

ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: PIANO SUITES FROM 1900 TO THE PRESENT

Saeha Youn, Doctor of Musical Arts, 2022

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Inarguably, the piano suite is an essential part of the pianist's standard repertoire. With roots in the early baroque dance suite, the keyboard suite has played an important role in both performance and pedagogy. Certain suites, those by Bach for example, have become some of the most cherished works in classical music. Unsurprisingly, these seminal works and their broader style inspired many composers after Bach, most notably in the twentieth century and beyond, to write their own piano suites. Perhaps equally unsurprisingly, the baroque suite has inspired much research and countless recordings, whereas the most modern suites have attracted neither the same scholarly attention nor the same recorded legacy. For this reason, I decided to devote my dissertation to the suites of the modern era.

The history of the suite can be traced from as early as the fourteenth century, beginning with the pairing of dances. The term *Suite* became common by the end of the seventeenth century, to serve not only as a form for newly composed pieces but for arranging pieces for publication or performance purposes. The 'classical' form of the Baroque suite includes the

Allemande, Courante, Sarabande and Gigue. The idea of *suite*, in its more general sense, continuously evolved over time under various guises. In order to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the term, a broader approach, including a definition of the term and its historical background, is necessary. The purpose of this project is to survey selected piano suites written between 1900 and 2016 that I believe give an excellent overview of modern piano suites.

I have recorded approximately two hours of solo piano music, recorded by Antonino D'Urzo of Opusrite Productions, at the Dekelboum Concert Hall, in the School of Music at the University of Maryland, College Park, USA, and Todd Yaniw at the Grace Church on-the-Hill in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. The recordings are available in the Digital Repository at the University of Maryland (DRUM).

PIANO SUITES FROM 1900 TO THE PRESENT

by

Saeha Youn

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Last but not least, I owe my passion for music and research to my parents, Heesoon and Younggyu, and my sister, Saerom. I appreciate your unwavering support and love more than I can say. To all three of you, I dedicate this dissertation.

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Audio and Video Contents

AUDIO	[100'68"]
Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)	
Tombeau de Couperin, M. 68 (1914-1917)	[27'09"]
I. Prélude	[3'26"]
II Fugue	[3'25"]
III. Forlane	[6'13"]
IV. Rigaudon	[3'29"]
V. Menuet	[6'13"]
VI. Toccata	[5'03"]
 Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1951)	
Suite für Klavier, Op. 25 (1921-1923)	[15'13"]
I. Präludium	[1'05"]
II. Gavotte – III. Musette	[4'03"]
IV. Intermezzo	[3'48"]
V. Menuett & Trio	[3'53"]
VI. Gigue	[3'04"]
 Alberto Ginastera (1916-1983)	
Suite de Danzas Criollas, Op. 15 (1946)	[7'12"]
I. Adagietto pianissimo	[1'39"]
II. Allegro rustic	[0'39"]
III. Allegretto cantabile	[1'39"]
IV. Calme e poetico	[1'49"]
V. Scherzando-Coda. Presto ed energico	[2'46"]
 Helmut Lachenmann (b. 1935)	
Ein Kinderspiel (1980)	[14'17"]
I. Hänschen klein (Little Hans)	[1'08"]
II. Woklen im eisigen mondlicht (Clouds in Icy Moonlight)	[2'25"]
III. Akiko	[0'47"]
IV. Falscher Chinese, ein wenig besoffen (Fake Chinese (slightly drunk))	[1'44"]
V. Filterschaukel (Filter-Swing)	[3'58"]
VI. Glockenturm (Bell Tower)	[2'15"]

VII. Schattentanz (Shadow Dance) [3'20"]

John Cage (1912-1992)

A Valentine Out of Season (1944) [3'87"]

Part 1 [1'56"]

Part 2 [1'01"]

Part 3 [1'30"]

John Cage(1912-1992)

Suite for Toy Piano (1948) [5'85"]

I [1'29"]

II [1'39"]

III [1'33"]

IV [1'27"]

V [0'57"]

George Crumb (1929-2022)

A Little Suite for Christmas, A.D. 1979 (1980) [16'30"]

I. The Visitation [4'20"]

II. Berceuse for the Infant Jesu [2'07"]

III. The Shepherd's Noël [1'14"]

IV. Adoration of the Magi [2'05"]

V. Nativity Dance [1'11"]

VI. Canticle of the Holy Night [3'34"]

VII. Carol of the Bells [2'39"]

Libby Larsen (b. 1950)

4 ½ : A Piano Suite (2016) [7'95"]

I [1'54"]

II [1'28"]

III [1'33"]

IV "In Memoriam" [1'56"]

V [2'24"]

VIDEO	[20'96"]
Paval Haas (1899-1944)	
Suita pro hobo a klavír, Op. 17 (1939)	[16'40"]
I. Furioso	[4'40"]
II. Con fuoco	[5'90"]
III. Moderato	[6'10"]
Ursula Mamlok (1923-2016)	
Suite for Violin and Piano (1960)	[4'56"]
I. Grave	[0'49"]
II. Scherzando	[0'67"]
III Quarter Note = 50	[1'37"]
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TOTAL TIME: 121'64"	

Introduction

BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

Definition

According to *Oxford Bibliographies* the word *suite* derives from the French word *suivre* (“to follow”). It denotes a succession of integral parts that can be in a specific order or more generally in a group associated with a central idea. A *suite* is “a series of distinct instrumental movements or sections with some elements of unity, usually intended to be performed in a single setting.”¹ The number of movements in a suite can be as small as a series (three), or so much larger that it would most likely have been intended as an anthology (for example, François Couperin’s *Ordres*).² A suite’s unity is achieved by: movements sharing a common key; movements following a shared extramusical program; or by the composer’s extracting select movements from a larger work, such as a ballet or an opera. The ‘classical’ form of the Baroque suite was the one to follow most closely an organized pattern of dances, included the Allemande, Courante, Sarabande and Gigue. But even this design was often loosely interpreted. To gain a clearer understanding of the term *suite*, one must look at its historical background and its development over time.

Early history to 1630

The origin of the *suite* can be traced as early as the fourteenth century in the pairing of two contrasting dances. Usually, such pairings consisted of a slower dance in duple meter

¹ Bruce Gustafson, “Suite,” Oxford Bibliographies Online, accessed Feb 2, 2022, <https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199757824/obo-9780199757824-0072.xml>.

² Don Michael Randel, “Suite [Fr., succession, following],” in *The Harvard Dictionary of Music*.

followed by a faster dance in triple meter. Pairings of three dances started appearing in the sixteenth century. In such pairings, the dances were often thematically and tonally related. The earliest known use of the term *suite* was by Estienne du Terte in his *Suyttes de bransles* in 1557, for sequencing *branles* (sixteenth century popular French group dance) from stately to lively. Between the sixteenth and seventeenth century, dances for instrumental ensemble and lute were published with a variety of contents often grouped in the same key. The first composer to employ a consistent pattern of dance was Paul Peuerl (1611), using the order *paduana—intrada—dantz—galliarda*.³ Composers in Germany started writing thematically related dances in a single key with a specific order, but with their own unique choice of dances. Despite these innovations, the pairing of unrelated dances remained dominant.

The ‘classical’ Baroque suite

A clear development of the suite occurred during the Baroque period. The first datable suite literature for the Baroque includes the Allemande, Courante and Sarabande, as seen in a 1629 mandora volume by François de Chancy.⁴ The A-C-S grouping was frequently used for French lute music around 1630. Soon, the A-C-S pattern was adopted by German harpsichordists who, after the addition of the Gigue in 1655, employed it over any other scheme.

In the second half of the seventeenth century Germans started to imitate aspects of the French lute style, including the A-C-S sequence. Around 1650, Johann Jakob Froberger created a standardization of Allemande, Gigue, Courante and Sarabande (A-G-C-S) pattern, but many other Germanic composers preferred to place the gigue at the end. Due to this reason,

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

Froberger's publishers eventually "fixed" the ordering to Allemande, Courante, Sarabande and Gigue (A-C-S-G).⁵ During this time, the most important German composers of suites were Johann Erasmus Kindermann, Dietrich Buxtehude, and George Böhm. Undoubtedly, the most influential of them all was the last successor of this group, Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750).

Bach wrote 40 suites for solo instruments (i.e., harpsichord, lute, violin, cello, and flute). For the harpsichord, he wrote six English Suites (BWV 806-811), six French Suites (BWV 812-817), six Partitas (BWV 825-830), and the *Overture in the French Style* (BWV 831), and a handful of "miscellaneous" suites unconnected to any others. The designations "French" and "English" for the Suites were not given by Bach himself and therefore have no descriptive significance. Bach's six French Suites are the earliest that he wrote. The suites in both French and the German sets consist of the standard four dance movements: Allemande, Courante, Sarabande and Gigue (A-C-S-G). The English Suites open with a prelude, taking the pattern: Prelude, Allemande, Courante, Sarabande and Gigue (P-A-C-S-G). One or more optional dances, or *gallantries*, are included between the Sarabande and the Gigue. The English Suites Nos 3 and 6, feature a pair of Gavottes while the Second Suite contains a pair of Bourrées. The optional dance in the French Suite varies both in type and number. The Partitas (sometimes referred to as the "German Suites" even though Bach's title for them was Partitas) demonstrate Bach's highest mastery of the suites. In comparison to earlier suites (English and French), the structure of the partita displays the greatest diversity within the same basic scheme: Bach employs a different opening movement for each Partita: Praeludium, Sinfonia, Fantasia, Ouverture, Praeambulum, and Toccata; also, there appeared optional dances between Courante and Sarabande. Breaking the mold completely, the second partita ends with a Capriccio, rather than a traditional Gigue.

⁵ Ibid.

More generally, in French harpsichord music, the main purpose of a suite was to order pieces for publication or performances, rather than to serve as a compositional form⁶. The pieces were compiled by composers or performers to create groupings in a single key. Often, the suites included music of more than one composer. Music from 1640 to 1710 shows the greatest consistency, based on the A-C-S scheme. Beginning with François Couperin le Grand (1668-1733), harpsichord *suites* (which he called *ordres*) increasingly consisted of character pieces, rather than just dances with descriptive titles. No consistent organizational pattern was used except for his tendency to include programmatic sets of pieces as subgroups⁷. During his lifetime, Couperin produced four volumes of harpsichord music (Premier Livre 1713, Second Livre 1717, Troisième Livre 1722, and Quatrième Livre 1730), which contains 27 *Ordres* and over 230 individual pieces.

English harpsichordists generally followed the (P)-A-C-S-G pattern, but the gigue was not always present. George Frideric Handel (1685-1759) composed roughly twenty-two keyboard suites. The most well-known suite is his *Suites de Pièces pour le Clavecin* HWV 426-433 (1720), commonly referred to as the ‘Eight Great Harpsichord Suites’. The suites “showcase his extraordinary versatility, imagination, and contrapuntal skill, as well as his willingness to break with tradition. Handel skillfully weaves together a wider range of forms, including fugues, a toccata, Italianate airs, and Baroque dances.”⁸ *Suite No. 1* opens with a virtuosic Prélude, followed by Allemande, Courante, and Gigue. *Suite No. 2* “contains none of the conventional dance movements of the typical suite, being similar to an Italian sonata in form, with a fast-slow-

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Caroline Waight, liner notes to *HANDEL, G.F.: Keyboard Suites, Vol 1 (P.E. Fisher)-Nos. 1-4*, performed by Philip Edward Fisher, piano, Naxos Records, 8.572197, 2010, CD.

fast-slow sequence of movements.”⁹ *Suite No. 3* is a “grand synthesis of old and new.”¹⁰ The opening two movements, *Prélude* and *Fuga*, form a “classic ‘toccata and fugue’ pairing.”¹¹ The final three sections depart from the traditional form. The sixth movement is a variation movement on the preceding movement, *Air*. The suite concludes with a vibrant *Presto*. *Suite No. 4* opens with a *Fugue*. The remaining four movements follow the conventional pattern, including an *Allemande*, *Courante*, *Sarabande*, and *Gigue*. *Suite No. 6* opens with a *Prélude* followed by a stately *Largo*. The final two movements are an *Allegro* and *Gigue*. The first movement of *Suite No. 7* is the *Ouverture*. The following four movements observe the pattern of the traditional suite: “an allemande-like *Andante*, a corrente-like *Allegro*, a lyrical *Sarabande*, and an Italianate *Gigue*.”¹² The last of Handel’s ‘eight great suites’, *Suite No. 8*, opens with a *Prélude* followed by an *Allegro*. The last three movements are based on traditional dance movements, including the *Allemande*, *Courante*, and the *Gigue*.

After the Baroque Period

Dances eventually gave way to sonata principles in the middle of the eighteenth century in favor of newer forms such as the sonata, concerto, and the symphony. Nearly all dance suites disappeared for a time. The *divertimento* had the similar connotation to the Baroque Suite, but without strong connection to dance forms. Instead, the term *divertimento* was used as a more

⁹ Bridget Cunningham, liner notes to *Handel’s Great Harpsichord Suites HWV 426-433*, performed by Bridge Cunningham, piano, Signum Classics, SIGCD679, 2021, CD.

¹⁰ C. Waight, *HANDEL*.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² B. Cunningham, *Handel’s Great Harpsichord Suites*.

general term to describe “light, often occasion-specific, instrumental music that was arranged in several movements.”¹³ Since then, the suite assumed a retrospective role for most composers.

By the end of the nineteenth century, the factors leading to the resurgence of the suite became ever so clear. Some of these factors include nationalism, the need to experiment, dissolution of tonality, the expediency, among many others.¹⁴ Musicology also helped to discover forgotten suites of the Baroque period. Many composers sought to revive the balance and forms and clearly perceptible thematic processes of the seventeenth and eighteenth century. The breakdown of tonality in certain circles discouraged sonata writing, and the search for new styles and forms became ever more deliberate. Finally, the demand and ‘market’ for music changed drastically. Because of these changes, starting with the twentieth century the *suite* enjoyed a resurgence of interest in countries such like France, Russia, Austria, Argentina, Germany, and America.

In the modern era, composers’ use of suite as a form was interpreted in a more liberal and accessible way. As a result, the modern suites are usually composed in one of three ways: (1) extract suite: taking excerpts from a larger piece and assembling them together; (2) ‘character’ or ‘programme’ suite: movements sharing a common theme and programmatically related to one another; and (3) antique suite: neo-Baroque works with deliberate reference to Baroque themes.¹⁵ The extract suite was favored by many composers towards the middle of the nineteenth century. Composers assembled excerpts from larger works such as ballets, operas, and other larger works into suites. Famous examples include Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky’s *Nutcracker Suite*, Op. 71a

¹³ “Divertimento/divertissement,” Basic Glossary of Musical Forms: Yale University Library, accessed March 1, 2022, <https://web.library.yale.edu/cataloging/music/Basic-glossary-of-musical-terms>.

¹⁴ David Fuller, “Suite,” Grove Music Online (2001), accessed January 4, 2022, <https://doi-org.proxy-um.researchport.umd.edu/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.27091>.

¹⁵ Ibid.

(1892), Igor Stravinsky's *The Firebird Suite* (1911, 1919, 1945), and Aaron Copland's *Appalachian Spring Suite* (1943-44).

The antique suite was favored by many other composers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Examples of neo-Baroque suites include Maurice Ravel's *Le Tombeau de Couperin*, M. 68 (1914-1917) and Arnold Schoenberg's *Suite für Klavier*, Op. 25 (1921-1923). The 'character' or 'programme' suite continued the late-nineteenth-century tradition of nationalistic and 'geographical' suites. Many modern suites fall into this category. Examples include Pavel Haas's *Suite for Oboe and Piano*, Op. 17 (1939), Alberto Ginastera's *Suite de Danzas Criollas*, Op. 15 (1946) John Cage's *A Valentine Out of Season* (1944) and *Suite for Toy Piano* (1948), Ursula Mamlok's *Suite for Violin and Piano* (1960), George Crumb's *A Little Suite for Christmas, A.D. 1979* (1980) and Libby Larsen's *4 ½ : A Piano suite* (2016).

"However, it was [not] the extract suite, antique suite, nor the character suite which became the channel for the most advanced and original contributions of the [twentieth] century. The three types were often identifiable as suites and even had suite in the title."¹⁶ This was not appealing to certain composers, especially those composers who strived to be unconventional.¹⁷ "Instead, it was the suite idea itself, unrecognizable (or differently named) and free, that inspired the originality of composers whose ideas resulted in sets of pieces that are meant to be performed at a single setting."¹⁸ Erik Satie's *Chapitres tournés en tous sens* (1913) was one of the first twentieth century composers to make the set of pieces his own. The *Chapitres tournés en tous sens* was a trilogy of unrelated pieces with simple melodic lines borrowed from operettas and

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

children's songs with Satie's unique and often experimental harmonies. Other examples of this kind include Helmut Lachenmann's *Ein Kinderspiel* (1980).

Chapter 1

THE COMPOSERS AND THEIR COMPOSITIONS

1.1 Maurice Ravel (1875-1937): *Le Tombeau de Couperin* M. 68 (1914-1917)

In France, the turn of the nineteenth century brought newfound interest in older forms, particularly forms from the Baroque era. In France in the early 1900s the suite began to reemerge at the hands of Maurice Ravel (1875-1937). *Le Tombeau de Couperin*, M. 68 (1914-1917) pays homage to the French Baroque tradition of François Couperin (1668-1733) and his contemporaries. The suite consists of six movements, and each movement is dedicated to the memory of one of Ravel's friends who lost their lives in World War I:

I. Prélude

II. Fugue

III. Forlane

IV. Rigaudon

V. Menuet

VI. Toccata

The structure of *Le Tombeau de Couperin* is based on a Baroque suite, and its composition reflects a trend of the early twentieth century, which celebrated the *grand siècle* (“Great Century”) of French culture and the revival of older music. However, the harmonies and other aspects of music are undoubtedly modern. The energetic *Prélude* (*praeludere*; “to play before”) opens the suite with the running of sixteenth notes in perpetual motion, grouped in triplets. The texture is lean and clear with frequent ornaments throughout the piece. Three voices are used for the second movement *Fugue* (*fuga*; “flight”). First, the main subject is stated,

followed by other voices in succession. The main subject is built on the sequence of triadic notes in short, fragmented phrases. In contrast, the countersubject is more expressive with smooth legato lines.



Figure 1. Ravel *Tombeau de Couperin*, M. 68. II. *Fugue* measures 1-4¹⁹

As in the *Prélude*, Ravel establishes the tonality of E minor with modal touches, which helps to create a sense of antiquity. The overall character of the Fugue is both melancholic and nostalgic. The third movement, *Forlane* is based on a lively folk dance from Northern Italy, known to have been popular with gondoliers during the seventeenth century. In the eighteenth century, it gained popularity amongst the French aristocrats. As a preparatory exercise, Ravel transcribed François Couperin's *Forlane* from his fourth *Concert Royal* for the harpsichord and ensemble. As a result, there are many similarities between Couperin's and Ravel's music. For example, they both utilize 6/8-meter, rondo form, the utilization of the dotted rhythm, and phrases in perfect symmetry. The fourth movement, *Rigaudon* is based on duple meter dance originating from Provence in the seventeenth century. At the end of the seventeenth century this dance frequently appeared in French ballets and sometimes as the optional dance of a suite. Ravel's *Rigaudon* is in ternary A-B-A form. The A section is in C Major and is vibrant and animated in character. The B section, in contrast, is in the parallel key of C minor and embraces a more lyrical and expressive character. The fifth movement, *Menuet*, is based on a popular social dance during the time of

¹⁹ Maurice Ravel, *Le Tombeadu de Couperin*. Paris: Durand & Cie, 1918, pg. 9.

Louis XIV. Like the Rigaudon, the *Menuet* is in ternary A-B-A form, consisting of a Menuet-Musette-Menuet with an extended Coda. All three sections are clearly defined with double bars and change of tonalities. The sonority is simple, mostly homophonic and has a simple chordal texture. For the most part, Ravel's *Menuet* retains the dignity of the Baroque minuet, along with a touch of gentle melancholy and lyricism. The brilliant and virtuosic *Toccata* (*toccare*; "to touch") is the concluding movement of *Le Tombeau de Couperin*. Historically, the general purpose of the Toccata was to display the brilliant technical ability of the performer. The English pianist and musicologist, Denis Matthews, says that "from its first tingling repeated notes to its final flurry of alternating chords, [Ravel's *Toccata*] forms a magnificent apotheosis of Ravel's piano writing."²⁰ Ravel's *Toccata* is surely a work of intense animation displaying the highest virtuosity and pianism. Extensive use of repeated notes, giant leaps, constant hand-crossing, and alternating extended chords and octaves are just a few of the demanding techniques required to perform this movement. The *Toccata* is full of energy and excitement—a brilliant conclusion to the monumental suite.

1.2 Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1951): Suite für Klavier, Op. 25 (1921-1923)

Viennese composer Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1951) composed his *Suite für Klavier*, Op. 25 between 1921 and 1923. This piece is the composer's first piano piece in which the twelve-tone row is used throughout the entire work. In Schoenberg's own words, the twelve-tone technique is "[a] method of composition with twelve tones related only to one another."²¹ The

²⁰ Denis Matthews, *Keyboard Music* (New York: Praeger, 1972), 285.

²¹ Grant Hiroshima, "Arnold Schoenberg: Suite Op. 25," Los Angeles Philharmonic, accessed Jan 31, 2022, <https://www.laphil.com/musicdb/pieces/3839/suite-op-25>.

Suite is composed of six movements, and in form and style, it is modeled after the Baroque keyboard suite:

I. Präludium

II. Gavotte – III. Musette

IV. Intermezzo

V. Menuett. Trio

VI. Gigue

According to the *Harvard Dictionary of Music*, twelve-tone technique is “music based on a serial ordering of all twelve chromatic pitches. The series of twelve pitches (also known as the row), whose form is uniquely determined for each composition, serves as the reference point for all pitch events in that composition (in contrast to the seven-note diatonic basis used in tonal music).”²² Thus, all twelve tones are given equal importance, and the music avoids a key center. The *Suite*’s prime row includes the following pitches: E–F–G–D \flat –G \flat –E \flat –A \flat –D–B–C–A–B \flat . The rows are often broken into tetrachords (four-note groups) which are presented either vertically, horizontally, or both. In the *Suite*, Schoenberg uses transposition and inversions of the row for the first time: the sets used include P-0, I-0, P-6, I-6 and their retrogrades.



²² Don Michael Randel, “Twelve-tone music.” In *The Harvard Dictionary of Music*. 4th ed. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003.

Figure 2. Four basic forms of the row used in Schoenberg's *Piano Suite, Op. 25* ²³

The *Suite* borrows the titles of the Baroque suite and makes use of the standard formal procedures. For example, *Praeludium* serves as an introduction to a series of dance movements. *Gavotte* is based on the French gavotte of the seventeenth century in 2/2 time, beginning with an upbeat, and the phrase usually begins and ends in the middle of a measure. *Musette* is based on a pastoral dance of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The *Intermezzo* has a slower and more expressive character than the preceding dance movements. It is also much longer than any other movement of the *Suite*. The *Menuett* is in 3/4 meter and has a moderate tempo. Its graceful dignity characterizes the seventeenth century French dance at the court of Louis XIV. The *Trio* of the *Menuett* is composed in the manner of a canon. The final movement, *Gigue*, does not share a strong relationship with the characteristic dance of the seventeenth century. Instead of the customary compound time, the movement is in duple meter. The qualities which Schoenberg's *Gigue* have in common with those of the Baroque suites are its fast tempo and energetic style. In the same way the row served as an introduction to the *Suite*, the *Gigue* concludes with a majestic appearance of the original row as a grand finale.

1.3 Pavol Haas (1899-1944): *Suita pro hoboj a klavír, Op. 17* (1939)

Czech composer Pavol Haas (1899-1944) was one of the leading representatives of Leoš Janáček's compositional school, and one of the several Jewish composers imprisoned by Nazis in the concentration camp of Theresienstadt (Terezin in Czech). Haas composed his *Suita pro hoboj*

²³ Paul Griffiths, "Twelve-note music," *The Oxford Companion to Music*. : Oxford University Press, Oxford Reference, accessed February 7 2022, <https://www-oxfordreference-com.proxy-um.researchport.umd.edu/view/10.1093/acref/9780199579037.001.0001/acref-9780199579037-e-6995>.

a klavír (Suite for Oboe and Piano), Op. 17 in 1939, just after the Nazis' complete occupation of Czechoslovakia. He made numerous attempts to escape the country, but they were futile. Five years later in 1944, he was deported to Auschwitz and died in a gas chamber. *Suita* is comprised of three movements:

I. Furioso

II. Con fuoco

III. Moderato

A balance of desperation with a sense of hope permeates the piece—perhaps fearing, but not knowing the worst to come. Throughout the *Suita*, Haas frequently quotes folk tunes and hymns of Czechoslovakia, which not only serves as an expressive vehicle, but as a compositional tool to unify the suite. The first movement displays Haas's agitation and depression over the apparently hopeless occupation. Heartfelt and sorrowful melodies are heard throughout the movement, along with a quotation of the medieval St. Wenceslaus Chorale (Svatováclavský *Chorále*). The St. Wenceslaus Chorale was often used to symbolize the Czech people whenever danger was close. This hymn particularly resonated with Haas when the Nazis came to power. Some of the words from the hymn include: "Let us not perish, us and our descendants, Saint Wenceslaus!"²⁴ In the second movement, a surge of strength is displayed in the music, suggesting Haas's readiness for battle and that he is not going to give in. In the music, Haas quotes a Hussite hymn, *Ye who are God's Warriors*, symbolizing the Czech military as Smetnana had sixty years previously in his *Má Vlast* (1879). Towards the end of the movement, the Nazi's ringing of the bells in celebration of their victory over the Czechs is heard in relentless

²⁴ Marnie Hall, "Paval Haas," linear notes for *Composers of the Holocaust (2000)*, Downtown Music Productions, Mimi Stern-Wolfe, Marshall Coid, Bert Lucarelli, Isabelle Ganz, Robert Abelson, Downtown Chamber Singers, Leonarda CD #LE342, accessed March 1, 2022. <https://www.leonarda.com/notes/note342.html>.

hammering of the piano. The final movement opens with the same St. Wenceslaus Chorale (*Svatý Václav*) in its earliest version, providing thematic material, which later turns into a glorification of his faith in the victory of Czechoslovakia.



Figure 3. Saint Wenceslas Chorale as sung at Vespers in Cathedral of Saint Vitus, Wenceslaus, and Adalbert in Prague, in modern notation



Figure 4. Haas *Suite pro hoboj a klavír*, Op. 17. III. Moderato measures 1-6 ²⁵

1.4 Alberto Ginastera (1916-1983): *Suite de Danzas Criollas*, Op. 15 (1946)

²⁵ Pavel Haas, *Suite for Oboe and Piano*, Op. 17 (Prague: Supraphon-Artia, 1962), pg. 26.

Alberto Ginastera (1916-1983) composed his *Suite de Danzas Criollas*, Op. 15 in 1946 while in New York on a Guggenheim Fellowship. Ginastera was the most prominent Argentine composer of the twentieth century, and his music reflects Argentine culture and musical style. This suite is the first piece of his second compositional period, termed ‘subjective nationalism’. It is comprised of five dances, whose titles are noted with expressive Italian markings rather than names of specific folk-dance forms:

I. Adagietto pianissimo

II. Allegro rustico

III. Allegretto cantabile

IV. Calmo e poetico

V. Scherzando – Coda: Presto ed energico

During Ginastera’s ‘subjective nationalism’ period, a shift occurred in his musical aesthetic, a shift from Argentine folk borrowings and obvious nationalistic idioms towards a more integrated and personal style. However, this does not mean that the composer abandoned his cultural roots. Driving dance rhythms, rhythmic syncopations, and the incorporation of folk melodies were still prevalent in his later works. According to the composer, “all melodies and rhythms in the Suite are Argentine; however, this material is used in a new, personal, and imaginative way, as if inspired by a folklore dream.”²⁶ Instead of following any specific stylistic dance indications, each movement conveys more generalized impressions of bodily movement. The first dance, *Adagietto pianissimo* is a brief folk song with a singing melody and with flowing accompaniment figuration. The rhythm is dominated by the *zamba* rhythm (♩♩♩), a typical

²⁶ Mary Ann Hanley, “The Solo Piano Music of Alberto Ginastera Part II,” *The American Music Teacher* 25, no. 1 (1975): 6.

Argentine rural dance in 6/8 meter. The second dance *Allegro rustico* is a vigorous dance with two alternating sections. The first section is characterized by off-beat eighth-note tone clusters, which are to be played by the palm of the hand. The second section is more lyrical and filled with Argentine folk elements such as the use of *gato* rhythm (♩♩♩), a repetitive structure and hemiola pattern.²⁷



Figure 5. Syncopated cluster chords in Ginastera Suite de Danzas Criollas, Op. 15. II. Allegro, measure 1.²⁸



Figure 6. Gato rhythm, Ginastera Suite de Danzas Criollas, Op. 15. II. Allegro, measures 7-8.²⁹

The third dance *Allegretto cantabile* is more mystical and expressive with a lyrical melodic line and simple accompaniment. The rhythmic pattern is particularly interesting. The meter, marked 11/8, is a combination of two different rhythms: 6/8 plus 5/8. There is also a juxtaposition of

²⁷ Patria Montgomery, "The Latin American Piano Suite in the Twentieth Century" (D.M.A. diss., Indiana University, 1978), 26.

²⁸ Alberto Ginastera, *Suite De Danzas Criollas, Op. 15 : For Piano*, place of publication not identified: Boosey & Hawkes, 1957, 3.

²⁹ Ibid.

rhythms between the hands: the left hand is mostly in 6/8, whereas the melody is in 3/4. The fourth dance, *Calmo e poetico*, is a lyrical movement. According to Hanley, Ginastera described the fourth dance as a “poetic nocturne inspired by the pampas.”³⁰ Wylie felt that the rhythmic pattern and the repetitive phrase structure resembles a *zamba*.³¹ Other uses of Argentine folk sources include the harmonization in thirds, the use of 6/8 meter and presence of the typical “guitar” chord.³²



Figure 7. Zamba rhythm, Ginastera Suite de Danzas Criollas, Op. 15. IV. *Calmo e poetico*, measures 1-2.³³



Figure 8. Guitar figure, Ginastera Suite de Danzas Criollas, Op. 15. IV. *Calmo e poetico*, measures 11-12.³⁴

³⁰ Mary Ann Hanley, “The Solo Piano Music of Alberto Ginastera Part I,” *The American Music Teacher* 24, no. 1 (1975): 19.

³¹ Roy Wylie, “Argentine Folk Elements in the Solo Piano Works of Alberto Ginastera,” (D.M.A. diss., University of Texas at Austin, 1986), 107.

³² Ibid., 107-108.

³³ Ginastera, *Suite De Danzas Criollas*, Op. 15, 1957, pg. 6.

³⁴ Ibid.

The final dance, *Scherzando* is an exciting dance filled with complex rhythm inspired by Argentine folk tradition. This dance is a typical *malambo* containing hemiola and repetitive passages. According to Chase, “Ginastera’s *malambos* are faster than their folkloric models since he is not interested in literal borrowing from the genre, but more concerned with the symbolic concept of the dance.”³⁵ The *malambo* serves as a model, shifting back and forth between 3/4 and 6/8, with occasional 5/8 and 7/8 meters, acting as an energetic driving force throughout the movement.

1.5 Ursula Mamlok (1923-2016): *Suite for Violin and Piano* (1960)

Ursula Mamlok (1923-2016) was born in Germany, but due to her Jewish descent, she emigrated to Ecuador with her parents in 1939. In the following year, she received a grant to study composition in New York on a full scholarship. While studying at the music institute of Black Mountain College in 1944, she had the opportunity to work with Ernst Krenek and Eduard Steuermann, which sparked a change in her style from less complex tonal music to complex non-tonal sounds.³⁶ Her study of twelve-tone music encouraged her to employ Arnold Schönberg’s system, however, she modified the system to fit her own works, with complex rhythms and varying sound colors. The four-movement *Suite for Violin and Piano* was written in 1960.

I. Grave

II. Scherzando

III. Quarter Note = 50

³⁵ Gilbert, Chase, “Alberto Ginastera: Argentine Composer,” *The Musical Quarterly* 43, no. 4 (1957): 454. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/740763>.

³⁶ “Ursula Mamlok,” Boosey & Hawkes: Composers Index, Accessed Feb 9, 2022, <https://www.boosey.com/composer/Ursula+Mamlok>.

IV. Scherzando, vivace

Barry Wiener describes Mamlok as “a serialist who wants the composition control that the technique provides. Mamlok’s musical outlook and technique are fundamentally traditionalist in orientation, a heritage of her diverse musical background and her thorough grounding in the classics of musical literature.”³⁷ On her music, Weiner writes “Mamlok’s music is a unique amalgam of many twentieth century stylistic trends. As her style evolved, she incorporated the neoclassic tendencies of her early music into her evolving use of serial technique, creating a music consistently transparent in texture and sensuous in sound.”³⁸ Like many of her other works, the *Suite for Violin and Piano* is complex in rhythm and filled with extreme contrasts in register, dynamics, and tempo. Brevity is one of the main characteristic of her music. All movements of the *Suite* last only a minute or less, and the entire piece takes less than five minutes to perform. The first movement, *Grave*, is built around short segments of notes and phrases. The second movement, *Scherzando*, is a brief and concise movement—only seven measures in length. Its overall character is playful and light-hearted. The third movement, *Quarter Note = 50*, is an expressive movement. Extreme leaps occur simultaneously in both the violin and piano parts. Other serialist tendencies include the serialization of pitch, rhythm, and texture among others, creating a highly ordered piece.

³⁷ Barry Wiener, program notes to Music of Ursula Mamlok, performed by Seattle Symphony, Gerard Schwartz, conductor, Parnasus, piano, Jubal Trio, Casatt Quartett, Composers Recordings, Inc., 2007, CD.

³⁸ Ibid.



Figure 9. Mamlok, *Suite for Violin and Piano*. III. Quarter Note = 50, measures 5-9 ³⁹

The final movement, *Scherzando, vivace* is composed of two contrasting sections: a quick-moving, “scherzando” section in 3/8 meter contrasted against a more reflective “slow” section in 3/4 meter. The piece concludes with the final ‘tempo primo’ section with a short, angular set of notes jumping in big leaps, driving the music to its finale.

1.6 Helmut Lachenmann (b. 1935): *Ein Kinderspiel* (1980)

German composer Helmut Lachenmann (b. 1935) composed his piano suite, *Ein Kinderspiel* in 1980. The German word “kinderspiel” translates to “child’s play” or “children’s game.” However, despite its title, this suite is not a pedagogical work, nor written specifically for children. In the piano suite, the ideals of the *musique concrète instrumentale* can be heard throughout the seven movements. The composition is built on simple five-note musical patterns, stylized dance rhythms, and familiar folk-tunes.

I. Hänschen klein (Little Hans)

II. Woklen im eisigen Mondlicht (Clouds in Icy Moonlight)

³⁹ Ursula Mamlok, *Suite for Violin and Piano*, 1960 (Berlin: Boosey & Hawkes: Bote & Bock, 2011), pg. 4.

III. Akiko

IV. Falscher Chinese (ein wenig besoffen) (Fake Chinese (slightly drunk))

V. Filterschaukel (Filter-Swing)

VI. Glockenturm (Bell Tower)

VII. Schattentanz (Shadow Dance)

In the late 1960s, Lachenmann developed new musical material, conceptualized by himself as *musique concrète instrumentale*. This implied a musical language that embraces the entire world of sounds made accessible through unconventional playing techniques. According to the composer, this is music

“in which the sound events are chosen and organized so that the manner in which they are generated is at least as important as the resultant acoustic qualities themselves. Consequently, those qualities, such as timbre, volume, etc., do not produce sounds for their own sake, but describe or denote the concrete situation: listening, you hear the conditions under which a sound- or noise-action is carried out, you hear what materials and energies are involved and what resistance is encountered.”⁴⁰

Lachenmann’s *Ein Kinderspiel* consists of familiar shapes and models, “such as children’s songs, dance forms and the easiest grip-technical models.”⁴¹

⁴⁰ “Musique Concrète Instrumentale: Conversation and Performance,” with Helmut Lachenmann, *Slought, Sound Field NFP*, accessed Feb 26, 2022. https://slought.org/resources/musique_concrete_instrumentale.

⁴¹ Livine Van Eecke, “The Adornian Reception of (the) Child(Hood) in Helmut Lachenmann’s ‘Ein Kinderspiel,’” *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* 47, no. 2 (2016): 226, accessed February 1, 2022, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44234971>

Unconventional and innovative pedaling techniques are required to play this suite. Some examples of these pedaling techniques include the depression of tone clusters held “silently” using the sostenuto pedal (as used in *Hänschen klein*, *Akiko*, and *Filterschaukel*); precise pedaling between notes in coordination with the rhythm of the right hand (is used in *Wolken im eisigen Mondlicht* and *Schattentanz*); the use of the sostenuto pedal (as used in *Akiko*); and the releasing of keys in exact rhythm (as used in *Filterschaukel*).

The first movement, *Hänschen klein*, is based on a nursery rhyme of the same name in ABA form. A sequence of descending chromatic tones makes up the movement. The second movement, *Wolken im eisigen Mondlicht*, uses a simple five-finger pattern in the right hand. Other than occasional shifts in meter and changes in fingering, the music in general is simple. *Akiko* is the third movement. Here, the long-held tones noted with thick bars direct the performer to press the keys down silently on a cluster of chromatic tones and to capture their resonance with the sostenuto pedal.



Figure 10. Muted Cluster Chord, Lachenmann. *Ein Kinderspiel*. III *Akiko*, measure 1⁴²

In the fourth movement, *Falscher Chinese (ein wenig besoffen)*, the right hand plays a more percussive role while the left-hand wanders along “a little drunk.” The accents, both on and off

⁴² Helmut Lachenmann, *Ein Kinderspiel* : sieben kleine Stücke : für Klavier = Child's play : seven little pieces : for piano (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1982), 8.

beat, give the music a ‘tipsy’ feeling. The fifth movement *Filterschaukel* uses tone clusters throughout the entire movement. The overall sonority resembles an organ or a harmonium. In the Coda, Lachenmann instructs the performer to release the cluster tones one by one in exact time.



Figure 11. Lachenmann, *Ein Kinderspiel*. V *Filterschaukel*, measures 65-69 ⁴³

The sixth movement *Glockenturm* mimics the sound of a bell tower with various ‘chime’ motives. In this movement, Lachenmann instructs the performer to “release the key[s] briefly and [then] silently depress the note again.”⁴⁴ The final movement, *Schattentanz*, is based on the rhythmic pattern in the familiar tune “Ring Around the Rosie”.



Figure 12. *Ring Around the Rosie*

⁴³ Ibid., 17,

⁴⁴ Ibid., Notes.



Figure 13. Lachenmann, *Ein Kinderspiel*. VII Schattentanz, measures 7-8 ⁴⁵

Chromatic muted clustered chords in the bass are reintroduced in this movement. “Hammer chords” in the right hand consist of the highest B and C on the piano. The notes and the rhythm are mostly unchanged throughout the movement, except for occasional rests.

1.7 John Cage (1912-1992): *A Valentine Out of Season* (1944)

From the mid-twentieth century onward, many notable suites were written by American composers such as John Cage (1912-1992), George Crumb (1929-2022) and Libby Larsen (b. 1950).

John Cage (1912-1992) is one of the most influential figures of the postwar Avant Garde. Cage invented the concept of the prepared piano in 1938. A ‘prepared piano’ is a piano in which the pitches, timbres, and dynamic response of individual notes have been temporarily altered by placing bolts, screws, mutes, rubber erasers, and/or other objects on or between the strings.⁴⁶

Cage composed his prepared piano suite, *Valentine Out of Season* in 1944.

Part 1

Part 2

⁴⁵ Ibid., 20.

⁴⁶ Edwin M. Ripin, “Prepared Piano,” *Grove Music Online*, rev. Hugh Davies and Thomas J. Kernan, accessed Feb 14, 2022, <https://doi-org.proxy-um.researchport.umd.edu/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.A2252176>.

Part 3

Cage's invention of the prepared piano began while he was working as a piano accompanist at the Cornish School in Seattle, Washington. In 1938, one of his colleagues, Syvilla Fort, requested Cage to compose a music for her dance, *Bacchanale*. His initial plan was to compose music for a percussion ensemble, but he realized that the performance space was too small for a percussion group. The only instrument available was a single grand piano. Since then, the prepared piano became a signal instrument for Cage. *A Valentine out of season* (1944) was composed for a choreographed piece by Merce Cunningham titled *Effusion avant l'heur*. The preparation of the piano was simple. It required only rubber, weather strips, bamboo sticks, wood, pennies, and large and small bolts to be inserted between the strings.

PIANO PREPARATIONS: (GRAND PIANO)

	MATERIAL USED	STRINGS AFFECTED (L to R)	DISTANCE BETWEEN FROM TUNE (SEE NOTE)	MATERIAL USED	STRINGS AFFECTED	DISTANCE BETWEEN FROM TUNE (SEE NOTE)	TONE - T. OF PIANO
B ³	RUBBER	1-2-3	5 1/2"				B ³
D	WEATHER STRIP	1-2-3	2"	PENNY	1-2-3	5 1/4"	D
E ³	WEATHER STRIP	1-2-3	1"	PENNY	1-2-3	4"	E ³
F	WEATHER STRIP	1-2	1"	LG. BOLT	2-3	7"	F
G ³	SPLIT BAMBOO	1-2	3 1/4"	WOOD	2-3	2"	G ³
G				BOLT	2-3	2 1/8"	G
A				BOLT	2-3	2 1/8"	A
B	BOLT	1-2	2 1/8"				B
C				BOLT	2-3	2 1/8"	C

*NOTE: MEASUREMENTS ENCLOSED in []'s are read from extreme end of strings rather than from hammer.

Figure 14. Piano Preparations for *A Valentine Out of Season* ⁴⁷

The *suite* is composed of three distinct parts. Part 1 is chromatic, stagnant, and reflective. Half notes are used throughout the movement with occasional rests and accents. Part 2 is dance-

⁴⁷ John Cage, *A Valentine out of season: music for Xenia to play on a prepared grand piano* (New York: Henmar Press, 1960).

like, filled with running eighth notes and repetitive rhythmic patterns. Part 3 combines characteristics of the previous movements. A total of nine pitches makeup the suite: which include B \flat -D-E \flat -F-G \flat -G-A-B-C. The music does not suggest counterpoint or referential harmony. As a result, much of the music can be thought of as one long, unaccompanied melody with prepared sounds. Cage dedicated this suite to his wife, Xenia, just before their separation, and their separation, perhaps, is somehow linked to the suite's title.

1.8 John Cage (1912-1992): *Suite for Toy Piano* (1948)

Suite for Toy Piano was composed by Cage in 1948. This was the first example of a serious piece composed for the toy piano. The suite is in five short, numbered movements.

I

II

III

IV

V

John Cage wrote the *Suite for Toy Piano* as the music for the choreography of Merce Cunningham's ballet, *A Diversion*. "The toy piano is little more than a repackaged glockenspiel. Unlike the real piano's mechanism with many highly calibrated moving parts, the toy piano's action is rudimentary: plastic hammers attached to piano keys strike metal rods when the keys are played."⁴⁸ The toy piano comes in a variety of sizes from small (two octave range) to large (three octave range). The suite employs a very limited number of tones: the nine white keys

⁴⁸ "Toy Piano: Cage 100 Overview," University of Maryland: Research Guides, accessed Feb 13, 2022, <https://lib.guides.umd.edu/c.php?g=327089&p=2195013>.

range from the E below middle C to the F above middle C. All nine tones appear only in the central movements, III and IV. The outer movements, I and V, are limited to five tones from G to D.

There are various ways to perform the piece, depending on the performer. For example, the renowned improviser, Christ Burns used different pianos for the suite. “A-bell like one for the outer movements, a mechanical one for the third and [a] clunky one for the fourth... The best way to play the Suite is to strip away conventional pianistic mannerisms such as might be applied to a piece of Chopin.”⁴⁹ Burns suggests, “[playing] it straight without any subjective involvement, in a mechanical way as far as possible.”⁵⁰ However, Singaporean pianist Margaret Leng Tan suggests a different approach:

“The three inner movements are essays in inventiveness employing the most sparing of means. With its many subtle rhythmic delineations and myriad details of touch and articulation, I had to apply the same level of effort and concentration as with the regular piano. I realized that the toy piano had the potential to be a real instrument. Cage’s meticulous and exaggerated dynamic indications ranging from *sfz* to *ppp* reveal his sense of humor and irony, but he is also challenging the pianist to achieve the impossible. The pianist tries their utmost, and subtle differences do emerge.”⁵¹

The *Suite for Toy Piano* is one of Cage’s most charming and creative compositions. It is remarkably inventive given its limited range and is full of charming melodic lines and beautiful expression.

1.9 George Crumb (1929-2022): *A Little Suite for Christmas, A.D. 1979* (1980)

⁴⁹ Andy Hamilton, “Toy Story,” Rhinegold Publishing, Nov 2015, accessed Feb 13, 2022, https://www.rhinegold.co.uk/international_piano/toy-story/.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

George Crumb (1929-2022) was an American composer of modern classical and Avant Garde music. He was an explorer of unique timbres, unique forms of notation, and extended instrumental and vocal techniques. Crumb composed *A Little Suite for Christmas, A. D. 1979* in 1980. Totalling seven movements, the music is an ‘aural tableau’ that was inspired by the frescoes in the Arena Chapel in Padua, Italy.

I. The Visitation

II. Berceuse for the Infant Jesu

III. The Shepherd’s Noel

IV. Adoration of the Magi

V. Nativity Dance

VI. Canticle of the Holy Night


VII. Carol of the Bells

Commissioned by Enrico Scrovegni, Giotto di Bondone (ca. 1267-1337) completed the frescoes in 1305. Crumb focuses on the Nativity scene, but only the first and the fourth movements relate to specific Giotto frescoes. According to Stephen Burns, “the composer was responding to ‘the childlike, nearly innocent style’ of the painting, rather than creating explicit musical analogues. The piece reflects Giotto’s formal clarity, and purity of color.”⁵²

⁵² Steven Burns, program notes to Feldman: Palais de Mari; Crumb: A Little Suite for Christmas ‘AD 1979,’ performed by Steven Osborne, piano, Hyperion Records., CDA 68108, 2016, CD.




Crumb uses several extended techniques in the suite. These techniques include pizzicato playing (using both fingertips and fingernails), muted tones, harmonics, string glissandos, unique pedaling, and the silent depression of keys.

PERFORMANCE NOTES

- 1) Accidentals apply only to the notes they precede except in case(s) of immediate repetition of pitch or pattern of pitches.
- 2) All metronomic indications are approximate and may vary slightly, depending on the acoustical properties of the hall, etc.
- 3) *A Little Suite for Christmas* requires several special techniques such as *pizzicato* playing, muted tones, production of harmonics, etc. In order that the execution of these effects be accurate, it is important that the strings be clearly marked by bits of drafting tape with the pitches labeled thereon. For *pizzicato* and harmonics, the tape should be placed on the dampers; for muted tones, near the "bridge" (at the end of the string). The following table of pitches includes all those to be specially marked (N.B. The precise nodal point for harmonics can be indicated by affixing a tiny sliver of tape to the string. The strings to be prepared in this manner are distinguished by the symbol [o]. The harmonics within bracket "A" are 5th partial [the node located near the dampers]; within bracket "B," 2nd partial [the node located at the exact center of the string]:
 

N.B. Since the interior construction of pianos varies considerably among the various manufacturers, and even among different models produced by the same firm, the pianist should choose an instrument which facilitates the execution of all the various special effects. It is critically important, too, that the piano be equipped with a correctly functioning *sostenuto* pedal.
- 4) Two modes of *pizzicato* playing are required:
 - a) the string is plucked with the fingertip (towards the center of the string), indicated by "*pizz.(f.i.)*,"
 - b) the string is plucked with the fingernail (at the very end of the string, near the "bridge"), indicated by "*pizz.(f.n.)*."

N.B. Normal playing on the keyboard is indicated by the instruction "on keys."
- 5) Glissandos over the strings are to be played with the fingertip (f.i.). The strings may be strummed in front of the dampers (i.e., between the front crossbeam and the pins) or behind the dampers; the choice, depending on considerations of *timbre* and ease of performance, is left to the discretion of the pianist. The approximate range of the glissando is always given in the score.
- 6) Muted tones are indicated by the symbol "x." In order that the desired *timbre* be produced, the musing should be quite firm and at the very end of the string (i.e., as close as possible to the "bridge" of the string).
- 7) The pedal instructions are precise and should be followed exactly. The following special symbols are used to indicate the pedals:

 I = right (damper) pedal
 II = middle (*sostenuto*) pedal
 III = left (*una corda*) pedal
- 8) All boxed notes are to be silently depressed (vide 6. *Canticle of the Holy Night*).
- 9)



 = three seconds (approximately)
 = six seconds (approximately)
- 10) The composer would recommend that the titles of the separate pieces be included in the printed program.

Figure 15. Performance Notes for *A Little Suite for Christmas*, A.D. 1979⁵³

The first movement, *The Visitation*, is based on the fresco of the same name. The overall harmonic language and its use of birdsong motifs recall the music of Olivier Messiaen. In this movement, Crumb introduces two ideas that unify the entire suite. The first is a series of chords based on whole-tone scales moving in contrary motion, and the second is overlapping pairs of minor sixths moving in parallel motion a major seventh apart.

⁵³ George Crumb, *A Little Suite for Christmas*, A.D. 1979: for Piano : (after Giotto's Nativity frescos in the Arena Chapel at Padua (New York: C.F. Peters, 1980), Program Note.



Figure 16. Chords moving in contrary motion. Crumb, *A Little Suite for Christmas, A.D. 1979. I*, measures 1-4.⁵⁴

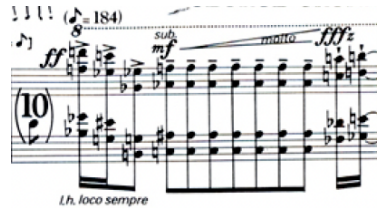


Figure 17. Crumb, *A Little Suite for Christmas, A.D. 1979. I*, measure 5.⁵⁵

The second movement, *Berceuse for the Infant Jesu* is a gentle lullaby with rocking figures in the accompaniment. A strange sound is created by the interference of harmonics on the strings. It is the most gentle and quiet movement of the suite. The third movement, *The Shepherd's Noël*, is built on short, fragmented figures. The extended technique featured in this movement includes the plucking of the strings with the fingernails and running fingertips along a block of strings. The fourth movement, *Adoration of Magi* is the most joyous of the set. The extended technique in this movement involves the pianist playing on the black keys while stopping the strings with the other hand, creating a percussive-pizzicato effect like the violin. In addition, the pianist is instructed to pluck two strings simultaneously, a harmonic and a normal one. The fifth movement, *Nativity Dance* is a frenzied, energetic, and joyous dance. The music is angular and filled with irregular rhythm. No extended techniques are present in this movement. The sixth

⁵⁴ Ibid., 6.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

movement, *Canticle of the Holy Night*, combines melodic figures based on the ‘Coventry Carol’ of 1591.

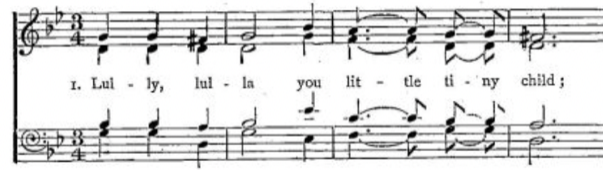


Figure 18. *The Coventry Carol. Measures 1-4.*

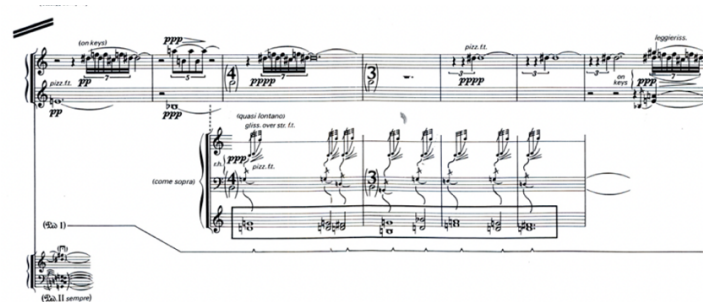


Figure 19. “Coventry Carol”. Crumb, *A Little Suite for Christmas, A.D. 1979. VI, measures 22-28*.⁵⁶

Crumb instructs the pianist to strum directly on the strings ‘like a minstrel’s harp’, which further emphasizes the archaism in the music.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Ibid., 13.

⁵⁷ Burns, Feldman: Palais de Mari; Crumb: A Little Suite for Christmas ‘AD 1979.’

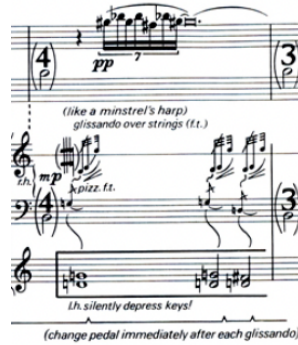


Figure 20. Crumb, *A Little Suite for Christmas, A.D. 1979*. VI, measure 5.⁵⁸

The last movement, *The Carol of the Bells*, is based on the main musical idea of the first movement, *The Visitation*. The extended techniques for this movement include the glissando and the muting of strings.

1. 10 Libby Larsen (b. 1950): *4 ½: A Piano Suite* (2016)

Libby Larsen (b. 1950) is a contemporary American composer. Larsen's musical style and approach comes from her own philosophy about music. The American music critic, Mary Ann Feldman, describes Larsen's music as "adventurous without being self-consciously Avant Garde [with a] style noted for energy, optimism, rhythmic diversity, colorful orchestration, liberated tonality without harsh dissonance, and pervading lyricism."⁵⁹ *4 ½: A Piano Suite* is comprised of five short pieces:

I

II

III

⁵⁸ George Crumb, *A little Suite for Christmas, A.D. 1979: for Piano* (New York: C.F. Peters, 1980), 12.

⁵⁹ William Thomas Walter, "UNCG's Festival of Women Composers," *Classical Voice of North Carolina (CVNC)*, March 26, 2002, accessed Feb 2, 2022, <https://cvnc.org/article.cfm?articleId=4698>.

IV “*In Memoriam*”

V

The five pieces in the suite only “relate to each other through shared crystalized musical motives, which are transformed and developed.”⁶⁰ Individual pieces have their own distinct characters. The character of the first piece is dance-like. Piece I’s musical materials are based on popular, 1940s American dances, such as the boogie-woogie. Constant meter change, unusual placement of accents and syncopated rhythm are common features of this movement.

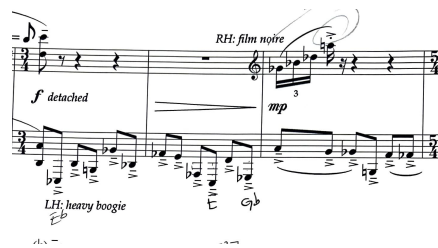


Figure 21. Larsen. *4 1/2 A Piano Suite, I*, measures 17-19.⁶¹

The second piece is written for the left hand only. “It features repeated sixteenth-note pedal notes punctuated by a twenty-one note pitch-string in the outer voices.”⁶² The overall character of the third piece is gentle and flowing. The driving motive of this piece are the first three notes of Victor Schertzinger and Johnny Mercer’s 1941 hit song, “Tangerine.” The same three notes serve as a motive in the fifth piece.

⁶⁰ Libby Larsen, *4 1/2: A Piano Suite* (Minneapolis: Kenwood Editions: Libby Larsen Publishing, 2016), program note.

⁶¹ Ibid., 3.

⁶² Ibid., Program Note.



Figure 22. First three notes of *Tangerine* (1941)



Figure 23. “Tangerine” motif. Larsen. *4 1/2 A Piano Suite, I*, measures 17-24.⁶³

The fourth piece is an “elegy for departed, beloved ones.”⁶⁴ A short fragment of the “Dies Irae” unfolds in counterpoint with itself throughout the piece. The concluding movement is a lively rhapsody. The music is based on the shared musical motives from the previous four pieces, including the use of boogie-woogie rhythms, the reappearance of the “tangerine” motif, and walking-bass figures.

While the writing is not idiomatic for the instrument, the overall technique required to play this piece is not too difficult. A strong sense of rhythm is needed to bring character and vibrancy. The running sixteenth notes in the fast movements should be articulated with a crisp touch to help bring the music to life. Extreme dynamic contrast is another key element in this

⁶³ Ibid., 10.

⁶⁴ Ibid., Program Note.

piece. In particular, the subito piano and forte should be studied and executed with careful consideration. Lastly, a careful consideration should be given to the articulation markings, such as the accent, tenuto, staccato, tied, and slurred notes.

Conclusion

This project hopes to bring some needed attention to the under-studied repertoire of twentieth and twenty-first century piano suites in their various iterations across musical and geographical boundaries.

Arnold Schoenberg's *Suite für Klavier* (1921-1923) was the first piano piece in which the revolutionary twelve-tone row is used throughout the entire work. In form and style, the work featured many aspects of Baroque suites while making use of the standard forms. Helmut Lachenmann's *Ein Kinderspiel* (1980) reflects the ideals of *musique concrète instrumentale*, implying a musical language that embraces the entire world of sounds made accessible through unconventional playing techniques. George Crumb's *A Little Suite for Christmas, A.D. 1979* follows the Nativity scene and was inspired by the Giotto frescoes in the Arena Chapel in Padua, Italy.

This select sampling of suites demonstrates a wide range of compositional and pianistic styles that can be useful for other pianists, teachers, and students. Just as Schoenberg, Lachenmann and Crumb took classical techniques, styles, and motifs and used them to push the boundaries of music, and in this case the Suite in particular, modern pianists and composers can learn from their approach. In doing so, they can further the continuing evolution of piano literature by pushing their own compositional aspirations and pianistic experiences beyond what is familiar, traditional, and accepted.

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