all, the capacity for self-making, for self-historicizing, for inventing marvelous lands and speaking invented languages, is also a capacity for creativity. And these visions and sounds, the imaginary world of a queer child seeking refuge from a hard, muscular (masculine?) reality in fantasy, are very much the stuff so much of his creative work is made of. Describing his collaboration with Vivier from the early 80's to Paul

Griffiths, Paul Chamberland said that “What fascinated me was that he already was in that visionary world, as if mental structures had become physical structures” (193).

Interestingly, the notion of a temporal discontinuity as an opportunity for invention and creativity appears in an explicitly musical context, in Vivier’s 1972 assessment of the contemporary music scene, in which he wrote to his friend Pierre Rochon that the “lack of tradition” in America promises new “great musical streams”:

As to interesting music that’s going on in Europe there’s not a lot, the French have had the Boulez malady or the G.R.M. malady, the Germans that of Adorno (except Kagel who does extraordinary things) Stock. who remains Stock. with his bizarre contradictions but very much a genius; as for everybody else it doesn’t seem to me there’s a whole lot going on. I think the great musical streams will come from America, that’s the only place where the face of music has really, deeply changed (from the need to ignore the past and from lack of tradition) I don’t believe the country that carries on its back such a long and heavy tradition can really carry the revolution that has hardly begun, that we have hardly begun (qtd. in Gilmore 69).

If the temporal discontinuity in his biography compelled Vivier to creatively dream up an individual history for himself, his private desire for self-historicizing, too, is paralleled by queer people’s collective desire to understand history and their part in it, to understand their collective origins, or as put by Elizabeth Freeman, a “desire for history itself”:

Since sexual identity emerges as a concept, gay and lesbians have been figured as having no past: no childhood, no origin or precedent in nature, no family traditions or legends, and, crucially, no history as distinct people (162).

“Growing Sideways”

As pointed out by Vivier’s school friend, Gilles Beauregard, Vivier suffered multiple rejections early in his life (Gilmore 17). The abandonment for unknown reasons by his parents was of course a foundational experience. Soon after being brought to live with the Vivier family, his adopting mother, Jeanne Vivier, decided to send him back to the orphanage. “She told me she didn’t like him”, Thérèse Desjardins recalled (interview by author). At the behest of Armand and Gisèle Vivier, his adopting father and sister, Claude was brought back to live with the family, but Beauregard recalled that he “knew that his family wasn’t very warm, that he wasn’t very well accepted there...” (qtd. in Gilmore 17). At the age of eight, Vivier was raped by his uncle, his mother’s brother. As a child thirsty for love and attention, it is perhaps not completely surprising that Desjardins remembers that “there was no sense that he necessarily disliked what happened or was even particularly traumatized by it” (Gilmore 10). Moreover, this incident paradoxically saved him, she told me, because it set in motion his removal from his adopting family’s house. “Meeting a homosexual saved him. That is really the truth”, she said.

Today, “the increasing profile of queer families and the quickening pace of debates about gay marriage are abrading what was once a stark distinction between straights

ensconced in families and queers exiled from them” (Marcus 206). In other words, queer children, at least for almost all of history including Canada in the 1940’s and 50’s, did not have immediate role models: they were normally born to and raised by straight parents, and experiencing a strong rejection in that contexts is not at all uncommon. Citing Terry, Marcus points further that “social theories identified homosexuals as threats to the family and defined good parenting as the prevention of homosexuality in children”. And in discussing growing up as a ‘proto-gay’ child in North America in the 1950s, sexuality theorist and historian David Halperin asserts that “since ‘gay experience’ includes many dimensions of subjective life beyond same-sex eroticism, it is possible to attribute a specifically gay experience to a child who has yet to form any clear idea of the eventual orientation of his sexual desire”, an experience “that shaped his subjective existence in that hostile environment” (Halperin 93).

Given these assertions and the way they seem to echo Vivier’s own account of his childhood quoted above, and given that the very definition of good parenting depended on the success of parents preventing their children from becoming “deviants”, might the rejection by his adoptive mother not have been partially because of his being a proto-gay child, even if it was not spoken of as such? Could it not have been part of the reason Jeanne Vivier “did not like him”? I would not suggest we should

discount any other explanation -- a few of which are brought by Gilmore -- but simply that we explicitly add this aspect to the existing ones.

The string of rejections continued when, at thirteen, Vivier was sent away from the family to a system of Catholic boarding schools from which he was also expelled at eighteen. As outlined by Gilmore, "at least two of Vivier's friends independently picked up the idea from the composer himself that the cause was some sort of sexual impropriety", while Véronique Robert explained this to have been due to "lack of maturity" (Gilmore 19). A lengthier explanation is offered in Gilmore's book by one of Vivier's teachers, Urbain Beauvais:

Claude was very sensitive, very nervous... He was cheerful, he was lively, but excessively sensitive and excessively inward-looking... He left the community not because he didn't pray but because for me his orientation -- music, poetry, all that -- perhaps it would not have suited him to stay in the community... Perhaps it was too structured; he wasn't the type to be structured, Claude... I think his orientation wouldn't have fitted with the orientation of the community (qtd. in Gilmore 18).

The painful expulsion from the seminary's community at eighteen must have been amplified by a perceived expulsion from Catholicism more broadly. This expulsion seems more directly related to Vivier's sexual orientation, even while not spelled out as such. The "lack of maturity" mentioned by Véronique Robert as the reason for

expulsion is in fact a very common euphemism for being gay (Brett 28), directly related to the notions of queer time vs. straight time I outline below. Such euphemisms are also abundant in Beauvais's account of Vivier being "very sensitive" and "very nervous", and his "orientation" -- "music, poetry, all of that" -- not lining up with the orientation of rest of the community. Gilmore further confirms that,

Asked whether Vivier's homosexuality was obvious during his time at Saint-Hyacinthe, Gilles Beaugard replied: "It was evident; perhaps we weren't perceptive enough to understand it that way at the time... what we took as a need for affection... Sometimes, I remember, he'd try to befriend someone, wanted to talk to him, to work with him, and the boy didn't connect with him at all, wouldn't answer or would say 'Claude, you're annoying me.' I know Claude suffered because of this" (Gilmore 20).

When interpreting these accounts we must bear in mind the broader climate and attitude towards queers in Canadian society at the time. "The 1950s and early 1960s were years of the social construction of homosexuality as a national, social and sexual danger in Canada," writes Canadian sociologist Gary William Kinsman (137). This was done through a variety of means which included orchestrated witch-hunt campaigns of the Canadian Government, in an effort to "cleanse" civil service positions from gays. These perverse "Lavender Scare" campaigns resulted in hundreds of people losing their jobs and the compilation of lists of thousands more "suspects". The following quote from a 1959 Canadian Security Panel memorandum published by Kinsman is illuminating:

By exercising fairly simple precautions, homosexuals are usually able to keep their habits hidden from those who are not specifically seeking them out. Further, homosexuals often appear to believe that the accepted ethical code which governs normal human relationships does not apply to them. Their propensity is often accompanied by other specific weaknesses such as excessive drinking with its resultant instabilities, a defiant attitude towards the rest of society, and a concurrent urge to seek out the company of persons with similar characteristics, often in disreputable bars, night clubs or restaurants. From the small amount of information we have been able to obtain about homosexual behaviors generally, certain characteristics appear to stand out -- instability, willing self-deceit, defiance towards society, a tendency to surround oneself with persons of similar propensities, regardless of other considerations -- none of which inspire the confidence one would hope to have in persons required to fill positions of trust and responsibility.

Only in 1967, the same year Vivier was expelled from the Catholic seminary, was the Government funded research project known as the 'Fruit Machine' -- a project testing different approaches to reliably identify gay individuals -- finally abandoned due to insufficient scientific results. This failure was in part owing to lack of cooperation -- in other words, resistance -- on part of gay informants.

Experiences of rejection continued later in Vivier's life and here, too, his queerness seems to have had a decisive role. Vivier deeply admired Stockhausen, who at first did not accept him as a student. When Vivier was accepted a year later -- famously satisfying the entry requirements when replying to Stockhausen's inquiry as to why he wanted to study with him, "because you're the greatest composer in the world" -- Stockhausen maintained his distance from him. In a letter to his friend Pierre Rochon,

Vivier explained this was because Stockhausen did not understand his “warm manner” (Gilmore 57). Composer and friend Clarence Barlow, who studied with Vivier in Utrecht and Köln during these years recalls that “Stockhausen did not like him straight away. I think he did not like his character. Claude behaved too strangely, too oddly. On top of everything he had a sheepskin jacket that stank quite a lot, to be honest. And Stockhausen took offense at that, at his character in principle... ” (Rêves D’un Marco Polo). And in an interview with Gilmore, he mentions explicitly that part of Stockhausen’s repulsion from Vivier was due to “a certain namby-pamby quality” in his speech, which is to say, he sounded effeminate (Gilmore, 2009, 38). This rejection was all the more acute since Vivier was Stockhausen’s most loyal student at the time, both in Köln and also later in Darmstadt, where a sort of coup d’état against Stockhausen took place in 1974, an event that deeply upset Vivier. He said in an interview:

When I decide to study with someone, I’m extremely... Well, I was the only pupil in three years who attended all his courses and followed him around as officially his pupils were supposed to do. So I followed the rehearsals, the concerts, perhaps not all the concerts, but some of them, and the recordings of Stockhausen’s *Momente*. To the letter! And I did nothing else when I arrived, except *Momente*, for three months (qtd. in Reicher 26).

Prior to the final and ultimate rejection -- his murder in March 1983 -- Vivier was assaulted by another man whom he picked up at a bar in Paris and brought home for the night: on January 25th he was robbed in his apartment and stabbed in the neck with

a pair of scissors, an experience which left him shaken, and which he compared to being raped (in stark contrast to the non-traumatic rape by his uncle at the age of eight). His friend and collaborator Philippe Poloni, who was the one to console him immediately after that traumatic event, commented after his death “He was going toward love, and wanting attention, and in reaction he received violence” (Gilmore 229).

These decisive rejections punctuating Vivier’s entire life were accompanied by less dramatic yet omnipresent teasing by colleagues and friends, as already mentioned in Beauregard’s account. Numerous other accounts of Vivier’s interaction in society repeatedly mention his stench, his odd laughter, and generally his “lack of social sensitivity”, as put by Gilmore (30). An early sketch by a friend from the Catholic Seminary reads: “... his trousers rarely straight. Yes, Claude can be irritating. This song suits you well... Yes, Claude, despite our sometimes nasty teasing, we respect you and wish you every happiness” (qtd. in Gilmore 14). At eighteen, “Young people made fun of him because he was so out of the ordinary. He already had effeminate manners, laughed loudly and behaved strangely”, an acquaintance told Gilmore (21). Later, at the Montréal Conservatoire he was described by Walter Boudreau as being “very loud and very obnoxious... His feet would smell, and he had bad breath” (33). In Köln, “He was a bit like a street dog”, said Kevin Volans, “a shaggy dog, sniffing about, running around

here and there, sort of uncontrollable. He was not bourgeois in any shape or form..." (84). And Barlow recalled that

the first thing you noticed when you met him was his inability to observe social rules. And sometimes people found him embarrassing because he was very direct. He was rude in a way, but I mean it positively. However, to people who did not know him he was not very well behaved. That is the second thing I remember about him: somebody who did not stick to the rules (Rêves D'un Marco Polo).

Interestingly, an often repeated formula in many of these accounts mentions Vivier being teased, but then explains how it was never done with malice or with an intention to hurt him. For example, Beauregard recalled that "Claude wasn't someone who was bullied at school: we liked to joke about him, we liked to make him react (because his reactions were always very strong), we liked to tease him; but we weren't mean to him" (Gilmore 17). Gilles Tremblay, Vivier's teacher at the Montréal Conservatoire remembers that, as put by Gilmore, "Vivier could be 'unbearable' and yet was 'loved' " (Gilmore 33). In Köln, Walter Zimmermann, who was Vivier's roommate "recalls ("with regret") that he and several of the other students used to tease Vivier a good deal, however good-naturedly, and would often make fun of him" (Gilmore, 2009, 42). And Richard Toop, Stockhausen's teaching assistant at the time of Vivier's studies with him, said that "...our main problem with Claude was his total disinclination to wash... We couldn't resist teasing him at times, but it was done in an entirely friendly

spirit, not a malicious one” (Gilmore 86). This repeated apologetic formula in fact acknowledges, I believe, a homophobic or at least intolerant element in such “teasing”.

I am pointing to the underlying homophobic tone of these accounts not in order to accuse specific people of being homophobes -- that would be futile and pointless. Rather, by clustering these accounts together and highlighting their confession-like quality, their *structural* similarities, I hope to outline for the reader the *structural* homophobia, a central organizing force in the societies Vivier lived in, a structure with which everyone is implicated. Recognizing this will allow us to reevaluate Vivier’s proclaimed “lack of social sensitivity”: with this in mind, why *should* queer people adhere to the social rules of a society plagued with homophobia, transphobia and an anxious aversion to gender non-conformity, rules that to a large extent were formulated in such a way as to exclude queers from it in the first place?

Indeed, the dynamics at work here were much more complex than Vivier’s simply being the odd one out and being ostracized for it. Together with the teasing and rejections, he was also much admired and loved by many, often specifically for his uniqueness and for his direct style of communication which lacked mannerisms. In the years in Montréal before leaving for Paris he was even at the center of a social formation involving mostly people younger than him, serving as a kind of charismatic role-model

(Gilmore 171). Throughout his life, he was negotiating his difference with his environment, not as a passive actor -- being teased, being rejected -- but as an active actor with agency. Seen from this perspective, we may start to think about his "inability to observe social rules" also as a choice, whether conscious or not, to "queer-up" the space around him, to make a queer intervention in the publics he moved through. Here precisely is where the personal becomes also a political site, and an inability to "straighten up" and be "normal" becomes a source of pride and an embrace of difference. "The accepted ethical code which governs normal human relationships does not apply to them", read the 1959 Canadian government memo. Damn right it don't.

A few examples of Vivier's self-aware choice to bend the rules are recounted in Gilmore's book, such as his transgender-like habit to have "unapologetically made use of the women's toilets on a regular basis", or his quasi-anarchic "tendency in Cologne to cross the road whenever he felt the need rather than walking to a corner crossing" (84). Boudreau tells us that "Vivier was a clown, in life, with people. How could he disguise this terrible insecurity? By being an asshole. And by being so loud... Claude would sit at a concert, and if the piece was boring he'd let out this incredibly loud yawn..." (qtd. in Gilmore 33). Barlow tells of a Stockhausen premiere at Donaueschingen, after which he and Vivier had nowhere to spend the night. Vivier improvised a sign asking for accommodation. "I thought, oh God, you can't go anywhere with him!", recalled

Barlow, but it worked, and the two men spent the night couch-surfing at a generous stranger's home (57). On a different occasion a few years earlier, during a vocal presentation of composer Harry Somers at a symposium at McGill University, Vivier "jumped out of his seat, mounted the stage, and like the agit-prop street theatre of the day did a mocking, mirror-like copy of Somers's performance", recounts John Rea (34). And during Vivier's first ever visit to Europe, at Darmstadt, in summer 1970, Barlow recounts that,

There was a piece... involving a lady rolling around in a fishnet suspended above the audience. She had very little on... Suddenly you noticed this young man who had begun to wriggle around and do a kind of funny dance during the piece... we were all watching him rather than the lady. He was getting into all kinds of lascivious positions, with very tight trousers if I remember right; maybe green satin trousers. That's when I first saw Claude. I got terribly embarrassed and thought, this person would certainly not be somebody I'd like to meet, I just wouldn't know how to deal with him. He made quite a scene of himself in public (45).

The recurring embarrassment that is the lot of those who lived to tell these stories points to Vivier being one of those "queer performers who destabilize the normative values that make everyone else feel safe and secure" (10), as in Jack Halberstam's description of queer subjects. The visual disturbance of the above described performance -- lascivious positions with tight, green satin trousers -- is complemented with interventions in the other senses: Vivier's laughter -- described variously as being "very loud and a bit creepy", "a fabricated sound", and unnatural (Gilmore 111), "Mephistophelean" and like "a harsh crackle" (Griffiths 196) -- as well as his smell,

infamously recalled by numerous commentators, can both be interpreted as a sensual intervention in space¹, a refusal to behave “bourgeois”, to use Volans’s term.

I see a parallel between these negotiations with the environment -- of embracing a position of “never totally fitting in”, as put by Boudreau (qtd. in Gilmore 33) by memorably making “quite a scene of himself in public” -- and the healing transformation of a “muscular” reality to a “marvelous dream universe” discussed above. This transformation is particular for Vivier, while also being common in queer lives and culture. Such is the reappropriation of pejoratives like “queer”, turning it from a signifier of abjection to an adjective with positive connotations of creativity and resilience. This alchemic process which queers specialize in has been highlighted in psychological research focusing on the positive aspects of queer existence, such as Masten, A. S., (2001), Brown, L. S. (1989), Riggle, E. D., & Rostosky, S. S. (2011), Anderson, A. L. (1998) and Savin-Williams, R. C. (2009). It is a response to the challenges of “growing sideways”, of being a proto-gay child in a hostile environment. Kathryn Bond Stockton’s poetic insight that “There are ways of growing that are not growing up” (11) is particularly useful for thinking about Vivier’s early life. Growing sideways, Bond suggests, entails missing some of the markers of straight temporality,

¹ Here is a quote from feminist philosopher Annie Lecler’s *Parole de femme*, which Vivier had read and was influenced by (see Chapter 2); the “you” here refers to men: “Vagina open when you want it, closed up with Tampax. Scoured, scraped, made hygienic, deodorized and re-odorized with rose-smelling perfume, it’s too much, it’s stifling me, I need my own body. That is what I mean by living.”

but it is growing nonetheless. A striking example from Vivier's childhood is his late -- according to accepted norms -- development of language skills: "His friend Michel-George Brègent noted, after Vivier's death, that "until the age of six Claude was thought to be deaf and dumb" (Gilmore 6). And while this aspect of Claude the child certainly would have been seen as alarmingly queer (in the broad sense of the word), it was also tied by scholars as well as by Vivier himself to his artistic output later in life. For example, in his program notes for the first recording of his piece *Chants*, which he regarded as his "opus 1", Vivier wrote "My whole life passed before me, giving me a filigree glimpse of a sad-faced child trying to express something grandiose, of which he had never been capable as yet" (qtd. in Reicher 26-27), an image which seems to directly echo that childhood experience, whether real or not.

This highlights again a clear connection between Vivier's creative processes of positive queer transformation and self-making as a child, and the later creative processes of Vivier the composer. Moreover, the queer interventions in public space can also be found in Vivier's artistic efforts to intervene in the concert hall tradition, an intervention aimed at his colleagues and contemporaries, but also more broadly an intervention in the canon itself and its relationship to what he understood to be masculine ideals.

“Families We Choose”

But some of Vivier’s relationships seem to have been devoid of the above described frictions altogether, the most obvious one being with Thérèse Desjardins and her family.

I met Thérèse for two long sessions during a research trip to Montréal in winter 2012.

Perhaps it is my being a bit of a Francophone, which means I think anyone with a French accent (Quebecois French notwithstanding) is more profoundly rooted in human culture than I could ever be; or my Proustian/gay tendency to collect and fixate on mother figures; or simply that irresistible combination of Thérèse’s high culture finesse and charming bluntness -- “it’s much better in the sauna!”, she admitted when reflecting on gay public sex vs. the straight adolescent experience of a cramped car in an empty parking lot -- but in any case, I loved her immediately. With Brahms quartets playing in the background, and a mid-January snow blizzard expected for later that day, we sat down to eat at her house which overlooks the river Saint-Laurent, and she treated me with duck pie and wine, as well as salad, bread and cheese and sweet desert. I wasn’t going to be a good researcher or ethnographer or anything of that sort, purporting objectiveness, maintaining a distance to keep a critical cool. No, I wanted to feel something about the nature of her relationship with Vivier himself, to jump in. Imagining myself -- a young gay composer seeking her guidance, dining at her table -- to be in his place, for just a few hours. And what I felt was a strong sense of being

welcomed, actively, of being made to feel comfortable, in a way that can be quite rare for queer people. We spoke for several hours about Vivier, his music, their relationship, but also about me, my music, my plans for the future. She was interested in my research of Vivier, but also in me as my own person. It felt as if I got just a fraction, a glimpse of their relationship, of that love, of how precious it was for them. This is what she meant, I think, when she told me that “I was his friend, but I was a little like his sister, or mother. And my children were really his brothers, they loved him.” I asked her to recount for me the story about a birthday party I knew she threw for him.

It was his last birthday before he left for Paris, on April [1982]. I knew he was going to Paris for many years, so I made a big party for him and his friends. There were many people there, John Rea, Boudreau... When he came my mother was at the piano and played “Happy Birthday to You” and he played with her. But for him, it was really a shock. He just walked into the room, and then we had dinner, party, and then cake with candles. Big candles. When he was looking at this, well, “you have to blow them out”. “You know, it’s so beautiful, wait a little”. And then he finally did it. But after the party we were alone, together, and he started crying. I asked, “why?” “Because it’s my first birthday cake. My first party.” And it was the last one (interview with author).

Duck pie, red wine, Brahms quartets in the background, a snow blizzard making its way, a “Happy/Sad Birthday to You” story, and many more such memories that have, over the span of almost thirty years since his death, been molded into anecdotes, into fixed stories. And a complete embrace and openness towards queers like Vivier, or myself, of Thérèse going after his death to gay bars and saunas to learn even more

about his world, or of her daughter helping him put on makeup before heading to cruise the parks, when he still lived in Montréal.

Of a choice to be a family. “Feminist studies of kinship... show how lesbians and gay men countered rejection by biological families (parents and siblings) by forming voluntary, nonprocreative families” (Marcus 205). The desire to find familial intimacy outside the biological family manifests itself in the creative relationships and kinships formed in queer communities, which were so powerfully present in Vivier’s own life with the Desjardins Family, as well as in other queer publics. It was not uncommon for Thérèse to take people in. A beautiful man named Ivan, for example, stayed with them for seven years. Another, a runaway from home, was seeking refuge and eventually became the father of her granddaughter. And in fact before having four biological children, Thérèse and her then husband adopted their first son. Through this experience she learned about the difficulty of growing up with the temporal disjuncture, of not knowing ones origins. And that in turn helped her relate to Vivier.

Eventually this familial relationship was even codified legally when, following Vivier’s death, Thérèse became “the custodian of all his effects”, signed off by “Jeanne Vivier, Armand Vivier, Marcel Vivier, Gisèle Vivier Labrecque, and her husband Francois, and

Vivier's friend Jean Billard" (Gilmore 226). In a way, Thérèse finally became his guardian: a mother, if not of Vivier himself, then of his legacy.

I was driving along the frozen river back to Montréal in an American rented car with no snow tires when the blizzard hit. I was happy.

Queer Time

In the introduction to his book *In a Queer Time and Place* Judith-Jack Halberstam explains the necessity to develop the concept of "queer time" in contrast with "normal" or "straight" time:

Queer subcultures produce alternative temporalities by allowing their participants to believe that their futures can be imagined according to logics that lie outside of those paradigmatic markers of life experience -- namely, birth, marriage, reproduction, and death (2).

Queer time emerges, then, as an array of (often willfully) distorted versions of an idealized straight timeline. Following the ticking of this imagined straight clock is generally valued as the "right way" to live, whereas by failing to do so one may find oneself living "outside of reproductive and familial time as well as on the edges of logics of labor and production" (10).

Vivier lived outside of “familial time”, which according to Halberstam “refers to the normative scheduling of daily life (early to bed, early to rise) that accompanies the practice of child rearing” (5). A phone call to a friend in the middle of the night to share a freshly composed section of a piece, an unannounced visit in the early morning after cruising the park at night. “Outside of reproductive time” too, does not require much explanation in the case of Vivier, who had no reproductive aspirations as far as I know. Vivier was “a person without boundaries” says John Rea, who together with his wife used to host Vivier to many dinners, and who explains “you could get a telephone call at any time, a visit at almost any time, you could be caught off guard” (qtd. in Gilmore 145).

One can also easily trace the fact of Vivier living “on the edges of logics of labor and production”. The Vivier family were working-class and could not support their adopted son financially beyond his immediate needs. So later in life, regularly dining at others’ homes was a way to socialize, but also to be supported by a network of friends who were financially better off than him. When I asked her about Vivier’s financial situation throughout his life, Thérèse Desjardins chuckled sadly and said,

He had money when he got the big grant to go to Paris but before that he lived on five or six thousand dollars a year, nothing more. He had to pay for his apartment, so he couldn’t eat, and he had to pay for his music, so he was eating at friends’ places all over Montréal, very often at my place. I was living in Montréal so he was coming every two days maybe, very often. He was *really*

poor. He had nothing. I remember, one time I said “you need glasses”, and he replied “yes, but I have no money.” So many friends helped, one bought glasses, another gave him a piece of garment, things like that (interview by author).

Interestingly, later in his adult life, living in poverty was at least partially a kind of idealistic and risky choice: he abandoned the pursuit of an academic teaching career -- he held part-time positions at the Universities of Montréal and Ottawa, as well as at CEGEP Montmorency in Laval in 1975-1976 (Gilmore 102) -- and made a modest living solely off of his music. Not an easy task for a young composer without the financial support of a family. The decision was in part due to his dissatisfaction with teaching and his criticism of academic institutions and training more broadly, combined with a desire to concentrate on his artistic work. (After being rejected from the family institution, as well as religious and educational institutions, his skepticism towards academic training should not come as a surprise.) But in any case it also meant living in economic precariousness and as shown by Gilmore, a document from 1978 reveals his very modest income for the previous year, which came to \$3,270.21, or “about \$10,700 in today’s currency” (145). Halberstam helps put this in context:

for some queer subjects, time and space are limned by risks they are willing to take... musicians who risk their livelihoods by immersing themselves in nonlucrative practices... those people who live without financial safety nets, without homes, without steady jobs, outside the organizations of time and space that have been established for the purposes of protecting the rich few from everyone else (10).

Vivier emerges as a paradigmatic queer subject then; he was leading a life outside of familial and reproductive time, as was most often the case with LGBTQ subjects during his lifetime; and he also lived more broadly in queer time due to his living “outside the logic of capital accumulation.” Furthermore, he was fascinated by and attracted to others subjecting themselves to the tick-tock of a queer clock: “here we could consider ravers, club kids, HIV-positive barebackers, rent boys, sex workers” and, from the perspective of capital accumulation logic, the ultimate queer subjects: “homeless people” (Halberstam 10). Of course, many queers are pushed to these societal margins through systemic discrimination. As shown by the Sylvia Rivera Law Project, which is named after the Stonewall Uprising veteran and strong advocate for the rights of poor queer people of color, “gender non-conforming people are much more likely to be poor or homeless than the average person”.

Revolution Has Come?

...we must relate to the homosexual movement because it is a real thing. And I know through reading, and through my life experience and observations that homosexuals are not given freedom and liberty by anyone in the society. They might be the most oppressed people in the society (qtd. in Blasius 405).

These were the words of Huey P. Newton, co-founder of the Black Panther Party, in August 1970, one year after the Stonewall Rebellion, when rage over police brutality

and institutional oppression of LGBTQ people more broadly was expressed in a spontaneous eruption of militant resistance in New York City's Greenwich Village. June, 1969 is widely acknowledged as a watershed moment in the history of the LGBTQ rights movement, marking the beginning of a new kind of queer visibility and processes that were to shape, to a large extent, the very notion of gay life and identity as we know them today. For gay men especially, "those events vastly expanded the available options for gay male sexual and social life, created a public, visible, open gay male culture, and forged a dignified, habitable gay male identity" (Halperin 39).

The transition of the gay liberation movement from the radical political margins to the liberal mainstream over the past few decades inevitably also meant the dwindling of its revolutionary verve, its potential and practice of reinforcing a joint solidarity struggle across sex, gender, class, race, national borders and other divisions, such as Newton was calling for. After all, just as the Feminist Movement was a necessary predecessor for Gay Liberation, so were the Black Civil Rights Movement and the concept of Black Pride the models of Gay Pride and Civil Rights. As Marcus succinctly explains, "race and homosexuality were both effects of hierarchical classification and a politics of body surveillance. Both homosexuals and blacks were marked as abnormal and unnatural" (Marcus 208). "Black is Beautiful" birthed "Gay is Good". This historical link resonates in Vivier's most directly and audibly political piece, *Wo Bist du Licht!*, which

foregrounds an excerpt from a recording of Martin Luther King's speech from the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom.

Today gay political efforts are generally understood to narrowly address the right to participate in the heteronormative, conservative institutions of the nation-state: marriage and military service. But in the early '70s, the gay movement was still very much a subversive movement with liberationist aspirations, operating at the political avant-garde, radical by definition. And as Benjamin Shepard shows, often these emancipatory aspirations were manifesting in playful tactics that in hindsight may not seem particularly radical: celebration of difference, sexual liberation and partying. A blow-job on a side street is, in some contexts, a politically subversive act, especially when not only the occupation of public space but also the act itself is illegal, and homosexuality considered a psychiatric disorder.

It is hard to speak of these facts without romanticizing them, yet they need to be remembered when looking back if we are to understand the context in which Vivier navigated these political realities, times and spaces, and his relationship to them. We must remember that the political assertiveness of LGBTQ rights activists in the late 1960s and early '70s was in response to severe oppression by the state, law enforcement and society at large. According to his own account, Vivier realized he was gay

(‘homosexuel’) sometime during his studies at the Montréal Conservatoire (1967-70). Nothing in his account suggests this was a particularly traumatic experience, except, implicitly mentioning in the same sentence that he was “still a Catholic” (qtd. in Gilmore 19). Yet surely, it could not have been a neutral experience either. Journalist Glenn Greenwald writes that, in the 1970s,

the existence of gay people was all but unmentionable, particularly outside of small enclaves in New York, Los Angeles and San Francisco. If your first inkling of a gay identity took place in that decade, as mine did, you necessarily assumed that you were alone, that you were plagued with some sort of rare, aberrational disease, since there was no way even to know gayness existed except from the most malicious and casual mockery of it. It simply wasn’t meaningfully discussed: anywhere... With exceedingly few exceptions, openly gay figures in politics, sports, or entertainment were nonexistent.

The concept of “coming out” was framed as a political tool and not simply a personal choice by revolutionary groups such as the short-lived yet highly influential Gay Liberation Front, which had chapters across the US and Canada in the early ‘70s. The spirit of defiance of the Gay Liberation movement is exemplified in the demand to come out, explains pioneering queer scholar Henry Abelove, who further points out that the name of the group was chosen “in a provocative allusion to the Algerian National Liberation Front and the Vietnamese National Liberation Front, which was the enemy of the United States in the Vietnam War”. In Quebec the English GLF was directly

translated to Front Libération Homosexuel, which to Canadian Anglophones resonated as an “honoring of indépendantiste terrorists” (Higgins 73).

All this is crucial in thinking about Vivier’s own nonchalant sounding but in fact courageous and highly political public coming out at the age of thirty, in the same 1978 article published in *Sortir* and quoted above. *Sortir* in some ways came out of the Montréal counterculture magazine *Mainmise*, the first edition of which was published in October 1970, and whose “main role over the next few years would be to transmit the ideas of the American counterculture to French-speaking Quebec. Drugs, Eastern mysticism, free love... filled its pages. Right from the start, the editors included articles on gay themes” (Higgins 72). It was in the offices of *Mainmise* that the first meeting of the Montréal chapter of the Gay Liberation Front took place, in March, 1971, answering a call to action that was published in its third edition.

Sortir, which can be translated as “coming out”, was a collection of essays on gay identity and politics, one of the first of its kind to be published in Quebec, and is described as a “watershed publication in the new era of liberation” (Poirier). On the cover, the editors specifically cite the police arrest of 145 gay men in a 1977 raid as the impetus for the publication. It was edited by Jean Basile and Georges Kahl -- who were among the editors of *Mainmise* -- as well as Luc Benoit and Paul Chamberland. The

latter is an important gay Quebecois poet who was also Vivier's collaborator on the libretto of *Prologue pour un Marco Polo*. *Sortir* included contributions from twenty-two authors among whom were Paul Chamberland; Michel Tremblay, one of Canada's most prominent playwrights who was openly gay since 1975, and with whom Vivier at one point considered collaborating on the libretto for *Kopernikus* (Gilmore 176); and Vivier's colleague and friend from the Conservatoire days, Michel-Georges Brégent, to whom Vivier dedicated his orchestral piece *Siddhartha*. In short, these were some of the cultural and political pioneers and heirs of Gay Liberation in Quebec, and Vivier was moving in these circles, making his own contribution to their efforts.

Following earlier police raids in the mid-70s, the Association pour les droits des gai(e)s du Québec (l'ADGQ) was formed. Based in Montréal, it was a "civil rights organization, the main gay liberation organization in Quebec at the time" (M. Smith 48). The highly political periodical published by ADGQ, *Le Berdache*, is where an interview with Vivier was published in the July-August issue of 1981 as a centerpiece of that issue. A picture shows Vivier dancing with another young man in the street, holding hands, smiling, with his shirt open, revealing a moderately hairy chest. The interview is the most detailed text by Vivier regarding his thinking about the connections between sexuality and music (see Chapter 2).

All this firmly places Vivier as a prominent cultural figure operating at the heart of the gay rights movement in Montréal at the time. Because he did not seem to be particularly invested in the separatist question, one of the central political issues on the national agenda in Canada, Gilmore concludes that, “It is as though imaginary lands and timeless, ahistorical issues held more attraction for him than real-life ones” (176). The question is of course, whose real life? Vivier’s involvement in the gay liberation circle is a prime example of commitment to real-world politics, where it mattered to his own life experience. To disregard this is to miss an important aspect of his life by adhering to a hierarchy whereby national politics are deemed more important, more “real”, than the liberationist struggles of disenfranchised groups.

***Not* the Only Gay in the Village²**

The places Vivier chose to live were urban spaces that offered him opportunities to participate in the social, intimate and sexual cultures he was part of: Montréal, Köln and Paris. This is not to say that it is uncommon for composers and other artists to flock to major urban centers which are usually also centers of funded cultural production, offering opportunities for performances, commissions, and schmoozing with cultural patrons. Nor that his choice to move to Köln, for example, was not primarily motivated

² Daffyd Thomas is the hilarious character in *Little Britain* who constantly complains about the hardships of being “the only gay in the village”, in spite of numerous indications to the contrary.

by his wish to study with Stockhausen; surely, it was. Yet Stockhausen and schmoozing notwithstanding, each of these cities also had specific relationships to gay life, in which Vivier enthusiastically participated.

Halberstam broadly confirms the notion “that queer subcultures thrive in urban areas” (15). Each of the three mentioned cities was in the process of becoming a center of gay life in the post-Stonewall era, when Vivier lived in them. His making homes in these cities was part of a new migration of gay men and other queers into urban centers, forming communities concentrating especially in and around specific geographic areas now known as “gayborhoods”, such as Montréal’s Le Village gai or Le Marais in Paris.

Today, Le Marais or Le Village gai (or the Castro, Chelsea, and many gay ghettos in urban centers around the world) are for the most part gentrified, family-friendly tourist destinations, offering afternoon strolls between boutique sex-stores and cafes in the safe zones (for some) of high-tech surveillance and militarized police. But at the time Vivier was navigating these geographies they were very different places. These queer havens were formed to a large extent in search of allyship and physical safety in a hetero-supremacist society, fleeing police raids, frequent arrests under false accusations, sexual and other forms of harassment, and murder: the kind of violence Vivier ultimately did fall victim to.

After spending the 1971-1972 academic year in Utrecht, in the relatively progressive Netherlands, Vivier was accepted to study with Stockhausen and moved to Köln. The German gay rights movement at the time was in dramatic flux. In West Germany, gay sex was decriminalized in 1969, but the police kept surveilling and collecting information on gay individuals (Hans Werner Henze left Germany in 1953 in part because of its homophobic climate, less than ten years after the end of WWII, which had included an orchestrated Nazi effort to exterminate gay people, too). *Nicht der Homosexuelle ist pervers, sondern die Situation, in der er lebt* (It is Not the Homosexual Who is Perverse, But the Society in Which He Lives), was the title of a groundbreaking 1971 film that was screened in theaters across Germany, including Köln. It sparked public debate, and in some accounts is credited for propelling the gay rights movement in Germany forward, with the formation of several gay groups in Köln (Centrum Schwule Geschichte). The Gay Liberation Front in Köln had its first public meeting in February 1972, and in 1973 the first Lesbian group, Homosexuelle Frauen-Aktion, was formed.

Letters Vivier wrote show him aware and curious about these transformations as they were taking place, while tracing his migration through these cities reveals his clear preference to live in proximity to these emerging enclaves of gay life. Gilmore confirms that “Vivier was well attuned to the gay scene” (62) while living in Utrecht, which was

at the height of the Gay Liberation days, in the early 70's. Vivier wrote to his friend

Pierre Rochon:

The Dutch penis seems to be similar to the Quebec one. Here the boys are wonderfully handsome and the gays make a lot of noise by unifying their sexual revolution and the political one... Politically Holland is very capitalist but the people themselves much less so, they have a very high sense of the social and a quite rare sense of community... (qtd. in Gilmore 63).

In Köln, after living at first in a western suburb of the city, Vivier moved to the north of the old city (Gilmore 82), which has been the city's center of gay life for many years. Subsequent apartments at Neuhöfferstraße and Weißenburgstraße kept him in the vicinity of the old city (85). Once again, it is a letter to Rochon that shows Vivier being involved in gay life in the city, at a time of general sexual liberation and exploration among his milieu:

I must say that many parties end up in an orgy, the Germans also seem to do orgies not badly in a way that everything is not badly mixed together but anyway you still end up in a girl's vagina! On the other hand German gay guys are not very amusing in general and the most beautiful boys always end up asking you for money which is not very interesting. In this way I miss Montréal, its life is much more healthy! (qtd. in Gilmore 83)

Montréal was Vivier's birthplace, but also a city he came back to and made a life for himself in as an adult. Already in 1969 gay sex was decriminalized in Canada (for

comparison, only in 2003 was sodomy law struck down in some of the remaining US states, following the Supreme Court ruling in the Lawrence vs. Texas case). In 1977 “the Quebec Charter of Rights and Freedoms was amended to make Quebec the first jurisdiction in the world to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation in the public and private sectors” (Gilmore 172). But like elsewhere at the time, the push for LGBT rights and increasing visibility also amped the backlash as oppositional forces were competing to shape the present and future of society. The political success of 1977 came after the police raid of the Truax Bar and La Mystique, which ensued large-scale protests that were sympathetically covered by the media and that are often referred to as Montréal’s own “Stonewall” (admittedly, many police raids followed by protests in the post-Stonewall era, of which there were plenty, were hailed as a “Stonewall” moment). It was in response to these raids that *Sortir* was published. Earlier, “in 1975 and again the following year, there were large-scale protests after the police raided gay establishments in Quebec and in Ottawa in the buildup to the 1976 Olympics” (Gilmore 172). These were likely ordered by the openly homophobic mayor of Montréal Jean Drapeau, who was also responsible for operations such as clearing bushes and trees in gay cruising areas.

When Vivier came back to Montréal in 1977 after traveling in Asia he found an apartment at avenue du Parc. In fact, he found two apartments on that street: moving

from an apartment at 5352 to a larger one at 5304 avenue du Parc (Gilmore 130). Both these apartments were within a short walking distance to Parc du Mont Royal, “the city’s largest green space”, and also an active cruising area. On the other side of the park was rue Stanley which at the time was the center of gay life in Montréal, before the development of the Gay Village in its current location around rue Sainte-Catherine, which started in the early ‘80s in parallel with that of Le Marais.

A year before Vivier moved to France, in 1981, the first gay pride parade took place in Paris in April, and in May of that year gay sex was decriminalized. Pride parades in dozens of large cities around the world had started being held in the previous decade, in commemoration of the Stonewall Uprising. The history of the creation of a Parisian center of gay life, too, is a layered one, and it must be noted that there are differences in the perception and construction of urban queer space in North American, German and French cities. As outlined by Provencher, the latter tend to be more mixed and fluid, and therefore also more elusive. In spite of that, Paris unequivocally became the most important center of gay life in France, with “46 percent of France’s gay men” having “lived in Paris in the early 1990s” (151); and Le Marais is the most visible and stable such center in Paris, indeed following a more centralized American/global model, emphasizing visibility, consumerism and pride. And “while Paris functions as a canonical capital city for many French citizens”, Provencher stresses, “Paris’ gay

neighborhood 'Le Marais' serves as a canonical gay reference or 'lieu de mémoire' ['realm of memory'] for many of France's homosexual citizens" (153). Similarly to his location in Montréal, when Vivier moved to Paris, in June 1982, he found an apartment in 22 rue du Général Guilhem, in the less central and thus more affordable eleventh arrondissement (Gilmore 202), which is adjacent to and within walking distance from Le Marais. Close enough to hobble your way back home at the end of a night at the bars, on your own, or with a lover.

Queer Space

We stood together in the quaint street with our pants around our ankles. I wanted to strip him off altogether, to see him bare. He had good thick legs, unlike Jasper, whose legs were thin, and Claude's had thick, heavy hair on them.

Of course, we couldn't take our clothes off on rue Tiquetonne, and it didn't seem likely we would do much of anything there, until Claude put his bottle on the sidewalk, crouched in front of me, and swallowed me into his face (Coe 174).

Going back to the idea of queer sex being subversive, and particularly so when performed in public (hetero) space, the particular blow-job described in the quote above was the beginning of a short love affair between a composer named Claude and an American tourist visiting Paris, described in Christopher Coe's semi-fictional autobiographical novel, *Such Times*. In reality, Coe was Vivier's last known lover, the

two having spent a few weeks together starting in January 1983, until Coe's return to New York. The scene takes place on a small side street at the center of Paris, after the two met at a gay bar which doubles as a sex club north of the Louvre. The scene unfolds with great detail until the two lovers were done, at which point "a taxi came into the street. A man and woman in evening dress alighted from it. They went into a building, through the door against which Claude and I had begun our deed. Claude laughed at this" (Coe 177). A reminder of the inherent, or assumed, heteronormative order of space that was momentarily undone by the two men.

The significance of such queer spaces for Vivier is evident from Gérard Grisey's succinct summary of "three things which were equally important to Claude: movies, music and gay bars" (qtd. in Gilmore 225); a holy trinity of sorts. But Vivier's navigation of these queer spaces was subversive also by virtue of situating him at a vantage point for cross-class contact. There are numerous accounts of Vivier's ability and tendency to easily make friends and interact with homeless people, immigrants and members of other marginalized groups.

In Köln, Vivier "befriended some of his new Turkish neighbors, and learned some Turkish and some Arabic" (Gilmore 82). "That was typical of Claude -- he'd make friends with people at the drop of a hat", recalls Clarence Barlow (qtd. in Gilmore 83).

“All the people sat around him, about 25 people every night he was here every night in the place here and they would listen to him with their mouths open, about music. Me, I don't know much about music, but the way I saw the people listen to him I knew he was a good musician and famous”, remembers Karygiannys, the owner of the Greek bar-restaurant Skala in Montréal that Vivier used to frequent (*Rêves D'un Marco Polo*).

“After we closed the bar around three o'clock he wanted to talk more, and we go out, we go to the park sometimes, we sit, everybody together, and talk. His speech was all about music, nothing else, you know.”

“He always identified himself with the rejects and misfits of society”, writes Griffiths (189), and mentions Vivier's “horror at the racism he found in Paris directed against Jews and North Africans”, while reminding the readers of “his intuition that he might be Jewish himself”. And Gilmore describes with greater detail Vivier's strong reactions against racial tensions that were exposed during his time in Paris by the “bombing and shooting attack on a Jewish-owned restaurant” in the Marais on August 1982, as well as the horror of the massacre in Palestinian refugee camps in Beirut as part of Israel's invasion of Lebanon in September. “He marched in a demonstration against the slaughter, and recounts how, in tears, he went into a bar and found a Palestinian man also grieving; Vivier bought him a beer and the two sat, without speaking, united in their distress” (209).

Taken together, these and many other such recollections may point to a relationship to queerness and to the kinds of possibilities afforded and encouraged by moving through queer space. Because the political charge of queer spaces is not merited by queer and/or public sex alone. As shown by Samuel R. Delany, queer spaces where men come to cruise, socialize and get off, such as sex clubs, bars, saunas and parks, are uniquely positioned as a crossroads for pleasurable, non-transactional cross-class contact. Inversely then, the elimination of queer spaces of this kind, often in the name of family values and safety, is also part of an ongoing class war. Halberstam expands on this point:

...class war works silently against the social practices through which interclass contact can take place. In other words, what we understand in this day and age as “class war” is not simply owners exploiting labor or labor rebelling against managers but a struggle between those who value interclass contact and work hard to maintain those arenas in which it can occur, and those who fear it and work to create sterile spaces free of class mixing (14).

Kevin Volans’s description of Vivier as being “not bourgeois in any shape or form” comes to mind (qtd. in Gilmore 84). Importantly, Vivier’s capacity for creating connections across class, ethnic, age and other cultural differences is also echoed in his music. A telling example is the following excerpt from the program notes to his 1974 piece, *Lettura di Dante*:

this music tends toward a new sensitivity, a sensitivity that I have always perceived, all my life, in the people neglected and left behind by society. This beauty and purity that I find in the elderly and the very young, or the nearness of death... inspired a vision of an inaccessible world in a life where money and power are everything... So it is above all of these solitary humans that I think when I write music (qtd. in Reicher 27).

In the original French text, Vivier uses the term 'les robineux' , "Quebecois slang for homeless people" (Gilmore 101). Another earlier example is Vivier's encounter with an "old Corsican, completely drunk, whom everybody was afraid of" on a train ride in Holland. Vivier engaged the man in conversation, which he recorded and then used in a 1972 tape piece, *Hommage: Musique pour un vieux Corse triste*. He explained his impetus to pay tribute to the man saying, "I wanted to eternalize him, transcend him, take him out of the context of the train, to transform this meeting into an ecstatic vision" (qtd. in Gilmore 67). Or consider his 1978 chamber piece *Greeting Music*, a piece that "is somehow related to a hopeless world where nothing is to be done nor felt" (program notes by the composer), but the symbolic greeting of which, he told a friend, was directed to "homeless people living on the streets" (Gilmore 147).

Moving through queer space facilitated Vivier's making meaningful, creative and hopeful connections with people who were markedly different from him, across boundaries of nation, ethnicity, gender, language and other barriers, and who, similarly to him, lived "outside the logic of capital accumulation", in queer time. Here is a telling

account by a journalist who interviewed Vivier's friend, in which Vivier made the connection between these publics and his music: "One evening, [Vivier] brought his friend Rober Racine to the boulevard Saint-Laurent, to a tavern where transvestites, beggars and other homeless people gathered... 'My music is here,' he added, gesturing around the room full of lost souls" (Gilmore 185), echoing perhaps Genet's fascination by, solidarity with, and depiction of marginalized people. Paul Griffiths recounts the story slightly differently, depicting the human collage as having included "prostitutes and tramps and transvestites" and adding that Vivier had spent Christmas there once. "He was thoroughly at home there: that was his family. And he said that these people were the inspiration for his music" (190).

As one may decipher from the quote's tone, creating these types of connections is often perceived, justifiably or not, as risky. And because of Vivier's violent death, it is easy to anachronistically read warning signs into such encounters. But this form of risk-taking, of mindfully blurring socially constructed borders, is also a form of resistance to hegemonic cultural values: bigotry, classism, nationalism and the alienation imposed by living under financial and governance systems that value individuality and competition above all else. In explaining how he benefited from being gay, Genet told his interviewer Madeline Gobeil,

It's what put me on the path of writing and of understanding people. I'm not saying that it was only that, but perhaps if I hadn't made love with Algerians I wouldn't have been on the side of the FLN. Well, no, not really; I would have been on their side in any case. But it was homosexuality that made me understand Algerians were men like any others (14).

Reaching across these borders, then, must not be seen simply as a flirtation with death, but rather an embrace of life itself, in its full capacity. This is the capacity and potential of queerness to imagine and provide alternative modes of living, alternative worlds, to a "hard" and "muscular" reality, where "money and power are everything", "a hopeless world where nothing is to be done nor felt". Desjardins told me about a time when she drove Vivier back home at night after spending an evening together, and upon seeing a familiar homeless person nicknamed Christmas lying on the sidewalk, Vivier insisted that they stop the car and take him to the hospital, which they did. Or how in Paris, after his death, she approached a woman selling flowers at the metro, who knew Vivier, she was told. Desjardins asked her if she knew a young man, describing Vivier. "Claude!" she immediately replied.

He always bought a flower, just one, he bought the flower and he gave it back to her. And she really remembered him. Because he was nice, very open minded, and happy, he was a kind of... I don't really know anymore who he was, this guy, the only thing I know is he was a good composer (interview by author).

“Could a merchant know wisdom?”, shouts the speaker in *Prologue pour un Marco Polo*, bursting into laughter, “Marco Milione, what is your price?”, and then softly, as if replying to himself, “Can one haggle over the essence of a flower?”.

Two Comments About Vivier’s Death

Vivier’s tragic and untimely death has become a paramount element in the mythology surrounding the composer’s life. It is mentioned at the beginning of his biographies so often as to suggest that his entire life was a journey leading inevitably to that unfortunate night, between March 7th and 8th of 1983. The idea that Vivier had a death wish that he acted upon has also been explicitly suggested by some commentators.

Combined with the fact that death was a central theme throughout Vivier’s work -- and especially the way his last piece, *Glaubst du an die Unsterblichkeit der Seele*, uncannily epitomizes the very idea of life and work bleeding into one another -- this sensational cocktail of a huge talent, anonymous gay sex and fatal violence, became a source for ongoing speculation and an inextricable facet of the composer’s posthumous reception.

However, Gilmore argues with caution that Vivier was in fact a victim of a “hate crime”. These are not easy to define, but the fact that twenty-year-old Pascal Dolzan, when arrested by the French police in October 1983, admitted also to the murder of two other

gay men in Paris on February 15th, just a few weeks before his encounter with Vivier, is the main evidence in this direction. Another such victim -- in a scene that could have been taken right out of Genet's *Querelle* -- was gay American composer Marc Blitzstein, who was murdered in 1964, dying of wounds he sustained from a gay-bashing by three sailors he picked up in a bar while on vacation in Martinique (Sturges 126). Pasolini was murdered in 1975 by a male hustler he picked up at a train station in Rome. Prejudice-motivated violence (including murder) against LGBTQ people is widespread globally and very common still today (Spade 2014). The exceptionally high rate of LGBTQ teenage suicides is another expression of this violence. Violence against trans women of color is particularly widespread. Very few of these crimes -- usually only when the victims are white and/or famous -- come to public consciousness, such as the cases of Pasolini or Vivier. But numerous other cases exist that get very little attention. It follows then that there was nothing exceptional about the circumstances of Vivier's death, except his being an exceptional composer. I believe that understanding this tragic event in the larger context of the prevalence of violence against LGBTQ people brings a healthy clarity. It also exposes an element of victim-blaming and an underlying homophobia in the oft-repeated narrative of acting upon a death wish in the case of Vivier.

Doctors in New York and California have diagnosed among homosexual men 41 cases of a rare and often rapidly fatal form of cancer. Eight of the victims died less than 24 months after the diagnosis was made. The cause of the outbreak is unknown...

On July 3rd, 1981, the New York Times reported on a new disease initially thought to be an unexplainable “gay cancer”. HIV was discovered as the virus causing AIDS in 1983. By the end of that year there were 2,807 cases of AIDS reported and 2,118 deaths in the US alone, with additional cases reported in as many as 33 countries, including France.

Christopher Coe, in his book *Such Times*, claimed that the character named Claude (and undeniably based on Vivier) had infected him with the virus. His claim regarding Vivier cannot be proved nor disproved at this point, but it situates Vivier in a plausible scenario in relationship to the impending epidemic, and reminds us that he was at a high risk of being infected. Several interviewees in Gilmore’s book speculate that had he not died in 1983 he would have died of AIDS some years later.

“Hate crime” legislation notwithstanding, the greater dangers of deep and structural homophobic violence were spectacularly exposed by the HIV / AIDS crisis, with the apathy and inaction of the government and health establishment and lack of interest

from the general public, as urban gay communities and poor people were disproportionately plagued.

"*AIDS is news. Fight AIDS, not Arabs!*". Four year after Vivier's murder and 40,000 AIDS-caused deaths later (in the US alone), the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP) and similar movements around the globe brought together the concerns of gay men and women, trans people, people of color and poor people including the homeless, and united them for a rare moment in a fight against the establishment's lack of concern for their needs, which included housing solutions and jobs. Inaugurated in New York, it quickly had 147 chapters including in Montréal, Paris, Köln and Amsterdam. This was perhaps the most literal political translation of Vivier's own tendencies in his life to identify with marginalized people and create connections across boundaries.

And like any explosive social justice movement, it also left a blazing trail of brilliant art as it moved forward: David Wojnarowicz (1954-1992), Keith Haring (1958-1990,) Ray Navarro (1964-1990), Robert Mapplethorpe (1946-1989) and numerous other artists' work was radically transformed by the AIDS crisis; *Illness as Metaphor*, one of four books by Susan Sontag in Vivier's library, was complemented by its author -- turned AIDS activist -- with a new book, *AIDS and its Metaphors* (1989). Vivier's long-time close friend from the Montréal Conservatory days, composer Michel-Georges Brégent, died of AIDS in 1993. Vivier's last known lover, Christopher Coe, died of AIDS in 1994. Desjardins

told me she had lost 22 friends, men and women, to the disease during those years. I am left to wonder -- beyond the question of Vivier himself getting infected or not -- had he lived longer, how would the AIDS crisis, annihilating large parts of the communities he was part of, have affected him and his music?

CHAPTER TWO:

THE ANTI-MACHO COMPOSER

Opera is so gay.

He was a good boy... He was always laughing and he sang all the time. He liked all the time music. It was inside of him, I think... Not popular music, no. He liked to be an opera man, I think (Giséle Vivier Labrecque, in *Rêves D'un Marco Polo*).

In what follows I briefly map the mutual attraction between queer subjects and opera -- some of the reasons opera houses are so highly populated with queer creators, performers, managers, patrons, critics and audience members alike -- and situate Vivier's music in relation to this attraction.

"The operatic voice has loomed large in musicological queer theory because it allows us to reimagine, transgress, and sever the links among body, sex, voice, pitch and timbre..." writes opera scholar and director Michal Grover-Friedlander (*Voice*, 323). This scholarship has been important in revealing how opera exhibits a long history of gender-bending performances, a tradition that has continued in varying intensities and social contexts to this very day. Classical familiar examples include Monteverdi's 1607 *La Favola d'Orfeo*, the main role of which could be performed by either a tenor or

soprano, Cherubino in Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro*, and the suggestively lesbian soprano and mezzo-soprano love affair of Octavian and the Marschallin in Richard Strauss's *Der Rosenkavalier*. Later in the 20th and into the 21st centuries we can find operas more explicitly dealing with LGBTQ themes. The significance of this tradition cannot be understated: if, as the prima donna of queer theory Judith Butler famously articulated, gender is construed through performative repetition with no original, essential model, then just like the drag queens in Butler's example, opera's gender-bending performances have for centuries exposed the fragility of gender construction and gender's performative essence.

The castrati's bodies were artificially produced through maiming in order to create a voice which, as explained by Grover-Friedlander, "epitomizes the operatic voice because of its unusual, unnatural quality of timbre" (Lecture at Cornell University, June 23rd, 2015). A boy's vocal chords in a grown man's resonating body. Intersex people today are usually surgically forced into one of the two sex categories still imagined to be the only "natural" ones: male or female. Conversely, the castrati's bodies were produced through surgical interference with the opposite purpose: to manufacture a body that encapsulates in its voice the mystery of sex and gender malleability. The castrati were much sought after as lovers by both men and women and the erotic responses their singing aroused in listeners is documented in numerous accounts (Feldman 2015). The

divinely androgynous and erotic quality of the castrato voice carries into the later operatic tradition with such countertenor roles as Oberon in Britten's *Midsummer Night's Dream*, and Apollo in his *Death in Venice*.

If the castrati were the superstars of opera for centuries, the culture of stardom in opera did not die in 1922 with the death of Alessandro Moreschi, the last castrato. Diva worship is as central to opera culture as it is to gay and lesbian culture. The operatic diva embodies the paradox of almost superhuman abilities and stamina combined with fragility and the immanent death that is metaphorically always present in the operatic voice itself (Grover-Friedlander *Vocal Apparitions*, 1-8). To explain queer diva worship, Patricia Juliana Smith proposes that "minoritized groups tend to exhibit a particularly intense need for cult icons with whom to identify as a response to and enactment of their exclusion from the mainstream", while Gerard Guy Davis suggests that if every queer is in some ways an orphan, the importance of the diva stems also from a desire to compensate for an absent maternal figure. In the broadest sense queer people's attraction to opera is an expression also of the attraction of those cast as abject by society to forms of high culture, which the diva represents (Halperin 277).

The femininity of the diva is also cast over the media as a whole. Unashamedly exploring notions that have fallen out of intellectual and political fashion in the post-

Stonewall era, namely arguing that the Foucauldian approach of a complete separation of gender and sex overlooks important aspects of gay male subjectivity, Halperin writes that “If gay men have gravitated to drag, Hollywood melodramas, grand opera, camp, or fashion and design, it’s surely because they are all feminine forms, or at least because they are traditionally coded as such” (302). In other words, the somewhat idealistic call for a separation of sex and gender is partially also a call to undo cultural notions of gay identity itself, including the modes of negotiation and resistance of queer people living in a homophobic society. Social constructs do not magically cease to exist once identified as such; they remain powerful forces that reproduce themselves through repetition and subtle variation.

Camp, a queer form of cultural resistance intimately linked to parody, is especially relevant to the operatic aesthetic since, as Grover-Friedlander beautifully summarizes Adorno’s 1955 *Bourgeois Opera*, “[operatic] singing is transcendent on the one hand yet always under the threat of appearing ridiculous on the other, being both miraculous and continually available for parody” (*Vocal Apparitions*, 3). The flamboyance and monumentality of grand opera is also reflected in the aesthetics of the operatic voice itself, which Grover-Friedlander characterizes as being “artificial, stylized, eccentric, extreme, extravagant, exaggerated, excessive, grotesque, bizarre, irrational, and

absurd" (*Voice*, 318) -- adjectives that could just as naturally have been used to describe a night at a drag ball.

It should not be surprising, then, that many gay composers

worked mostly in opera, including... Gian Carlo Menotti (1911-2007), Benjamin Britten (1913-1976), and Hans Werner Henze (b. 1926). Composers such as Blitzstein and Bernstein often blurred the distinction between operatic music and more popular musical theater, a practice in which they were followed by David Del Tredici (b. 1937) and the most successful of musical theater composers, Stephen Sondheim (b. 1930) (Blackmer, Corinne E. and Patricia Juliana Smith).

And to this list, I argue, we may add Claude Vivier, in spite of his catalogue only including one opera. The seventy-minute long chamber opera *Kopernikus* (1979), Vivier's longest complete work, is a wonderfully deconstructed opera. According to Pierre Audi, who directed the ingenious production of the work at the Holland Festival in 2000, it includes quotes from operas by Monteverdi, Mozart (the Queen of the Night makes a guest appearance), Verdi, Wagner and Debussy (*Rêves D'un Marco Polo*, Liner notes by Pierre Audi). It is like an opera queen's essentials pocket guide, but one that invites childish wonder and confusion, rather than clarity. In an interview Audi said that he "also recognized in it an enormous amount of theatrical flair, theatrical, I would say love, really, love of how music can be theatrical and how in return it can touch" (*Rêves D'un Marco Polo*).

Indeed, theatrical elements were present in Vivier's work long before the composition of *Kopernikus*. In *Hiéraphonie* (1970-71), for soprano and ensemble, he experimented with crossovers of concert performance, ritual and theater, dividing the players into opposing groups and included instructions for lighting and movement (Gilmore 45-8). *Chants*, his 'opus 1' piece, included a staging plan in which the seven singers were to be placed inside seven coffins (Gilmore 79). Even *Désintégration*, a strictly serial 1972 work for two pianos, includes a tape part which, at the end of the piece plays standards of classical piano repertory while the two pianists who performed Vivier's rigorous serial work for twenty minutes sit and listen, ceasing to perform as musicians, and beginning to perform the role of audience members, as it were. We may recall also that in his critical assessment of the European new music scene in 1972 Vivier isolated Kagel -- whose music typically included theatrical experimentation -- as a composer who did "extraordinary things" (see page 15). Theatrical experimentation continued in Vivier's vocal works, such as *Lettura di Dante* and *Journal*, as well as in instrumental works such as *Greeting Music*, the piece that is "somehow related to a hopeless world where nothing is to be done or felt", and which includes an instruction for the performers to play with no facial expression and as little movement as possible: "the five performers should look more like zombies".

Importantly, since at least as early as the composition of *Kopernikus*, which began in 1978, Vivier gravitated towards opera and film as his preferred mediums while also making connections between the two. In an interview from 1981, Vivier tells Carolyn Jones that “What I would like to do is a grand opera -- yet that’s nearly impossible for the next 25 years -- and that’s too bad” (Jones). Asked what he would create if these practical considerations did not exist he replies confidently, “A big stage work”, and elaborates:

I would like to do the *mise en scène* myself. Something for tape, big choir and orchestra and... it would be very quiet. Personally, I think that opera as it was before is finished -- that’s theatre. I would like to do an opera in an invented language: dialogue; music; therefore its own dramatic power which becomes involved. I would love to do films, though good quality film is very expensive. That’s where my interest lies now, in stage work or in film. I’ve started a series of pieces, two hours of music on the life of Marco Polo. The cost of producing it is considerable.

Those “two hours of music” refer to his plan to weave several of his existing vocal and instrumental works revolving around the theme of Marco Polo and travel into an evening long “opéra fleuve”, a “flowing” opera, a quilt made of “scenes, like scenes in a film” (qtd. in Gilmore 221). According to his letter from February 23rd, 1983, we learn that this opera was to include *Lonely Child*, *Shiraz*, *Bouchara*, *Wo bist du Licht!*, *Prologue pour un Marco Polo*, *Samarkand*, as well as one unrealized piece as the finale, *Nous sommes un rêve de Zipangu*. In fact, the majority of Vivier’s musical output from 1980 on was

meant to be included in the planned opéra fleuve, which would also have made it his largest work (the second largest being *Kopernikus*).

In a different interview from 1981 for Radio-Canada, Vivier ties his interest in film with his musical development:

The other thing I see in my own musical development: I've already made a video, *L'Homme de Pékin*. It's my first video, an experiment, but personally, since I like film so much I could imagine a future for myself in that, well, my future... the next few things I do, I'd like to work in that, but there again it's horribly hard here to succeed in making anything big. And I'd really like to do big things (Reicher 37).

Interestingly, for the soundtrack of *L'Homme de Pékin* Vivier used excerpts from Gluck's *Alceste*, in addition to *Kopernikus* and his 1972 tape piece, *Hommage: Musique pour un vieux Corse triste* (Gilmore 197). The interest in film carries directly into Vivier's other major operatic plan which occupied him while in Paris, his opera about Tchaikovsky's death, which he said would be a kind of "film opera", including projected video components as part of the imagined staging (Gilmore 211).

Thus at the time of his death Vivier's oeuvre included three operatic projects at various levels of completion: *Kopernikus*, his single complete opera; the opéra fleuve on the theme of Marco Polo, his largest cycle which was almost finished and included most of

his mature works from 1980 on, in addition to the 1977 *Shiraz*; and the opera about Tchaikovsky, having only been preliminarily sketched, but which was his main priority in the last couple of months of his life, together with the composition of the smaller-scale *Glaubst du*. Prior to leaving for Paris, he also produced the short autobiographical film, *L'Homme de Pékin*, and he was expressing his intention to continue working in that medium and to combine it with his future operatic plans.

Although Vivier clearly gravitated towards opera since 1978, the year he started composing *Kopernikus* and also the year he publicly “came out”, this was not a sudden shift for him. As Grover-Friedlander explains,

Several approaches to opera locate its aesthetic foundation in the singing voice, in that the media conceives of itself through the voice and the idea of the operatic voice. These approaches view the voice and the aesthetics of voice as embodying the single crucial condition, core, or essence that defines, constitutes, and determines the media (*Voice*, 318).

If the crucial condition of opera, its core, is the operatic voice itself, then that essence existed in Vivier’s output since as early as his student work from the Montréal conservatory days, starting with *Ojikaawa* (1968), and continuously throughout his career with *Musique pour une liberté à bâtir* (1968-69), *Hiéraphonie* (1970-71), *Chants* (1972-73), *O! Kosmos* and *Jesus erbarme dich* (1973), *Lettura di Dante* (1974), *Hymnen an die Nacht* (1975), *Liebesgedichte* (1975), and *Journal* (1977), leading to *Kopernikus* (1978-79). Then we have

the seven vocal and instrumental works that make up the opéra fleuve (1977-1982), and after the experimental film *L'Homme de Pékin*, the last two works which he composed while in Paris: *Trois airs pour un opéra imaginaire* (1982), alluding to an “imaginary opera” in its very title, and which was also a study in re-introducing counterpoint to his work, which he felt was necessary before embarking on a new, larger-scale project; and *Glaubst du an die Unsterblichkeit der Seele* (1982-83), a highly cinematic piece which includes a solo tenor aria and a prominent soprano solo in its final section.

From this perspective, which sees the core condition of opera in the operatic voice, Vivier is indeed a paradigmatic opera composer, just like Menotti, Henze or Britten. But in unlike Britten, whose works often foreground solo male voices, male soloists in Vivier are a rarity. The female voice looms at the center of his works again and again. *Chants*, considered by Vivier to be his ‘opus 1’, the piece where he found his compositional voice, is for seven female voices; *O! Kosmos* and *Jesus erbarme dich* are both choral works featuring prominent soprano solos; and all of the pieces with one vocal soloist are for soprano, except a mezzo-soprano chosen for the darker *Wo Bist du Licht!*. When male soloists do appear in a work, there is always *also* a soprano solo singing in that work, and usually the soprano solos have a certain prominence. Such is the case with the solo soprano aria at the end of Act I of *Kopernikus*; the final scene of *Prologue pour un Marco Polo*; and the third and final section of *Glaubst du*.

“Claude’s was music which frightened me off because of all the vibrato-ing sopranos”, Clarence Barlow told Gilmore (130). Barlow points to the strangeness of Vivier’s music in the context of the music his other colleagues were composing during the late ‘70s and early ‘80s; the crucial aspect of that strangeness that separates Vivier from the rest, its core, its essence, Barlow identifies in the “vibrato-ing” operatic voice. But of course it is not exclusively the quality of timbre or technique of vocal production that make up such a voice. It is also the operatic expression, the unabashed “exaggerated lyricism” of Vivier’s music, to use Grisey’s words (qtd. in Gilmore 271), with its long, lyrical melodic lines. Indeed, the centrality of melody in Vivier’s works is unquestionable. It is commonly referred to by commentators as well as the composer himself:

In my case a melody is often the origin of a whole work. I compose this melody, then I sing it in my head the whole day long, until it develops by itself and takes on its own shape. It may sometimes suggest the large-scale form of the piece as well as the organization of its smaller parts... I need to feel “close” to my musical material, to live it (qtd. in Gilmore 187-8).

I imagine Vivier walking around his apartment and falsetto-ing a melody until it falls into place “by itself”. Beethovenian compositional tweaking aside, the scene should be familiar to any opera queen. But as noted above, when Vivier was walking around his apartment searching for the correct pitches and their correct durations, more often than not he was imagining those pitches and durations to be performed by a vibrato-ing *soprano*. This is the second part of Barlow’s formulation of fear (of castration? or perhaps

disgust?): vibrato-ing, meaning operatic; but also sopranos, meaning female. These lyrical lines are sung by “vibrato-ing sopranos” so consistently in Vivier’s oeuvre that we must think about the meaning of this choice. The meaning of not simply “orchestrating” a melody by casting it to be sung by a soprano, but of putting a woman at the center of the audience’s attention and perception, sometimes for the entire duration of a piece, when, especially in the works using spectral chords (*les couleurs*), it is as though with her throat and lungs she is administering a magical organ, spewing fantastic colors and sound-columns following obediently her every breath.

This diva figure, around which Vivier’s music often seems to be crystalized, plays different roles in different pieces and within pieces: she is a loving mother, singing a lullaby to her child/lover Tazio in *Lonely Child*; she is a high priestess, performing an abstract ritual in search of God in *Lettura di Dante*; she is an abject, blind singer looking for redemption in *Wo Bist du Licht!*; she is the lover singing to her beloved in *Bouchara*; she is a neglected inventor and wanderer in Marco Polo’s *Prologue*; she is a child, miraculously discovering her own voice at the end of the second aria from *Trois airs*; she is the harbinger of death in the last.

She is, perhaps, Vivier himself. If we accept Gilmore’s assertion that not only “almost all his works are essentially autobiographical”, but that a “Vivier Character” appears in

many of them and that “in the deepest sense the most frequently recurring subject in Vivier’s compositions is himself” (Gilmore 2012, 3) -- that they are to a large extent written through the perspective of Vivier *as a subject*, singing from his subjective voice -- than what is the significance of choosing the female voice to perform this subjectivity in practically all his vocal works, to cast himself as an operatic diva?

Referring to his identification with Agni -- the male Hindu god that is the main character in the opera *Kopernikus* -- Vivier wrote as a matter of fact that “Agni, *c’est moi...* For musical reasons, I represent him by a woman” (Gilmore 153). Undoubtedly, there *must* be a musical reason for choosing the female voice so consistently (Agni’s is an alto). He was after all making these choices as a composer. But, there is also the question of identification, supported also by Vivier’s own explanation that he needed “to feel ‘close’ to my musical material, to live it”. There is an affective quality to this transgendered choice of expression via the soprano voice again and again. And while there can’t be one correct “meaning” for this choice, I believe that Vivier’s queerness is crucial here. Because, to paraphrase Halperin, we are not talking about being gay simply as identity, desire, or as sexual practice, but as “queer affect, sensibility, subjectivity, identification, pleasure, habitus, gender style” (86). And as we shall see in the next section, Vivier’s thoughts about his own identity as a gay composer were directly informed by feminism.

Vivier's archetypal divas -- The Queen of the Night, Virgin Mary, Joan of Arc -- like all divas, "are cartoon women. They express in an exaggerated way parts of women, which become separate from an entire personality", as explained by John Clum (qtd. in Halperin 191). In the program notes to the premiere of *Kopernikus*, Vivier asks "Why an opera in 1980?", and replies:

Since the beginning of opera it has always shown us the archetypes of history, and the profound desires of humans. This means showing a story and characters in their pure state, in pure action, which is therefore exaggerated. Opera, as a form of the soul's expression and of human history, cannot die. The human being will always need to show its hallucinations, its dreams, its fears and aspirations (qtd. in Reicher 5).

In other words, in opera and its inclination towards archetypes Vivier found license for expressive exaggeration. But this exaggeration's value has several dimensions, as laid out by Halperin:

Divas may be cartoon women, but they are not without a certain power and authority of their own... They are not only caricatures of femininity and epitomes of what our society regards as unserious -- not only extravagant, grotesque, and larger than life. They are also *fierce*. Femininity in them gathers force, intensity, authority, and prestige... Without trying to claim male power or privilege and, thus, without seeming to take on masculine gender characteristics... divas nonetheless manage to achieve a position of social mastery... they acquire power through an exaggerated, excessive, hyperbolic, over-the-top performance of [femininity] (Halperin 252).

“Flamboyant, theatrical, extravagant, ostentatious in his sexuality, exaggerated in his behavior”, Vivier is described by Paul Griffiths (185). Halperin goes on:

Abjection, moreover, can be just as powerful as glamour. Those who are relegated to the ranks of the unserious have no reason to behave themselves... They can afford to let themselves go, to be extravagant, to assert themselves through their undignified and indecent flamboyance... Aestheticism becomes a weapon in their hands. By wielding it, divas manage to be successful against the odds.

So who are we talking about here? Claude Vivier, or his vibrato-ing sopranos? It’s hard to tell. Somehow, and without suggesting a complete overlap of “life” and “work”, both seem to be relevant to the discussion: on the one hand Vivier’s guerrilla performance in tight satin pants at Darmstadt, shocking at least Clarence Barlow, for whom this was the first encounter with Vivier (“the unserious have no reason to behave themselves”), and the archetypal exaggeration of the divas he created as the center of his musical world on the other (“aestheticism becomes a weapon in their hands. By wielding it, divas manage to be successful against the odds”).

“If only the teased and bullied queer child... could manage to summon and to channel that righteous, triumphant fury... he might find within himself the courage, the strength, and the conviction to bash back” (Halperin 253). Perhaps Vivier’s divas were his way of bashing back, his aesthetic choices operating as a kind of weapon? It seems like the idea

of a queer intervention in public space explored in Chapter 1 is relevant also as an aesthetic intervention in the Western concert tradition, and especially contemporary music, in Vivier's choice to channel specifically queer aesthetics -- or rather, elements which are perceived as such and thus are threatening, emasculating, disturbing -- into his work. In an interview with Sylvaine Martin, Vivier reflected about such reactionary elements in his music:

I think that my musical language, and my attitude to contemporary music, shocks people who are interested in the future of contemporary music here as elsewhere... I believe that *Kopernikus*, and *Orion*, are works that are disturbing... I wrote them in reaction against a certain kind of contemporary music that wants composing today to be the equivalent of inventing structures. It's madness, the delirium of a structuralism that wants to be the only generator of real works of art and which forbids any inspiration provoked by what I call musical emotion (qtd. in Gilmore 187).

Shocking and disturbing were his artistic reactions against "the delirium of structuralism", according to Vivier himself. The aesthetic weapon? Inspiration through "musical emotion". If Vivier's spectral contemporaries took sound as the departure point and model for developing their musical grammar, Grisey famously saying "We are musicians and our model is sound not literature, sound not mathematics, sound not theatre, visual arts, quantum physics, geology, astrology or acupuncture" (qtd. in Fineberg 105), it seems as if Vivier could have said, "We are humans, and our model is

emotion". Vivier's music is both simple and sophisticated: his creative process always involved much planning, sketching and precomposition, a molding of "emotions" into "structures". But Vivier puts a bold emphasis on a realm that is culturally designated, constructed and codified as feminine -- that of emotion -- while Grisey's, in comparison, is much more traditionally perceived as masculine: scientific, positivist, rational, while still being a (oedipal?) reaction against the post-serial established strongholds. Indeed, although Vivier's reaction was part of a larger postmodern wave in late 20th-century music by prominent composers such as Ligeti as well as many younger composers of Vivier's generation, including spectral, neo-romantic, minimalist and new simplicity music, in highlighting Vivier's as distinct from these other experiments, I can't help but hear Clarence Barlow's remark that "Claude's was music which frightened me off because of all the vibrato-ing sopranos" as also saying "Claude's was music which frightened me off because it was *so gay*."

Finally, Vivier's works "are haunted by the omnipresence of death, which in Vivier's output holds dominion over everything else" (Gilmore x). *Kopernikus* is subtitled "opera -- ritual of death", and the last name Vivier had in mind for his Tchaikovsky project was *Tchaikowsky, un réquiem Russe*. But if we accept the idea that Vivier was a paradigmatic opera composer, then with that territory comes the omnipresence of death, its "dominion over everything else" a convention of the genre. Because "Opera relays, ever

again, the scene of death, releasing its central characters, one after the other, to that inner compulsion" (Grover-Friedlander *Voice*, 327). So Vivier's death obsession is also opera's death obsession, Wagner's death obsession, Verdi's, Puccini's. This distinction is significant also when considering the (highly questionable in my mind) theory of Vivier acting upon a death wish, and especially the way this interpretation of his death was supported through the perception of his "death-obsessed" body of works. If the subtitles in Vivier's 1977 *Journal -- Childhood, Love, Death, After Death --* outline a life cycle which directly jumps from "Love" to "Death", I suggest we should not read warning signs where there are none. Tristan and Isolde, who are featured in part II of *Journal*, never got married, didn't get a mortgage, save for the kids' college tuition, retire from the service of King Mark of Cornwall, and die of old age leaving a hefty inheritance for their children. They loved, and died. The blurring of love and death is epitomized in the finale of Wagner's opera with Isolde's singing her famous *Liebestod*, a love-death song.

As suggested, there are several possible connections between Vivier's operatic aesthetic choices and his queerness, situated within the larger context of the ongoing flirtation between queers and opera. Since at least 1978 Vivier was increasingly interested in opera and film. This attraction expressed itself also with his even longer-term interest in the female voice, and I see some correlation between Vivier's divas and Vivier's

occasional public displays of diva-esque behavior. Finally, his repeated visiting of death as a theme in his work is aligned with opera's own death obsession. In his interview to *Le Berdache*, the magazine of l'ADGQ, where Vivier explicitly talked about what it means for him to be a gay composer, it is not surprising then, that the only two works he mentioned were two of his operas.

Being a Gay Composer

"...His music is to sensibility what light is to crystal, neither one nor the other emerge from the transparency unchanged, resulting in an expansive music, it uses its freedom intensely, the immense freedom that Claude Vivier gives it."³ With this description Daniel Carrière introduced Vivier's music to the readers of *Le Berdache*, where his interview with the composer was published in the July-August 1981 edition. The poetical introduction points to a crucial element in Vivier's thinking about music: the transformative power it can have over listeners.

Under the sub-headline "The anti-macho", the discussion begins with Carrière's disclaimer: "This is, to my knowledge, the first time where someone defends a thesis for

³ The entire interview as brought here was translated by Yael Wender

a music that aims to be 'gay'. Composed by a gay man, available to everyone for the raising of a gay consciousness." Vivier then begins explaining:

If I take for example the *Kopernikus* opera, which is a typical example, there are people who have criticized my lack of dramatic action in *Kopernikus*. These people always expect to have a battle between A and B, they are always expecting to have good and evil... whatever good whatever evil, some kind of conflict, a situation of domination and dominated. For me, at the core of *Kopernikus* I absolutely did not want to have conflict. In this sense, it is with *Kopernikus* and following it that I had begun exploring a kind of sensibility that I wanted to express and that was very particular.

At the outset, Vivier identifies his opera and the subsequent (mostly operatic) works as the point where a particular sensibility began to emerge in his music⁴. While "sensibility" may sound opaque, he clearly contrasts it with domination and conflict, ideas which seem to echo his earlier program notes to *Lettura di Dante*. There, he described a world where "money and power are everything" after mentioning his sensitivity (*sensibilité*) towards children, the elderly and the homeless. We may also recall Vivier's 1978 article published in *Sortir*, the year he started working on *Kopernikus*. There, he talked about "An extreme sensibility which, alas, because of a pseudo-male environment, can often only suffer." After this unequivocal contrast of a 'sensibility' with masculinity itself (or rather, pseudo-masculinity), he talks explicitly about that sensibility's oppression, aligning it even more clearly with gay politics: "I have written

⁴ *Sensibilité* can be translated as either "sensitivity" or "sensibility".

this introspective text in the context of a book on the oppression of a sensibility and the free expression of love..." whereas, by contrast, "A single law governs my music: love. And it's also this simple law that should govern our human relations."

Vivier then reads a quote by Annie Leclerc that he prepared for the interview: "the universal looks just like the specific." Leclerc (1940-2006) was an influential French philosopher, especially known for her 1974 book *Parole de femme (Woman's Word)*, from which Vivier was quoting. It is a "lyrical-philosophical text... in which she challenges patriarchal language and proposes a new form of women's writing" (Meyer 310). Vivier then outlines the connection he sees between the claim for universality; language and Western civilization; notions of masculinity in opera and contemporary music; and how these can be destabilized through the questioning of their "sensibility":

This is a very important phrase in Annie Leclerc, so many big romantic myths have wanted to bear the face of the specific, Tristan, Siegfried, to the same extent that we have wanted to teach the opposite with structuralism (which is at the basis of contemporary music), let go of the truth, make it personal, give it flesh, formalize it, in one piece. Man's language, such as we have known it in Western civilization, is language that forces us to be strong, big, dominating, that forces music to have a purpose, that forces opera to display conflicts, to stage the Universal. This is what is put into question at the level of the sensibility. We are currently living a huge crisis of civilization, extremely profound and that presents itself in terms that feminists such as Annie Leclerc have discovered in a brilliant way. Since the Greeks, we have been forced to live with a macho complex in works of art.

While Vivier's explanation is typically labyrinthine, Leclerc's -- whom Vivier obviously admired and was directly influenced by -- is more straightforward and can help put his comments in context:

Whose words do we hear in those great, wise books we find in libraries? Who speaks in the Capitol? Who speaks in the temple? Who speaks in the law-courts and whose voice is it that we hear in laws? Men's. The world is man's word. Man is the word of the world. [...]
They turned the specific into the universal. And the universal looks just like the specific. Universality became their favorite ploy. [...] We have to invent: otherwise we'll perish. This stupid, military, evil-smelling world marches on along towards its destruction (Leclerc 58-9).

Back in the 1981 interview, Carrière focuses the discussion and asks "Gay music? Can we really bring the 'right to be different' to this radical, even partisan distinction?", to which Vivier replies:

When I talk about a gay language in this sense, a gay language just like a feminist language are terms meant to give people back their equality and importance, without difference. **For me a gay language completely puts into question a system of sensibility, be it homosexual or heterosexual. It transposes the discourse to a higher level.** It is no longer important whether my sexuality expresses itself in a homosexual way, it is necessary to be able to surpass that in order to discover things, for example: I no longer feel sorry for the fact that I am a faggot, and when I surpass that I discover things that the heterosexual, whose sexuality has never been questioned, has never had the occasion or the opportunity to see. This is what makes certain heterosexuals today examine even their own sexuality, in this sense there is a gay movement that touches heterosexuals as much as it touches homosexuals.

In the passage I highlighted in the text Vivier insightfully points to gay liberation's potential to encourage the sexual liberation of society as a whole. Vivier's ideas also relate to what Marcus described as "one of queer theory's most valuable contributions, and one that establishes an important link to feminist work", namely the ability to "demonstrate how homosexuality and heterosexuality mutually define each other" (197). And while queer theory has largely focused on queer subjects, "variations and tendencies within heterosexuality continue to be obscured by the illusion of its universality" (205). For Vivier, being a gay composer means questioning the existing musical discourse which, like heterosexuality and patriarchy, claims universality, being the natural order of things.

At the time of Vivier's interview, these queer theories would need a few more years before being articulated in published form, notably with Eve Sedgwick's *Between Men* (1985) and Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble* (1990). But as we can see, Vivier was part of the intellectual and artistic surge from which these ideas came forth. And if Sedgwick and Butler 'transposed the discourse to a higher level', Vivier was already thinking about and experimenting with reflecting that higher discourse in his music, according to his own testament, at least since his opera *Kopernikus*.

Carrière continues: “He cannot tolerate any macho reference in his work, no domination over the musical matter.” This of course should not be taken literally. “No domination over the musical matter” would render perhaps a Cagean negation of the act of composition itself, decidedly different from Vivier’s methodical approach⁵. Carrière’s further explains:

He uses a language that relates to intimate, simple values, that ultimately say a lot more than whatever act of domination... an example of an intimate value, for him, are the dialogues in the works of Margerite Duras, dialogues that are practically about nothing...

Alluding to an overlap of his queer identity and his identity as an artist, Vivier continues:

Us others, the artists (I say this because we are still cast aside, there are still artists on the face of the earth, one day there will be none) more or less what do we do? We work in a very subtle way within [the realm] of sensibility, in shaping it, changing it, freeing sensibility of human beings, by making them discover intimacy, simplicity, certain things that are so present that we had never wanted to see them.

⁵ Cage’s aesthetic philosophy of silence, negation and withdrawal has been explained in relationship to his closeted gay identity, being a member of an older queer generation than Vivier’s (“pre-Stonewall”). See Jonathan D. Katz, “John Cage’s Queer Silence; or, How to Avoid Making Matters Worse,” in *Writing through John Cage’s Music, Poetry and Art*, ed. David W. Bernstein and Christopher Hatch (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 45.

Emphasizing the central question of transforming the listener's consciousness through music, Carrière asks, "You want to change the sensibility of people in a specific way, in what way?". Vivier replies, with traces of Leclerc:

I do not wish to make my discourse Universal, because there is no discourse that could be universal, discourse is individual in its perception, therefore respectable... the music I create speaks from inside me, without it being a pseudo-mystical music, it's a music that aims to awaken certain elements in me, that are so close to me that without listening to my music, without having composed it, I would have not noticed that I had. It discerns certain sweetnesses or certain associations with childhood.

The power of music to heal is evident through the existence of such a clinical field as Music Therapy, which theorizes, codifies and uses that capacity. Vivier seems to suggest that his process of spiritual and emotional growth was bound with his evolution as an artist, or that his artistic practice is what leads that healing process, and that this transformative experience is that which he wants to offer to others through his music. This is a powerful testament to the autobiographical nature of his work.

Vivier then critiques a disconnect he sees in Western music from what he calls a "natural musicality":

Sage Western music has lost a natural quality to it, a natural musicality that is not in order. It is this natural musicality that I am trying to rediscover, not in the folklore sense, a musicality that goes off on its own accord, that without colliding with you, forces you to see, to open your

heart, your sensibility. Then at the same time when I compose I am still extremely religious, beyond the music there is something, that makes for a kind of communication with a Universe that is much more beautiful.

His remarks on Western music relate to a broader critique of Western civilization being out of touch with -- or rather, trying to dominate -- nature, since at least the Enlightenment Age. This position was clearly formulated by several counterculture movements of the '60s and was informed by a mixture of spiritual, environmental, indigenous and feminist thought:

Feminist scholars have long recognized that patriarchy's dual war against women's bodies and against the body of the earth were connected to that essential, corrosive separation between mind and body -- and between body and earth -- from which both the Scientific Revolution and Industrial Revolution sprang (Klein 177).

Vivier's five-month-long trip through Asia, in 1976-77, was another opportunity to study not only different Asian musics, but to do so in their endemic context. He tried his best to learn local languages, especially Indonesian, to avoid performances tailored for tourists and to communicate with natives (Gilmore 121). His laughter, a source of embarrassment for his friends back home, in Bali was celebrated in his given local name: "Nyoman Kenyung", "the third born laughing". When Vivier was in Bali, Indonesia was in the midst of the long rule of Western-backed dictator Suharto, who was responsible for the genocide of perhaps over a million Communists and suspected

Communists as part of his power grab, Indonesia having transitioned into his hands after centuries of Western (and brief Japanese) colonization and occupation. Vivier may not have been completely aware of these political circumstances, as they are widely contested and denied still today. Yet he had a clear sense of the West's intervention in the island. He ended an article written for *Musicanada* reviewing his time in Bali with an insightful critique of Western cultural domination. It would take more than a decade before this critique would translate in the West into organized resistance to the processes, policies and trade agreements generally referred to today as "Globalization", understood by critics to be a continuation of a colonial pursuit in renewed forms.

Vivier's statement rings nothing less than prophetic:

Here in Den Pasar [*sic*] western pop music of Mantovani is gradually replacing Balinese music. They offer a sort of musical soup in hotel lobbies or in shows for tourists.

Culturally, humanity is presently living through an extremely important transitional period. A process is in motion which slowly but surely is bringing together the different cultures of the world to find one terrestrial culture. It seems that this movement is headed more towards an impoverishment than an enrichment. More and more the non-western cultures are literally drowned by western culture without any exchange of culture which would have been desirable for human thought (qtd. in Gilmore 121).

This is the broader intellectual context of Vivier's remarks. The 1981 interview then ends with a discussion of Vivier's next planned operatic project (Marco Polo), and his collaboration on its libretto with Paul Chamberland, whom he called "a great writer":

It is going to take me a huge amount of time to do because I have no openings for showing it in Montréal. I composed the prologue [*Prologue pour un Marco Polo*], a work for strings [*Zipangu*] and the love song [*Bouchara*]. I am composing it a bit like a soap opera i.e. to make it take part in a large cycle that I would love to stage, I am trying to be able to make it in Banff. Paul, I've known him for a long time. He was supposed to work with me on *Kopernikus*, except that we noticed that it would be better if I wrote the texts, in addition I had given myself the task of working at least once in my life with a writer in order to have a text that is at least acceptable/tolerable, so I asked Paul to write a text because we are very close with each other in terms of our thinking, and of our sensibility...

It is significant that Vivier's only collaborator on a finished libretto was Paul Chamberland. As pointed out in Chapter 1, Chamberland was one of the editors of *Sortir* as well as the Quebecois counterculture magazine *Mainmise*. He was one of the most prominent writers of the gay liberation era in Quebec. In his 1976 *Le Prince de Sexamour* for example, he tied hopes for sexual liberation to liberation from capitalism. Like Vivier, he saw "homosexuality as a means through which human beings can come to understand themselves" (Poirier). And Vivier identifies him as someone who is "very close" to him in both his thinking and "sensibility". The particular context of the interview is also important: *Le Berdach*, colloquial for "gay" or more loosely "deviant", was published by l'ADGQ, Quebec's main LGBT civil rights organization at the time. It included calls to action, political analysis, LGBT news from around the world, as well as features on Quebecois LGBT culture and community, including the interview with Vivier.

Given the interests of the magazine's readers, it is not surprising that the interview at *Le Berdache* is the most thorough discussion we have of the relationship between Vivier's sexuality and music in his own words. Yet it was not the only instance where he expressed similar ideas. Interviewed by Susan Frykberg in summer 1981 -- around the same time the interview at *Le Berdache* was published -- he expressed a similar critique of Western culture and its reliance on political systems of domination. And while the question of being a gay composer is not explicitly discussed, Vivier directly framed his critique of Western culture as also a critique of "Man", again, with some trace of Leclerc or more broadly of a feminist perspective that identifies patriarchy as an important source of these coercive systems:

Those questions you ask when you create, most of the time, they're unanswerable. They're just questions to be asked in the infinity of time. The problem in the western world is that they always wanted to have answers to questions, and they thought that any system, whether artistic, political or social, had to have an answer. And this is a half truth, because this whole way of thinking belongs to a very manly way of thinking. In the Bible, God didn't say to the woman to go and create, or go and name things, he said that to the man... and the Bible is a very influential book... And political systems are the same thing. They try to find answers and they try to apply those answers to masses of human beings. Which is sometimes very dangerous to individual lives.

If Leclerc's claim against patriarchy quoted above revolves around universality and "the specific", or particular, here Vivier talks about the application of "manly" answers to "masses of human beings", consequently endangering "individual lives".

Also in this interview -- which was conducted by another professional composer -- Vivier explained in some detail how he is responding to his critique of masculinity in his music:

My music is a paradox. Usually in music you have some development, some direction or some aim, the big bang or the crescendo or whatever which in my music, happens less and less. I just have statements, musical statements, which somehow, lead nowhere. Also on the other hand, they lead somewhere, but it's on a much more subtle basis. Not on the basis of mastering the crescendo or mastering the actual expectations of the listeners, I mean expectations in the dramatic sense. Very often my music doesn't have these expectations. It's often only statements, very clear statements, sometimes with dramatic curves, but not as in romantic music.

This statement is key to understanding Vivier's music and its relationship to his sexuality. The main concern of that relationship is the notion of time. He consciously reacted in opposition to what he perceived as notions of masculinity expressed musically in the temporal dimension: a tendency for development and directionality, goal-orientation, even in the form of a simple crescendo, "happens less and less" in his music. Instead, there are only "statements". This is the most central reflection in his music of his critique of masculinity.

Essential Linearity

Before I zoom in on Vivier's music in greater detail, a few clarifying words about essentialism are due. I am not arguing that "masculinity" is somehow essentially linear (phallic), goal oriented, in thought, perception, relation to time, anymore than "femininity" is essentially cyclic; nor that women nor men nor gays nor lesbians essentially perceive time differently from one another. Queer theory has successfully upset all of these binary categories, demonstrating their inherent instability and fluidity, their dependence on cultural context, their codependence in defining one another, and fundamentally the absence of a masculine or feminine essence.

Today Leclerc's 1974 formulations therefore sound in some ways anachronistic. But in the '70s her ideas made an important and provocative intervention as she boldly outlined groundbreaking concepts for women's liberation. To be sure, because of her emphasis on the female body as a site of experience and perception contrasted with the male body, Leclerc was already then criticized for making essentialist argumentation by other feminists such as Christine Delphy and Colette Guillaumin (Meyer 310). More to the point, however, Leclerc's ideas were deeply influential on the main subject of this dissertation, Claude Vivier and his music, and this is the frame from which I am conducting this discussion.

The question at hand, then, is not whether or not every Beethoven climax resembles the male orgasm. Rather, my attempt is to reconstruct the specific intellectual and cultural context for Vivier, and outline his grappling with these questions as they were emerging in feminist and gay discourse at the time, and his incorporation of these ideas into his music. As we saw, he clearly drew connections between his difference, being a “faggot”, and his compositional aesthetics. He drew parallel lines between what he called structuralism in music, which he reacted against, and masculine ideals. That is not to say that “structuralism” cannot be an aesthetic or set of techniques chosen by gay composers (Boulez being an obvious example). In line with Vivier himself, I am not arguing for the existence of a universal gay sensibility or aesthetic.

Finally, one might suggest that Vivier used these feminist theories to justify musical tendencies that were latent in his musical taste and bound to occur anyway. Perhaps. But this suggestion assumes the existence of an essential, “real” musical taste, or voice, that a composer has to discover, an idea I do not subscribe to at all. Further, the very simple, binary “chicken and egg” framing of causality -- was his musical taste drawing him to feminism or was his feminism shaping his musical taste -- in fact robs us of a more subtle understanding of the question. “Life” and “work” relate to each other in a multitude of ways, which therefore always lend themselves to interpretation and speculation as part of the construction of any given artist’s reception. For example,

whatever meaning one assigns to the fact that the year of Vivier's public coming out in the 1978 *Sortir* article was also the year he started composing his first opera -- which he himself marked as being pivotal to the development of his aesthetic "sensibility" -- is in the eyes of the beholder. I see Vivier's political thought (and more broadly "life") and aesthetic approach (and more broadly "work") evolving in parallel streams with many possible confluences, and I believe they were mutually interrelated rather than one being an active source of influence on a passive receptor.

"Epicycles and Eccentric Circles"

With this frame in mind, here is another excerpt from *Parole de femme*, Leclerc's book Vivier quoted from, where she writes specifically about masculine and feminine notions of time:

My body experiences a cycle of changes. Its perception of time is cyclical, but never closed or repetitive. Men, as far as I can judge, have a linear perception of time. From their birth to their death, the segment of time they occupy is straight. Nothing in their flesh is aware of time's curves.

While queer theory has developed more subtle and complex understandings of the construction of identity, the performativity of gender, and the non-binary nature of sex, Leclerc's ideas of directionality are not completely unrelated to the notions of queer

time explored in Chapter 1: the goal-oriented directionality of the “capital accumulation logic” and the pre-determined (imagined) linear trajectory of child rearing, as opposed to queer time’s inclusion of bends, slowdown and speedups, circular, and sideways motion. Further, these powerful ideas have generated much creative and philosophical work, which is to say, culture. So non-linearity in music is *not* feminine just as opera is *not* gay: it is not *inherently* so, *essentially* so, but, these powerful ideas produced a cultural space where these connections are rendered meaningful; and it is within that space, where these ideas resonate, that much of Claude Vivier’s music resides. Vivier seems to have understood just that when he told Frykberg that “the Bible is a very *influential* book”, not that it is factual.

Just like “homosexuality” and “heterosexuality”, “linearity” and “nonlinearity” in music, too, are relative terms. They are largely dependent on cultural, historical and aesthetic contexts as well as interpretation, and they also co-define each other. In Vivier’s case, his own remarks serve as a guide: the lack of dramatic action in *Kopernikus*; his description in a letter to Desjardins of an operatic project possibly becoming “a dramatic work without a subject in which the drama would be music itself” (qtd. in Gilmore 204); his description of having increasingly “only statements” in his music, as opposed to development and crescendos; his questioning a “fixation” on “directional linearity” in writing in his piece “Pour Gödel” (Gilmore 195); and writing

music that does not encourage dramatic expectations as in romantic music: these are all expressions of his attempt to disturb constructions of linear narrative-making.

Generally speaking, the sense of linear dramatic expectation in Western music Vivier refers to seems to be that which is achieved through processes of gradual accumulation or dissipation in one or more musical parameters over time, including harmonic rhythm. A crescendo is but a simple example of such a process. It is not that linear processes do not exist in Vivier's post-1978 music: there are notable processes of this kind in *Wo Bist du Licht!*, *Prologue pour un Marco Polo*, and elsewhere. But they stand out exactly because they are exceptional in the overall topography of his music. And as we shall see in Chapter 3, directionality spanning whole sections of works, happens especially in self-aware moments, such as the "mad arias" of *Prologue* and *Trois airs*, or the "love aria" of *Glaubst du*. These are referential moments, gesturing towards specific traditional musical tropes, and their linear trajectories are part of a stylistic impersonation.

If the culturally constructed concepts of consonant and dissonant were core to Western music for centuries, atonal music and more so serial (atonal) music removed that crucial distinction. Spectral composers sought to reintroduce a similar function to their musical dialectics by contrasting harmonicity, spectra close to the harmonic series and

containing few noise elements, with inharmonicity, spectra containing inharmonic partials that are therefore noisier. Through working with processes of accumulation of tension and its release, oscillating between these two poles in conjunction with processes in rhythm and other parameters, spectral composers such as Grisey were able to give the perception and expectations of listeners a prominent role in shaping their music. A metaphor used in discussing these processes in Grisey's magnum opus *Les espaces acoustiques* is breath (Moscovich 27). Metaphorically, each phase of the breath has a specific relationship to directionality: inhalation, the accumulation of tension; exhalation, its release; and rest, a stasis.

To use the breath metaphor for Vivier's context, his music for the most part does not inhabit the processes of accumulative tension or its release (inhalation/exhalation), but instead dwells within the nondirectional rest period alone. And in that rest (outside of linear time?), too, there is life. As in those deep-sea abysses where an unexpected source of energy such as gas spewed from volcanic activity below generates unknown endemic life forms: blind crabs and other crustacea, soft invertebrates, albino, eyeless creatures performing their ritualistic routines of survival in a continuous cycle, away from sunlight, engulfed by the vast dark ocean, outside the march of history. Or rather, as in that place inhabited by the nocturnal, colorful people Vivier identified as the inspiration

to his music, where he spent Christmas, where he found a family, amongst “prostitutes and tramps and transvestites” (Griffiths 190), in a queer place and time.

Perhaps avoiding linear narrative-making is also how Vivier tried to express “The interval between the past moment and the future moment”, which he said, “if it exists, would be the eternal, and it’s the eternal that makes music vibrate.” In his decidedly spiritual, deliberately unscientific manner (so different than Grisey’s), he went on,

It is in this refined atmosphere and on multiple levels that music occupies this space forbidden by analytical speculations, the interval between acceptance and negation, between love and death, a place so present in the human spirit that the Greeks called it Acheron. A hopeless Acheron, eternally breaking the continuum of space-time and calling music what others call desire (qtd. in Gilmore 205).

So how does nonlinearity manifest in Vivier’s music specifically? On a small scale, repetition plays an important role. It is often used as a means to zoom in, so to speak, to linger, to serve as a reminder that time is not necessarily flowing evenly across horizontal space. Such moments are an interruption to a progression in a linear plot. It is an invitation to experience the depth of a sound, or perhaps to grow one’s perception sideways. Repetition of this kind does not rhetorically reaffirm that which is repeated; it does not insist; it is not an idea put forward more assertively with each appearance; it is

not accumulative nor dissipative. As a very simple example, let's look at the opening of *Lonely Child*:

Figure 2.1 - *Lonely Child*, bars 1-5

The musical score for the opening of *Lonely Child* (bars 1-5) is shown. The score is for Clarinette I-II, Rin, Gr. c., Violon I, Violon II, and Alto. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 72. The time signature changes from 13/4 to 3/4 and then to 4/4. The dynamics are marked as *mf* and *p*. The Clarinette I-II part starts with a rest in bar 1, then plays a melodic line in bars 2-5. The other instruments play a rhythmic accompaniment.

Lonely Child, for Soprano and Orchestra © 1994 by Boosey & Hawkes, Inc.

The melodic oscillating of a minor third, played by violins and doubled an octave lower by violas and two clarinets, lacks rhetorical conviction. It is not asserting anything, it is not overpowering another statement or anything of this nature. It is just placed for the listeners to observe -- with no dynamic change and hardly any articulation, and with no vibrato -- dangling from a B-flat to a G, and back and forth. It creates a momentary dent in linear time because time is slowed down before being set in motion when new

pitches of the melody unfold⁶. And it is only in hindsight that this dent can really be appreciated, since these are the first notes of the melody: there is no precedent to measure time by. This type of oscillation and its interruption of linear time is an extremely important melodic and harmonic device throughout the rest of *Lonely Child* as well as elsewhere in Vivier's music. Here, for example, is the melody at bars 150-158, consisting of only three pitches cycling through various rhythmic values (the other voices following homophonically):

Figure 2.2 - *Lonely Child*, bars 150-158, melody



Lonely Child, for Soprano and Orchestra © 1994 by Boosey & Hawkes, Inc.

These types of oscillations and circular repetitions bend, stretch and slow down time all across *Lonely Child*, because they are unannounced. In other words, Vivier usually does not prepare or guide the listener's expectation by slowing down and speeding up the harmonic rhythm gradually, but simply introduces these changes at once.

⁶ All this is not to deny the melody's rigorous construction (See Braes 43-46). Here I am focusing specifically on the repetition itself and what it does for the sense of time in the work.

The sudden changes in harmonic rhythm often operate similarly on a larger scale, too. In music that is generally already slow, including a slow harmonic rhythm, nodes in that rhythm often correspond with a clear sectional division⁷.

Vivier explained the sense of time in his works in the following quote, where he again relates it to a mystical Eternity. This metaphor, represented in more than one way in his music, is also tied to the sudden shifts in harmonic rhythm:

Music is time passing, at whatever speed, but the time we perceive musically has nothing to do with that of the clock. It's completely different. But I can feel that time, I feel it, and that is why using a grid, or some structural order, a tool... yes, a tool, cannot account for the refinement of certain elements that make it good or not good... My music is slow in any case, but it has to hold, there has to be a kind of... or so it seems to me sometimes... a kind of door on Eternity. What expresses this transcendency? It is the interval between time and the need for Eternity (Reicher 32).

Expressing Eternity itself in his music means expressing a break from the perception of time flowing linearly; it means representing a glimpse of time's totality, past, present and future. In order to represent that totality, his music "has to hold", it has to be slow. It is as though the composer is asking the listeners to be patient, or perhaps, demonstrating patience, an essential element of Vivier's work, on both the small and

⁷ See for example the sudden shift to a faster harmonic rhythm (approximately one chord per bar) at bar 77 of *Lonely Child*, correlating with the beginning of a new section (*mélodie 2*), compared with the much more static feeling of the previous section with its long sustained bass notes.

large scale, in order to transcend linear perception. This demonstrative patience also ties back to the political aspect of his work.

But before completing the circle and discussing again the political aspect of his work, let us look at how nonlinearity in his music operates on a larger scale. Because a negation of one model is inevitably an embrace of another, that which is perceived to be an alternative. And thus Leclerc's cyclic idea of time often is relevant for Vivier.

The title of his work *Et je reverrai cette ville étrange* ("And I will see the strange city") refers not to some far, exotic place, such as Bouchara or Samarkand, but to Toronto, Desjardins asserts (interview by author). The piece was commissioned by the Toronto based Arraymusic. Vivier composed it in October 1981 and the premiere took place on February 1982. Because it is a piece of boldly reduced means -- five *mélodies* played mostly in unison by five melodic and five percussion instruments -- *Et je reverrai* is especially transparent structurally.

On the surface of it, the first, anthem-like *mélodie* that opens *Et je reverrai* is faster music than the opening of *Lonely Child*. But the melody is played through again and again, subtly changing, but with no sense of direction, of growth or progress. That is because the first *mélodie* cycles through a mode of only five pitches. And while the changes to the

melodic cells keep the listener interested, there are no structural signposts, no sense of direction. There is no sense by which one repetition of the melody has greater conviction than another, no crescendo, only a declaration followed by another and another (“I just have statements, musical statements”). This is the first cycle, a process which is repeated in the next melodies, each of which -- typically for Vivier -- uses a different number of pitch classes: ten in the second *mélodie*, nine in the third, then eight and finally twelve.

The first *mélodie* also oscillates between dyadic formations in thirds always cadencing on a fourth in the even-numbered bars, and monodic formations in the odd-numbered bars. This is a second cycle, encompassing the smaller, modal cycle. A cycle within a cycle. The “dyadic” bars grow from 6 to 7, 8, 9 and finally 10 quarters in duration, a simple sequence of integers, while the “monodic” bars diminish from 11, to 7 -- meeting the “dyadic” 7/4 bar half way through -- to 5 and then 3 quarters, in a descending sequence of prime numbers. So the durations of the two oscillating formations of the melody roughly mirror one another, but imperfectly so, asymmetrically, by following an individual numerical logic, and suggesting further cycles at work.

The fourth *mélodie* is unique in that it is repeated four times in different tempi: the first time at eighth note at 60 mm., then 45, 30 and back to 45. A simple musical device, but

the musical effect is quite unique. It is tied, in my listening, to the idea of teaching, perhaps preaching, patience. Like the invitation to zoom in, to move into a depth of experience rather than running horizontally on to the next thing, it is as though Vivier tells the listeners to try harder, to use their imagination, to be present in the moment and to generate meaning through their own interaction with the musical object he places in front of them. Not only is the melody repeated, it slows down substantially with each repetition. By 25% the first time; then to half the original speed, which was not very fast to begin with (and remember that the texture here is but a melody played in unison). Vivier is handing over a magnifying glass, encouraging listeners to observe previously unheard details: the resonance of the trompons and piano interacting with the harmonics of the strings, the beauty of the melody as it abstractly changes character only through turning the tempo knob down. And then, up again, back to that average sweet-spot of 45 mm., to sum the experience, and to imply the continuation of the cyclical motion: the next logical step would be a repetition of the whole *mélodie*.

If we look at the tempi scheme of the entire piece we can see that there are two waves of “*accelerando*” and “*ritardando*”, so to speak (they are not smooth transitions, but rather incremental), suggesting another larger-scale cycle, dividing the piece into two. Every five tempo changes we reach again mm.=60, the “time of the clock”. And every third dynamic indication is a *ff*.

Table 2.1 - *Et je reverrai cette ville étrange*, tempo and dynamic cycles (entire piece)

mélodie	1	2	3	4				5	6 (=1)	
tempo (in ♩)	45	50	80	160	60	45	30	45	120	60
dynamic	<i>ff</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>mf</i>	<i>ff</i>	<i>p</i>			<i>mp</i>	<i>ff</i>	
cycle	("accelerando")			("ritardando")			("accelerando")	("ritardando")		

Two larger cycles framing the smaller ones. To end the work, the first *mélodie* is repeated, the only difference being a slightly faster tempo. If the romantic tonal model of a recapitulation is epitomized by diatonicism symbolically exterminating the corrupting diminished chords and sly chromaticism, in other words, symbolizing linear progress, a singular moment within a dramatic plot advancing forward, here -- as well as in *Lonely Child* and *Zipangu*, two other works where the opening melody is repeated at the end -- it is as though no progress has been made. We are simply back to the point where we began. It is dawn. Or maybe spring. Or our old inner demons resurfacing. Or death. Whatever the meaning, the entire work is an expression of a cyclic sense of time.

Between each *mélodie* as well as in the opening and end of the piece, gong strikes ritualistically mark the cyclic motion of time, the lengths of their resonance following the Fibonacci sequence numbers in seconds: 13, 21, 34, 8, 21, with free fermatas in the beginning and end. Seven strikes altogether. This is perhaps what Vivier meant when he

wrote that this work marks “empty spaces of time surrounded by melody” (Gilmore 194-5). A reminder to the larger scale of things: the *mélodies* that makes up the piece, Vivier’s work as composer, the focus of our human attention, are but mere interruptions to a greater silence. Eternity sends its regards.

Few melodies embedded into silence, into the time continuum. This piece as an act of despair in so far as creation was always trying to link past and future. “Melancholia and Hope,” to recreate the time continuum that human life has disrupted (program notes by the composer).

This kind of ritualistic marking of time, framing the piece, differentiating it from the silence from which it emerges -- using a rin or other percussion instruments -- is wholly typical of Vivier’s music. These and other such recurring musical gestures create a net of musical associations flowing from one piece to another, thus defying the singularity of specific events and hinting at possibly even larger cycles. For example, the bare presentation of the harmonic series as a moment of meditation, repose or nirvana, towards the end of many pieces⁸; or the framing of incrementally shortening intervals of silence between the loud drum hits in *Lonely Child* (bars 140-147), and the similar corresponding gesture in *Zipangu*, performed by two cellos playing “Bartók” pizzicato (bars 179-181); or the striking octaves opening *Siddhartha* (1976), reincarnated in the opening of *Greeting Music* (1978); or the main melodic motive of that piece (first presented at bar 23) reemerging in *Kopernikus*, as part of Agni’s song (reh. 10) and

⁸ see also Braes, 50-52.

elsewhere (see example 2.3 and 2.4); and important cadential figures accompanying Agni's salutation at the opening scene of *Kopernikus* (reh. 4) finding their way into a more continuous treatment in *Bouchara* (reh. 22) (see example 2.5 and 2.6); or the tape part, which abruptly cuts the continuous singing in *Bouchara*, as though an external force intrudes the acoustic space of the work, is in itself another hallmark of Vivier's (a very similar gesture appeared also at the end of the *Prologue pour un Marco Polo*); or the upward spiraling final section of *Prologue* directly modeling the final aria of *Trois airs*.

Figure 2.3 - *Greeting Music*, bar 23, flute part



Greeting Music © 2010 by Hendon Music, a Boosey & Hawkes, Inc. Company.

Figure 2.4 - *Kopernikus*, one bar after reh. 10, Agni's song



Kopernikus © 1979 by Boosey & Hawkes, Inc.

Figure 2.5 - *Kopernikus*, reh. 4, Agni's salutation motive, vocal parts

4
4

Col. *mf*
hé o —

Sop. *mf*
hé o —

Mezzo *mf*
hé o —

Bar. M. *mf*
hé o —

Bar. *mf*
hé o —

Basse *mf*
hé o —

Kopernikus © 1979 by Boosey & Hawkes, Inc.

Figure 2.6 - *Bouchara*, reh. 22, reduction

♩ = 45

Ka yo né gou etc.

Bouchara © 1981 Boosey & Hawkes, Inc.

These, and many other recurring motifs, gestures, devices -- as well as more subtle,

smaller scale preferences for certain intervals, for example the oscillating minor third and melodic major second⁹ -- help create the sense of a larger constellation of works relating to one another. This is not to say that recurring elements are unique to Vivier; of course, they exist in any composer's oeuvre. But the significance of their function that I am pointing at here is that they facilitate that quality of a larger quilt or a revolving constellation that negates linear narration, in the very way these works relate to one another.

It is in part this quality that allowed Vivier to imagine weaving separate pieces of differing forces -- solo works, chamber, vocal and orchestral pieces -- into a single evening in the form of the *opéra fleuve*. Moreover, it is this quality that allowed Pierre Audi and Reinbert de Leeuw to remold Vivier's original plan for the *opéra* and perform it -- substituting the nonexistent last work with *Glaubst du*, and replacing *Samarkand* and *Bouchara* with *Zipangu*, in a sense designing their own cycle -- and still have it be a coherent evening and an artistic success.

The cycles thus suggestively keep on growing, defying linearity, creating instead multidimensional structures of cycles within cycles, or epicycles, aiming always to engulf time itself, to transcend, to find that "door to Eternity". "Nothing that we can

⁹ It should not be surprising that the first two intervals in Vivier's oeuvre to receive his idiosyncratic spectral treatment, using what he called *les couleurs*, are those two intervals: a major second followed by a minor third (bars 24-28 of *Lonely Child*).

observe makes us admit the existence of epicycles and eccentric circles. Epicycles are even impossible”, reads the libretto of *Kopernikus*.

This perception of Vivier’s music as somehow being multidimensional is apparent also in the image Carrière used in his description at *Le Berdache* of “light” refracted by “crystal”. There is a sense in which time is expanding in a fractal-like manner, but Vivier’s fractals are not mathematically identical, that is not their point, they are always twisted, branching out towards their unique formation. This implicitly eternal expansion and its defiance of linear narrative-making is part of Vivier’s attraction to larger forms, such as opera: “I find it very difficult, working on short pieces” he said. “My music has a pace that takes its time. You know, it takes time, but I’d like to be able to do enormous things. I’m a monumental type anyway, I’m a monumental composer” (Reicher 37).

Quintessential Circularity

In exploring these cyclic structures and defying linear time, queerness and feminism are of course not the only influences. Claiming as much would be a “half truth”, to use Vivier’s own words. These tendencies must have also been informed by spiritual ideas coming from Asian cosmologies, filtered by Westerners. But these spheres of influence

are not mutually exclusive. On the contrary, they reinforce one another: if the Orient, as shown by Said, is perceived as “timeless”, removed from a lineal historical march of “progress” which is perceived as the birthright of Western culture, it is so exactly because perceptions of the Orient are gendered and sexualized. The Orient was constructed as effeminate and passive in relationship to the masculine, active Western world (J. McLeod 45). And as we have seen, the critique of masculinity, is after all bound with a critique of the male-dominated Western culture and its sense of global entitlement.

Nonlinearity could have also been influenced by Vivier’s love of film. His own experimental video, Gilmore points out, is decisively nonlinear (197). In his letter from February 1983 outlining the structure of the *opéra fleuve*, he described it as being made of “scenes, like scenes in a film” (Gilmore 221). And as we remember, he was fascinated by the prospect of creating a work in which the music was to become the drama itself. But again, these are not mutually exclusive ideas: one of his strongest models for cinema was the work of Duras, with her “dialogues that are practically about nothing”, as put by Carrière, and which Vivier himself had cited as an influence on his opera (Gilmore 153).

So rather than stemming out of one particular source, there was an assemblage of sources of influence and inspiration. Vivier was a complex, multi-faceted composer, and he used different techniques to create different effects. He was constantly evolving as an artist, setting for himself new goals and mindfully orienting himself in new directions. His *Trois airs*, for example, represented a stage he felt important before he could fully submerge himself in the Tchaikovsky project. Specifically, he wanted to experiment with reintroducing counterpoint to his music, as well as a “more dramatic musical time, closer to speech, with atomic elements of different kinds”. Perhaps this orientation had to do with a more linear dramatic structure he had in mind for Tchaikovsky, unlike the *opéra fleuve*.

These reservations notwithstanding, queerness was a crucial motivator for these musical explorations, aided by the work of Annie Leclerc and other feminists who influenced Vivier’s thinking about politics, language, dramaturgy and notions of time. An earlier piece from the Montréal Conservatory days, the 1970-1 *Hiérophanie* for soprano and ensemble, shows his early preoccupation with morality. In it, the ensemble is divided into groups representing the “caring” side of humanity and the “egotistic” side of humanity, as well as the idea of transcendence (Gilmore 45-48). By the time he wrote *Kopernikus*, however, Vivier decided to rid his music of this representation and staging of conflict. What that meant for him at that point was to rid his music of what

he perceived as musical expressions of masculinity: development, “big bang”, linear directionality, and the dramatic expectations these devices generate.

The popular -- *very* popular among some gays -- English show *Absolutely Fabulous*, displays no prominent male figures. Its social critique (of men and non-men alike) is displayed through the bodies and neuroses of its fem characters: eating disorders, body dysmorphia, addiction, compulsive consumption. As in *Ab Fab*, masculinity in Vivier’s work is present by its absence. And not only because of the predominantly female vocal soloists, his divas; if the result of “masculinity”, as Vivier thought of it, was relations based on control and submission, with both political and sexual connotations implied, he consciously created music that negated these tendencies. The refusal to represent time as conflict and its resolution, as conquest, together with the forsaking of dialectically working with the listener’s expectations, become an invitation for listeners to give up those expectations: to give up the tendency to always explain, to narrativize linearly, and therefore narrowly, arriving only at what he called “half truths”.

Here, is an example of an unexplainable claim from a person who otherwise seems rather rational to me:

We don't know the exact date of his death. People think it was the 12th, but I know it was the 8th the night between the 7th and the 8th of March. I know. I sensed it. I felt ill. I called his flat maybe

40 times and I couldn't understand why he wasn't answering. And I was even calling while the murder was taking place. How could I know? Because witnesses said that the telephone kept ringing and ringing, and it was me who was calling (Rêves D'un Marco Polo).

Desjardins also says she had a clear sense when she and Michel-George Brègent drove Vivier to the airport for his departure to Paris that this would be the last time she would see him. How to explain her experience? Ignore it? Discard it? Or, perhaps accept that much of our existence is in fact beyond our grasp? Vivier's music raises these questions. It is ultimately an invitation for listeners to give up their illusion of having control. That illusion is, after all, a mind game played by creating expectations, by expecting to have expectations in an encounter with an artwork and having those expectations fulfilled or defied. If his contemporary spectral colleagues tried to come back closer to nature through exploitation of breakthroughs in science and technology (two fields traditionally perceived as "masculine"), these breakthroughs in and of themselves were not what Vivier was interested in. His response to the human condition was to observe it and smile. To try and accept it, with all its contradictions and great unknowns. That is also what is so deeply queer about his approach.

There is a deep self-awareness in his music that on first listenings was hard for me to detect because it is at the same time so strikingly sincere. "The special thing was the way he was using his voice... It sounded like a mixture of singing and crying. It did really touch you. To expose his feelings in this way", recalled a fellow student from

Utrecht (Gilmore 61). But why should there be a contradiction between being sincere and self-aware? Aren't they in fact the same thing? Vivier created a musical discourse about musical discourse; he "transposed the discourse", to use his terms. His is not simply dramatic music, but also music about drama. In that way, his work is also very postmodern. And the path he took to formulate this discourse was through a queer experience. Because, if the discourse one is surrounded with constantly erases one from it, or causes one to be minimized or relegated only to abject or unserious roles, one naturally begins to question that very discourse (see also pages 164-7).

So here is the transformative power of music, Vivier's attempt to affect people's "sensibility", as reflected also by his choice of Agni, god of transformation as the main character for *Kopernikus*. To be deliberately crude, Vivier seems to be saying, listening to this music will probably not make you gay; but if you let it, it might emasculate you a little, soften you up. And that's a good thing.

Kopernikus, a work that was shocking and disturbing to listeners at the time according to Vivier, may sound bewildering even today. But if approached as opera about opera, discourse about discourse, an invitation to give up control and accept the presence of beauty in every moment, it becomes a guide: "A melody will be your guide"; "Don't be

afraid"; "There you will learn about the light and the softness of subtle birds, of subtle birds. Come, my gentle friend" (Vivier *Kopernikus*).

Queer Worldmaking (or, somewhere over the soap bubble)

The earth is an island floating on the divine waters endlessly vast and deep. The heavenly vault is half a soap bubble resting on the edge of those same waters (Vivier *Kopernikus*).

Mahler, one of Vivier's favorite composers, famously equated the symphony to a world. Before hearing Mahler's Seventh Symphony in Paris, in the fall of 1982, Vivier wrote to Desjardins, "Mahler is perhaps the musician to whom I feel closest -- an exacerbated sensibility, schmaltz, and at the same time profound desire for purity, but for purity that's almost libidinal" (Griffiths 194-5). The year Mahler died, 1911, Thomas Mann came to Venice looking for inspiration and wrote *Der Tod in Venedig*. The short novella was based on his own experiences but he distanced the autobiographical aspect of the homoerotic tale by figuring its protagonist, Gustav von Aschenbach, on Gustav Mahler. Aschenbach brings about his own demise due to his infatuation with a beautiful Polish boy named Tadzio. Britten's last opera, *Death in Venice* (1973), is based on Mann's novella. While Britten was working on his opera another gay artist, the Italian theater, opera and cinema director Luchino Visconti -- whose work Vivier used to watch enthusiastically (*Rêves D'un Marco Polo*) -- directed a film version of *Morte a Venezia*

(1971) based on Mann. But unlike Mann's or Britten's versions, the protagonist in Visconti's film is not a writer but a composer, and he famously used the Adagietto from Mahler's Fifth Symphony and excerpts from the Third Symphony in the film's soundtrack. Tazio, Aschenbach's erotic love object (and angle of death), appears as the subject of Vivier's 1980 love-lullaby *Lonely Child* (spelled there as "Tazio"). This net of connections -- associations, borrowings, influences, homage, appropriation, admiration, inspiration -- is an example of queer worldmaking. Threads of differing qualities, strengths and visibilities make up this net, which can help us locate Vivier within larger constellations of queer culture. The nets I am weaving here are demonstrative yet suggestive, leaving room for interpretation as well as further expansion. We are never only spectators, you see: the act of weaving these threads asks to highlight an existing queer culture while at the same time taking part in bringing it into existence, or insisting on its existence. ("The world is changed through story, each of us giving over what we know for what we do not yet know"). This, I believe, reflects something of Vivier's own labyrinthine, nonlinear thought process and writing, and his resistance to seeking absolute answers where none exist. Queer worlding is often the result of a collaboration and networks of support amongst queer artists. These networks can be viewed as unofficial artistic affirmative action, or even good old nepotism. Probably more accurately, however, in most cases art is created on par with friendships (romantic or otherwise), common interests and, more broadly, a community (imagined, or

otherwise). Nadine Hubbs explores such networks especially focusing on Aaron Copland and Virgil Thomson and the younger generation of composers surrounding them including Ned Rorem, Paul Bowels, and Leonard Bernstein, the latter also having been a strong supporter of Mark Blitzstein. Vivier is a case in point. Serge Garant was one of his strongest advocates in Canada. Vivier wasn't much of a collaborative artist, but when he did collaborate it seems to have been within the context of such queer constellations. For example *Nati Malam*, his only music for dance, was composed for Le Groupe de la Place Royale, led by Jean-Pierre Perreault together with openly gay choreographer Peter Boneham. He also wrote his *Love Songs* in collaboration with that group. Earlier, in an application for a grant from the Canada Council in 1970 to go to Europe, Vivier proposed, among other things, to work with Maurice Béjart (Gilmore 48). It is curious to speculate, as Gilmore does, whether or not this was a realistic plan, given the French choreographer's high cultural status at the time compared with the inexperienced Canadian composer. But whether this was a concrete plan or fantasy, it clearly shows Vivier's early intention to orient himself towards queer cultural production: Béjart was a prominent gay artist who "derived inspiration from such gay icons as Prometheus, Dionysus, Orpheus, and Saint Sebastian" (McFarland), and who was considered by many to be the cultural heir of the Ballets Russes. We already noted that the only libretto Vivier completed in collaboration with another writer was that of *Prologue pour un Marco Polo*, which he wrote with Paul Chamberland; and that at one

point working on *Kopernikus* with Michel Tremblay was considered (Gilmore 176).

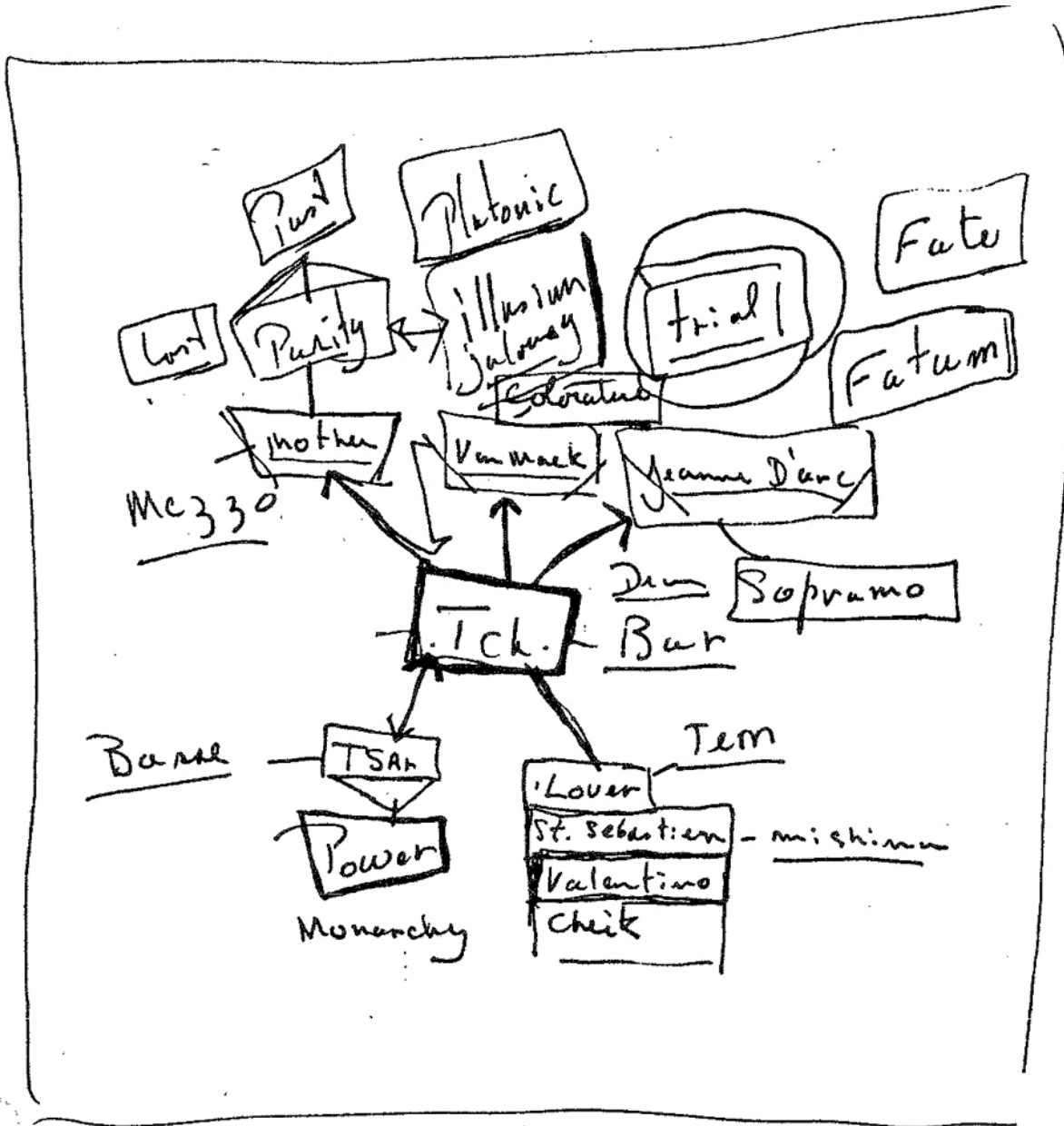
Normally however, Vivier wrote his own texts, often weaving fragments from other authors such as Lewis Carroll (whose own sexuality was a subject of controversy, or as put by David Del Tredici, “was a closeted Victorian young girl lover”). Carroll was the creator of a paradigmatic queer world, Wonderland, an alternate reality where different rules apply. Perhaps that is part of the motivation of many queer artists who have used his texts before gay lib and after: Harry Parch, Ned Rorem, Pauline Oliveros, Del Tredici and Michael Finnissy among others. I believe that by 1988, when Ligeti began composing his *Nonsense Madrigals*, revisiting Carroll texts may have been motivated by his posthumous discovery of Vivier. He wrote to Desjardins in May that year that Vivier was “the most important and original composer of his generation” (qtd. in Gilmore 232). Ligeti, by the way, identified in Vivier’s music “a certain homosexual aesthetic, which could be of great beauty... Much like the music of Tchaikovsky, the poetics of Oscar Wilde or the graphic works of Aubrey Beardsley” (8). Also in 1988, a performance of Britten’s *Death in Venice* by Glyndebourne touring company for schools was canceled for fear of it being “seen to promote homosexuality” (Brett 1994, 21); and in Germany, Britten’s long-time friend Henze founded the Münchener Biennale, a festival dedicated to commissioning operas from young composers. Another external literary source Vivier used was Hölderlin’s *Der blinde Sänger*, on which he based the sung text of his *Wo Bist du Licht!*. Here, too, we can spiral in queer constellations, an example of which was

the friendship between Henze and Britten, the former having composed several pieces based on Hölderlin, including his 1958 *Kammermusik*, which he dedicated to the latter and which was premiered by Britten's partner, Peter Pears. In the summer of the same year Britten composed his own *Sechs Hölderlin Fragmente*. Henze also set poetry of another writer in Vivier's library, Walt Whitman, and he wasn't alone: so did Lowell Liebermann, Lee Hoiby, Bernstein, Blitzstein, Michael Tilson Thomas, Ned Rorem, Chris DeBlasio, Virgil Thomson and other queer composers. These circles can be drawn on and on and encompass numerous musical settings by queer composers of other queer writers as well as choreographies, films, set designs, visual and digital arts and on and on. But lest we wander off too far in these queer galaxies, let us zoom back in on Vivier. A simple yet important political aspect in some of Vivier's works is the continuation of a "coming out" process -- the most important political tool of the Gay Liberation movement -- extending it onto the concert or theater stage by evoking clearly homoerotic or homosocial themes. If the political value of this seems doubtful, let us be reminded of Britten's *Death in Venice* being censored five years *after* Vivier's death. While the totality of Vivier's work can be seen as a form of queer worldmaking, a prime example would have been his unrealized *Tchaikowsky, un réquiem Russe*. This was the main project on Vivier's mind in the last few months of his life. As noted earlier, one of the two pieces he did compose while in Paris, *Trois airs pour un opéra imaginaire*, was a study in reintroducing counterpoint to his work as preparation for the operatic project

(Gilmore 206). It seems like *Tchaikovsky* would have been the large-scale piece he had been waiting to write for a long time. As pointed out to me by Desjardins, the nine months he spent in Paris were the first in his life when he had real financial stability, having received a \$20,000 grant from the Canada Council (Gilmore 195). He could have been more relaxed, and he was taking his time to study, plan, and allow the gestation of what was to be a major stepping stone in his career. It was during that time that Vivier wrote to Desjardins about his wish to “give humans a music that will prevent them once and for all from making war” (Griffiths 196). The choice of Tchaikovsky as subject matter was anything but neutral. One of Vivier’s favorite composers from an early age (Gilmore 17), Tchaikovsky is also one of the most popular composers among the public, and a passionately despised figure by classical music snobs; critic Eduard Hanslick (1825-1904) said that Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto “stinks to the ear”, a remark especially acrid in Vivier’s context; while Boulez -- ever a drama queen -- said “I am not a fascist. I hate Tchaikovsky and I will not conduct him. But if the audience wants him, it can have him” (Peyser 11). As pointed out by Gilmore, Russian musicologist Alexandra Orlova propagated a new theory in 1979 about Tchaikovsky’s death which suggested that his death was a suicide ordered from above, possibly by the Tsar himself, due to his infatuation with his nephew, Vladimir Davydov, to whom the Sixth Symphony was dedicated. In other words, the cause of Tchaikovsky’s death was homophobia, just like Vivier’s. Tchaikovsky’s last piece to have been premiered in his

lifetime, the *Pathétique* (1893), and Vivier's last work *Glaubst du* (1983), were used similarly to read a death-wish of their creators posthumously (Taruskin). "Tchaikovsky" stands apart from the protagonists of Vivier's other operas: Vivier was not much interested in the actual lives of the historical Copernicus and Marco Polo and used them instead as mere symbols (Gilmore 210). Here on the other hand, it was the theory of persecution of the great artist due to his sexuality that horrified, captivated and inspired Vivier. The sketches that exist are mostly verbal, explaining the dramatic trajectory of a work which was to be structured on the basis of a requiem mass ("Black Mass", he wrote on one page). They also include preliminary notes on distribution of the vocal forces, solos, duos, indicating that Vivier had begun conceiving the sonic world of the work. Actual music does not survive, if ever it existed. While an abstract dramatic outline based on these sketches was published by Gilmore, here I would like to focus on the work as an object of queer worldmaking, based on the sketches as well as Vivier's correspondence with Elizabeth Biolley, who was collaborating with him on the libretto. Tchaikovsky would have been at the center of a constellation of five characters representing different forces in his life (see figure 2.2 on the next page). Tchaikovsky was cast as a baritone; the Tsar as a bass, representing power and monarchy; a seductive potpourri of Tchaikovsky's male lovers were to be represented by a tenor; and three women who "directed Tchaikovsky's life": the mother, a mezzo, representing lost purity ("a castrating mother/witch" in Biolley's sketches); madam von Meck, a coloratura,

Figure 2.2 - detail from Vivier's sketches for *Tchaikovsky*



Université de Montréal, Fonds Vivier, MS P0235/ D4, 0061. Used by permission.

representing platonic love, illusion and jealousy (of the male lovers); and Joan of Arc, soprano, the “human symbol of the trial”, according to Biolley. (Griffiths mentions also

the horrifically sadistic Gilles de Retz, but I couldn't find him mentioned in Vivier's or Biolley's sketches). On the same page next to Joan of Arc's name the word "Fate" appears as well as "Fatum", Latin for fate, and perhaps also a reference to Tchaikovsky's *Fatum*, op.77, a work the composer himself thought of as a failure, and which was therefore only published after his death. The fifteenth-century woman-warrior who was condemned by the Inquisition for witchcraft and cross-dressing, and consequently burnt alive on May, 1431, Joan of Arc, officially became a saint some five hundred years later, in 1920. Unofficially, she has for long been an iconic feminist and gender-queer martyr (Matzner). "She helps TCH [Tchaikovsky] to assume his Fate (Fatum)", wrote Biolley -- an experienced butch mentor to Tchaikovsky's own queer martyrdom. Interestingly, the maid in Tchaikovsky's own opera *The Maid of Orleans* is none other than Joan of Arc, "whose story... had fascinated him since childhood" (Kellerman). Another queer martyr appearing in Vivier's *Tchaikovsky* is Saint Sebastian, a "patron saint of gay sensuality" who appeared also "in the work of Marsden Hartley, F. Holland Day, Frank O'Hara, Marcel Proust, Derek Jarman, and Pierre et Gilles" (Goldman). The homoerotic potential of this subject was exploited in dance form by both Béjart and Robert Wilson, a prolific gay artist, choreographer and director. In a lecture Vivier gave in November, 1982 at the Centre Culturel Canadien in Paris, he expressed "his admiration for the work of Robert Wilson", in whose work "the music has become the opera" (Gilmore 213). In addition to Saint Sebastian, there were two other named lovers

in the polyamorous constellation surrounding Tchaikovsky represented by the single tenor singer. The first is “Valentino”, referring most likely to Rodolpho Alfonso Raffaello Pierre Filibert di Valentina d'Antonguolla Guglielmi (1895 –1926), an Italian born silent-film actor, dancer and sex symbol. The other is “Mishima”, referring to Japanese writer, actor, singer, model and boxer Mishima Yukio (1925-1970), whose explicit -- often homoerotic -- sexual work scandalized the public. Mishima himself was photographed as St. Sebastian in one of his works. His 1965 film *Patriotism* included a “prediction” of his death (which brings to mind Vivier’s *Glaubst du*); in his case, a dramatic suicide after leading a failed coup d’état to reinstate the Japanese Emperor (Nakao 600-1). “Cheikh”, French for Sheikh, an Arab paternal honorary title, completes this pantheon of masculinities surrounding “Tchaikovsky”. The extension of a coming out process onto the stage with the *Tchaikovsky* project is clear. But that would have not been the only political aspect of the work. When Vivier initially applied for the grant to go to Paris the Tchaikovsky project was not mentioned as such, as in all likelihood he was not yet set on that subject matter. Instead, Vivier mentioned an “*opéra en fresque*, for seven singers, chamber orchestra and tape”, which would be a “montage of philosophical and political texts” (Gilmore 196). “Tchaikovsky”, Vivier’s protagonist, accused of sodomy and put on trial by the Tsar, a gay martyr, was in reality also a Russian composer and national hero, and Vivier’s choice during the height of the Cold War was in line with his long fascination with Russian culture, language, history and politics, and more broadly in

reaching across perceived boundaries. The final part in Vivier's sketches reads "Tchaikovsky again reaches the heights of power, a power that will be destroyed in '14-'18 [WWI] and its sequels Hiroshima and Vietnam" (Gilmore 212). It is painful to look at these sketches, so vital, so pregnant with ideas, music, life. *Tchaikowsky, un réquiem Russe* was to remain but an imaginary opera. But like the books on Vivier's shelves representing and also generating queer culture, queer galaxies continue expanding, building on his legacy. *Shameful Vice*, a chamber opera about the death of Tchaikovsky, was composed in 1994-95 by Michael Finnissy, an openly gay composer whose oeuvre gravitated towards explicitly political and gay themed works in parallel with the AIDS crisis and its aftermath. And in 2014, alongside a performance of Vivier's *Kopernikus*, an opera about Vivier's own death by composer Marko Nikodijević and librettist Gunther Geltinger, both gay men, was premiered at the Munich Biennale -- the festival Henze founded in 1988. Nikodijević's beautiful and lyrical *Claude Vivier. Ein Nachtprotokoll*, in which Vivier -- now himself a queer martyr -- is cast as a countertenor, mixes dream and reality, biographical details and fiction, as well as references to Vivier's queer worlds: the metro ride from *Glaubst du*, *Zipangu*, and *Kopernikus* (Vivier – *Chambres Des Ténèbres*).

Queer theorist José Esteban Muñoz defined queerness as "the rejection of a here and now and an insistence on potentiality or concrete possibility for another world" (Muñoz

1). Vivier's queer worlding is ultimately also the rejection of the here and now, the alchemic process described in Chapter 1 by which muscular reality is transformed through the queer imagination, and through which "queer" transforms from an insult to not just an honorary title, but a whole world. "Hope is an imaginary space where everything is possible, where dreams exist. Often, alas, this dream is conceived and organized not by creative forces but by political forces", wrote Vivier (Gilmore 195). The imaginary refuge of alternate realities, distant lands where different rules abide -- magical cities, charming princesses, Marco Polo's Zipangu, Alice's Wonderland -- is also the imagining of queer people's dream of liberation: a world devoid of oppression, a world in which music can end all war.

Herr Mozart. Herr Mozart. Mr. Mozart, listen to me. Is it true that on the other side of the river the trees talk to each other? That the flowers make such beautiful music as to make the gods weep? Is it true, Mr. Mozart, that the nymphs' timeless song has seduced the angel of harmony? Is it true? I've been told I can play leapfrog from galaxy to galaxy, that my hair will be a path for the hands of the joyful planets, that Carabosse the fairy has her porphyry castle there. Tell me, is all of this true? (Vivier *Kopernikus*).

CHAPTER THREE:

LISTENING TO QUEERNESS IN VIVIER

Camp and homo-exoticism in *Journal*

Journal is a 45-minute-long work for four vocal soloists, SATB choir and percussion. It was composed immediately after (and possibly during) Vivier's trip through Asia. Originally he conceived it as a sonic travelogue, but instead the travel described in it is a travel through life: it is divided into four parts titled Childhood, Love, Death, and After Death, and it was described by Vivier as an "autobiographical piece" ("Les Écrits de Claude Vivier" 79). Referring to a related, smaller-scale work, *Love Songs*, he said:

The great voyages always turn out to be a contemplation of interior voyages. Poverty that hurts, dictatorships that dishonor themselves, the smile of a child listening to music... those are my voyages, those are my memories, my cries of horror or of tenderness (qtd. in Reicher 31).

At the time of its completion, in May 1977, *Journal* was the longest work Vivier had composed (Gilmore 131). The piece that would surpass it in length two years later would be *Kopernikus*. And indeed, in many ways, *Journal* is a predecessor of the opera. Both works deal with the journey towards the unknown, towards beyond death, which

Vivier firmly believed existed (another example of a cyclic perception of temporality).

Both works share imagery and many characters: Merlin the wizard, Caraboosee the evil fairy, purple colors, starry constellations, cosmic dimensions.

Musically, the highly sectional structure and sudden shifts in mood and texture that characterize *Journal* -- which is to say, Vivier's experimentation in nonlinear musical narrative -- will carry into *Kopernikus* and later works. The opening section of *Journal*, for example, is a disjunct assemblage of short homophonic phrases in the four solo parts alternating with solo *sprechstimme* phrases, sustained chords with tremolos, occasional hiccups of the solo tenor and other pointy gestures from the choir, an insistent middle B and then also G in the choir sopranos and altos, which gallops at times, hockets (interlocks) at others, and a rin punctuation that frames the piece's opening and then carries into this texture intermittently.

With a rin strike at bar 28, however, all this suddenly stops, the choir bows -- one of many theatrical gestures embedded in the score -- and we find ourselves in a new section in which the men choristers sing homophonically in dyads a *molto legato* phrase to the words "These hoped for dimensions will appear", which is then repeated with the women's choir doubling at the octave. Once the second repetition is complete, we abruptly find ourselves in the new, chaotic texture (bar 37).

Figure 3.1 - break into dyadic texture, bars 29-32 of *Journal*

The image shows a musical score for two voices: Tenor choir and Bass choir. The music is in 4/4 time, marked 'T° ritenuto' and 'p legato molto'. The lyrics are: 'Ces di - men - sions es-pé - rées, el - les ap - pa - raî - tront, es-pé-rées, ap - pa - raî - - tront'. The score is divided into four measures. The first measure is marked with a '29' and a '4/4' time signature. The second measure is marked with a '3' and a '4/4' time signature. The third measure is marked with a '3' and a '4/4' time signature. The fourth measure is marked with a '3' and a '4/4' time signature.

Journal, for chorus and percussion © 1977 by Hendon Music, a Boosey & Hawkes, Inc. Company.

This is but a simple illustration -- and the first in *Journal* -- of the sectional structure typical to so much of Vivier's work. The break into dyadic texture is also a recurring element and an extremely important device in Vivier's music. A formative musical experience was his hearing a rehearsal with only two voices of a Bach chorale being sung and noticing how vital and full of expression the music still was, in spite of missing the other two voices (Gilmore 168). As in the organum-like section of *Journal* described above (bars 29-36), this texture is often associated with chant and other tropes of church music, as if evoking that early, formational musical experience. A different example is the last reiteration of the melody in Vivier's 1979 orchestral piece *Orion* (bars 169-182), constructed solely of dyads, in which the entire orchestra sounds very much like an organ doubled by bells (fig. 3.2).

Figure 3.2 - dyadic texture, reh. 26, *Orion*, reduction

Orion © 1979 by Hendon Music, a Boosey & Hawkes, Inc. Company.

Starting with *Lonely Child* on, Vivier's idiosyncratic spectral device always took the dyad as a departure point and the foundational building block, through the addition of frequencies, while "calculating each... combination tone from preceding combination tones or the initial bass and melody tones" (Christian). But even after introducing that technique dyadic textures are still frequently used in his work, and often conjure the organ, as for example in the incredibly effective bars 30-62 of *Prologue pour un Marco Polo*, and the equally effective opening section of *Wo bist du Licht!*. "...Refinement does not necessarily mean complexity. Even two sounds superimposed... that's terribly complex", he said in an interview (Reicher 32). This recurring exploration of the complexity, richness, and endless possibility in as simple a musical object as an interval is another example of Vivier's invitation to deepen one's perception discussed in Chapter 2.

Like *Kopernikus*, *Journal* too opens with a text by Lewis Carroll; Childhood in Wonderland. Carroll is also used here to set the intertextual, humorous spirit of the piece: the first words in *Journal* are “Twinkle, twinkle, little bat!”, which is to say, a parody. The quick, sharp transitions that characterize the work as a whole continue, as do the quips. For example, after a squeaking descending glissando on a long fermata of the bass soloist alone (bar 46) -- with the instruction “on the grain of the voice”, echoing Barthes, and meaning probably to use a vocal fry, imitating a granular sound that was to become important in Vivier’s string writing in such pieces as *Zipangu* and *Wo bist du Licht!* -- the rest of the ensemble rejoins in a cacophony that includes “Bravo!” calls from the solo soprano and alto and some “polite applause”. The joke carries on when, after catching his breath, the bass reassures the others “I’m not dead, I’m not dead!” and laughs (bars 49-50), to the annoyance of the tenor. Shortly after this episode -- through which the choir is galloping to an onomatopoeic “tom-ti-ki-tom” -- the galloping slows down and disintegrates, while the tenor soloist sings a slow aleatoric glissando, and the bass announces: “my wooden horse is broken” (bar 60). In retrospect, we realize that we were listening to a word painting of a child playing with their toy horse, and by now the downward glissando -- in which the men’s choir had also joined with their own aleatoric motif -- can suddenly also be heard as a sigh, or the sound of weeping or consolation.

I am pointing out these musical puns to portray Vivier's ability to perform sincerity and at the same time self-awareness, exemplified in the layered parodying of theatricality itself. But I am not doing justice to his humor by describing it in writing. Isolating and pinpointing these jokes means also flattening them by creating a linear narrative that loses the essence of the actual listening experience, and therefore also their humorous edge. When listening to the piece, these jokes are thrown at the listeners in the context of a wonderfully disorienting, messy cluster of sound, which changes character repeatedly and abruptly. The wittiness lies also in the fact that by the time you understand you have been listening to a horse galloping it has already broken down, for example. Rather than a clear, linear storyline, these jokes are embedded in a rich simultaneity of musical events. Yet I am ruining Vivier's punchlines purposefully; because later pieces such as *Kopernikus* are generally more abstract than *Journal* -- with its clearly madrigalesque treatment of text and relatively clear interactions of characters -- their humor is abstracted as well. It is even more subtly hidden, almost to the point of not being recognizable. By observing the more clearly humorous *Journal* I suggest we can deduce something about Vivier's humor when it is more suggestive, elusive, open for interpretation, and therefore also more campy.

Schmaltz, which Vivier identified in his own music when referring to his affinity with Mahler (Griffiths 194), is not unrelated to the idiom and aesthetics of camp. Vivier's

ability to identify and acknowledge the schmaltziness of his music, that self-awareness expressed musically, is what gives the exaggerated sentimentality its campy edge, as opposed to simply kitsch. And the sincere expression, the naiveté, is what makes it satisfying camp (Sontag comes to mind), whether or not it was intended as such.

In 1972 Vivier attended the summer course at Darmstadt for the second time, where he heard a live performance of Stockhausen's beautiful and influential work *Stimmung* (1968). Walter Boudreau told how Vivier, Grisey and he used to satirically amuse "themselves by incessantly imitating the vocal overtone sonorities of *Stimmung* as they walked around the town or on trams, much to the annoyance of one particular driver who threatened to throw them off" (Gilmore 71).

The second part of *Journal, Love*, opens with a long drone of a low F and A an octave and third above it, sustained by the choir basses and tenors while individually changing colors (vowels). With the next notes added all being part of the harmonic spectrum of the bass note -- or more simply, complementing a major-ninth chord above it --

Stimmung is an obvious association. This is an example of Vivier's campy humor: it is as though because *Stimmung* made for such a kick with his beer buddies at summer camp, because they went around town ridiculing and parodying it, he knew it was the right material to incorporate into his serious work. I am not purporting to know what Vivier

thought of *Stimmung* as a whole. He very likely may have admired it as he admired Stockhausen's work in general. But having it both ways would be the right recipe for camp in any case -- admirable to the point of being ridiculous, or, ridiculous admiration.

Against the backdrop of this stimmungy, timeless drone, the "great lovers" call each other, performed by both soloists and choir, across space, and repeatedly, as if forever, across time: "Roméo! Juliet'! Isolde! Tristan! Ro-méo! Juliet'! Tr-istan! Iso-lde!".

Hypnotizing Balinese gongs beat the time, seemingly forever, an eternal pulsation, while across the stage the lovers call each other in exaggerated pathos, highlighting different notes of the major-ninth chord, with few auxiliary notes making for crunchy, jazzy additions, as the names of the lovers blend into one another. "Love" here is an eternal cosmic force ("I want art to be the sacred act, the revelation of forces, the communication with those forces", Vivier wrote [Reicher 29]). Yet, at the same time, the raw, naked pathos pokes fun at the very representation of love: in theater, opera, Wagner, with *Stimmung* in the background.

Figure 3.3 - opening of part II of *Journal*

138 $\text{♩} = 45$ *ppp* $\frac{9}{4}$ *ppp* $\frac{5}{4}$ $\frac{6}{4}$ $\frac{5}{4}$

SOLOISTS S solo *mp* *Glissando*
Ro - mé - o,

[2 Balinese] Tuned Gongs *ppp* (1) $\text{≡} \text{<}$: change color

Journal, for chorus and percussion © 1977 by Hendon Music, a Boosey & Hawkes, Inc. Company.

“Eternity” is suggested by the continuous pulsation, but is also more subtly symbolized by the way time moves both forward, into the next section, as well as nonlinearly, backwards: there are three palindromic cycles in this section whose symmetrical axes do not converge. The soloists’ initial calls (bars 138-145) are repeated in reversed order (bars 155-163), with all the same musical gestures but amping the pathos a notch higher by using slightly wider vocal ranges and longer holds. Between these two repetitions the choir sopranos and altos begin their cycling through the lover’s names (bars 147-154), which are then reversed together with the soloists’ reversal, so the overall

texture becomes more dense (bars 155-162). Less perceptible is the reversal of the number of beats between the appearance of a grace note in the gongs -- at first every ten, then nine, the eight beats and so on, until reaching one (bar 146), and then increasing the number of beats back to ten. When ten beats are reached, a new, smaller incomplete cycle begins (bar 159), suggesting the continuation of these cycles beyond what the actual score and performance reveal to the listeners; the page is turned, and we find ourselves somewhere else. These cyclic constructs bring to mind Leclerc, but also Berg, an especially important composer for Vivier, and other composers such as Webern, Bartók and Messiaen. On another temporal scale, the big palindrome of Western music's history -- the proliferation of palindromes and serial techniques in the twentieth-century mirroring the palindromes and canons in medieval polyphony such as Machaut's -- remind us that "new" is always contextual.

Table 3.1 - three palindromes in bars 138-163 of *Journal*

bar	138	139	140	141-2	143-4	145	146	147	148	149	150	151-2	153-4	155-6	157	158	159-60	161-3											
solo		Ro		Ju	Is	Tr								Tr	Is		Ju	Ro											
choir							Ro		Ju		Tr	Is	Is	Tr			Ju	Ro											
gong beat	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10					5	4	3	2	1

The “search for love”, Vivier explains in the program notes, leads “from the Bible to the brothel” (“Les Écrits de Claude Vivier” 80). The next few short sections include a phrase from the New Testament set in dyads (bar 164), a solo tenor sounding like gregorian chant going “oriental” (bars 170-176), and a layered buildup based on the Italian words *caro mio vieni* (“come, my dear”). The slightly chaotic texture suddenly clears when, together with the solo bass’s question “what is he looking for”, the clear response resounds, in a crispy combination of the women gasping (“loud breath in”) above the men’s rhythmical, insistent reply “sex! sex! sex! sex! sex! sex! sex! sex! sex! sex! sex!” (bar 182).

A clear sense of pulsation is momentarily reintroduced in this dry, whispery soundscape, emphasizing the contrast to the lush, watery pulsation of gongs accompanying the aristocratic, tragic love of the great lovers in the opening section.

Sounds of laughter ensue, mixed with audible fragments of text in different languages expressing the hunt for love. Childhood characters reappear, Vivier notes, as if also taking part in the search. “Pinocchio! Where are you!”, the percussionist shouts into the tam-tam. The quest to repair the broken wooden horse continues, too, becoming a rather thick innuendo in this cruisy context.

Another sudden dropout of the mass of sound shifts the focus back to the tenor, who falsettos in *sprechstimme* “don’t leave me in the dark, you know I’m afraid” (bar 205), which Gilmore identifies as an expression of a real, lifelong phobia of Vivier’s (133). As the tam-tam softly strikes and the choir begins to hum, the soprano and alto soloists reply in an irregular tremolo on “ch” and “s”, conjuring the sound of a mother quieting her child. However, this tender moment is immediately turned on its head: already in the next bar the maternal image is disturbed by the addition of (drunken?) hiccups and repressed laughter. “The laughing must be as if laughing and trying to hide it”, instructs Vivier.

Meanwhile the tenor says, in French, “everything seems so distant around me”, and then moves to the invented language, “meuz da yé, meuz da yé jté meuz da yé”, prompting one chorister to whisper “What? What does he say? I don’t understand what he says!”, interlocking with the tenor’s angular rhythm (bars 207-208).

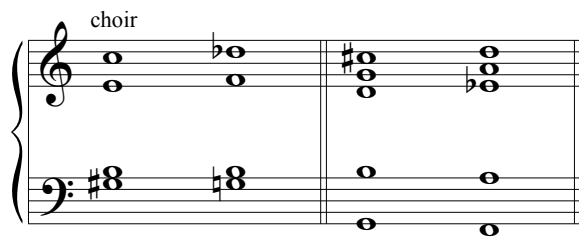
Figure 3.4 - hocket of solo tenor with chorister, bars 207-208 of *Journal*

The musical score consists of two staves. The top staff is for the solo tenor, marked "solo [whispered]". It begins in 5/4 time and changes to 4/4 time. The lyrics are: "what what does he say I don't un-der-stand what he says". The bottom staff is for the tenor solo, with lyrics: "meuz da yé meuz da yé jté meuz da yé jté jté meuz da yé jté". The score shows a hocket between the two parts, with the tenor solo part having a 5-measure phrase at the end.

Journal, for chorus and percussion © 1977 by Hendon Music, a Boosey & Hawkes, Inc. Company.

This section is characterized by a dreamy atmosphere: a humming choir slowly oscillating between two chords doubled by soft tam-tam strikes. This type of oscillation and the slow harmonic rhythm it produces is completely typical of Vivier’s music, as are the chords themselves: the first is a major-sixth E-major chord with one dissonant note (C), or, an inversion of an augmented chord with a major seventh, and the other is a subset of the whole-tone mode structured like a “French” augmented sixth chord.

Figure 3.5 - oscillating chords in *Journal*, bars 206-219 (Love) and 324-5 etc. (Death)



Journal, for chorus and percussion © 1977 by Hendon Music, a Boosey & Hawkes, Inc. Company.

The progression also shows Vivier’s fondness for using a minor second as a leading tone in these kinds of chord oscillations. A very similar oscillation of chords will be the basis of much of the piece’s third part, *Death*, during the evocation of the name of the handsome, rough-trade looking Russian poet Mayakovsky, who killed himself in 1930 (and who also appears as the subject of some of Frank O’Hara poems). “As you know, in spiritualism very often, souls trying to make contact with earthlings are those who have committed suicide”, Vivier explained (“*Les Écrits de Claude Vivier*” 80). But again,

this sincere expression is layered with parody, as in that third part, the requiem text is punctuated by the bass singer is occasional weeping outbursts, which gradually infect the other performers.

Still in the second part, the odyssey of love goes on. As another small rhythmic palindromic structure of the humming choir and tam-tam strikes reaches its mid-point (bar 211), the bass singer begins soliciting the tenor. With the indication to be “crude, not to say a bit vulgar” he asks in German if the tenor is dreaming, and then asks him to come to the pub and have a beer with him. The tenor accepts the rendezvous, on the condition that his friend will not leave him alone: “you know I’m afraid to be alone”. “No, no, no, no”, the bass reassures his gentle mate for the night, “come!” and snaps his finger.

A subito *fff* assisted with a bass drum hit transports the couple into the bar (or “brothel”, in Vivier’s formulation). In a highly cinematic effect, the cacophony drops to *pp subito* when the bass encourages the tenor, “Look, the world is at your feet my friend” (bar 221), as if zooming in on the main characters in the midst of the loud party. The choir demands more and more beer, as voices chaotically talk over each other, mixed with noises of laughter and hand clapping. “STOP!”, the tenor shouts after a

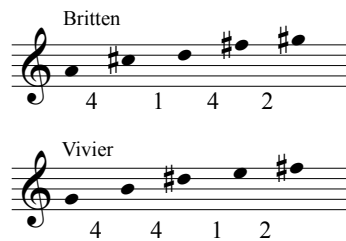
while, abruptly silencing the loud commotion, and we are once again carried to another scene, or perhaps to what is going on in the tenor's mind.

The contrast of the Apollonian, transfigured, trans-bodied love of the opening section, with the Dionysian, earthy, fleshly love of night-time cruising at the bars, leaves the tenor to wonder, "Wo ist meine Liebe?" ("where is my love?"), to the accompaniment of five Thai gongs (bar 239). This is one of the work's most beautiful and memorable moments. The Thai gongs accompanying this solo have already appeared briefly earlier in the piece at the end of the first section (bar 163), playing a very similar figure. This is another reminder of the nonlinearity of time, as if these musics constantly exist -- the beer songs, the cosmic love, and this tenor's soliloquy -- and the score is but a particular sequence of opening and closing the doors on them. The lyrical writing for exotic percussion in this section is also a recurring element in Vivier's work, as reflected by the title of his 1980 solo percussion piece for Asian instruments, *Cinq Chansons pour Percussion* ("Five Songs for Percussion").

But the exoticism here is not confined to the use of Thai gongs. The tenor's melody begins in a mode that is an equal-temperament approximation of the Indonesian pelog. This mixture of eros and the reference to gamelan, the harnessing of its exoticism to portray homoeroticism, appears in another autobiographical work from the same

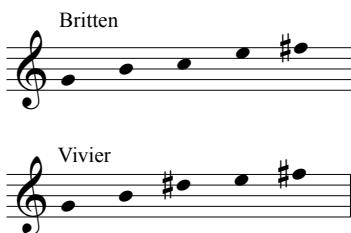
decade, with Britten's gamelan-inspired musical description of Tazio as he is seen (and heard) in Aeschenschach's mind in *Death in Venice*. The interval content of both Vivier and Britten's approximation of the pelog is the same: two major thirds, one major second and one minor second, but their ordering is slightly different, with Vivier placing the two major thirds together at the bottom, creating an augmented chord and a slightly different color for the mode (figure 3.6):

Figure 3.6 - pelog approximation in Britten's *Death in Venice* and in Vivier's *Journal*, original pitch



If we transpose Britten's mode to match Vivier's we can easily see they only differ by one note (figure 3.7):

Figure 3.7 - pelog approximation in Britten's *Death in Venice* and in Vivier's *Journal*, transposed



The tenor's soliloquy goes on, and the initial pentatonic structure of the melody dissolves as the chromatic aggregate gradually unfolds, representing the search for love in yet another way (starting with a suggestively "blue" D-natural).

While many musical devices marked in Western music as "exotic" are recurrent in Vivier's work -- the use of drones, Asian percussion instruments (Indonesian, Iranian, Chinese, Japanese, Thai), cyclic structures, interlocking rhythms, slow or no harmonic rhythm -- the clear reference to gamelan music in the context of the search for love has a specifically queer resonance, because gamelan and Bali have been figured as a queer world in the history of twentieth-century Western music.

As shown by Edward Said in his seminal study of orientalism, the "Orient" -- a Western construction that is in part imagined and in part comes into being through the power of that imagination (and through coercion) -- is deeply tied to sexual fantasy and gendered imagery. Philip Brett explains that "orientalism is one of the means by which desire unacceptable to or feared by the (Western) Subject can be projected onto the Other" (142). And while Said did not elaborate on Orientalism's specific relationship to gay and queer issues, others have (Boone 1995; Lucey 1995).

Brett further points out that Bali and its music had a definite relationship to the music of gay male composers in the twentieth century, amounting to what Stevan Key suggested to be a “gay marker” in North American music (133). And while “gay markers” of any kind are dubious if taken too literally (after all, even the Canadian government-funded “Fruit Machine” project failed), there is indeed a long list of twentieth century white queer composers who have used gamelan directly and indirectly in their music, forming yet another queer constellation around the island and its music. A non-exhaustive list may include Maurice Ravel (1875-1937); Percy Grainger (1882-1961); Henry Cowell (1897-1965); Francis Poulenc (1899-1963) -- whose 1931 Concerto for Two Pianos in D minor was performed together with Britten, a piece that was commissioned by lesbian American expatriate Princesse Edmond de Polignac and which includes gamelan-inspired passages in an otherwise mixed bag of camp and lyricism (Brett 134); Collin McPhee (1900-1964); Harry Partch (1901-1974); John Cage (1912-1992); Benjamin Britten (1913-1976); Lou Harrison (1917-2003); and even Pierre Boulez (b. 1925), who indulged himself with these exotic sounds to portray a hammer, when no masters were looking.

Clear depictions of homoeroticism in classical music repertoire are a thing of rarity in any case, but there are such depictions with specific reference to gamelan in such piece as Britten’s *The Turn of the Screw*, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* and *Death in Venice*, and

Harrison's *Scenes from Cavafy*. While for McPhee, the attraction to Bali was never only musical but also (homo)erotic, as clearly expressed in this letter quoted by Brett:

Many times there was a decision to be made between some important opportunity and a sexual (homosexual) relationship which was purely sensual. I never hesitated to choose the latter. This I did deliberately and would do again and again... The Balinese period was simply a long extension of this (151).

Vivier's fascination with gamelan music should be viewed also -- though certainly not exclusively -- within this queer constellation. We know that Cage's *Sonatas and Interludes*, for example, were analyzed by Richard Toop when Vivier was studying with him (Gilmore 86). And that the third concert of the Montréal-based concert series *Les Événements du neuf*, cofounded in 1978 by Vivier, José Evangelista, John Rea and Lorraine Vaillancourt, was dedicated to Colin McPhee, including his *Balinese Ceremonial Music* (Gilmore 149). Moreover, Vivier admired McPhee's classic book *Music in Bali* (Gilmore 268). We know also that the visit to Indonesia was an extremely significant experience for Vivier in many ways, and much more so than any other place he visited during his trip, which included Japan, Singapore, Thailand, Iran and Egypt. It is not clear if sexual tourism was part of what made it significant in his case, although Walter Boudreau unequivocally says it was (Gilmore 124). But in any case it seems likely that the specific relationship to Bali predated in some ways his physically being there, by being mediated also as a realm of the queer imagination.

In *Journal*, a 1972 improvised street performance parodying *Stimmung* became a carefully planned parody of love and of humanity, while at the same time sincerely expressing humanity's eternal desire for love, "its hallucinations, its dreams, its fears and aspirations". Like portrayals of love by Shakespeare, or Mozart -- whom Vivier cited as inspiration for *Kopernikus* -- *Journal* encompasses "high" and "low" love, while also including implicitly homoerotic portrayals of love, with the tenor-bass pickup scene as well as the exotic devices signifying Otherness, which in this context is at least *also* erotic otherness.

The score of *Journal* also includes staging directions that involve the performers bowing at structurally significant moments. This is perhaps a nod towards that self-aware performativity, which is also deeply related to queer theory's outlook on human relations. *Journal* ends with the solo tenor saying "come, let's go" to which the soprano replies "ya". Gilmore insightfully suggests that this is Vivier "closing the curtain on the charade of art". These postmodern/queer winks "transpose the discourse", as they portray visually the self-awareness which is also inherent to the music. Such layered discourse that includes parodying and a self-humor, I suggest, did not go away in subsequent works.

In *Love Songs*, for example, *Journal's* younger and smaller (in scale) sister-piece, one of the men tells the old nursery rhyme: "Peter Pumpkin eater had a wife and couldn't keep her. Put her in a pumpkin shell, and there he kept her very well!", to which all the performers burst out laughing, except one "girl" who cries out: "Hey! Why do you laugh? This is a sad story!". She commands their attention, and also the attention of the listeners. This is feminist critique in a pumpkin shell, perhaps. But if so, it is at the same time also a parody of such critique.

In later works, the abstraction of narrative and generally more solemn and lyrical atmosphere make humor less detectable. But think about the exaggerated pathos of the lovers' calls at the opening of the second part of *Journal*; or the demand made in *Love Songs* by "all girls", individually and "hysterically" shouting, "give me my Romeo!", directly moving from shouting to crying, repeatedly. Isn't the exaggerated pathos, the performed hysteria -- that caricature of femininity encapsulated by the diva figure, its weaknesses and strengths combined -- similarly present also in a work such as *Bouchara*? Dedicated to Vivier's then boyfriend Dino Olivieri, *Bouchara* is another piece the composer defined as a "Love song". In the program notes he explained it was written entirely "in an invented language, a language of love, an eternally-repeated story". Aren't the pathos-filled glissandi at reh. 15, for example, echoing the calls of the great lovers from *Journal* (fig. 3.8)? Or the climactic, dramatic, noisy, long-held vibratos

at reh. 19 a revisit of the performed hysteria that appeared in *Love Songs*? This is serious music, of course. So serious, it is ridiculous. It is completely sincere while at the same time realizing -- being aware of -- the effect such sincerity may have on its audience. It willfully makes itself available for parody even when not clearly declaring itself as such.

Figure 3.8 - *Bouchara*, soprano part, reh. 15

yè da ro ziè tcho tai ke bo rio ko Vo - i do - i zé na Reu oi

Bouchara © 1981 Boosey & Hawkes, Inc.

Without suggesting a complete equivalence here, I see a thread connecting Vivier's interventions in public space -- such as his extrovert, sexual guerrilla performance (to much embarrassment of those around him), or his being open and detailed about his sex life, or his loud, piercing laughter -- with his intervention in concert repertoire with the extravagant, flamboyant, campy, divaesque expression in *Journal*, *Love Songs*, *Bouchara*, and many other such examples.

Camp, after all, is a form of cultural resistance that is entirely predicated on a shared consciousness of being inescapably situated within a powerful system of social and sexual meaning. Camp resists the power of that system from within by means of parody, exaggeration, amplification, theatricalization, and literalization of normally tacit codes of conduct - codes

whose very authority derives from their privilege of never having to be explicitly articulated, and thus from their customary immunity to critique (Halperin *Saint Foucault*, 29).

Not that Vivier's work is only, or mainly, or explicitly a form of camp-protest. His music is vast, ceremonial, lyrical, melancholic, unabashedly beautiful, theatrical, full of pathos, human, otherworldly, extravagant, devout, crude, infantile, brutal at times, its textures bubbly, grinding, scruffy, and it is also deeply self-aware, humorous and joyful. It is all these things. Vivier's statement about Balinese art seems to hold just as true for his own: "There's one thing that people don't recognize in Balinese art, it's poetry that is enormously sad, a sadness that love of life can bring with it. Not the sadness of people who don't love life, but of those who love it deeply" (Reicher 30). The sadness in his music is not the sadness of not loving life, but the sadness of love itself. Its richness emanates from its multifaceted forms of expression and layers of suggested and available meanings.

“Welcome to the kingdom of mutations”: *Kopernikus*

Something strange happened to me in the kingdom of mutations, something I couldn't foresee. For a long time I didn't get Vivier's opera. I thought it was unclear, had no form, lacked a center of gravity. I liked the music in general, but felt disoriented by it, and I couldn't make sense of it as a whole. I designated it as one of Vivier's not-yet-mature works -- after all, this was a pre-*Lonely Child* work, I thought -- which is to say, not one that required much further attention. In short, I exhibited the exact same discomforts Vivier's critics had at the time.

But as I was weaving my queer webs around Vivier and his music -- as I learned something profound about his music which I had no prior knowledge of and could not have predicted -- *Kopernikus* clicked. I was able to hear it differently, and to understand, with the help of one joint and two friends, that it was in fact a highly sophisticated and mature work, and that in some ways it was key to understanding Vivier's music, and therefore my own thesis as well. What needed to change wasn't the dramatic or musical structure of the work, but my perception of it. Agni, god of transformation, did his magic trick on me. My perception was transformed -- I was transformed -- by engaging this work.

Like *Journal*, *Kopernikus* opens with an excerpt from Lewis Carroll, this time being read by a baritone. Following Carroll and some singing in the invented language, the first literal words by Vivier himself in the piece are the greeting: “Welcome to the kingdom of mutations”, which is to say, the land marked by difference, oddness, queerness, a place where other rules apply. The luring of Agni into the queer world he/she enters is also the luring of the audience into the strange work. As already mentioned in Chapter 2, the libretto, when using literal language, does provide a sort of listening guide: “A melody will be your guide” is the next statement, followed by the prediction that “the changing sun slowly will transform you.”

Both acts of the opera open with the trumpet, the instrument of death, as Vivier explained. In the first act, it presents a fanfare-like melody based on six pitches which operate as a *cantus firmus* in what follows:

Figure 3.9 - *cantus firmus*; opening section of *Kopernikus*



These six pitches comprise the sole notated pitched material up to reh. 9, and their significance continues beyond that point. They are cycled through much in the same

way we saw in *Et je reverrai cette ville étrange*. At times this cycling resembles closely the original presentation of the melody by the trumpet, while at others it departs from it greatly while maintaining only its pitch content.

The initial cantus presentation in the trumpet is also partially doubled by the baritone-martin in the invented language, a voice standing in as a kind of storyteller or joker character throughout the work. This voice type, used mostly in French operatic repertoire -- for example, as Debussy's *Pelléas* -- typically makes use of falsetto in the high register, which Vivier's score indeed calls for.

The structure of *Kopernikus* is shaped by the predilection for sectionality and rapid changes in parameters other than pitch content. Every two or three phrases, and sometimes even more often, changes in texture, rhythmic patterns, orchestral combination and registers occur, maximizing the possibilities offered by the score's modest forces of seven singers and seven instrumental performers: oboe, three clarinets, trumpet, trombone, violin and percussion.

Two cadential figures in dyads oscillate throughout the opening part. Both are based on the cantus firmus and both exhibit Vivier's preference for a descending minor second in

one of the voices in a cadence. The first set uses the cantus' first three pitches; the second the last four; and both share C-sharp as a common tone (figure 3.10):

Figure 3.10 - cadential figures in dyads based on cantus firmus of *Kopernikus*



The first set initially appears in a chorale-like texture, setting Agni's greeting, "hé o", accompanied with a visual salutation (bars 7-9); at first, the salutation appears as a mezzo solo accompanied by lower instrumental parts; then, the other voices (minus Agni) join and close on an F-sharp minor chord. Then the second set follows, performed by the baritone and bass singer doubled by the trombone, with the baritone-martin continuing his narration ("Welcome to the land of mutations" reh. 3).

These two figures -- the higher choral configuration based on the first dyad, and second dyad in a lower register, serving as background to the baritone's narration -- alternate a couple more times, always at varying lengths and using different expressive variations in the voices, for example by altering tremolos. The oscillation of the cadential figures creates a bend in linear time like the one we saw in the example from *Lonely Child*

discussed in Chapter 2; as if zooming in on a smaller structure within the larger governing melodic sequence.

At reh. 5 a new melodic figuration appears. Still based on the six pitches of the cantus firmus, it is sung by the mezzo doubled by the violin, with a homorythmic doubling of the bass singer, mirroring the soprano's melody imperfectly. In fact this phrase is an embellishment of the second dyad set, cadencing on the first set, again to the salutation "hé o" (figure 3.11):

Figure 3.11 - new melodic material, reh. 5 *Kopernikus*

The musical score for Figure 3.11, rehearsal mark 5, features four staves. The top staff is for Mezzo (soprano), the second for Baritone (Bar. M.), the third for Baritone (Bar.), and the bottom for Violin (Von.). A large '5' in a box is placed above the Mezzo staff. The Mezzo part begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a time signature of 4/4. It starts with a dynamic of *p* and a tempo marking of *léger*. The melody consists of eighth and sixteenth notes, with a cadence on the first set of the dyad. The Bar. M. part is a whole rest. The Bar. part begins with a bass clef, a key signature of one sharp, and a time signature of 4/4. It starts with a dynamic of *p* and a tempo marking of *léger*. The melody consists of eighth and sixteenth notes, with a cadence on the first set of the dyad. The Von. part begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp, and a time signature of 4/4. It starts with a dynamic of *p* and a tempo marking of *léger*. The melody consists of eighth and sixteenth notes, with a cadence on the first set of the dyad. The lyrics for the vocal parts are: "bien - ve - nue au pa - ys ma - gi - que au pa - ys de Mer - lin, au pa - ys de Wag - ner hé o". The word "Gong balinese" is written below the Mezzo staff. The dynamic *mp* is marked at the end of the phrase for the Mezzo and Bar. parts.

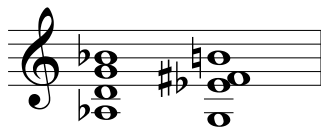
Kopernikus © 1979 by Boosey & Hawkes, Inc.

“Welcome to the land of magic, to the land of Merlin, the land of Wagner”, they continue to lure and greet Agni. The next phrase is in three voices, growing at reh. 6 to a four-part chorale of trombone, low trumpet, oboe, and clarinet, presenting yet a new melody together with the baritone’s narration in rhythmic unison: “Death will be as gentle as a mother. Your friends have all arrived. Finally you will see the light”. This last bit is sung in the falsetto typical of the baritone-martin, followed by one more bar of the instrumental chorale and a long downward glissando whistled by the baritone. Then, the beginning of the same melody appears again in a four-part choral texture, but in a higher register played by the wind instruments with a D-pedal in the trombone, and a continued whistling figuration of the Baritone. This state of affairs continues, sonic combinations being constantly refreshed, for example by adding a long pedal of individual rapid repetition on “na no ni” in the voices, creating a wonderful bubbly texture, two bars before reh. 8.

Explicitly mentioned in the libretto, Wagner’s shadow haunts the work in several other ways. The score leaves the bass register to the reign of the trombone alone (with occasional support from a bass clarinet), lending its brassy sound certain prominence, and the fanfare character of the opening melody -- emphasizing dotted rhythms and an oscillating perfect forth -- and materials generated from it, make the Wagnerian association even stronger (see the trombone part at reh. 7, for example).

At reh. 9 an oscillating pair of chords appears, much like the ones we noted in *Journal*. They also introduce two new pitches, E-flat and A-flat, adding more of that Phrygian gravitational pull to the cantus's original D and G. The chords are typical to Vivier in that both are based on triads with one added dissonant note: a g-minor chord with an A-flat and B-major chord with a G:

Figure 3.12 - oscillating chords, reh. 9 *Kopernikus*



The triadic base of this progression is indeed rather Wagnerian: a similar progression, between a b-minor as tonic and a g-minor chord, appears prominently at the opening of the second act of *Parsifal* to prepare the mood for a scene at Klingsor's magic castle (as part of a symmetrical division of the octave). *Parsifal* is also thematically related to *Kopernikus* and, not surprisingly, Vivier's library included the twenty-fifth volume of *Musik-Konzepte* (1982), dedicated to Wagner's last opera. The same chord progression will return in pure triadic form, without the dissonant notes, at reh. 12 in Act II of *Kopernikus*, as the background to the brief evocation of the names Tristan and Isolde. Here, with the addition of the tonally disorienting dissonant notes -- and similarly to its effective use in *Parsifal* -- this progression is used to portray the entrance of Merlin the

wizard. If magical realism had to pick a quintessential chord progression, this one would make for a strong candidate.

“Come, come, and don't be afraid”, Merlin urges Agni. “I guide the children of earth in the paths of the hereafter. Now the purple dawn breaks”. When he asks her, “Sing to me the song of your country”, she pauses -- a general pause with a fermata, which is the first moment of silence in the score (since the music started) -- she opens her mouth, and then begins singing, “na ka wa loi mi kou mi kou ya”, in the invented language. Vivier is winking.

Vivier's invented language, used so consistently throughout his oeuvre, suggests different meanings at different contexts. It is after all “meaningless” in the literal sense, and can therefore also *mean* anything. It is a blank onto which listeners can project meaning, or concentrate on the expression itself rather than try and understand; it is humorous, childish, but it can also represent a failure to communicate, to express, to be understood. It is an abstraction of language, a representation of language, similar to the theatrical gestures in *Journal* representing theatricality.

Agni's sung monologue finally unfolds the chromatic aggregate while presenting new melodic cells that in turn become new cantus firmi, generating further musical material.

For example, this motive from her monologue (figure 3.13) --

Figure 3.13 - excerpt from Agni's solo; reh. 10 *Kopernikus*

Alto

11

pp

nou ma ra ya zi im ma ko ma ko ag ni

Kopernikus © 1979 by Boosey & Hawkes, Inc.

becomes a mobile of revolving melodic fragments sustained into harmony later in the act, at reh. 42-44:

Figure 3.14 - excerpt from mobile based on Agni's melody; reh. 44 *Kopernikus*

Cl. 1

Cl. 2

Cl. 3

Trp.

Trb.

3

44

4

5

p

p

Kopernikus © 1979 by Boosey & Hawkes, Inc.

I have taken the time to describe here the first few minutes of *Kopernikus* in order to capture something of Vivier's treatment of time in this masterful work. The quickly rotating motives based on the cantus and the consequent sectionality, the sharp alterations of mood, from childish playfulness to suddenly austere solemnity (as at reh. 19, for example), create a dialectic in which listeners are invited to give up their expectations regarding the work's future, especially its future structure, its narrative, and instead to give in to enjoying the moment. The reduction of pitch material and cantus firmus technique affords consistency and a sense of sameness, as if examining the same object from different angles or in different lights, a kaleidoscopic experience. Short phrases come and go, musical gestures replace others, all are expressive, charged, beautiful, but they don't fit into a predictable linear progression.

When a longer, more continuous section appears -- such as the "mobile" at reh. 42, or the soprano's aria at the end of Act I (reh. 53) -- the assumed established rules of the work break down even further. Such moments deepen the impact of that invitation, to give up expectation, while also deepening the sense that several time scales simultaneously exist and the score is but a sequence of navigating between those scales, rather than journeying through a linear development (as pointed out to me beautifully by Daniel Alexander Jones). "We are the pilgrims of timelessness. Defectors from

dimensions to dimensions. We are the migrants of the sacred galaxies”, sings the soprano coloratura (reh. 19).

In a work whose only plot is a rather abstract transition to a different dimension, these musical devices suggesting complex perceptions of dimensionality and time are fundamental. *Kopernikus* ends with a procession of all the performers leaving the stage through a door, to the “beyond”, while repeating a six-part chorale (many of the chords here are again based on triads with one or two added dissonant notes). Back at reh. 26 -- at about the middle of Act I -- the baritone-martin sings about eternity: “Eternity comes to speak to us and we must listen. A wonderful revelation is this voice of the times. A cosmic flower is given to us to see at last, at last see eternity...”

While he sings, a recording of the procession music ending the opera is played in the tape part. And in Act II, just before that very procession finally is performed live, two “souvenirs” from Act I are played over sustained, shimmery chords, both of which form part of the buildup towards the processional choral sequence. The first souvenir is from towards the end of Act I (reh. 24); the second is from a more distant past in the work, near the beginning of the act (just before reh. 9). As if the future is already present. The past is still with us. Time folds onto itself.

Kopernikus ends with the recorded sound of a slamming door. The intrusion of recorded sound into the acoustic space of the work is a recurring element in several endings of Vivier's works and can be seen as yet another gesture of acknowledgement, a nod towards that which is beyond the scope of any particular score. This is true in the *Prologue* and in *Bouchara*, but also in earlier works such as *Learning* and even *Désintégration*.

Vivier said of *Kopernikus* that "We should not try to read any meaning into what happens but try to *feel* what's happening. Not try to *understand*, but to *enjoy* what's happening" (qtd. in Gilmore 156). This poses a particular challenge when using language, as I am doing, in discussing the work. Explaining often is done as a means to dissect, quantify, evaluate, rank, emulate, exploit and control. The opera is an effort to defy these kinds of explanations, and the partial knowledge they produce, the "half truths" that are a "manly way of thinking", while in fact risking overlooking what is essential.

In the same Frykberg interview discussed in Chapter 2, Vivier said, "instead of naming things, you are an elephant or a tiger, you can say, ah ha!! You're a big nice animal. Are you angry or are you dangerous?... If you ask questions without answering". The kinds of interactions created on stage in *Kopernikus* similarly defy clear explanation while at

also in an array of nonnormative vocal techniques such as tremolo types, using the hands on the mouth, for example, or singing and speaking through tubes. The opera's production by Pierre Audi released on DVD is especially marvelous in how it treats the inherent theatricality of Vivier's musical gestures, charging each gesture while successfully avoiding literal meaning.

Reinbert de Leeuw, the Musical Director of that production, describes the strangeness, the uniqueness of Vivier's vocal approach:

That's down to the combination. Just look at his use of language. He uses mainly fragments. And part of the language is his own invention. An artificial language. It isn't simply sung, it's performed in different ways. Singers cover their mouths with their hands, and sing through tubes, loudspeakers, in such a way that what you hear is both singing, and not singing, in a very disconcerting way. It presents a wondrous universe of vocal lines that aren't simply "singing". The very combination of made-up language and actual language is in itself extraordinarily mysterious. What is being said here? Only at the point where something is told does he use a speaking voice. At that point, it becomes concrete, something is being told. But the singing itself... It feels very much otherworldly (*Rêves D'un Marco Polo*).

Vivier's approach to the voices is one of the keys to the work's queerness: his usage of a limited number of embellishments in the context that otherwise makes a highly traditional use of the voice -- operatic bel canto arias, duets, ensembles and choral singing -- queers this normative context. This juxtaposition of traditional writing and "extended techniques" emphasizes expressiveness and oddness, and it creates an effect

that is both fresh and striking. The strangeness of a soprano who suddenly ends a lyrical, bel canto phrase with a high-pitched glissando and tremolos with her hand on the mouth while bending her body and walking away, for example.

Vivier defined his opera as a *féerie mystique*, saying, "Its two fundamental aspects are dream and spirituality, which are mingled" (Gilmore 153). More books from his shelves that pop to my librarian-wired brain and make up the larger cultural world of the work are *The World Guide to Gnomes, Fairies, Elves and Other Little People*, an 1880 classic by Thomas Keightley; the 1978 *Man, Magic and Musical Occasions* by Charles Lafayette Boilès; Miguel Covarrubias's classic *Island of Bali*, which includes a discussion of magic in Balinese tradition; the Magic Realism of Jorge Luis Borges; and, of course, a book I did mention in my pink reading section of the Introduction, T.H. White's *The Book of Merlyn*. The "Radical Fairies" -- a network of gay anti-assimilationists which started their return to nature conventions, emphasizing spirituality, paganism and a queer outlook as a response to mainstream gay liberation of the '70s -- also come to mind.

Vivier's *féerie mystique* is a neo-romantic and slightly psychedelic piece, evoking, as always in Vivier's music, a mix of different musical tropes such as Christian choral music and seductively oriental sounds to portray a magical fantasy land on stage. It is a religious camp ceremony, a queer pagan ritual, and it has a deep humor to it. Part of its

impact lies in the way it recreates the experience of encountering a different culture, the quintessential “Oriental” experience. As if being dropped into a context one is not fully equipped to decipher, but which shimmers with the richness and variety of an existing culture and echoes the depths of its history. That’s why I didn’t get it at first: I thought it was just an opera. But the more time you spend in the kingdom of mutations, the more you are able to see and hear. I think this is what Ligeti meant when he said that Vivier “invented an orient... He made things that are absolutely his own fantasy... it’s like a nonexistent folklore” (qtd. in Gilmore 137).

In addition to avoidance of linear narrative, the representation of time as conflict and its resolution, *Kopernikus* is pregnant with social commentary reflective of Vivier’s politics, spirituality and queerness. As Shaka McGlotten pointed out to me, Orientalism is, after all, also a European fantasy about being more connected to nature. But Europeans themselves were of course, at one point, indigenous peoples too. That connection to nature -- deeply tied to traditionally feminine knowledge such as natural healing, homeopathy, herbalism, potions, magic, paganism, which itself is tied to earthiness, sensuality, fertility, dirt, processes on the very material level (“Rotting matter thrust into the black silt fertilizes the seed”, reads the libretto of *Prologue*) -- was exterminated by the Church as it consolidated its political domination. This process included genocidal massacres which were also patriarchal campaigns (“witch hunts”), aimed at

exterminating powerful women (such as Jeanne d'Arc) for being perceived as having some kind of connection with the elements, with nature. And as we have seen, McCarthy's "witch hunt" and other government campaigns made more explicit the connection of those early bigoted campaigns of mass execution and the 20th century's obsessive persecution of queers, putting on trial deviance, variance, alternative knowledge and world-views. The political aspect of Vivier's work, its queerness, vibrates loudly for those who are willing to listen.

To conclude my discussion of *Kopernikus*, I would like to offer parts of a conversation I had the joy of holding with Daniel Alexander Jones, an incredibly talented queer artist, winner of the prestigious 2015 Doris Duke Award and Associate Professor of Theater at Fordham University. I had the opportunity to watch excerpts of Pierre Audi and Reinbert de Leeuw's production of Vivier's opera with Daniel. These were his perceptive responses, which, as you may recognize, echo elsewhere throughout this essay. Italicized excerpts from the libretto of *Kopernikus* intersperse the conversation.

After responding to the work's fine balance of abstraction and a profound rootedness in human culture and expression, Daniel described the singers and players on stage as constellations of characters traveling through individual routes, which occasionally

meet and interact, and then keep on their course. When I asked him specifically about how he perceived the sense of time in the work he said he sensed an

imbrication of multidimensional time. There's a simultaneity of time. We are watching these activations of individual moments but there's a sense that time is present; that we're in a present.

*We are the pilgrims of timelessness.
Defectors from dimensions to dimensions.
We are the migrants of the sacred galaxies.*

I said something about the metaphor I was using at the time, that the piece is like a jewel, that there's a 3-D quality to it. That it reminds me of that moment at the end of *Men in Black*, when the picture zooms out from Manhattan to earth to the galaxy and we see that our universe is contained within a gemstone, a plaything of some alien creature, or perhaps God.

Come towards the purifying water. This magical river contains all worlds.

Daniel continued, likening the sense of time in the work to a

fractal holograph: you can take any moment, dilate it and find this fractal expansion of it but its all constant. We experience the linearity in the sense of, we are choosing, we encounter that jewel in a particular moment, we turn it in a particular way, so we encounter a sequence, but what's magical is you could pick it up a different day and encounter it in a different way, and have a

different sequence, and it would still reveal its content. But there's a sense outside the formal initiation of the ritual that all bets are off, it could kind of go every direction.

*The times will be obscured, the stagnation of the temporalities will begin.
Monks abandon themselves to abstract rituals in secret, the secrecy of their opal cloisters.
Mauve songs escape.*

And the deeper meaning is going to come through troubling your habit of linear narrative making, by forcing you to have simultaneous experiences and begin to have associative meaning, rather than linear meaning, and as you go through the whole, you're going to emerge with, one of Shaka's favorite words, an affective imprint, and that is the thing that you walk away with, and the meaning will come in a nonverbal way almost.

*We hear the call, eternity of the white and purple dawns.
We shall respond, our eyes fixed on the strange instrument panels.
We shall respond, cosmonauts from distant, subtle lands where the kings are the wise men.*

With the constant availability of narrative, you get what I call, I often say to my students, we're in a culture that emphasizes horizontal knowledge, so we get a wide spectrum of data, but rarely do we have vertical knowledge, which is about being able to drop all the way in or zoom all the way in, really parsing a particular moment or a particular thing, and finding in it -- in the way we do with quantum physics, where, the smaller you get the more the rules change, how you see what you encounter changes the way it behaves and all that -- what I like about this kind of structuring is that it deliberately reminds you that you are choosing, in a cultural, political, social way, to construct your knowledge, and to construct your experience of life, in an extraordinarily limiting way, but that at any moment you could scratch it and go deep.

We shall only listen to our hearts. The only law will be love, the only guide will be love.

And that's where queerness comes in for me, in that, as queer artists, as black artists, as however we want to identify, we are so often excluded from those linear narratives, or our role in them is insular or highly, highly demarcated, so in our encounter with them we already reject them because they don't match our lives, so we are already, kind of like, you're constantly aware of the rub with the narrative so we inherently begin to do this, to take encounters and open them up, to find out where we are located. We just do it. Going to the store we do it. It becomes a second hand thing. So that's what I like about this. In a way it's almost like an instant of time, dilated, and we see all of it. And it's profoundly beautiful.

Look. Look. May the entire heaven open up to you and reveal its beauty.

Cruising the Métro forever: *Glaubst du an die Unsterblichkeit der Seele*

1980 saw the release of William Friedkin's controversial film *Cruising*. Starring a young, hunky Al Pacino, the film follows Steven Burns, a police detective tasked with infiltrating New York's underground gay leather scene in order to catch a serial killer targeting its members. A German poster advertising the film shows the shadows of men dressed in leather uniform and reads "Wir sind die Männer der Nacht, die Straße ist unser Jagdrevier" ("We are the men of the night, the street is our hunting ground"). Indeed, the film portrays the "hunt", and something of the cruelty of cruising, its capitalistic logic, the commodification of desire in an all-male meat market. Eyes quickly scanning bodies, efficiently evaluating, ranking with expertise and registering stats, race, age, built, predicting sexual preferences, assuming favorite positions, speculating about fetishes, imagining cock size. "Did he show you his knife?", whispers a fellow police detective in Burns's ear as he lies flat on his stomach, naked, his hands tied behind his back with leather straps. Love in the film -- and specifically dark, erotic love -- is equated and blended with death, and specifically murder. Hunting. Sex as stabbing; carnage as intimacy; orgasm as death. S&M's blending of pain and pleasure taken to an extreme. "Ah, those knock-out body fluids: blood, sperm, tears!": a similar equation appears in Jean Genet's *Querelle de Brest* (77), which was also adapted to film in 1982 by Reiner Werner Fassbinder. And in (another) gay filmmaker Pedro Almodóvar's

1986 mystery film *Matador*. And also in Claude Vivier's final work, the highly cinematic 1983 *Glaubst du an die Unsterblichkeit der Seele* (Do you believe in the immortality of the soul).

Commissioned by the Groupe Vocal de France (Gilmore 214), this work typically mixes eroticism with religious symbolism. It is structured like a triptych, and the number three bears much significance in it: the question/statement that forms the piece's title -- "do you believe in the immortality of the soul" -- is reiterated three times in the work; the first section ends with three strikes on the tubular bells, the only use of that instrument in the work, making it a mystical moment of heightened awareness, of "truth"; the harmonic progressions of both the second and third parts are a sequence of nine chords; the last oscillation of these chords in the third section is tripartite, the third and last repetition of which is cut short in the middle, creating the work's ingenious ending.

In addition to the special significance of the number three, the proportions of the Fibonacci sequence are projected onto many parameters throughout the score. These numbers appeared also in the construction of previous works including *Shiraz*, *Zipangu* and *Orion*¹⁰, and they are a reminder of Vivier's serial upbringing and his life-long admiration for and influence by Stockhausen. Found in multiple occurrences in nature,

¹⁰ See Bergson (2010) and Braes (2003)

this set of proportions has fascinated artists and composers for centuries, particularly for its relationship with the golden proportion. In that sense using these numbers conjures a long cultural history and is also an evocation of forces beyond the human, of nature itself. In the 1981 interview with Susan Frykberg Vivier explained that the “Fibonacci series and all these series like that are the basic harmonics of time” and he suggested that following their durations puts music in touch with “laws that are harmonic, natural, yet very refined”. Elsewhere, Vivier wrote that he wants art to be a

sacred act, the revelation of forces, the communication with those forces. The musicians must organize, not musical sessions but sessions of revelation, sessions of incantation of the forces of nature, forces that have existed and exist and will exist, those forces which are the Truth (Reicher 29).

Once again we see the fascination with capital-E Eternity at the base of Vivier’s thinking. In certain conditions and especially when applied to rhythm and time, the Fibonacci proportions create perceivable musical structures that feel organic: unpredictable yet sensible, irregular yet ordered. When projected across multiple musical parameters, as in this work, they can also help create sameness and order throughout the piece, even when that order is not perceivable through listening. The Fibonacci sequence also has a suggestive relationship to fractal structures (Posamentier 307-26), and in that sense hints at infinity, which directly relates to the theme of immortality explored in *Glaubst du*.

The number three is significant also in the choice of involved forces: the score calls for three synthesizers and twelve voices, three of each voice type, in addition to percussion. The choice of instruments and voices does not make very practical the use of combination tones -- Vivier's spectral device -- since he never notated microtones in his vocal writing. While being confined to twelve-tone equal-temperament, some chords used throughout the work still suggest a spectral sensibility, much in the same way Messiaen's music does.

In a letter he wrote to Desjardins at the time, Vivier mentions that "the problem with the piece I'm working on now is that I want to write for large orchestra!" (qtd. in Gilmore 217). He seems to have overcome that problem: one of the work's most striking features is a surprisingly full sound world created with relatively small forces. Traditional choral music is glimpsed but through Vivier's distorting musical devices, which are simple yet highly effective, while the synthesizers are used as a kind of orchestral extension of the voices, adding registers of depth and sparkle where the voices cannot reach. The blending of synthesizers and voices creates a compound sound, its quality both human and nonhuman, warm and cold, dead and alive.

The sonic portrayal of immortality, of the livingdead, is epitomized by the use of a vocoder effect¹¹, adding an eerie, granular quality to the speaking voice repeating the piece's title like an mantra: "Do you believe in the immortality of the soul", grammatically structured as a question but enigmatically appearing with no question mark. The nonhuman, robotic association of this type of sound was popularized at the time through its usage in portraying robot speech such as the Cylon Centurions in the 1978 show *Battlestar Galactica*.

The mantra comprises the first discernible words heard in the work -- words not in the invented language, that is -- giving significant weight to the zombie-voice (as we may recall, Vivier's instructions for the performance of *Greeting Music* were for the performers to look like zombies; here, they sound like zombies). The queerness of this synthetic voice may also be suggested, since "The nonlinear algebra of difference posed by queer and trans bodies is akin to the blurring of divisions between human and machine represented by the cyborg" (Roberts)¹².

Each of the three repetitions of this phrase -- in syncopated rhythmic patterns that balance variance with a sense of similarity while avoiding clearly articulating a

¹¹ This simple effect sends the speaking voice (modulator) through the synthesizer (carrier). The selected synthesizer keys held down by the player operate as bandpass filters highlighting specific parts of the spectrum while following the envelope of the live speaking voice.

¹² See also McGlotten, Shaka, and Steve Jones. *Zombies and Sexuality: Essays On Desire and the Living Dead*. Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2014.

memorable rhythmic motive -- has a rhythmic highpoint: a single longest rhythmic value, always appearing on one of the syllables of the longest word in the phrase, "Unsterblichkeit" (immortality). Shifting the placement of this agogic accent enlivens the expression of the machine-like voice, lending it a measured expressive quality, which further enhances its uncanniness: un-STER-blichkeit; unster-BLICH-keit; UN-sterblichkeit.

Percussion is consistently yet modestly used throughout the work: only two instrument types are used in each section -- in addition to the singular tubular bell cadence at the transition between sections I and II -- and those have definitive, fixed roles within each section. The exotic colors of some instruments help create the work's otherworldliness.

Gilmore tells us that according to his letters to Desjardins, Vivier thought of the work "as having two 'poles', mobility and immobility" (214). Perhaps this alludes to that "stagnation of time": Eternity and immortality on one hand, and linear motion in time -- cruising the métro, a motion towards love -- on the other. The troubling of linear time is represented here, too, by symmetrical structures governing each of the work's three parts: a palindromic time grid for part I and a quasi-palindromic chord progression in part III, and a sweeping arc form for the love aria in part II. These structures with their

midpoint symmetrical axis suggest time can move forward but also backwards; going nowhere, yet arriving.

In the first section (bars 1-30) the illusion of motion is created also through harmony. A single pitch field resonates throughout the entirety of this section, and it is activated in a typical oscillation, creating the illusion of harmonic motion where there is none. Or perhaps there is, but it is so subtle that it would not be considered as such under normative analysis standards.

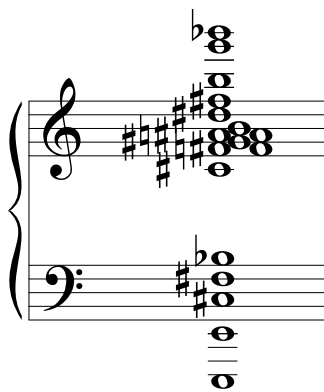
The whole section is laid over a palindromic time grid comprising two alternating sets of values following the Fibonacci sequence proportions (see table 3.2 on next page). Set 1 is devised by the addition of quarter notes following the first values of the Fibonacci sequence in descending order (5, 3, 2, 1) to a whole note duration (4/4), as well as the addition of a short measure in 16th-note values which uses the same Fibonacci integers in ascending order. Set 2 simply uses the Fibonacci values descending from 13 to 2 in quarter note values, and then reverses back to 13.

Table 3.2 - *Glaubst du*, section I (bars 1-30) Palindromic measure grid following Fibonacci sequence integers (bold)

bar no.	set 1			set 2
1-2	4/4	+ 5 /4	+ 1 /16	
3				13 /4
4-5	4/4	+ 3 /4	+ 2 /16	
6				8 /4
7-8	4/4	+ 2 /4	+ 3 /16	
9				5 /4
10-11	4/4	+ 1 /4	+ 5 /16	
12				3 /4
13	4/4	(set 1 mid point)		
14	(set 2 mid point)			2 /4
15-16	4/4	+ 1 /4	+ 5 /16	
17				3 /4
18-19	4/4	+ 2 /4	+ 3 /16	
20				5 /4
21-22	4/4	+ 3 /4	+ 2 /16	
23				8 /4
24-26	4/4	+ 5 /4	+ 1 /16	
27-29				13 /4
30				

The pitch field is a carefully constructed sonority covering a wide range of five and a half octaves. The immediately striking sense of depth and space is further enhanced by the distancing effect of the singers humming with closed mouths.

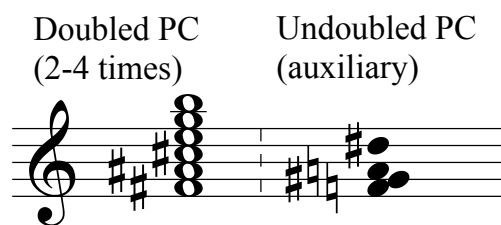
Figure 3.16 - pitch field, first section of *Glaubst du*



The pitch field covers 10 pitch classes (C-natural and D initially missing). Doublings give prominence to the pitches of an F-sharp major triad over the bass note E. To this structure of an inverted dominant-seventh chord, a minor 9th (G-natural) and 11th (B-natural) are added, if F-sharp is thought of as a root. Interestingly, in the next section of the piece, when the bass note will move to a different pitch for the first time (bar 35), it will indeed move a half step down to a D-sharp, an allusion to a dissonant resolution in a traditional tonal context. While the implicit tonality of this structure is arguably irrelevant, at least for some listeners, the central role of the pitch F-sharp is nonetheless undeniable: it is the only pitch doubled four times, followed by three A-sharps (spelled

B-flat), whereas all the other doubled pitches are doubled twice (C-sharp, E, B, G), and each of the remaining four pitches appears only once (F, G-sharp, A and D-sharp). These latter auxiliary pitches blur and color this otherwise relatively consonant, thirds-based sonority. This is an extension of the same technique of adding dissonant notes to triadic harmony used in pieces such as *Shiraz*, *Paramirabo*, and which we have seen also in *Journal* and *Kopernikus*.

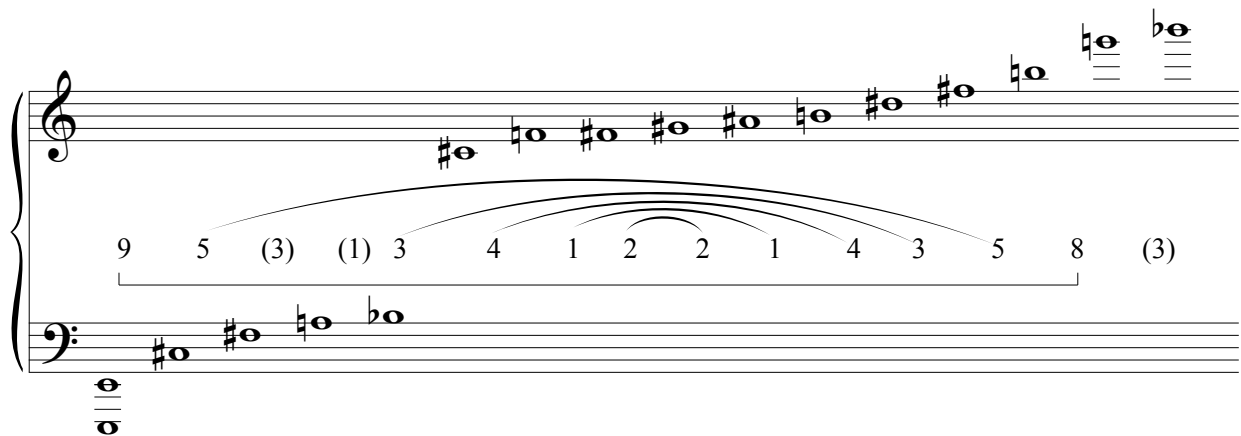
Figure 3.17 - pitch field presented as triadic chord and auxiliary pitches



The distribution of pitch in space, too, creates an imperfect symmetrical structure. Its axis -- calculated from the bass E2 -- is (an unperformed) middle G. Similar symmetrical pitch constructions appear in *Orion*, *Zipangu* and *Lonely Child* (Braes 35). Here, the same system of proportions is projected onto the distribution of material over time as well as its pitch structure. Measured by half step increments, the size of the intervals fanning out from the center of the pitch field give prominence to the Fibonacci numbers: 1, 2, 3, 5, 8. Time and space fold onto one another, mirroring one another, while also mirroring

themselves due to the symmetric structuring. Again, we see Stockhausen's enduring presence.

Figure 3.18 - Pitch field symmetry and Fibonacci numbers (expressing intervals in half steps)



We may also note Vivier's interest in applying symbolic and abstract ideas in an imperfect way: like his combination tone choices, which sometimes deviate from their algorithm¹³, here the imperfect use of Fibonacci proportions to generate intervals -- using also major thirds, which constitute four half steps -- as well as the imperfect symmetry of the structure as a whole. Of course any of these deviations may have been musical tweaks, an intervention of the composer's ears, but it perhaps reflects also his fascination with the idea of striving towards 'purity': these imperfections can be read as

¹³ See Christian, 2014.

emphasizing the *search* for purity, a yearning, a process of purification rather than 'purity' as a stable category which can either be reached, or not¹⁴.

While throughout this section the pitch field does not become part of a harmonic sequence, that is, moving to a different chord, it is at the same time not completely static either: it glimmers with a dynamic envelope swelling from *ppp* to *p* and back; and it alternates and then also merges with the bass note E. After the midpoint of this section it also receives minor variants through inversions in the upper vocal parts. The texture is further enlivened by a variation which is one of Vivier's favorite go-to compositional devices, and which we observed in *Kopernikus*: the gradual addition of tremolos in the upper vocal parts, hand on the mouth, while simultaneously changing the vowels freely. This effect is all the more striking since the rest of the ensemble keeps humming with closed mouths. A similar textural process with even greater independence of individual voices and covering the entire vocal range will occur in section III.

The bass note of the pitch field, a low E sung by bass singer 3 and doubled an octave lower in the 3rd synthesizer, is at once part of the pitch field and musically distinct from it. Like the other voices in the pitch field, the bass note includes a dynamic envelope swelling from *ppp* to *p* and back. In the electronic counterpart that envelope is also

¹⁴ The original title of his 'opus 1' piece, *Chants*, was *Reinigung*, German for 'purification' (Gilmore 78).

matched with an added filter effect. Its quasi-distinct status lies in its oscillation with the rest of the field's pitches, following at first the time grid described above: set 2 for the low E's and set 1 for the rest (table 3.2). Since the two most prominent notes in the pitch field are F-sharp and the bass note, E, the oscillation of sets 1 and 2 can be reduced to an oscillation between these two notes. Significantly, an oscillation between these pitch-classes opens the soprano solo's part in section III. Here, as the oscillation continues, the pitch field and bass note gradually come to overlap until the initially clear distinction between them is blurred.

If these oscillating chords represent time and space merging onto a continuum, it is at the fore of this cosmic background that the human drama of the section occurs, embodied by tenor 1. A loud attack on a high Thai gong on the opening downbeat clearly punctuates the silence preceding the piece, as is common in many of Vivier's works including *Lettura di Dante*, *Learning*, *Journal*, *Lonely Child*, *Cinq Chansons pour Percussion*, *Et je reverrai cette ville étrange* and *Trois airs pour un opéra imaginaire*.

In this case, however, the attack is more than a ritualistic framing of the beginning of a piece, because it is soon imitated by the tenor soloist, hands around the mouth, percussively calling: "ka" (bar 2). What follows immediately is a thirteen-quarter long bar of only the abyssal bass note, sustained. It is as though the tenor is waiting for an

answer, but is met at first with cold silence. This Berlioz-like musical depiction of loneliness -- reminiscent of the shepherd's unanswered calls at the end of the third movement of the *Symphonie fantastique* -- matches the circumstances of Vivier's life in Paris at the time. He wrote to Desjardins that he missed Montréal's "human warmth, which seems impossible for me to find in Paris" (Gilmore 213). Beyond these specificities of biographical circumstance, it is common for Vivier's protagonists to represent outsiders, the misunderstood (Marco Polo), the abject (*Wo bist du Licht!*), the condemned (Tchaikovsky). His small choral piece *A Little Joke* captures this in essence: its text mixes invented language with the words, "just a little joke" repeated, until, on the very last page a solo tenor interferences, "this is a sad joke..." and ends the piece, resigned, "I'll never know the joke".

The very first sonority of the piece, then -- the attack on the Thai gong -- is like a seed planted, to soon become this section's foreground material: short recitative-like calls by tenor 1, preceded or echoed by the Thai gongs. The Fibonacci sequence is used in an incomplete symmetrical structure here, too, determining the number of syllables in each call and response pair: starting with one, growing to eight and then retrograding back, incompletely, to two (table 3.3):

Table 3.3 - Symmetrical structure and Fibonacci sequence in tenor calls

bar	Text	Number of syllables
1-2	ka	1
4	ka rotch	2
7	ka rotch kié	3
10	Soimé fa yé ko	5
13	na ko yesh mé fa yeu so ma	8
15	tiet ké no ro si	5
18	Na yo chié	3
21	Koy dja	2

The tenor calls in the invented language and its percussive counterparts also help articulate the oscillation of the time grid in the background: they appear exclusively on bars of set 1 of the grid. The first time the tenor interjects literal French with his plea, *Écoutez, écoutez moi!* (Listen, listen to me!) at bar 20, is also the first time he is heard against the background of a set 2 bar, still only answered by the robotic repetition of the mantra.

In addition to the oscillation of the pitch field in the background, the tenor-gong exchanges in the foreground, and the robotic repetition of the mantra in the middle ground, one further musical layer is added to the mix at bar 17. It is a galloping, childlike material scored for soprano and alto duet joined by synthesizer no.1. It

appears strictly within set 2 of the time grid. The childlike characterization is in part the effect of a repetitive text: ever alternating combinations of the syllables “da” and “dit”. This limited selection is significant in that, immediately after it is introduced, the tenor abandons the invented language calls and moves to discernible French (bar 20), as though a different musical character took over the nonsensical expressive means. In addition to providing a significant contrast by adding some lightness and childlike wonder to the otherwise threatening (if sensual) sound-world of the introduction, this layer also introduces C-natural, a pitch class that has been absent from the pitch field thus far.

The most dense texture in the introduction is reached at bar 23 when all four materials are simultaneously heard, and the tenor’s confession “You know I’ve always wanted to die for love but - ” is answered by a finally intrigued alto 3, asking, “but what?” .

At bar 24, the process of accumulating tremolos reaches its peak as it appears in all six female voices. At the same time a thinning of the texture begins by dropping out the bass register completely. This opens up the space for the tenor’s reflection, showing awareness of the musical environment engulfing him: “This music is so strange, it does not move”. Significantly, this statement comes at bars 24-26, when the set 1 palindrome completes its reversal, returning to the rhythmic values of bars 1-2. As if the protagonist could somehow sense the nonlinear structure underlying the oscillation of the pitch

field. It is followed by a hissing from a fellow tenor “chut!”, which cuts off the remaining sustained notes in the upper vocal parts, but not the rest of our protagonists’ dialogue, sung-spoken to the backdrop of the last and longest iteration of the galloping material:

A3: speak

T1: I never knew

A3: knew what

T1: how to love

With that last realization of the tenor, a cadential figure played on tubular bells appears and closes the section off. Like the cadential figures observed in *Kopernikus*, here too a dyad in which one of the voices descends by a half step is used¹⁵. The cadential figure overlaps and takes over the galloping material, starting with the very same pitches (a major third interval), and marks this moment as a moment of segue by moving the two voices in contrary motion for the first time, into a minor sixth, and by completing the chromatic aggregate with the introduction of a natural D.

¹⁵ See also Braes, 47.

Figure 3.19 - *Glaubst du*, bars 28-30

28 (800)

Synth. 1

Perc. *cloches* *mf* *p* *p* *l.v.*

S 3 dit da da dit da da dit da da

A 1 dit da da dit da da dit da da

A 3 *mp* su quoi chan-te moi u-ne chan-son d'a-mour

T 1 *mp* Je n'ai ja-mais su *mf* su ai-mer oui

Glaubst du an die Unsterblichkeit der Seele © 1983 by Boosey & Hawkes, Inc.

This is also another instance of percussion instruments used to articulate the large-scale contour of a work. Tubular bells specifically are used for that purpose in *Kopernikus*, *Orion* and to a certain extent *Lonely Child*. The significance of this moment is further enhanced by the fact that it is the only instance in the piece where the tubular bells are used, and the Christian, religious association of this sound lends the exchange with the alto an aura of a confession.

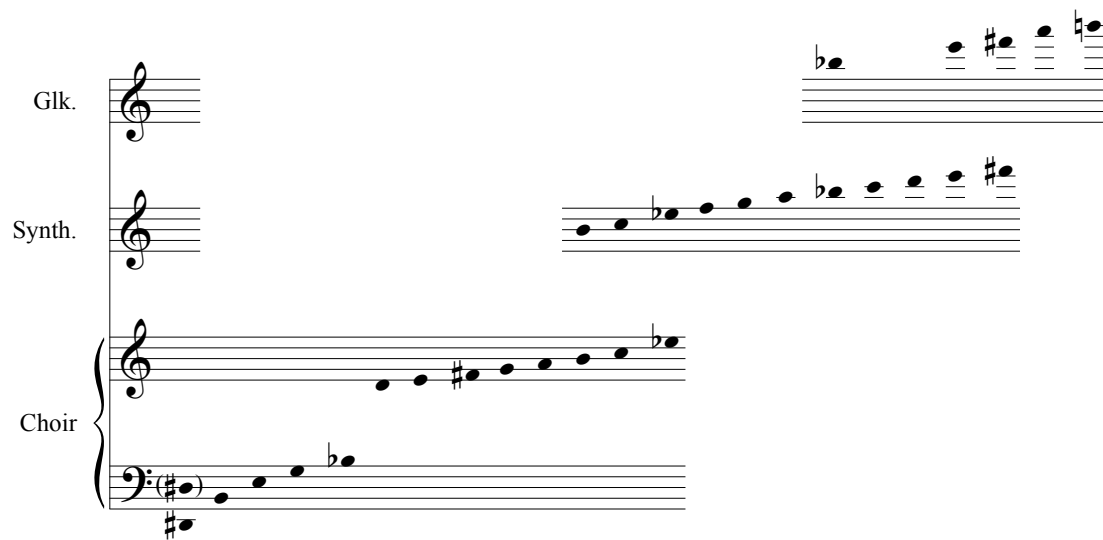
She asks him to “sing me a long song”, and he accepts. The loneliness of the tenor protagonist is redeemed, at least momentarily. His love song constitutes the work’s next section.

Like the opening section, section 2 (bars 31-71) is also symmetrical. But if symmetry in section 1 -- through its palindromic time grid -- suggests an interruption to linear time progression, section 2 is exceptionally directional. Written in one sweeping arc moving between nine chords, it builds up towards a clear climactic moment on the fifth chord, the midpoint of the harmonic progression (bars 49-53), and then gradually recedes. This motion towards the climax is supported by a clear dynamic profile -- a clear crescendo which, as we may recall, Vivier identified as a rare occasion in his music -- as well as the gradual extension of vocal and instrumental ranges.

The first of the nine chords is based on the same pitch field as section I, now activated in a new texture that will continue with slight changes throughout this section: a bass note sustained, while the remaining voices and synthesizers ripple through the chord’s (mostly) adjacent pitches. Adjacent vocal parts overlap most of the same pitches with the addition and subtraction of usually one note, following register and placement within the score. This logic is continued between humans and machines: the synthesizers partially overlap the choir pitches, and then extend the range upwards. The glockenspiel in turn generally shares some pitches with the synthesizers and then

extends the range even further. Here, for example, is the pitch distribution of the chord 2 (figure 3.20):

Figure 3.20 - *Glaubst du*, pitch distribution of second chord (bars 34-38)



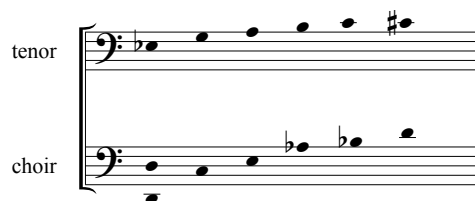
As you can see in the example above, the chords here resemble Vivier's "twisted" spectral chords in that the larger intervals are generally staggered in the lower register and as the pitches climb the intervals generally get smaller, though granted, no smaller than a semitone.

Vivier's strategy of overlapping the ranges of the choir, synthesizers and glockenspiel, while allowing each performer their rhythmic independence, creates an incredibly rich sonic result, a whole truly greater than the sum of its parts, aided further by the

constant change of vowels in the vocal parts. Gradually added accents and consonants, along with the dynamic profile following the voices' individual paths up and down the chords, insure that individual details keep popping out of the rich, purée-like texture, a multitude of individual chants resounding simultaneously.

The tenor's melody is differentiated from this texture rhythmically -- through sustained notes that otherwise only appear in the bass -- and through pitch distribution, thus helping the solo stand out in the saturated sonic environment. For example, the lower parts of the chord 3 (bars 39-42) -- those within the range of the tenor's melody in these bars -- lay out a subset of the whole-tone scale, while the tenor's melody uses the pitch content of the complementary whole-tone scale almost exclusively (figure 3.21):

Figure 3.21 - *Glaubst du*, complementary pitch classes based on whole-tone scales, third chord (bars 39-40)



A stark exception to this rule is the climactic chord 5 (bars 49-53). Marking its

significance in the sequence of nine chords and enhancing a sense of arrival is the fact that here, the tenor's melody falls squarely within the chord (both in pitch content and range). This chord is also the one modeled most closely after a harmonic spectrum (on B-flat, a tritone apart from the initial bass note E, which opens and ends the entire work).

The tenor's line is further assisted through doubling by synthesizer II as well as the glockenspiel. A similar glockenspiel doubling appeared in the soprano's aria at the end of Act I of *Kopernikus*. Here, too, the doubling is homorythmic -- marking each new note of the melody -- but while in *Kopernikus* pitch was also doubled, here it deviates, following only the tenor's contour. Similarly to the spectral halos hovering above Vivier's holy virgin divas in works such as *Lonely Child*, the effect here is a series of straying, sparkling overtones, or a guiding star following the tenor's song.

The aria begins with an ascending minor third motive. As noted before, this interval is of special significance in Vivier's music in general. Here, it will appear also at two other important moments in the tenor's aria (including the climax), and it will end the piece in the soprano's solo. Queer, expressive, theatrical ornamentation is added to the tenor's melodic line with tremolos such as hands on mouth and finger between lips. Most of the love aria is in the invented language, but essential literal language bits do pop out:

“You, my love, my love”, on an oscillating minor third (bars 39-41); “Liebe für Ewig”, German for “love forever”, leading to the climax, which is a repetition of the word “Liebe”, again on an oscillating minor third (bars 49-53). Desjardins remembers Vivier saying that in opera one only discerns a word here and there anyway and nothing more (interview with author). In that way, it seems as if the usage of the invented language in this context can also be a parodying of this feature of the operatic experience.

After all, this is a performance within the performance: the alto asks the tenor to perform “love” for her, to sing her a love song. And as noted above, this section is exceptional in its clear buildup towards a climax and the decay following it. The reason for that seems to be exactly that self-awareness. Similar exceptionally directional moments appear in the arias that spiral upward at the end of *Prologue* and *Trois airs*. There, the self-awareness is not as explicit as here, but they are still referential in that they nod towards the genre of the mad aria (Vivier referred to the first as the “voice of God becoming almost the voice of madness” [qtd. in Gilmore 181]).

In the love song the clear arc form is referential. Moreover, that referentiality is the key to the section’s campiness, as we have seen also in *Journal*. The play within a play invites the exaggerated, over-the-top expression of the love aria, leading to a pathos-filled climax, repeating in a very high register the word “Love”, and if that were not

enough, a chinese cymbal also strikes *fff* with each of those repetitions, as if to make clear to the listeners “this is what a climax sounds like!”. Vivier fully exploits the inherent paradox of the operatic voice: its miraculousness and simultaneous ridiculousness. Needless to say, he is also simultaneously completely sincere about it.

In a work questioning immortality whose centerpiece is a song about singing, the Orphic myth also comes to mind. In the myth, the voice has the power to resurrect the dead, but that resurrection is temporary: Orpheus is forbidden to look back, and that visual interference ends up undoing the miracle of resurrection, as pointed out to me by Michal Grover-Friedlander. This tension of sound and vision leading to death will be foregrounded in the third, cinematic section of *Glaubst du*.

Further, the nine chords the love song moves through are built on a bass that suggests death as well as Eternity. While not strictly being a passacaglia or lamento bass, the descending bass line nonetheless suggests an eternal downward inertia -- bringing to mind such works as Bach’s *Crucifixus* from the B-minor Mass, and with it another mythic resurrection, perhaps -- and in any case it also subtly binds love and death together yet again (figure 3.22):

Figure 3.22 - *Glaubst du*, section II, bass reduction

Section II ————— Section III →

bar no. (31-33) (34-38) (39-42) (43-48) (49-53) (54-58) (59-63) (64-67) (68-71) (72)

The image shows a bass reduction of section II of the piece 'Glaubst du'. It consists of a single staff with a bass clef. The notes are: G2 (bar 31), A#2 (bar 34), Bb2 (bar 39), C2 (bar 43), D2 (bar 49), E2 (bar 54), F#2 (bar 59), G2 (bar 64), A2 (bar 68), and B2 (bar 72). The notes are placed on the staff lines and are mostly below the staff, indicating a low register. The notes are connected by a horizontal line above the staff, indicating a continuous melodic line.

After the climax is reached (bars 49-53), a dissolving process begins, continuing all the way to the end of the section (bar 71). The dynamics decrease gradually from *fff* to *ppp* (the singers singing with closed mouths again at the end); instruments drop out, starting with the highest registers of the synthesizers and cutting across the score diagonally until all female voices drop out; and the soupy, polyphonic texture gradually simmers down to a homophonic texture in the choir, starting with a new melodic figuration in a trio of men's voices (bar 59), and culminating the process of introducing consonants, singing now as they do in the invented language, as if infected by the tenor's passion.

The ninth and last chord of the section is pivotal, preparing the next section in several ways: its pitch content is based on a whole-tone scale, which will be an important sonority in what's to come; the B in the bass clearly suggests a dominant relationship to the E chord opening the next section; and the tenor's vastly lyrical last phrase (bars 68-71) -- still rhythmically distinct from the other voices and partially separated in its

pitch content -- ends up on a B-flat, the same note at the peak of the ascending minor third at the beginning of the aria, thus closing full circle, while also preparing as a common tone the the top note of the chord which follows at the opening of section III.

Section III begins at bar 72. In the de Leeuw recording of *Glaubst du* (Rêves d'un Marco Polo), this bar arrives at five minutes and eight seconds out of a total duration of seven minutes and fifty-four seconds, the ratio of which is 1.54 (474/308 seconds): not quite a golden ratio (1.618), but close enough to be noted and corresponding closely to the ratio of the lower Fibonacci integers 3/2 (the higher you go in the series the closer the ratio between adjacent integers comes to a golden ratio).

The new section has two storytellers, both narrating in first person. The first is a speaking voice performed by synthesizer player II, whose voice is processed again through a vocoder, albeit more moderately here (the score indicates that the text must be clearly understood). It is not indicated in the score that the speaker must be male, but the narrator identifies himself as "Claude" later, and in every commercially existing recording of the work this part was cast for a male performer. The narration is pictorial, detailed, evocative, pregnant with expectation, suspenseful, stylistically reminiscent of a crime novel or a film noir:

It was a Monday or a Tuesday I can't remember exactly. But all this is not important. What is important, what is important was what would happen that day. It was a grey day, as I recall, so I decided to take the underground. I even had to buy tickets, as I didn't have any left. I was making my way along the platform, lighting a cigarette to fend off boredom. The train's metallic rumbling announced its arrival. The long blue vehicle came to a halt. So I went towards one of the doors, lifted the latch, and rushed into the first carriage. The place was almost empty, except for an old lady reading her newspaper and smiling. She looked like a priest with his breviary. She seemed kind, and was sitting sideways so as not to bother anyone.

The second storyteller is the ensemble's first soprano singing a solo. Her text is more introvert and circular, perhaps reflecting an inner world accompanying the external narration. Subjective identity is split here into two archetypes, male and female: a pan-gendered identity speaking in a first-person counterpoint. Vivier shared the soprano's text with Desjardins in a letter from January 7th (qtd. in Gilmore 214):

I was cold, it was winter
in fact I thought I was cold -
perhaps I was cold.
God, however, told me I would be cold.
Perhaps I was dead.
It was not so much being dead
I was frightened of as dying.
Suddenly I felt cold
very cold -- or I was already cold.
it was night and I was afraid.

The soprano's melodic line, moving mostly in steps like a chant, gradually increases the vocal range from the opening's oscillating major second to a diminished octave. Its

complex rhythmic notation gives in actual performance a sense of flexibility and spontaneity, not rigidity. The other sopranos are silent in this section, leaving the high register free for the soloist alone. The pitch content of the melody is mostly distinct from the chords accompanying it. In the following example, a reduction of the soprano's solo, pitches that are distinct from the accompanying chords' pitch content are marked with a star, and pitches which are shared are marked with a circle (figure 3.23):

Figure 3.23 - *Glaubst du*, section III, soprano reduction

The musical score consists of three systems of staves. Above the notes, asterisks (*) indicate pitches distinct from the accompanying chords, and circles (o) indicate shared pitches. The score is divided into three systems: bars 73-75, 76-81, and 83-88, 90-96.

System 1 (bars 73-75):
 Bar 73: * * *
 Bar 74: * * *
 Bar 75: * * *
 System 2 (bars 76-81):
 Bar 76: * * * o * *
 Bar 77: * * * o * *
 Bar 78: * * * o * *
 Bar 79: * * * o * *
 Bar 80: * * * o * *
 Bar 81: * * * o * *
 System 3 (bars 83-88, 90-96):
 Bar 83: o *
 Bar 84: o *
 Bar 85: * o * * *
 Bar 86: * o * * *
 Bar 87: * o * * *
 Bar 88: * o * * *
 Bar 89: * o * * *
 Bar 90: o o * * *
 Bar 91: * * * o * *
 Bar 92: * * * o * *
 Bar 93: * * * o * *
 Bar 94: * * * o * *
 Bar 95: * * * o * *
 Bar 96: * * * o * *

There are significant meeting points of the soprano and chords' pitch classes at bars 84 and 93/95, which I will discuss below. As in section I, here too an oscillation between

adjacent bars is important: the soprano only sings every other bar at first, and as she sings more continuously her phrases are still interspersed with bars of pause. The soprano's most continuous singing begins at bar 92, with the tripartite, incomplete repetition of the phrase "it was night and I was afraid", which ends the piece.

The harmonic progression here is also made of nine distinct chords, but the motion through them is not linear as in section II, but oscillating in zigzags: 1 2 3 2 3 4 3 4 5 4, and so on (see table 3.4). The harmony is less saturated than in the previous section, as most chords are based on six or seven pitch classes only, allowing for a lush, sonorous disposition -- reminiscent of Messiaen's resonance chords, as pointed out by Gilmore, and not without a hint of jazz -- to display a wide spectrum of changing colors.

The chords are performed by the nine voices doubled by synthesizers. The latter add a filter effect onto each of these chords, while the voices imitate that effect by phonating "ta-o" on each, changing the vowel and consequently the formants (*Stimmung's* strong impression never went away, and the same vocal filter indeed opens the third section of *Journal*). The resulting compound mixture is a living-dead sound. The dynamic envelope of each chord is an attack followed by a diminuendo. The attacks and decay are emphasized by the sluggish accompaniment of a bass drum with loose skin and tam-tam on each new chord. A rhythm section for this funébre procession.

Figure 3.24 - *Glaubst du*, section III, chords

The image shows a musical score for 'Glaubst du' section III, chords. It is divided into two systems, each with five measures. The first system contains measures 1-4, and the second system contains measures 5-9. The notation is for voices and synth, showing complex chordal textures with many notes in both staves. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The first system has four measures, and the second system has five measures. The notes are dense and complex, with many accidentals and ties.

The overall dynamic contour of this section is similar to that of section II: increasing and diminishing like a wave, but without the caricaturistic climax. The texture in the choir supports that contour. Individual, irregular tremolos are inserted diagonally, starting at bar 76 with alto 1, and quickly infect the entire ensemble (bar 80). Different tremolos types then continue to be introduced, including notably a rolled “r” sound with changing vowels. The individual crescendo and diminuendo on each of these tiny gestures creates a typically granular and bubbly texture that is constantly evolving expressively in the background of the main storytelling. The activity is finally reduced again towards the end, when more and more vocalists join the soprano on the word “peur” (“afraid”).

But in spite of the clear dynamic contour of this section, time here is not wholly linear, as one might expect. For one thing, the harmony suggests stuckness in its inability to rid itself of the insistent E in the bass (a kind of “fate” pitch, perhaps). Also, a strong harmonic motion between chords 1 and 2, sharing only one pitch class -- and being the most memorable oscillating pair of chords, opening and closing the whole section -- is in fact a motion into the transposition of the same chord a minor third apart. So the illusion of linear movement forward is perhaps only movement up and down, and back.

And as in the previous two sections, here too there is a symmetrical structure in the background. There are 25 bars in this section altogether, making bar 84 its middle, marked also by the dynamic peak reached at that bar.

Table 3.4 - *Glaubst du*, section III, quasi-symmetrical chord structure and mid point

bar	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96
	1	2	3	2	3	4	3	4	5	4	5	4	6	7	8	1	7	1	7	9	1	2	1	2	1

On the thirteenth bar of the section, bar 84, chord 6 appears singularly. In fact not quite a chord, but a dyad consisting of pitch classes F and D-flat. The soprano sings the word

"mourir", dying; while the narrator -- observing his surroundings on the train -- says "Sitting there, I felt that something would happen to me that day, something of vital importance for my *life*" (my emphasis). So here in the middle of the chord progression, in the middle of the section, life and death fleetingly meet, on the background of a dyad, that foundational structure that keeps emerging throughout Vivier's oeuvre, and which is related to his early formational musical experience described in Chapter 2. Perhaps this is a subtle musical depiction of the breaking of linear time that people who have had near-death experiences report on: seeing their whole lives pass in front of them, experiencing a totality of time.

The narration immediately continues:

Then my eyes fell on a young man whose strange magnetism moved me deeply. I could not help staring at him. I could not take my eyes off him. It felt as if he'd been sitting across from me since the beginning of time.

Eternity is glimpsed yet again, and right after that it is as though time indeed slows down. Because the quasi-palindromic chord progression is now back to the oscillation of chords 1 and 2 (bars 92-96). With those dreamy, sensual chords oscillating in the background, creating a dent in time, a little pocket of timelessness, the story moves forward:

Then he turned to me and said, "Quite boring, this maestro, huh?" I didn't know what to reply, so I said, feeling embarrassed, "Yes, quite. " So he came to sit beside me and said, "My name is Harry." I told him that my name was Claude. And without further ado, he pulled a knife out of his black, Parisian jacket, and stabbed me right through the heart.

Penetration as a consummation. Ingeniously, the piece ends right there. Reinbert de

Leeuw describes this moment:

And all is silent. It's incredible, really. Because you'd expect the word *peur* again, but it's not there. But the story is complete. He stops in the middle of the phrase. And that's how we perform it. Susan [Narucki] sings: *Il faisait nuit, et j'avais peur*. Singers keep getting added who sing the word *peur* along. Near the end, nearly all of them sing *peur*. At the performance, we hear: *Et j'avais...* And everybody thinks the word. But it is not sung. And you notice that you get the timing. You're in the middle of the sentence, but it stops. The very idea of it is shocking in itself. But in the light of what is written, and considering his death... I've seldom experienced it on stage. Even as you play a very emotional piece, you remain on the outside, as you need to perform. You're far too busy to get caught up, you simply can't. But the first time we performed this... For a moment, I did get overwhelmed by emotion, I could feel myself shaking. The shock of it suddenly ending. It isn't simply an end, it is cut off (*Rêves D'un Marco Polo*).

This was exactly the ending Vivier carefully planned. The piece is not unfinished. The

shock has several manufactured layers. On the small scale, Vivier plays with the audience's expectations to maximize the effect. This expectation was so masterfully crafted, in such a subtle way, that only after it is denied does one notice it existed.

Because the oscillation of the two chords is repeated twice, just enough to create an unequivocal expectation to hear the second chord again in the third repetition, which is

cut short. This corresponds also to the soprano's melodic repetition of the ascending minor third motive, leading to the G-sharp, the common tone of the oscillating chords 1 and 2, and which therefore feels very much like a resolution coming off of the crunchy juxtaposition of the F-natural and G with chord 1.

On a larger scale, there is also defiance of an expectation inherent to the genre, of the performance of death. If life's trajectory as depicted in *Journal was Childhood, Love, Death and After Death*, *Glaubst du* can be seen as having only three parts: the first is at least suggestively childish with the galloping duet and invented language calls, the love aria, and then death. But strikingly, there is no after death. As part of the genre's conventions opera singers usually sing for extended moments as they die, while the audience relishes their transcendent singing, saved especially to portray these moment of transcendence.

Shakespeare parodies this theatricality -- becoming even more comical with Britten's musical treatment of this text, when it is *sung* -- in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. During the play within the play, when Pyramus dies, he makes it painfully (and hilariously) clear:

thus die I, thus, thus, thus.
Now am I dead,
now am I fled;

my soul is in the sky:
tongue, lose thy light;
Moon take thy flight:
Now die, die, die, die, die (151).

Vivier is robbing his audience of anything this parody pokes fun at. As if saying, no.

Unlike comedy, or torture, not like love, not a high note, not an orgasm, not lyrical, not ugly, not beautiful, not sublime, not even sad. Death is death. Just death. The material totality that made up a human body released of its energy, its life force, and the beginning of a decomposition process. This is Vivier's final plea to let go of expectation and the desire to control implicit in it.

In the quote of Desjardins cited in Chapter 2, she asserts how she sensed Vivier's death:

"People think it was the 12th, but I know it was the 8th the night between the 7th and the 8th of March. I know. I sensed it. I felt ill" (*Rêves D'un Marco Polo*). It is especially uncanny that the text of the narrator in *Glaubst du* begins with the statement "It was a Monday or a Tuesday I can't remember exactly". Because the night between March 7th and 8th, 1983 was the night between a Monday and a Tuesday. If we are to attempt to map Vivier's biography directly onto the score, then rather than having psychic powers to foresee the future, Vivier was more likely responding in his work to the past: his being stabbed with scissors on January 25th, in the early days of conceiving this work. But in any case, his death now being an inseparable facet of his works' reception,

Glaubst du an die Unsterblichkeit der Seele now forms a larger palindrome, with real attacks on either side, and their artistic representation as the centerpiece. It is difficult to imagine a more total artistic statement.

I will let Daniel Alexander Jone's wise words conclude once again:

The question/invitation, do we know, that hologram, the whole shape of our life? There are many traditions that believe you do, and you go through the river of forgetfulness in order to be able to live the experience and not be constantly aware of it, but its a little slippery, you have flashes, or déjà vus, or whatever, these imbrications, and I also think about the urgency of an artist like that to get it all out, like if you know something, what makes it so that somebody can produce at that level for that long, in such clarity, was there a presaging on his part, that he knew he had to get it done? Put it in the world? Which brings also questions about what an artist is, is an artist a prophetic, oracular figure, or is an artist a tradesperson, who learns a craft and builds a thing "like that".

CONCLUSION

“How will the generations to come imagine my face?”, asks Marco Polo, the “misunderstood researcher” and protagonist in Vivier’s *Prologue pour un Marco Polo*.

In this dissertation I have attempted to imagine and sketch Vivier’s face, his portrait, through a queer lens. Patiently weaving a broad constellation of aspects of Vivier’s life and work that were affected directly and indirectly by his sexuality and sense of difference, I sought to demonstrate how these -- sexuality, difference, work, life -- are inextricably linked in his case.

The striking originality of Vivier’s music is based on his ability to take familiar musical topoi such as church music, Oriental music, opera, serial and spectral techniques, and reflect them back to the listeners through a distorting mirror, a process which I have described as “queering them up”. Newness and originality are after all relative, cultural and contextual. His was an ability to take the familiar and present it in new light. This fine balance between familiarity and strangeness that is so striking makes his music accessible and unabashedly beautiful, and at the same time also intriguing, layered and challenging.

In a walk with my dog at the Ithaca cemetery one morning I was thinking of how Vivier's statement is ultimately a statement of humility: his music tries to remind its audience who we are in the large scheme of things. And that the answer to that question, in the large scheme of things, is, well, we don't know. Deeply rooted in a mixture of spiritual traditions, Catholic and otherwise, his music seeks to affect the sensibility of its listeners with the reminder that conquest and domination are distortions; that no matter how much domination over knowledge we think we may achieve, it is only a fraction of what there is to know; that humans, too, are merely part of nature's "immense effort of matter to raise itself to thought and intelligence" (Vivier *Kopernikus*). Vivier's music invites us to be at peace with this recognition. Ancient and distant cities and lands, other worlds, starry constellations, the cosmos itself, so present in his work, are in Vivier's hopeful queer imagination not places for further conquest, but a reminder to the infinite scale of things.

On a more human, societal scale, Vivier's music is also a reminder that we were all cast to play roles that were in some ways already fixed prior to our individual coming into existence. Like the characters on stage of his opera *Kopernikus*, we too are trying to play our roles, but with no certain knowing if we were cast wisely, and without really knowing how well we perform. And that is exactly what queer theory teaches us, specifically by the taking apart of gender and sexuality as a departure point, and then

extending these lessons to other realms as well. Vivier understood this well. This is the sensibility he talked about, and the need of questioning it, in order to “transpose the discourse to a higher level”. This is why Vivier talked about the questioning of sensibility as a process that is relevant for both “faggots” and “heterosexuals”, and this is why queer theory is as relevant for straight people as it is for gay people and for anyone else out there. Ingeniously, Vivier also sought to embed these ideas in his music, and to invite his listeners into a spiritual, ritualistic, transformational engagement.

Deeply influenced by his own queerness, Vivier’s politics were very open. He was politically savvy, yet not fanatical in any way, Desjardins told me. His politics are anti-macho also in that they do not prescribe solutions or an easy fix to the human condition. He opposed quick fixes and easy answers, ascribing those to a “manly” way of doing business, producing partial knowledge and much misery. If his aspiration to compose music that will end war amongst men -- as Desjardins told me he wrote to her in a letter -- seem megalomaniac, we should not understand it literally. Surely, Vivier knew he was not capable of such a thing. It is an intention, not an actual goal. Yet he needed to set that intention, this unattainably high goal, and he needed to recruit within himself huge amounts of faith -- in himself, in the power of music, and in humanity -- to be able to keep moving towards it, on the path of his own journey, without expecting to ever

arrive. Marco Polo, Vivier's misunderstood researcher, who had something important to say but not a crowd of followers, could not reach Zipangu. Only travel towards it.

To conclude my story about Claude Vivier I would like to quote the instructions for his 1977 piece *Love Songs*. This manual for the performance of an aleatoric score could just as naturally be read as Vivier's instructions for the performance of life:

To be staged or not

To be felt not understood

Let tones from the others inspire your own

Let the music flow out of you as if you were a kid

Notation is only a reminder for certain states

never follow the signs but only their spirit

In this score you do what is appropriate for you

to do and let the rest to the others

Always be in love

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Unpublished sketches of Vivier's work used in my research and published in this dissertation are used by permission of the Fondation Vivier.

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