

DÓNAL RAFFERTY

Choral Études

for mixed choir

RHYTHM | COINCIDENCE

SSSS AAAA TTTT BBBB choir

Duration: c. 3'10"

Composed 2009

www.donalrafferty.net

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Choral Études

FOREWORD

The *Choral Études* were conceived during an important creative turning point in my compositional career. Although I had come into contact with his work before, I became acquainted with the writings of Theodor Adorno (1903-1969) in earnest during my masters studies. His philosophical writings around the subject of the artist's role in society are something which greatly stimulated my thinking, particularly his belief in the importance of motivating a critical interpretation of one's music – and by extension, the world – in the listener. Contemporary art music has struggled to find relevance to society in the modern world partially because this is not always considered by the composer. Previously, I had come to the conclusion that to be a 'respectable' artist, it was enough to create something from one's imagination that did not exist before. This rationale quickly revealed itself to be quite hollow to me and I knew that in order for my continued motivation as an artist to prevail, I required something more to drive me. My work needed relevance, something which (at least for me) would connect it to the world I live in.

The sad truth of contemporary composition is that it is an elitist art form. It does not aim to be so but is nonetheless due to its very nature. Art which seeks to be the most truthful to its time and context is dependent on the interpretation of those relatively few individuals who seek beyond their regular sphere of thinking in order to find meaning in something unknown. With my *Choral Études*, my principal concern is the provocation of thought, while attempting to maintain a consideration of the importance of the listener's attention, and hopefully, interpretation.

One way in which we attempt to improve our understanding of the world is through the practice of modelling. We build, study, perhaps enjoy, and hopefully interpret scaled down, simpler models of the world around us. I think music can be used in a similar way. As a starting point, I have designed each étude to operate primarily in terms of one musical constituent, with this quantity being considered in terms of a comparable constituent of the real world, or in this case, a certain facet of my own personal world: the late-capitalist consumer society in which I live. The word 'étude' (study) in the title thus has dual meanings. I intend for the *Choral Études* to be a continual exploration, or diary of my evolving outlook.

Dónal Rafferty
3 March 2010

Choral Études

DÓNAL RAFFERTY

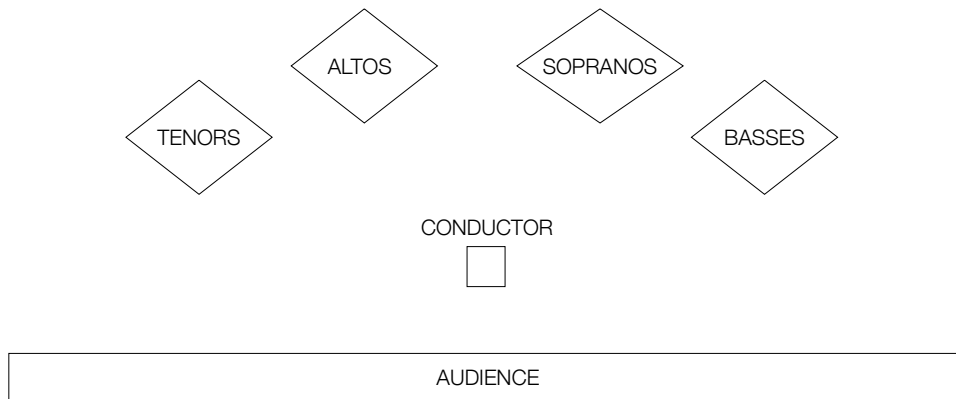
Rhythm | Coincidence

PROGRAMME NOTE

This étude is a simple musical model of human regional (as opposed to physical or biomechanical) migration within a social construct; individuals moving at different paces, sometimes meeting, sometimes passing. Each of the four principal voices is assigned a monotone 'signature' rhythm, the voices entering consecutively in exposition fashion. Each signature rhythm is a four-bar rhythm in a different time signature with its own set of distinctive syllables based around different vowel sounds which aurally characterise it. These rhythms evolve throughout the piece and they are affected by their interactions with the other signature rhythms. Their basic 'skeleton' remains intact. I simplified the harmonic and melodic material in order to allow the performers to concentrate on mastering the substantial rhythmic difficulties of the piece. However, I felt that some harmonic progression was necessary to give the piece a narrative aspect. The simultaneous execution of various rhythms across the choir led to interesting points of coincidence during the piece, which became compositional highlights. I was thus able to structure the piece quite specifically through the exploitation of this almost fractal systematic behaviour before having written anything more than the signature rhythms. The interactions of smaller rhythmic cells in the piece produce interactions on a larger scale which reflect the behaviour of the smaller elements. If the piece were to be increased in length, similarly repeating events would occur whose pattern could only be discerned from a higher level consideration of the larger structure.

Rhythm | Coincidence

PERFORMANCE NOTES



- The choir should be situated like so. The singers for each part should be situated together in a cluster and each cluster should be spaced apart from the others so as to make full use of the stage.
- Each of the principal rhythms in their native time signatures, along with their characteristic lyrical counterparts, are:

TENOR

$\frac{3}{2}$ Pamm pam pam Pam papam pampam Pam papam papampam Pamm papapam papam papa

ALTO

$\frac{2}{2}$ Rrimm bim Rim bim bim bim Rim bi - lim dim Rri-di-lim bim bim bim

SOPRANO

$\frac{3}{4}$ Tee tee tee Tee tee tee tee Tee tee tee ti-cka Tee ti - ti-cka tee

BASS

$\frac{5}{4}$ Boumm bum Boumm bum bum Bum ba bum bum bum Boumm bu bum bu bum bum bum

- Later, the following rhythms are introduced:

SOPRANOS, B. 34, variant B. 75

ALTOS, B. 42

TENORS, B. 58, variant B. 69

BASSES, B. 71

- Dotted slurs are used to indicate phrasing where a syllable change occurs.
- Staccatos halve the note's rhythmic value. Tenuto marks emphasise holding the note for its full value with a constant level in tone (whereas regular notes would decay slightly).
- Rhythmic accuracy and articulation is paramount.
- It is important not to sound robotic and lifeless, yet the piece should not be treated as a joke or gimmick.

Performance note:
Staccatos should halve
the note value.
(used to minimize rests)

Choral Études

RHYTHM | COINCIDENCE

Duration: c. 3' 10"

Dónal Rafferty
September 2009

Steady and clear (not too solemnly!) ♩ = 54

SOPRANO

ALTO

TENOR

BASS

Pamm pam pam Pam pa - pam pam pam Pam pa-pam pa - pam pam Pamm pa -

Dum Dum

Buh

6

S.

A.

T.

B.

rr = rolling r
i as in 'in'

Rrimm bim Rim bim bim bim Rim bi - lim dim Rri-di-lim bim bim bim

pa-pam pa-pam pa-pa Pamm pam Pam

Dum Dum Dum! roughly

Buh Buh Buh Dum!

bum dum dum bum dum dum

bum dum dum bum dum dum

pp

mf

mp

mf

mf

11 *mf dolce* *f*

S. Ae ee oh ah Tee tee tee Tee tee tee tee Tee tee tee

A. *mf*
RRim dim RRim dim RRim

T. *mp*
roughly pam Pamm pam pam Pam pa - pam pam pam

B. Bum!

16 *p* *f*

S. ti - cka Tee ti - ti - cka-tee Ee

A. dim RRim Ri - i - i - dim

T. Pam pa - pam pa - pam pam Pamm pa - pa - pam pa - pam pa - pa

B. *mf bell-like* *f*
Dumm Dumm Boumm bum Boumm bum
mf bell-like *f*
Bumm Bumm

19 *p* *f*

S. Ee

A. *f*
Rrimm bim Rim bim bim bim Rim bi - lim dim

T. *mp*
BPam

B. bum Bum ba bum bum bum Boumm bu - bum bu - bum bum bum

A

22

f Shae Shae Shae Shae

p Tee tee tee Tee tee teetee Tee tee tee

Rri-di-lim bim bim bim Rrimm bim

BPa - ba-bamm ba-da-ba ba-bamm

p Boumm bum Boumm bum bum Bum ba bum bumbum Boumm bu-bum bu-bum bum bum

27

ti-cka Tee ti-ti-cka-tee Tee tee tee Tee tee tee tee Tee tee tee ti-cka Tee ti-ti-cka-tee

Rim bim bim bim Rim bi - lim dim Rri-di-lim bim bim bim Rrimm bim

p Pamm pam pam Pam pa - pam pam pam

Boumm bum Boumm bum bum Bum ba bum bum bum Boumm

Boumm bum Boumm bum bum Bum ba bum bum bum Boumm

31

S. Tee tee tee Tee tee tee tee Tee tee tee ti - cka Tee ti - ti - cka-tee

A. Rim bim bim bim Rim bi - lim dim Rri-di-lim bim bim bim

T. Pam pa-pam pa - pam pam Pamm pa - pa - pam pa-pam pa - pa

B. bu-bum bu-bum bum bum Boumm bum Boumm bum

bu-bum bu-bum bum bum Boumm bum Boumm bum

34

S. Tee tee - sha tee - sha Tee tee sha

A. Tee - sha tee - sha tee Tee - sha tee - sha tee sha

A. Rrimm bim Rim bim bim bim Rim bi - lim dim

T. BPah bah BPah bah bah

B. BPah bah BPah bah bah

B. bum Bum ba bum bum bum Boumm bu - bum bu-bum bum bum

bum Bum ba bum bum bum Boumm bu - bum bu-bum bum bum

B

37

f Shee *mf* Tee tee tee Tee tee

f Shee *mf* Tee tee tee Tee tee

f Shee *mf* Tee tee tee Tee tee

f Shee *mf* Tee tee tee Tee tee

A. *p* Rri-di - lim bim bim bim Rrimm bim Rim bim bim bim Rim bi - lim dim

T. *f* BPah ba ba ba bah *mp* BPah BPah

f BPah ba ba ba bah *mp* BPah BPah

B. *f* Boumm *mp* bum Boumm bum bum Bum ba bum bum bum Boumm

41 *mp*

S. tee tee Tee tee tee ti - cka Tee ti - ti-cka-tee Tee tee tee Tee tee

A. *p* Rri-di-lim bim bim bim *f* RRi - i - im *f* bi - i - im

T. BPahm Pahm

B. *p* bu - bum bu-bum bum bum Boumm *f* ba bum Boumm bum

44

S. *p*
 tee tee Tee tee tee ti - cka Tee ti - ti - cka-tee Tee tee tee Tee tee

A. *mp*
 Ri - i Di - i Li - im Ri Di Lim RRim

T. *mf*
 BPah Pamm pam

B.
 bum Bum ba bum bum bum Boumm bu-bum bu-bum bum bum

47

S. *mp*
 tee tee Tee tee tee ti - cka Tee ti - ti - cka-tee Tee tee Tee tee

A. *mp*
 BPimm BPim RRim

T. *mp*
 pam Pam pa - pam pam pam Pam pa - pam pa -

B. *mp*
 Boumm bum Boumm bum bum Bum ba bum

50

S. *p*
 tee tee Tee tee tee ti - cka Tee ti - ti - cka - tee

A. *f*
 RRi - dim BPim - mi - lim

T. *p*
 pam pam Pamm pa - pa - pam pa - pam pa - pa

B. *p*
 bum bum Boumm bu - bum bu - bum bum bum

C

52 *f* *>* *mp*

S. Sho Tee tee Tee tee
 Tee tee Tee tee
 Tee tee Tee tee
 Tee tee Tee tee

A. *f* *>* *mp*
 BPi-mi - li - mi-dimm RRimm Rimm bim Rim bim bim bim

T. *mp*
 Pamm pam pam Pam pa - pam pam pam Pam pa-pam pa -

B. *f* *>* *mp*
 Buhm Buhm Buhm Buhm

56 *mf* *>* *p* *f* *>*

S. tee tee Tee tee ti-cka Tee ti-ti-cka-tee Tee- shae tee-shae Tee tee Tee- shae tee

A. *p*
 Rim bi - lim dim RRimm bim bim bim RRimm bim Rim bim bim bim

T. *f* *>* *f* *>*
 pam pam Pamm pa - pa-pam pa-pam pa Pa - shae Pa - shae

B. *f* *>* *p*
 Boumm bum Boumm bum bum Bum bum

60

S. *p*
 - shae Tee tee Tee tee tee

A. *p*
 Rim bi - lim dim Rri - di - lim bim bim bim Rrimm bim

T.
 Pa - shae pa - shae pah pah Pa - shae pa -

B. *p* *f*
 bum bum Boumm bu - bum bu - bum bum bum Buhm

63

S. *f*
 tee Tee - shae tee - shae tee tee Tee - shae tee - shae tee tee

A. *f*
 Rim bim bim bim Rim bi - lim dim Rrimm bim bim bim RRimm

T. *p*
 - shae pa - shae pa - shae Pamm pam pam Pam pam pam

B. *p*
 Buh-dum Buh-du-dum Bum

D

66

f > *mf* *leggiero*

S. Shah Tee-ee - ee lee

f > *mf* *leggiero*

S. Shah Tee-ee - ee lee

f > *mf* *leggiero*

S. Shah Tee-ee - ee lee

f > *mf* *leggiero*

S. Shah Tee-ee - ee lee

A. Ri-di-lim Rim RRI-di - bi-di - bim RRimm

T. Pam pam pa - pam pam Pamm pa - pam pa - pam pa - pa Pa - ta ka sa

B. *fp* (*p*) Boumm bum Boumm bum bum Bum bum bum Boumm

70

S. Tee-ee - lee Tee - ee - lo Tee tee Tee tee Tee

S. Tee-ee - lee Tee - ee - lo Tee tee Tee tee Tee

A. BPimm BPim RRim Rrimm bim

T. sa Pa - ta Ka - ta sa sa Pa - ta ka sa sa Pa - ta Ka

B. bu-bum bum Boum ba bum ba Boum ba bum ba Boum ba

74

S. *mf* *f*
 ti-cka Tee tee Tee cka tee_cka shae Tee cka tee_cka Tae sha_ te cka

A. *(p)*
 Rim bim bim Rim dim Rrim RRimm

T. *p* *cresc.*
 - ta sa sa BPahm BPahm

B. *p*
 bum ba Boum ba bum ba Buhm bum Buhm bum

78

S. *p* *cresc.* *ff*
 Tee tee tee tee

A. *cresc.* *ff*
 dim dim RRimm

T. *ff*
 BPahmm BPahm

B. *cresc.* *ff*
 Buhm bum Buhm boum

81 *p secco*

S. *p* *mp* *pp*
 tee tee tee tee tee tee tee tee tee

A. *p* *mp* *pp*
 Ri - ma - dim - a dum Ri - ma - dee Rum rum

T. *p* *mp* *pp*
 BPa - da - ba - da - bam BPa - da - bam! Dum dum

B. *p* *mp* *pp*
 Bu - ma - dum - a - dum Bu - ma - DIM Bum Bum