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ABSTRACT

An Exploration and Analysis of William Bolcom's Black Host

by
Lois Gurney

Black Host, a work for organ, percussion, and electronic tape, is essentially a dramatic work. The main characters of the drama are two hymn tunes, the Dies Irae and Donne Secours, whose struggle for predominance direct the course of the work. The texts associated with these tunes imply a tension between fear and hope, especially when seen in reference to the title of the work "Black Host." While the focus of the Dies Irae melody is on the interval of a minor third, Donne Secours centers around a major third. Deeper analysis, however, shows that although the hymn melodies have different personalities, they derive from the same dorian mode and are essentially part of one entity. By the end of the work it is clear that these two distinct emotions and motives can exist side by side.

The work is couched in eclectic musical language, a combination of styles, genres and gestures drawn from both the Western art music tradition and American popular music. Despite the seemingly unrelated blocks of sound, the work has a flow and a unity that belies its contrasts.
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A NOTE ABOUT THE SCORE

The score of Black Host is written in traditional metered notation and graphic notation. It includes free and unmeasured sections with only relative time values, as well as sections with standard time signatures. A glossary preceding the work gives an explanation of the free-time notation symbols. The sections of the score that are marked “free” have few bar-lines, therefore page number and system will identify these portions of the score in the text. For example, "p. 3, S2" refers to the second system of page three.

Two sections of Black Host have bar-lines and are numbered, beginning with measure 1. Both the Passacaglia (pp. 7-12) and the Rag (pp. 13-20) will begin with measure 1 in this document. The parts of the Rag section with simultaneous free and metered time will be identified by their approximate position with respect to the bar numbers.
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

William Bolcom, composer, performer, and academic, has received high accolades in many fields, and has been honored with many awards. His works include four violin sonatas, eight symphonies, three operas (McTeague, A View from the Bridge, The Wedding), several musical theatre works, eleven string quartets, two film scores (Hester Street, Illuminati), incidental music for stage plays, fanfares, and occasional pieces for solo instruments including the Organ. He has garnered four Grammy Awards for his setting of William Blake’s Songs of Innocence and of Experience.

As a pianist, he has performed and recorded his own works, most notably as part of a duo with his wife, mezzo-soprano Joan Morris. Cabaret songs, show tunes, and pop songs from the early twentieth-century are all included in their frequent performances together. Their many recordings include his complete Cabaret Songs, written with lyricist Arnold Weinstein. In addition to working as composer and performer, Bolcom is

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1 Since his first award, the BMI Award in 1953, he has been recognized on numerous occasions. These honors include the Marc Blitzstein Award from the Academy of Arts and Letters for Dynamite Tonite, an opera for actors written with Arnold Weinstein (1966), and the 1988 Pulitzer Prize in Music for his 12 New Etudes (1977-1986) for piano. In 1993 he was admitted to the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and was named 2007 Composer of the Year by Musical America.

2 Appendix V gives a list of Bolcom's Organ works.

3 This truly eclectic work requires huge resources, including actors, solo singers, a madrigal group, a chorus of almost two hundred singers, jazz and rock musicians, and a one hundred piece orchestra that includes saxophones, electric piano, electric violins, guitar and bass.
an educator, having served on the Faculty of the University of Michigan's School of Music as Professor of Composition from 1973 until 2008.

Bolcom's rich store of musical styles has accumulated throughout his life, beginning with his earliest years in Seattle, Washington, where he was born in 1938. As a child he was fortunate to have many opportunities to hear fine music and musicians in the home of his grandparents who hosted many visiting concert artists. Although Bolcom began the study of classical composition at the University of Washington from the age of eleven, his fascination with music encompasses many other styles, including pop, country, rock and roll, and Broadway. He studied composition with George Fredrick McKay (1899-1970) and John Verrall (1908-2001), and piano with Madame Berthe Poncy Jacobson. Bolcom's study with Darius Milhaud (1892-1974) at Mills College continued at the Paris Conservatoire, where he also studied with Olivier Messiaen (1908-1992). During his time in Paris he was able to experience the European "academic" music tradition, and the work of composers such as Pierre Boulez (1925-).

The thesis examines the development of Bolcom's eclectic musical style developed in part through the influence of his teachers. McKay had a love for American folk music, jazz, and blues. John Verrall, a former student of Zoltan Kodaly, encouraged experimentation and exposed him to his own compositional resources, such as symmetrical scale systems. Milhaud's music embodied a free spirit where jazz idioms and Latin American rhythms find a comfortable place, a far cry from the controlled innovations of the post World War era. Milhaud incorporates the sounds of improvised

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4 John Verrall used a nine-pitch scale, made up of a changeable central pitch straddled by two tetrachords that have a natural tendency of forming symmetrical harmonic and melodic shapes.
jazz, for instance, in *La création du monde* (*The Creation of the World*, 1923). Bolcom’s free spirit was well suited to Milhaud’s eclectic approach. It was through Milhaud that Bolcom came to know the works of Ernesto Nazareth, pianist and composer, who, through his waltzes and tangos, was instrumental in developing a Brazilian style of music. Bolcom was fascinated by the music of Scott Joplin for the same reason. Joplin melded the classical forms of the march with syncopation of dances such as the “cake-walk” to create a true expression of American music.

Messiaen, Bolcom’s last teacher, has enlivened the repertoire of organ music by creating works of endless color and imagination using a technique some have referred to as “juxtaposing blocks of sound.” Among other things, Messiaen uses the many possible colors of the organ to imitate birdcalls. *Chants d’oiseaux* (1951), for instance, combines bird song with blocks of eastern rhythms. As we shall see, Bolcom adapts this idea into the realm of popular music in *Black Host*, and combines the organ’s ability to imitate various instruments, with the capability of percussion, to form a jazz ensemble, comprised of bass, trap set, keyboard, and various solos. Messiaen’s use of added notes alters the sense of tonality in his works, and as a result the music seems to move from one unresolved chord (or discord) to another. *Black Host* has passages that are reminiscent of the added note chords in Messiaen’s earliest published composition, *Le banquet céleste* (1926) for organ.

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6 The C-sharp Minor triad, for example, has an added D (p. 3, S2), and is reminiscent of the sounds in Messiaen’s *Le banquet céleste*. 
From his early days as a composer, Bolcom has had mentors who have exposed him to different worlds of music, from the Latin American rhythms of the *tango*, to jazz and blues, and blocks of color. These all combine to form a rich array of resources, a strong foundation for his free spirited eclectic style.
CHAPTER II

BLACK HOST AND ITS PLACE IN MUSIC AFTER WORLD WAR II

William Bolcom’s best-known and performed compositions for organ include Black Host, four books of Gospel Preludes, Hydraulis, and Borborygm. His first and perhaps most ambitious organ work, Black Host, written in 1967, is a work for large pipe organ, percussion (chimes, cymbals and bass drum) and electronic tape. It was premiered on the Hill Auditorium Aeolian-Skinner organ at the University of Michigan in 1968 by organist and composer William Albright, with the assistance of Sydney Hodkinson. The original version made use of an actual radio, while the 1970 revision rendered a score that was easier to read and added a prepared tape part.

Although the piece is not performed frequently, it has received critical acclaim because it is a dramatic work, technically challenging for the organist, and because it illustrates Bolcom’s remarkable ability to merge diverse musical elements and styles, such as a hymn tune, a chant melody, rag-time, jazz, pop and atonality into the fabric of the work. It is also a very attractive and colorful piece, requiring frequent stop changes.7 The two main characters of the work are two hymn tunes, the Dies Irae and Donne Secours, which weave their way through the piece. Their interaction creates waves of tension that culminate with the climax of the prepared tape part. I conclude that the form

of the work, in its broadest sense, is derived from the musical gestures that define it: an atonal section is followed by a passacaglia, a rag, and a chorale. Although the work is made up of many varied styles and gestures, a closer examination reveals that Bolcom has subtly expressed a sense of both duality and unity within the piece.

In *Black Host* Bolcom has created a synthesized musical statement using the techniques of the avant-garde European school of composition, musical gestures gleaned from centuries of Western Art music, and sounds from popular American culture. Indeterminacy, electronically manipulated sounds, and new organ playing techniques such as arm and foot clusters and glissandi (expressed in graphic notation and ideograms) also all play a role in the work.

Bolcom is among those who have at times questioned the traditional boundaries of Western classical music. He does not turn his back on tradition, but rather uses all the resources from his musically diverse past, developing a style in which the definition of music has become broader and the barriers between specific genres have become broken down. He does not feel compelled to limit his writing to a typically "serious" classical idiom, and happily draws from any musical genre that he feels will suit his expressive needs. In *Black Host*, Bolcom has melded forms and gestures from the European music tradition with genres of popular music that have grown from American roots: rag, stride, 1920's dance music, jazz and rock music. These secular elements join together with hymn tunes, and are couched in both tonal and atonal musical contexts. It will be helpful to take a closer look at the various "worlds" of music that have been influential on Bolcom's style, and in particular his composition, *Black Host*. 
The horrors of the Second World War led, in some musical quarters, to a rigid, intellectual approach to the writing of music in the Western art tradition. Some agreed with Theodor Adorno that "to write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric!" Some responded to the reality of the Holocaust and the threat of the Atom bomb with a musical expression that was more controlled. Along with this came a suppression of subjectivity, and schools of composition centered on electronic music, and techniques or aesthetics such as indeterminacy, and serialism. Composition centered in Darmstadt relied heavily on resources that supported experimentation and innovation, and was often limited to those who had these resources. The research done in the Studio for Electronic Music of the North West German Radio in Cologne since the 1950s gave rise to works that incorporated the sounds of prepared electronic tape. Works by Karlheinz Stockhausen, such as his Kontakte (1959-60), illustrate the possibility of achieving a synthesis of dissimilar musical elements.

The strict control of the twelve-tone system, originating in the post 1921 works of Arnold Schoenberg, developed into integral serialism, an application of the serial principles to many aspects of a work. In contrast, aleatoric composition is based on a chance process by the composer and/or the choice of the performer. Indeterminate compositions, such as 4′33″ (1952) by John Cage, reflect his focus on sound and silence.

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9 Karlheinz Stockhausen's Kontakte, a four-track tape, was conceived as a self-contained piece. Live performers playing the piano and percussion parts were added at a later date.

10 The four movements of Schoenberg's Fourth String Quartet, 1939, are based on a single tone row.
Cage's *Music of Changes* (1951) is the result of his throwing dice and referring to the *I-Ching* (*Chinese Book of Changes*) to make his compositional decisions.

While Bolcom does not use serial techniques in *Black Host*, atonal and dissonant elements are fused with tonal ones. Sections do include all twelve tones, and sometimes pitches are added progressively to complete the aggregate. The chimes part has aleatoric elements, a middle ground texture between the stark blocks of sound and silence at the beginning and the end of the work. While the prerecorded tape in *Black Host* does have manipulated sounds, it contrasts with Stockhausen's *Kontakte*, because *Black Host* incorporates recognizable pop and jazz.

By the 1960s many composers felt a need to reconsider the essence of music as an expressive medium rather than a cerebral abstraction. The "new" music they produced had a more relaxed manner, and used the vast resource of varied styles throughout the history of music as a reference point. Some American composers, such as Gunther Schuller, as well as Bolcom, borrow sounds and styles from their American past, in the tradition of Charles Ives.\(^{11}\) *Third Stream*, a term coined by Gunther Schuller in 1957, describes an expression of music that fused jazz with classical techniques such as serialism; improvised works with composed works.\(^{12}\)

Bolcom has applied a free, eclectic spirit to his works. He is particularly interested in his style as a statement of American culture and music. He borrows from a wide variety of American music styles, and these references often make an immediate connection with his audiences. The roots of many American music styles, such as

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\(^{11}\) *Variations on "America"* (1891) by Charles Ives, is a set of an introductory theme, chorale and five variations for Organ.

\(^{12}\) His *Transformation* (1957) is a three-part work with an improvised middle section, and outer sections that call to mind works by Webern.
ragtime, blues, jazz, and rock-in-roll, lie in Africa. The blues are similar to laments sung in the rural south as early as 1900, and jazz grew from an improvisation on these tunes. Composers and artists, such as Bolcom and William Albright, performed and wrote rags, and were among the first academics to accept these genres into art music. The rise of soul music in Chicago and Memphis took place around the same time, from 1959 to 1963. Bolcom has used all of these as resources in his works, and particularly in *Black Host*.

In addition to this, the increasing advancement of the media, music technology, recording and broadcasting techniques after the Second World War had an enormous impact on popular music styles around the world. Instrumental innovations such as the electric guitar, and the advent of multi-track recording in the sixties opened the doors to new sounds as well as flexibility and sophistication in recording techniques. By the mid to late 1950s Rock and Roll had a stronghold in the United States and in Great Britain. Bolcom feels that these technological advancements should be reflected in the world of "serious" music. The electronic tape part in *Black Host* is a reflection of both these advances; "... a collage of rock, filtered and mixed, STEREO".

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13 Berry Gordy's Motown record label in Chicago favored an elegant, gospel-influenced style of artists such as Stevie Wonder, the Temptations, the Four Tops, Smokey Robinson and the Miracles, Marvin Gaye, and Diana Ross and the Supremes. The more blues-derived style of Aretha Franklin, Otis Redding and Wilson Pickett were recorded on the Stax Label in Memphis.

14 In the 1960s, instrumental innovations like solid-body electric guitars with powerful amplification and the ability for sound distorting effects, developed hand in hand with the new recording techniques and the growing media opportunities in radio and television. Electronic keyboards, including synthesizers, were added to the combination of electric guitars and drums.


Bolcom berates the stuffiness of "serious" music, and believes that all musicians, regardless of specialty, should learn from each other. In fact, he decries the term "serious music" because "it implies that everyone not in it is not serious - popism, I suppose; it's almost racist." He feels that style and genre limitations are stifling, and as a result, his works incorporate the many different colors and flavors he has gleaned from the world of Classical and popular music. This eclectic approach reflected a so-called postmodern spirit that welcomed the pluralism and rich diversity of the world.

Bolcom has a fascination with the juxtaposition of style, genre, and gesture. His intent is not necessarily to smooth contrasting sections, and he sometimes takes advantage of the shock value of juxtaposition. Screeching glissandi juxtaposed with a chorale setting of an old Genevan Hymn tune in *Black Host* makes a terrifying statement. His music is "what it seems," in this sense: If it sounds shocking, he means it to sound shocking, with no underlying irony or parody.

Robert Carl describes Bolcom as "unrepentantly eclectic." Bolcom may thus be accused of having no style of his own. In an interview with Elliott Schwartz and Barney Childs he counters:

In that I have not patented a type of interval treatment or poured the same stylistic brown sauce on all my pieces, I plead guilty. But I do have faith in my total style; I am in love with the many genres of music and

17 Ibid., 482.

18 An example of the ironic approach can be found in the work of Bolcom's colleague, William Albright. The program notes to his, *Curio II (trio)* state "this is also a dream piece... some portions evoke briefly a wandering improvisation by an inebriated Sunday School organist." William Albright, *Organbook III, Twelve Etudes for Small Organ* (New York: Henmar Press Inc., C.F.Peters Corporation, 1980), program note.

have learned that it is important to respect the genre you are contributing to if you want its expressive potential in your music. My use of it transforms the style into “something of mine,” and there a careful musicological reading will find similar chicken-tracks musically in everything I’ve done.  

Although William Bolcom’s formal training in the European compositional style is evident in his early works, glimpses of his American roots still appear. The year that *Black Host* was written, 1967, was a turning point, "when he ceased to care what other academic composers thought of him." While *Black Host* has atonal and dissonant elements of his early style, it includes a rag, for instance, which predates his involvement with the ragtime revival. Often with virtuoso flare, he has the ability to meld each disparate element into a tightly woven whole that has a natural flow that gives each style validity.

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CHAPTER III
ORGAN MUSIC TRENDS AFTER WORLD WAR II

Works written for the Organ after World War II follow the main compositional trends of the time. Features of the twelve-tone method are found in Schoenberg’s only significant work for the Organ, *Variations on a recitative*, Op 40 (1941), although the work refers constantly to a D-minor tonic. Similarly, Walter Piston presents a tone row at the same time as its retrograde at the beginning of his *Chromatic Study on the name Bach* (1940). Other Post World War II serial works that have been added to the organ concert repertoire include *Shimah b’Kohli* (1962) by Vincent Persichetti, commissioned for the opening concert of the Aeloian-Skinner Organ at Lincoln's Center Philharmonic Hall in 1962, and *Musica dominicalis (Sunday Music)* (1957-59) by Petr Eben.

Indeterminacy and a new way of hearing sound and silence, a legacy of John Cage, have influenced composers such as György Ligeti in his compositions for organ. His *Volumina* (1961-62, revised 1966) is a work made primarily of clusters and special effects, such as adding stops or turning off the blower while holding down keys. His graphic notation and symbols are equivalent to the sounds that he evokes, and the shape of the clusters, for instance, is more important than the individual pitches. *Etudes* (1968) by Lucas Foss has tone clusters juxtaposed with a hymn-tune. Bolcom's *Hydraulis* (1971) ends with the switching off of the organ motor, and a lifting of a yardstick with a slow glissando until the sound has almost disappeared. *Black Host* in turn, incorporates
blocks of sound and silence in two places; at the beginning, and close to the end
(Example A: p. 1; and Example B: p. 22, S3 - p. 23, S1), as well as the long B minor
cord at the end of the work.

Example A: The identical chords at the beginning of *Black Host* (p. 1, S1.)

Example B: The chordal section at the end of *Black Host* (p. 22, S3 - 23, S1.)

Electronically prepared tape combined with organ had a brief vogue in the 1960s.
Bolcom’s *Black Host* joins the ranks of works in this vein by composers Daniel Pinkham,
Richard Felciano, Mauricio Kagel, and Henk Baldings. *Black Host* requires very little
synchronization of the organ and percussion with the tape, and logistically is very
successful. The start of the prepared tape part is given in the score, and Bolcom provides
instructions for the organist and percussionist to stop playing with the upward glissando heard on the tape. Other works for tape and organ are more precisely synchronized. The organist requires a stopwatch in *Reverberations* (1970) by Ronald Perera. Elliott Schwartz gives precise tape cues, with notation divided into 15-second intervals in his work *Prisms* (1974). Bengt Hambraeus specifies a tape recorder with variable speed that is tuned to the organ, and loudspeakers that are placed above the heads of the audience in *Constellation I, II, III* (1958-61).

The colors that were so integral to the harmonies of Olivier Messiaen, a major contributor to organ literature, were often the result of his specific registration directives. Messiaen frequently asks for mutation stops, for instance, so that the fundamental sounds are less present. His suggestion of flute 4', nazar 2 2/3', doublette 2', and piccolo 1' in the pedal in measures 11-12 of *Le banquet céleste* (1926) renders a combination of sounds one octave, an octave and a fifth, two octaves, and three octaves above the given pitch. Composers' fascination with the coloristic possibilities of the organ continues after Messiaen. *Alleluyas* by Simon Preston, *Tanz-Toccata* (1970) by Anton Heiller, and works by William Albright also experiment with color. William Albright states in the program note for his *Organbook III*, for instance, that "each movement exploit[s] a different aspect of organ sound." He specifies certain registration sounds, for example, "reedy": 8' 2', or 1'" or "I. & II. Highest sounding mixtures or stops," with "Ped. 8'".

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22 Hambraeus explains, "Constellations I has provided all the basic material for the tape-composition Constellations II, and this tape, in its turn, must be used together and synchronized with the solo organ-part in Constellations II. Bengt Hambraeus, *Constellations I-II-III*, (Stockholm: AB Nordiska Musikforlaget, 1974), preface.

Flute.\textsuperscript{24} Similarly, Bolcom's registration specifications in \textit{Black Host}, on p. 2, S1, for the pedal part to use only 4' flute, places the pitch of the pedal part in the manual register, giving the pedal a non-traditional role.

\textsuperscript{24} Ibid., 8, 17.
CHAPTER IV

EXTRA-MUSICAL REFERENCES IN BLACK HOST

In addition to the musical references present throughout the work, the title Black Host alone invites scrutiny, and questions of its significance beg to be asked. Does the word "Host" refer to the consecrated wafer or bread that is offered in the Christian Mass? Or could this, alternatively, be a reference to the black triangular or hexagonal consecrated host used in Black Mass rituals, such as that celebrated by St. Sécaire to cleanse the impurities of the church? Is the title a reference to Black Mass rituals where the liturgy is celebrated backwards? Why would an heretical-sounding title be given to a work for the organ, an instrument that has such strong connections to the church?

Further questions arise when one notices the presence of two hymn tunes that weave their way through the work. In the middle of a seeming confused mixture of "fast, skittery" notes or frightening upward and downward slides, the two tunes, the Dies Irae and Donne Secours appear and seem to relate to each other as characters in a drama. Although Bolcom deliberately omits the first two notes of the Dies Irae tune, there is no doubt that he is quoting the first two phrases of the melody. Appendix I gives the complete melody of the Dies Irae, while Appendix II is a four-part setting of Donne Secours with text by Georgia Harkness.

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Ibid., 2, S2 - 3; 3, S3 - 4, S4. See Examples F, G, H, I.
Why do these liturgical tunes appear at the same time as disruptive or disturbing musical gestures? Why did Bolcom choose these particular tunes? Do the melodies have similar characteristics? Do the implied texts have any relevance in the context of this work? It is necessary to look into these extra-musical references in more detail before examining the purely musical gestures in *Black Host*.

William Albright’s comments on the work provide some insight.

> “the work is not a tone-poem on the tribulations of St Sécaire. Nor is it an exegesis on moral dualism, a dark ray of non-hope, or an uplifting sermon on the virtues of Calvanism (as it has been variously called). Even though *Black Host* flagrantly juxtaposes several recognizable styles within it’s time-span and is unified by the ghost of an old hymn-tune found in the Genevan Psalter, neither is it program music. It is an emotionally based piece, and if it is about anything, it would be fear. The score is even inscribed with the rueful words of Lord Russell: ‘In the daily lives of most men and women, fear plays a greater part than hope: they are more filled with the thought of possessions that others may take from them, than of the joy that they might create in their own lives and in the lives with which they come in contact. It is not so that life should be lived.’”

Albright states that the title is not about the Black Mass rituals per se but about fear. While the word “Black” is associated with darkness and fear, what does the word “Host” refer to? Perhaps the darkness is so big that it has the capacity to engulf someone, rendering them a "Host" of the darkness. This reading would seem to imply a personal darkness. It is possible that the texts of the hymn and chant will present some additional insight.

The *Dies Irae*, translated “Day of Wrath”, is the name given to the plainchant most commonly allied with the Sequence for the Mass of the dead in the Roman burial service, the Requiem Mass. The name of the chant melody comes from the first two notes from the record jacket.

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words of the sequence, *Dies irae, dies illa!* The composer of this melody, one of the more well known tunes of the chant repertory, is anonymous, but is assumed to have been active during the time of Adam of St. Victor (also known as Adam Praecentor [cantor] of Notre Dame) who died about 1146.\(^\text{27}\)

The *Dies Irae* text is based on a late twelfth century adaptation of Zephaniah 1:15-16. Although there has been much speculation about its authorship, it is possible that the final form of the *Dies Irae* text was drafted by Franciscan Thomas of Celano, (ca. 1190-1260). Through the ages, more than one hundred and fifty translations have made their way into the English language. They all express the fear, hopelessness, and terrifying horror of judgment day, including poems by British poets such as Sir Walter Scott.\(^\text{28}\) The conclusion of his poem, *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1805), a paraphrase of the first part of the *Dies Irae*, has not followed the form of the Latin text, but nonetheless preserves the spirit of austerity in the original text.

That day of wrath, that dreadful day,  
When heaven and earth shall pass away,  
What power shall be the sinner's stay?  
How shall he meet that dreadful day?\(^\text{29}\)

The fear and hopelessness expressed in this text has come to be associated with this twelfth-century plainchant.\(^\text{30}\) In fact, the tune is so repetitive that the first two

\(^{27}\) Since Adam of St. Victor was a known writer of sequences, he could possibly be the composer.

\(^{28}\) The *Dies Irae* was first found in Italian Missals from the fourteenth century, and then later in the fifteenth century in France. It was one of the four sequences retained for use in liturgy by the Council of Trent (1545-1563) and was included in the Roman missal in 1570 with the papacy of Pius V. Missals of other countries adopted it later.

phrases of the tune are all that is needed to express the musical essence (and dark intent) of the text. In the case of Black Host, the Dies Irae is clear in a truncated form without the first two notes. Although settings of the Dies Irae as independent works, apart from the Requiem mass, first appeared in the early baroque motets of the French court, the dramatic connection of the plainchant melody with the text has subsequently been used to great advantage by composers of secular music, in particular during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. As a result, the incipit of this tune alone has the power to instill feelings of dread and fearfulness.

Not only is the Dies Irae melody clear in the fifth movement, “Dream of a Witches’ Sabbath,” from the Symphonie Fantastique (1830) by Hector Berlioz, but so is its macabre intent. The orchestration of the Dies Irae melody is colorful and expressive. The chant is stated clearly in low brass and woodwinds, the atmosphere already set up by chiming bells (an association Bolcom will also use in Black Host). The tune has a menacing tone as it twirls between pizzicato strings, clarinet, and piccolo. Many other composers have used the Dies Irae in a variety of contexts.\(^{31}\)

\(^{30}\) See Appendix I for the complete Dies Irae chant.

\(^{31}\) Franz Liszt’s Totentanz (1849) is a set of variations on the Dies Irae theme. Other examples of the purposeful dramatic presence of this melody in instrumental music are Dance Macabre (1874) by Camille Saint-Saëns, Isle of the Dead (1909), and the Rhapsody on a Theme by Paganini (1934) by Sergei Rachmaninov. Twentieth century composers have quoted the Dies Irae incipit, including works by Claude Debussy, Nuages (Trois Nocturnes pour Orchestre, 1904), and Arthur Honegger’s oratorio La Danse des Mortes (1938). The chant tune is found in the violin part in the fifth movement (Dance Macabre) of George Crumb’s Black Angels: Thirteen Images from the Dark Land, for electric string quartet (1970) inspired by the Vietnam War. Organ pieces incorporating the chant melody are Dies Irae by Charles Villiers Stanford (1852-1924), Fantasie on “Dies Irae” by Francis Snow (1890-1961), and Dorian Prelude on “Dies Irae” by Bruce Simmons (1895-1989).
The second hymn melody in *Black Host* is *Donne Secours*, meaning "Give relief." The tune name is given to the melody associated with the versified translation of Psalm 12 found in the Genevan Psalter of 1551. Louis Bourgeois (1510-c1561), director of music at the St. Peter's Cathedral in Geneva, was the principal musical contributor to the *Genevan Psalter*. A translation of Psalm 12:1,2 reads:

Help, O God, for there is no longer anyone who is godly;  
The faithful have disappeared from humankind.  
They utter lies to each other;  
with flattering lips and a double heart they speak.

The transmission of *Donne Secours* through the English-speaking world can be traced by its presence in hymnals. Today the hymn tune is found in many contemporary American hymnals. The most common setting found in twentieth century hymnals by Georgia Harkness (1954), *Hope of the World*, is a paraphrase, not of the

32 Alternate tune names are *Seigneur*, meaning "Lord", *Genevan 12* or *Psalm 12*.

33 John Calvin, the sixteenth century Christian reformer, introduced the singing of psalms in the vernacular into public worship services. By 1533 the first rhymed, metrical translations into French appeared in the work of Clément Marot (c1497-1544). The later addition of further French metrical psalms by Théodore de Bèze (1519-1608) culminated in the formation of the *Genevan Psalter* (*Trente quatre pseaumes de David nouvellement mis en rime francoise au plus pres de l'Hebreu, par Théodore Besze de Veelay, en Bourgogne. Geneue. 1551*).


35 The *Genevan Psalms* were taken by immigrants to the Netherlands, Hungary, and South Africa, all countries with a strong Reformed Christian tradition. *The Complete Psalter* of 1562, revised in 1566 and 1567 and published by John Daye, was the first English Psalter to include tunes from the *Genevan Psalter*. Although this collection was taken to the American colonies, with the exception of a few tunes, the Genevan tunes fell out of use in the English-speaking world. By 1767 *Donne Secours* had appeared in North America in a setting for one voice. Hopkinson adapted Tate and Brady’s *New Version of the Psalms* in a way that they could be sung with traditional Dutch tunes.
Psalm 12 text, but of the biblical passages Romans 15:13; John 6:35, and John 8:12.\textsuperscript{36}

The first verse of Harkness's paraphrase is an interesting contrast to the original Psalm 12 text.

"Hope of the World, O Christ of great compassion:
Speak to our fearful hearts by conflict rent.
Save us, your people, from consuming passion,
Who by our own false hopes and aims are spent"\textsuperscript{37}

The \textit{Dies Irae} text and Psalm 12 text share a somewhat bleak outlook. While the translation of Psalm 12 seems to be a comment on the \textit{Dies Irae} text, the text by Harkness seems to correspond to the translation of the tune name, \textit{Donne Secours}, "give relief."

Thus, the implied textual references of these two tunes, the \textit{Dies Irae} and the \textit{Donne Secours}, present different messages. One text refers to fear, the terror of death, and the hopelessness of human existence, while the other looks for hopeful solutions for the world.

Example C: The dorian mode, and the placement of the \textit{Dies Irae} (without the first two notes) and the \textit{Donne Secours} tunes:

\begin{center}
\textbf{DONNE SECOURS} \hspace{2cm} \textbf{DIES IRAE} \hspace{2cm} \textbf{DONNE SECOURS}
\end{center}

\begin{center}
\textbf{DIES IRAE}
\end{center}

While both melodies are in the dorian mode, and use a preponderance of the intervals of seconds and thirds (not uncommon for a chant melody), they each have a

\textsuperscript{36} Appendix II is a four part setting of \textit{Donne Secours} to the text by Georgia Harkness.

\textsuperscript{37} Jeffery Rowthorn and Russell Schultz-Widmar, eds., \textit{A New Hymnal for Colleges and Schools} (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 547.
different character. Bolcom has highlighted the minor third by omitting the first two notes of the original Dies Irae chant, a contrast to the opening major third of the Donne Secours melody. Example C illustrates how the first five notes of each tune (a truncated Dies Irae, and the Donne Secours) fit into the dorian scale. The first five notes of each melody contain the same intervals: major third, minor third, and two major seconds. However, the focus of the Dies Irae melody is on the lowest three notes of the scale, a minor third and major second, and the melody is downward moving. While the Donne Secours melody moves outward and upward, it centers around the third, fourth and fifth notes of the mode, a major third and major second, and as a result it sounds brighter. Thus, these two tunes each portray a distinctive character. The Dies Irae tune, related to the interval of a minor third or a minor triad, might be called “dark” and implies the presence of fear. The Donne Secours tune, sometimes represented by a major third or a major triad, might be termed “light” and refers to an expression of hope.
CHAPTER V
MUSICAL REFERENCES

Black Host is made up of blocks of contrasting musical gestures, styles, or genres. A study of these various elements will help to clarify the form of Black Host. Appendix III presents a formal summary of Black Host. The first column shows that the work can be divided into seven sections. Musical references and gestures are indicated in the second column, while the presence of the Dies Irae and Donne Secours melodies or motives are noted in column three and four.

The first of the seven sections, the Prelude, begins with a series of seven identical loud chords separated by long silences (Example A.) Section II, like the overall structure of the whole piece, is constructed of varying textures and elements and introduces the main characters of Black Host. Strings of fast notes bustle around the two hymn tunes presented in long note values (Example H, I); Baroque “sighs” or suspensions (Example G) left hand playing on the Unda Maris stop) expand into majestic chromatic chordal blocks of sound (p. 6, S3-4); and Baroque-like cadences alternate with chords and flourishes (p. 6, S1-3.) With the exception of the hymn tunes, all these gestures are couched in atonal language. Although the “organ gestures,” as they will be termed, are powerful statements, they seem a little overdone, a caricature.

The bass drum enters at the beginning of Section III, which will be called, suggestively, “A Storm Brewing.” During the course of this section there is a growing
sense of disquiet from the subtle rise and fall of pitches, combined with the shortening note values. The forceful pedal ostinato exaggerates this forward momentum and exemplifies another Baroque form, a Passacaglia, which serves as the framework for improvisatory jazz gestures such as anticipations, off beat rhythms, and grace notes.\(^{38}\) The chime part in this section is aleatoric; part of the compositional decision-making is put into the hands of the percussionist. While a collection of pitches is given on p. 11, m. 48, the individual notes may be played in any order, Bolcom gives an interval of a minor ninth as the range for the pitches, with an example melodic contour on p. 10, S2. Though the pitches for the long chime solo on p. 12 are suggested, the composer notes that others are possible.\(^{39}\)

Section IV, "Carnival Time," begins somewhat hesitantly, with a free section in the form of colorful atonal questions that are interspersed with jazz-inflected progressions. The effect is of a quiet memory of times past. A few recognizable notes of the *Donne Secours* melody introduce the carnival, in the form of an energetic and playful rag that has elements of other popular dance music. The syncopated rhythms, off-beat accompaniment, walking bass line and cymbals sound like a jazz combo group ready to entertain. This is the first appearance of a key signature in *Black Host*, D-flat major. The sounds of a crowd and pop music emerge from the prepared tape part. A gradual change takes place and the crowd sounds are peppered with screams. The tape-sounds become

\(^{38}\) The Passacaglia is a continuous variation form that grew out of the repeated chord progressions played on guitar between stanzas or at the end of songs. These improvisations developed into a predominantly instrumental form that used a repeated four measure long bass ostinato as the basis for the piece. The height of the popularity of this form was during the seventeenth century, perhaps reaching its apex in Johann Sebastian Bach's *Passacaglia in C Minor, BWV 582* for the Organ.

more intense at the same time as the sounds of the organ become more discordant and the cymbal articulations more frantic.

The height of frenzy at the word “DETONATE!”, on p. 20, S2, is expressed by extremes in pitch for the organ, and dynamic extremes in all the parts, shown in Example D. Section V is marked by a juxtaposition of screaming organ glissandi with the "light" theme, a four-part chorale, and punctuated with the ethereal sound of chimes. When the screams take a breath, the chimes, like church bells, clamor to be heard, perhaps a reminder of the earlier relationship of the chimes with the “dark” theme of the Passacaglia.

Example D: The climax of Black Host (p. 20, S2.)

The final chord of the chorale, a D-major triad, gives a sense of triumph. The sound of the chord diminishes, and the calm that ensues, in the form of a wistful flute melody, is corroborated by the presence of accompanying major triads that prolong the major tonality.

Section VI features seven chords, recalling the same gesture in Section I. These chords, however, contrast with the harsh cluster chords heard at the beginning of the
piece. They have been changed by the dramatic events that have unfolded, and instead of loud, abrasive sounds, the sounds are soft and gentle. This is not the end, however. The bass drum, which has been a subtle presence underneath these soft chords, begins a slow crescendo that grows in volume inexorably until the organ enters with a long $ffff$ chord.$^{40}$

This brief introduction to the musical and extra-musical elements in *Black Host* beg for further analysis, which will be done in the following chapters.

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$^{40}$ Bolcom specifies 30-40 seconds. Ibid., 23, S2.
CHAPTER VI
THE PRELUDE AND AN INTRODUCTION TO THE CHARACTERS

The seven fortissimo chords and the long silences at the beginning of Black Host pose an interpretive challenge (Example A, p. 1.) The first chord is a précis of the whole piece, a foreshadowing of things to come. It expresses the central idea of the whole work: that duality can express unity. This one chord contains elements of both the Dies Irae and Donne Secours motives, as well as two spellings of the tritone, the diminished fifth and the augmented fourth. The audience in Mozart's day may have had the same response to the overture to Don Giovanni, where the dramatic opening chords introduce music that is associated with the Stone Guest and the demise of Don Giovanni and his escapades - sudden dramatic music which dispenses with the customary introductory character of an overture.

Stark blocks of sound are placed between six or seven seconds of silence: a harsh duality. This gesture has relevance for the rest of Black Host on many levels. While the chords might be identified with the stubborn pedal ostinato of the Passacaglia that follows, and the silence with the compliance of its left hand accompaniment, there are also connections to the major "light" and minor "dark" motives heard throughout the work. The chords are made up of three clusters of notes, where the organist plays "as many notes as described by the interval," together with specific notated pitches.\(^{41}\)

lower two clusters have an outer interval of an augmented fourth and a diminished fifth, statements of the same pitch class interval. This correlation between the two statements of the tritone foreshadows other expressions of duality throughout Black Host.

The upper given notes of the first chord (D-flat, B-flat, C, A-flat), contain the same intervals as the first four notes of the Dies Irae quotation on p. 3, S3 (Example H: G, E, F-sharp, D.) Note too that the C, A-flat, and B-flat are the first three notes of the Donne Secours melody (Example H.) Thus, these two melodies are part of each other. Example E illustrates the correlation between the four notes of the chord, and both the first four notes of the "dark" melody, and the first three notes of the "light" melody.

Example E: The first four notes of Dies Irae melody and the first three notes of Donne Secours transposed to fit with the top four notes of the first chord.

A texture change and some surface rhythm at the top of p. 2 introduce a new section. The new activity highlights the stasis of the previous section. The seven repeated chords seem to be stuck, or frozen in one place, like the repeated “vamp,” common in early tin pan alley tunes. Once the cycle has been broken and more dynamic music begins, we feel the opening as an introduction.

Section II is in two parts. The second expands and develops the foreshadowing gestures stated in the first part.\textsuperscript{42} The initial announcements are manual flourishes leading to the major and minor hymn motives in long notes. Below the hymns are heard

\textsuperscript{42} Section I: pp. 2, S1-3, first whole note; Section II: p. 3, S1, after the comma to p. 7, S1, before the double bar.
quick passages, Baroque cadential statements, exaggerated “sighing” suspension figures, and extended “deflating” chromatic chordal passages that are interspersed with pedal parts.

The four upper notes of the first flourish on p. 2 are the same top notes as the previous static chords, once again referring to the Dies Irae and Donnes Secours tunes, but here they cascade downwards. An immediate about-turn is heard in the following dramatic four octave upward glissando to the interval of a minor third. The soft 4’ pedal, with the Dies Irae motive intervals (C, A, B), connects the glissando with the first germ of the Donne Secours melody in long note values above the fast notes (p. 2, S1-2). Because of the registration, the notation is deceptive; the pedal part sounds in the same octave as the right hand part.

Example F: The high, long notes move down a skip of a major third followed by an upward second, the first three notes of the Donne Secours melody (p. 2, S2).

The discrete motives of the two hymn tunes appear before their full statements, as if to highlight the essence of each melody: the major third of the “light” theme and the minor third of the “dark” theme. Example F shows the long B-flat, G-flat, A-flat, the first three notes of the Donne Secours melody, a major third followed by a major second. Example G shows the second motivic statement, with thicker texture, and a falling minor
third in long notes, perhaps a premonition of the Dies Irae melody, which will be heard later. The first two notes of the Dies Irae are absent so that the beginning interval is a minor third.

Example G: The Dies Irae motive in high, long notes, followed by the sighing motive in the left hand (p. 2, S3.)

Example H: A flourish leading up to the long, high notes of the first phrase of the Dies Irae. The Donne Secours melody appears in long note values underneath the quick notes (p. 3, S3-4.)
The complete hymn tune and two phrases of the chant melody follow once again, disguised by flighty figurations around them. The “dark” theme, in a high register, smothers the underlying first phrase of the “light” (Example H.) The fast passagework continues over a duet of the last three phrases of the “light” theme. The second phrase of *Donne Secours* continues straight into the fourth phrase over the third phrase (Example I.)

Example I: The second, third and fourth phrases of *Donne Secours* lie underneath the fast passagework. The duet is constructed with the elided second and fourth phrases above the presentation of the third phrase of *Donne Secours*, (p. 4, S2-3).

The appearance of an exaggerated 32’ reed pedal solo at the beginning of the development highlights a caricature of a Baroque organ gesture (p. 3, S1). The performance practice of slowing down at the final cadence of a contrapuntal organ work is actually written into the score as it would be performed, as is the case at the end of
Bach’s *Toccata and Fugue in D minor, BWV 565*. While this stereotypical organ gesture is not a cadence, it nevertheless puts the spotlight on the full statements of the two hymn tunes that follow. The caricature continues on p. 6, where suspensions alternate with dramatic flourishes and chords emphasize the interval of a minor third.\(^{43}\)

Although all twelve chromatic notes are included in this section, each appearance of the hymn tune motives implies a tonality, albeit clouded by the surrounding flourishes. The *Donne Secours* motive suggests E-flat minor (p. 2, S2). The *Dies Irae* motive suggests F minor (p. 2, S3). The full *Dies Irae* is in E dorian minor, while the complete *Donne Secours* passage is in C dorian minor (p. 3, S3- p. 4, S2).

Within this section a few tonal chords make a striking statement because they appear in an otherwise atonal context. The tonality of C is made explicit in the nine-note triad at the *Maestoso*, which contains five Cs (p. 2, S4). This section also gives us a few instances of added note chords that are reminiscent of Messiaen’s *Le banquet céleste*.\(^{44}\) The first chord on the top of page three provides another example of the layered approach we have already heard in *Black Host*. The manual parts are in C-sharp minor, while the pedal notes are both spelled D-flat. The manual and pedal parts seem to be conceived in different keys: the pedals in a “flat side” tonality, initiated in the C-minor *Maestoso*, while the manuals gravitate to a “sharp-side” tonality soon thereafter.

A recollection of the opening chords occurs on page four. It is here we have the first inkling that the chords had a foreboding message, since they appear to interrupt the statements of the *Donne Secours* tune. These sudden chordal outbursts strike out from

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\(^{43}\) Some suspensions are ornamented.

\(^{44}\) For example, the right hand manual chord on p. 3, S2, m 2 (E, G-sharp, C-sharp, and D) has an implication of a C-sharp minor with an added D in the manuals.
the fast atonal passages. At first the outbursts come from above, then from below, and then alternating. It sounds like an argument that starts slowly, and escalates to involve everyone in the vicinity.

As a whole, Sections I and II present a few of the basic elements of *Black Host*: the two tunes, and their major third and minor third motives; the duality between the augmented fourth, and diminished fifth, and between D-flat and C-sharp; furthermore, a sense of unease has already been cultivated, through the jarring chordal interruptions. The passacaglia, which follows, develops these ideas of duality and unity even further.
CHAPTER VII
THE PASSACAGLIA

A *forte* bass drum entrance hails the beginning of Section III, the Passacaglia. It ushers in a surprising new metric feeling, and the first time signature in *Black Host* a simple quadruple time. The defining element of the Passacaglia form, the repeated two measure pedal ostinato, contrasts with the aleatoric chime part and the free flowing improvisatory jazz style of the solo parts played on the organ manuals. The pedal and the left hand accompaniment (except for mm. 21-24) form the framework around which motives from the hymn melodies are repeated, ornamented or manipulated with grace notes, anticipations or upward ending phrases (Example J.) Other jazz gestures, such as offbeat accented notes, and stretching rhythmic patterns into triplets or quintuplets over contrasting rhythms such as duplets, abound. A sense of excitement results when the ever-changing rhythms stretch, or the note values become shorter, within the ever-steady passacaglia ostinato patterns.

The pedal ostinato drives the whole section, and is a constant presence, even when its pattern changes briefly. Within the dramatic narrative, this pedal ostinato acts almost like a controlling individual, who may be a constant presence in the "actions" of others, even when separated from them. The left hand accompanying ostinato joins the
pedal with the exception of a few measures of "freedom" (mm. 21-24). The drama of this section seems to center on the attempts of the left hand to be free of the pedal.

Example J: The steady two measure pedal and left hand ostinati, and the jazz idioms that appear in the right hand (p. 7, S2-3). Note the first B-flat to F in the left hand.

The collections of notes used to construct each of the tonal "voices" within the passacaglia come from the two hymn tunes. The moving notes which begin the left hand accompanying figure: B-flat, A-flat, C, D-flat, C, make up a collection of notes that include the first intervals of the Dies Irae tune (p. 7, mm. 1-2.) The essential notes in the pedal ostinato (E-flat, B-flat, G-flat, and F) come from the first notes of the Dies Irae melody (p. 7, mm. 1-2). The note that binds these two ostinato patterns is the common

\[ F-\text{flat} \]

\[ F-\text{sharp} \]

The F-flat is a passing note.
B-flat, the note at the core of the left hand ostinato. The B-flat is the pattern's central note; it lies in between the span of two perfect fifths on either side of it.

As we will see, a deeper study of the tonality and melody of the Passacaglia presents a multi-faceted picture of this part of *Black Host*, and can be found in a condensed chart form in Example L. Tonality is used to express at turns diversity and unity. The beginning E-flat dorian mode section features a pedal ostinato that centers around the E-flat, while the left hand accompanying part has a different perfect-fifth identity as its core, based on B-flat. On three occasions both pedal and left hand parts move briefly to the subdominant A-flat dorian mode (mm. 25-28; 45-46; 50-51). This modulation is highlighted by a different ostinato pattern that is accompanied by a measure of changed meter. The pedal A-flat in m. 25 is the middle note of the left hand accompanying progression, a pattern which continues in this place throughout the A-flat section while the left hand planes through the A-flat dorian mode. After the second A-flat statement (mm. 45-46), one would expect the left hand and the pedal to move back to their original pattern, as the duality has become an entrenched part of the passacaglia. Example K shows that instead of the usual perfect fifth (B-flat and F) in the left hand accompaniment (m. 1), the interval in m. 47 changes to a major sixth (B-flat and G-flat.) The tonality of both parts subsequently becomes a unified E-flat dorian mode (pp. 11-12, mm. 47-49, 52-55). Here the E-flat unity is achieved at the expense of the left hand, which changes from an F to a G-flat to fit in with the pedal ostinato. This means that the essence of the left hand, which at first expressed a tension inherent in its identification with the "F", has once again been lost to become a consonant assenting figure with the pedal ostinato. The *Dies Irae* motive appears in its most succinct form in the last five
measures of this section, where it is combined with a rising scale passage, another aspect of this section (mm. 45-48). The end of the first statement of both the tonic section and the subdominant A-flat section (p. 10, m. 29), the approximate halfway mark of the Passacaglia, coincides with its highest note, its registral climax.

Example K: The first two measures (m.45-46) are in A-flat dorian modality. The B-flat - G-flat in the left hand (m. 47) is different for earlier statements of B-flat - F, and now a more unified E-flat dorian mode (p. 11, S2-3.)

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46 Mm. 52-55, is a repeat of mm. 45 - 48.

47 The section has 55 measures plus a free Chime solo.
Example L: Passacaglia Form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>section</th>
<th>measure</th>
<th>tonality</th>
<th>pedal/LH key</th>
<th>section</th>
<th>measure</th>
<th>Melody</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>1 to 24</td>
<td>I with added F</td>
<td>E-flat</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>1 to 21</td>
<td>Sharp centric</td>
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<td>Ascend</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>(left hand changes)</td>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>21 to 44</td>
<td>Flat centric</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>29 to 44</td>
<td>I with added F</td>
<td>E-flat/B-flat</td>
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<td>Highest note</td>
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Both tonality and register suggest an overall binary form, with a more dynamic second section. Non-motivic gestures in the solo (or sometimes duet or trio) lines further reinforce the binary division since they have a different character in each half.

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48 The keys move from E-flat dorian minor/with the left hand association with the "F", via A-flat dorian minor to E-flat dorian minor.
The lines in the first part descend in waves, and are much like the character of the *Dies Irae* melody. It seems as if the many attempts to move upward are counterbalanced by downward cascades, until with an enormous effort, seen in the rocking chords, tremelo and glissando (mm. 25-28), the line pushes forward to the climactic high G-flat. Even with several downward turns, the main movement in the second part has a more positive air. It moves upward, as if moving towards the "light," as does the *Donne Secours* melody.

Duality is also seen in the presence of two different minor motives in the first phrases of the melody. The first phrase, made up of the notes of the *Dies Irae* in G-sharp minor, focus on the minor-third, major-second, and minor-second intervals, upward for the first time. The highest note here, a C-sharp, becomes a C-natural at the end of the phrase, an enharmonic preparation for the B-sharp in the following phrase (pp. 7-8, mm. 3-12). The core of the second phrase (m. 13-24) is the descending D-sharp to B-sharp "dark" minor-third motive. The B-sharp, another enharmonic reality, changes the tonality from G-sharp minor to G-sharp major. The three dominant notes in the second phrase: G-sharp, B-sharp, and D-sharp, form a G-sharp major triad and confirm the tonality. One cannot help but notice another duality here. A D-sharp in the key of G-sharp minor would be the beginning note of the *Donne Secours* motive, which would normally be followed by a B, the interval of a major-third. The change to a major tonality renders a minor-third, from G-sharp to B-sharp. A G-sharp major mode changes the "light" motive into a "dark" motive. Both major and minor are expressed at the same time.

The rocking motion in the right hand in mm. 25-28 emphasizes the E-flat to G-flat minor third, the *Dies Irae* motive in E-flat minor. These notes appear (with a D-flat)
once more in the next phrase (mm. 38-52) in a highly embellished solo form. The melody begins in the tonality of E-flat and changes to a D-sharp tonality in m. 45, where the D-flat in the previous measure is tied to a C-sharp in m. 45.

The enharmonic notation in the right hand part expands the concept of the duality of E-flat minor/D-sharp minor. Measure 21 contains a D-sharp tied to an E-flat (Example M). Similarly, the G-sharp before this tie changes to an A-flat after the tie. Apart from a few notes, the measures before this are written with no flats, only sharps (mm. 4-21). After the D-sharp/E-flat tie (mm. 21-44), everything is written in flats, with the exception of one F-sharp in measure 22. This continues until the end of m. 44, where a D-flat is tied to a C-sharp. The rest of this section has no flats (mm. 45-52).

Example M: The enharmonic D-sharp tied to E-flat in measure 21 marks the end of the first, sharp-centric section of the ternary division of the Passacaglia (mm. 19-21). The attempt of the left hand to experience freedom is found in m. 21 when it begins to move with the right hand.
The specific enharmonic spelling of the melody lines now divides the Passacaglia into three divisions; sharp-side to flat-side, and back to a sharp-side tonality. This is reminiscent of the D-flat/C-sharp chord in section II (p. 3, S1). Each section of the three-part division also corresponds with other changes in texture or tonality. The beginning of the B section coincides with a change in the texture of the left hand accompaniment, and the C section begins at the entrance of the second A-flat minor section. Section A corresponds with the ostinato in the tonic with the left hand "F", while section B has one ostinato statement in the subdominant and one in the tonic. This shows a gradual movement from duality, to duality mixed with unity, and then total unity of the left hand and pedal part. However, the return of the melody to D-sharp in m. 45, the beginning of section C, is yet another interesting enharmonic "double entendre."

Furthermore, the instrumental texture is different in each section. The A section has organ and bass drum, with no chimes, the B section has chimes with the organ and bass drum, and the C section has chimes with the organ and a longer solo part. The long concluding chime solo serves to balance the earlier organ solo.

Whether considered binary or ternary, the whole Passacaglia projects an overall arch shape. The tension grows with the rise and fall of the melody line and dynamics, and the shortening of the rhythmic values against the steady ostinato bass in “slow, inflexible rock tempo” (p. 7, S3.)

The individual pitches appear in succession and form a complete chromatic aggregate, but not as in serial music, where order is important. Rather, new pitches are gradually added to the first F-sharp until the full chromatic twelve tones are present. The

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49 Example L gives a summary of the Passacaglia. Section A: mm. 1-21; Section B: mm. 21-44; Section C: mm. 45-55.
pace of the pitch accumulation differs, and this pace has a formal significance. It takes thirty one measures for the left hand accompaniment to reach the twelfth note, "A", on p. 10, S1 (Example U.) The “A” is highlighted because it is the “landing note” after a glissando that continues as a long tied note for four measures. The significance of this gesture will be comprehended when it returns in the chorale section.

The right hand, in contrast, completes the aggregate earlier in m. 19. Hereafter, the notes arrive in quick succession, and tension and pitch density begins to mount in both manual parts. The arrival on the subdominant (p. 9, mm. 25 - 28), and the presence of a major tonality (shown in the B-sharp in m. 13), have initiated discomfort: A kind of "aggravation" is heard in the addition of voices in the right hand (m. 14), and when the left hand joins in (m. 21), both hands clamor anxiously upwards.

The wide choice of colors on the organ make it possible for each manual to express a color that might suggest the sound of a different instrument, the bass, keyboard, winds and reeds. Each entrance of the solo part has a different color. The first, on the solo manual (mm. 4-12) has loud 8' and 4' flute and principal stops. The next phrase is played on the Great manual (mm. 13-32), and has 16', 8', and 4' principal and flute stops, a richer, more orchestral sonority, while Bolcom's suggestion of "solo: a pungent choice of stops; eg. Heavy loud solo reeds" in m. 38 could suggest a saxophone, or a combination including an oboe or bassoon.

The form of the Passacaglia proves to be a flexible vehicle for the expression of many dualities, and the short two measure ostinato patterns are short enough to accomodate the flexible themes and variations. The left hand ostinato is pulled in all

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50 The rise of tension in the rag section, as we shall see, also begins on the subdominant key.
directions, from being a separate yet integral part of the ostinato group, to joining the melody line at the time when tension is beginning to grow (mm. 21-24), changing once again to join with the A-flat of the pedal in m. 47. In the Passacaglia we have duality in many forms. Not only do we see the dual personality of the left-hand accompaniment, which moves from F to G-flat in the course of the Passacaglia and switches allegiance from one part to another, we see a duality of enharmonic notes and keys. The subdivision of the section into discrete parts corroborates this. This Passacaglia can be heard in two parts, and also in three parts, another expression of duality within this one part of Black Host. The rising and falling tension in the Passacaglia softens with the long chime solo, and prepares the listener for the change in mood that follows in the Rag section.
CHAPTER VIII
THE RAG SECTION

The core of the Rag section is a lighthearted, melodious rag tune, complete with cymbal and prerecorded tape, and an atonal introduction. In the course of this section, the character of the rag disintegrates and tension mounts to create the climax of the whole work.

*Black Host* is a work that exhibits little semblance of tonality in many of its sections. Much of what is written is atonal, or at least lacks any reference to a key. The Passacaglia section has no key signature, but has a distinct modality. The first appearance of a key signature is on page thirteen (D-flat major), at the entrance of a rag tune. A short atonal section precedes the signature and acts as a bridge between the reflective solo chimes and the upbeat rag tune. The atonal section begins quietly with relative rhythms and melody lines moving in waves.

The suggested registrations in this atonal section are very colorful. The organ chimes specified for the first entrance aurally connect the earlier percussion chimes with this new section. Not all organs have chimes, and Polly Purcell Brecht has suggested a comparable sound such as 8' with 2 2/3' stops, played up an octave.\(^1\) The Swell reed-stops contrast with the Great manual’s 8’ flute sounds, and the Choir manual’s 4’ flute and strings. This passage suggests an interesting conversation between very different

Example N: Personalities expressed in the passages (p. 12, S5-6); a, a surprise entrance and exit; b, a question about the sudden entrance; c, a smart quip; d, a sentence spoken by two people.

personalities, almost as though a comical scene is being played out. One can imagine a character who walks placidly into the room, looks around and then hurries out (the descending and ascending arpeggiated figure, marked “a” in Example N). Another looks up and questions the surprising entrance and retreat (the disjointed but slower staccato notes marked “b” in Example N), while another funky character makes a smart quip (the third phrase, made up of a downward figure, three groups of notes played on a nasal-sounding Vox humana stop, a quick upwards and downwards flourish on 4' flute and strings, thus sounding an octave higher, and ending on a short chromatic group of notes, marked “c” in Example N). At one point a character finishes another’s sentence (the phrase marked “d” in Example N has four different sound colors, and the nasal Swell
protrudes in a peculiar way), and a general disjointed feeling permeates the scene, the result of the “commas” indicated in the score.⁵²

The “long-note duet,” beginning with G and B, at the top of p. 13, S1 (Example O), suggests G-major, but B-flats interject in the pedal and accompaniment parts. Here the music articulates both a major and a minor G tonality, thus creating another duality. All of this activity takes place over a five note pedal statement of the “light” Donne Secours hymn motive as seen in Example O.

Example O: The G tonality is in long notes above the statement of the Donne Secours melody in the pedal (p.13, S1-2).

It is at this point that the D-flat rag arrives, a typical rag with respect to its off-beat left hand accompaniment, and syncopated melody.⁵³ The typical “oom-pah” left

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⁵²See the Glossary in the text for an explanation of the free-time notation.
hand of ragtime is found only in the C section (Example P, mm. 44-70). The more active
left hand and bass line at the beginning of the rag take up the characteristics of other
popular dances of the 1920s, such as the rhythm of the *Charleston* in section B (m. 28-
43),\(^{54}\) and stride, a later development of ragtime.\(^{55}\) The “oom-pah” bass-line of Fats
Waller’s *Valentine Stomp* (1929) has the flavor of a countermelody, similar to the
walking bass-line heard at the beginning of the *Black Host* rag. Bolcom follows the
general form and metric pattern of Joplin’s rags. Here, instead of Joplin’s usual time
signature, Bolcom gives “2 which still has the feel of two, but is easier to read. He
suggests a fast metronome tempo of half note equal to 152. As concerns performance,
Bolcom has stated elsewhere, “You’ve got to remember that it [a rag] is first and
foremost a dance! And it must feel like a dance; you should still feel as if you could
dance to it.”\(^{56}\)

While Bolcom’s harmonies here are, on the whole, typical of ragtime, with a
majority of major and minor triads, dominant and diminished seventh chords, he does

\(^{53}\) Ragtime developed from African American forms of song such as plantation spirituals,
minstrel shows and work songs, and had elements, such as the “oom-pah,” stemming from the
brass band and classic march. Classic ragtime came to its peak in the United States with the
music of Scott Joplin at the turn of the twentieth century. After World War I popular music
shifted to swing, jazz and then to popular song forms. William Bolcom, along with William
Albright, a colleague of many years at the University of Michigan, did much to promote the
recognition of ragtime as a unique classical American art form by performing and composing
rags. The 1960s revival of ragtime came to a peak with the 1973 release of the movie “The
Sting” that featured a number of Scott Joplin’s rags such as *The Entertainer* (1902).

\(^{54}\) The *Charleston* is a fast fox trot, written by jazz pianist James P. Johnson that was
popular in the 1920’s.

\(^{55}\) Stride developed in Harlem in the 1910s and 20s, and was particularly popular in the
1920s. The style was more flexible and virtuosic than the classical rags of Scott Joplin.

\(^{56}\) An interview with Yueng Yu found in Yeung Yu, *A Style Analysis of William
include added note chords, minor and major seventh chords and augmented triads. The introductory eleven bars of the rag in *Black Host* present seven bars of a walking bass line in D-flat Major moving through the chord progression I- IV- V7- I- V7/ii- ii- V7- I.\(^{57}\) The pedal then moves from its descending D-flat major scale to four measures of Alberti bass, placing a deliberate emphasis on the D-flat triad before the rag tune enters. This scalar pedal passage is the first fragment of a *Can-Can* quotation that will return a few times between m. 71 and m. 92, where we hear its fullest statement. Appendix IV gives a summary of the form of the rag section.

Example P: The oom-pah pedal and left hand pattern is heard in mm. 44-70.

\[ \text{\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{example.png}} \]

The prepared electronic tape is cued just before the Alberti bass settles into D-flat major. The beginning of the rag also exhibits a melody line made up, once again, predominantly of seconds, and thirds, reminiscent of both "light" and "dark."

\(^{57}\) The walking bass-line is more characteristic of stride than rag.
The rag is organized into the usual sixteen-measure strains, each with four, four-measure phrases. Its form (ABBCDDD) uses a typical ragtime structure, similar to Scott Joplin's *Maple Leaf Rag* (AABBACCDD). The key structure in *Black Host* moves from major to relative minor, back to tonic, to subdominant, and then returns to the tonic once again. The appearance of the relative minor in the B section is a colorful addition to the usual tonic key.

The cheerful atmosphere of the rag is gradually undermined by the sounds from the tape, foreign tonalities, and the gradual stripping of both the spirited melody and the left hand accompaniment. The pedal part continues its tonal bassline, while the other parts gradually deteriorate.

Example Q: The G tonality reappears in m. 57 against the subdominant G-flat tonality of the Rag (p. 17, S1.)

The G tonality from p. 13, S1 (Example O) reappears in m. 57 before the repeat of the Trio (or C) section, a contrasting section in the subdominant key (Example Q). But
the chord here is strikingly juxtaposed with the subdominant of the rag, G-flat major.

This dissonant clash weakens the change of key to the subdominant. The G-major moves to a diminished chord flourish and more seventh chords while the rag pedal and the accompaniment parts continue. The independent right hand part, now in no specific key, is joined by the left hand, and becomes increasingly strident. A chromatic chordal statement then moves stealthily above the continuing pedal part of the rag. At this point, the tape introduces more screams and the cymbal gives in to “a sense of growing frenzy” (p. 18), contributing further to the rag’s break-down. The Can-Can melody, which up to now has only made fragmented appearances, takes over the pedal part in m. 87 (Example R: p. 19, S3), everything accelerates, and the cymbal player “freak[s] out” (m. 93), until the tape part makes an upward glissando and both performers stop playing (mm. 97-101). The gradual fermentation of fear into frenzy is enhanced by the constant activity of the pedal, cymbal, and the tape part.

Example R: The can-can in the pedal part accompanies the frenzy in the tape, organ and cymbal parts (p.19, S3.)
Once the rag melody disappears, the manual parts in this section are reminiscent of the extended chordal "sighing" blocks in Section II, which sound like a slow cluster of notes crawling downwards at an uneven pace. The "deliberate" passage at the end of the atonal section (beginning on p. 6, S3) and the Maestoso section (p. 2, S4) both creep downward, while in the rag the music creeps slowly downward and then upward by step, like an ominous unknown presence moving furtively closer and closer in the pitch black of night. In addition, the increasing density of notes creates further tension. The right foot pedal accompanies the left foot pedal can-can tune and both hands play slow-moving cluster chords moving upward to the climax point, the upward glissando of the tape, when the percussion and organist stop playing. The organ and chimes pause for about eight seconds while the tape gathers momentum, after which the chimes play a mighty double glissando and the bass drum and organ enter on the word "Detonate!" (Example D, p. 20, S2).

The electronic tape part is only three minutes long. It is a collage of prerecorded pop music, voice sounds, crowd sounds, and screams. The sound of various artists and rock bands performing rock and roll, rhythm and blues, and soul music mingles with the sounds of a carnival. The sounds are manipulated and at times distorted by heavy static noise, so that strains from the various sources weave in and out of the listener's consciousness. One gets the sense that someone is adjusting the dial of a radio, randomly changing stations and volume. The beginning of the tape is so quiet that it is difficult to discern whether the sounds are crowd noise or soft music. Gradually different elements protrude: bass guitar, drums, guitar, and the sound of an orchestra, violins, or parts of pop songs. The words, "I need", "I need", "Bird, bird, bird", "love somebody", "your
loving” and “you’re always” appear. Gradually, the background noise gets louder and overshadows the sounds of the organ and percussion. At the same time, the sounds accelerate and the voices become high screams. The frantic pace moves along with heightened pitches in the organ part. Gradually the pressure subsides and the focus is momentarily on the words, “Dancing in the streets.” The quieter pace and the subsidence of the drama still includes talking and whimpers, and the Beatles sing “Help me if you can, I’m feeling down.” This final reference by the Beatles is clearly audible. It recalls the title of the hymn tune, Donne Secours, meaning, “Give help!”

The overall effect of the cymbals when added to the organ, just before the second eight bar phrase, is that of a jazz combo. Much of the cymbal part is improvised as it would be in jazz or pop music. The bass drum has only two notes here, each signaling eight bars in the subdominant key. This is a preparation for the fffff drum entrance at the height of the drama, the beginning of the chorale section.

The tape part is short and yet its presence heightens the festive atmosphere of the carnival at the beginning of the rag, and adds music references that many listeners can relate to. The audience can also identify with the voices, at first enjoying memories, perhaps, of friends at the carnival, and then when the music becomes more frantic, the screams change the enjoyment to fear. In this way, the tape binds the percussion and the organ together at the height of the drama, and leads the way to the next section of the

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58 Surfin’ Bird by the Trashmen (1963), and a rhythm and Blues song, Baby, I need your loving “ by the Four Tops (1964).

59 Dancing in the streets by Martha Reeves and the Vandellas (1964).

60 Help! is the title song of both the movie Help! and the album Help! by the Beatles (1965).
work, the powerful and emotive entrance of the "light", the *Donne Secours* melody in four parts, juxtaposed with screeching glissandi.
CHAPTER IX
THE CHORALE SECTION

In the narrative of *Black Host*, the Chorale section marks a peak of emotion. Tension, which has mounted constantly from the beginning of the work, culminates at this point. The disquiet in the passacaglia has grown to fear in the rag section. Dramatic organ and percussion glissandi work to amplify the increasing terror in the rag to an overpowering realization that everything is out of control. A moment of total despair is projected at the passage marked with the word "Detonate." This word marks the climax of the whole piece, and is the beginning of section V (Example D, p. 20, S2.)

The organ part requires the organist to use both arms and feet to perform the cluster and the rising and falling glissandi that follow, a gesture that makes use of the full range of the organ and the full physical involvement of the organist. The percussion part also expresses its full range here: from the *fff*, two-directional chime glissando, to the heavy, low bass drum beat that follows.

Another organ glissando, sounding like a high-pitched scream, serves as a dramatic introduction to the *Donne Secours* tune. The strong statement of the hymn tune, in the form of a four-part harmonized chorale, brings to mind the earlier calls for help: the reference to *Donne Secours* in the pedal just before the rag enters; and the

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61 The second glissando is on a different manual, the Choir or Swell, with a registration comprising a predominance of 4' and 2' partials, and leaves the Great manual free for the Chorale. The 4' and 2' partials sound an octave and two octaves higher than written. The score notes on p. 20, S2 state "like a scream: highest notes possible."
appearance of the Beatles song, “Help me if you can” in the tape part. The extremes of the organ and percussion parts express the intensity of that cry.

Example S: The apex of these glissandi are F-sharp, E-flat, D-flat, an augmented second followed by a major second (p. 21, S2-3.)

The D-minor chorale, the “light” theme, is played in a dark, low register on the organ, and is far removed from the recurring wave of the screams. The chimes enter at the end of the sobbing gestures, as if they are a continuation of them, and their overtones connect the chorale and the screams. When the sounds from the tape diminish to nothing, the highest notes of the glissandi move from their sentry post, the “highest notes possible”. The glissandi continue, but now the apex of the phrases is specified: F-sharp, E-flat and D-flat, and back to D-flat and F-sharp (Example S, p. 21, S2-3). This
progression of the augmented second and major second is an aural statement of the minor third, major second motive of the *Dies Irae* tune. The presence of this disguised minor third expresses that the "dark" is still present with the "light."

Example T: The last glissando slides down to an A, the note that corresponds with the word "hope" in the Georgia Harkness text (p. 22, S1).

![Musical notation](image)

A last outburst of emotion takes place over the final hymn phrase, and the glissando slides down from an F-sharp to join the chorale melody on an A (Example T), a note that corresponds with the word "hope" in the Georgia Harkness text (Appendix II). A similar passage, a high G-flat glissando down to an A in the Passacaglia (p. 10, m. 31), can be seen here in a new "light" (Example U). The glissando moves from the peak of tension at the end of the passacaglia to a glimpse of "hope," and relative calm. Both move to an A from enharmonically equivalent notes G-flat and F-sharp, with the F-sharp a preparation for the last chord of the chorale, a D-major triad.

Throughout this section, the chimes, like church bells, ring out until the scream gesture joins the hymn tune. Unlike earlier chime passages, however, this section is not aleatoric. The chime part expresses every interval except the major third and the perfect
fifth interval, the "light" motive. The chimes, throughout, have had a subdued, ethereal quality, and have functioned as a link, connecting each sobbing gesture in the chorale with the next outburst. Their subtle support of the "dark" here highlights this omission of the "light" motive.

Example U: The G-flat glissando down to an A in the middle of the Passacaglia foretells the coming of the "hope" at the end of the chorale (p.10, m.31).

The final D-major chord changes the course of the whole work, and is the culmination of the chorale section. The quality of the final chords of each phrase moves progressively to the climax of the D-major chord. The first phrase ends with a D-minor chord, and the second with a confused cluster that becomes an A-major chord. The third, a C-major chord, is the lowered seventh of the D-minor tonality, while the final chord introduces a striking modal shift to D-major.

There is a significant break in all parts before the D-major chord, a tierce de Picardie, an acknowledgement of the word "Hope." It is the first simultaneous break of the hymn, glissandi, and chimes in this section. The glissandi have been a constant
presence at the phrase ends of the chorale, and the chimes have connected the screams. This comma highlights the fact that the *Donne Secours* chorale is originally a minor mode melody. The D-major chord is actually a new gesture, and it ushers in a new atmosphere with an emphasis on the major mode, on "hope."

At first hearing, the appearance of the chorale may be the relief (needed to quell the vociferous screams) suggested by the tune’s name and confirmed by the final *tierce de Picardie* cadence. However, the D-major chord emphasizes that the *Donne Secours* tune is a part of the "dark" motive. This is supported by the subtle presence of the *Dies Irae* motive in the glissandi, and the absence of the major third and perfect fifth in the chimes.

Example V: The reverie here is accompanied by major triads (p. 22, S2.)

When the D-major *forte* chord diminishes and the reverie section, a series of major triads, follows above the pedal D, the tonic chord moves to the subdominant, G-major (via the passing chord, C), and one expects the progression to move back to the tonic (Example V, p. 22, S2). A “churchy” plagal cadence would be a confirmation of the ongoing presence of hope. This “Amen,” a positive “let it be,” would confirm the
resolution, and the end to the past agonies. But the cadence is delayed because the G-major is tied into the next section.

Our expectations, however, are eventually thwarted and the calm, wistful melody that floats above these chords is misleading. Its movement is mainly downward, and the presence of the augmented second interval (E-flat to F-sharp), reminiscent of the augmented second in the chorale section (Example S, p. 21, S2), suggests a lingering unease (p. 22, S2). As a result, the question of the G-major chord and its resolution undermines the D-major tonality, and the hymn tune expressing “light” does not ultimately express an underlying optimism.
The final second inversion G-major triad from the previous section leads to seven chords, much like the gesture which began *Black Host*. These chords, however, are not the brash articulations heard at the beginning. They have been changed by the events that followed them in the course of the work. Instead of loud, harsh, abrasive sounds, G-major chords blend with the two major and minor motives, both “light” and “dark” once again in one chord. Example W illustrates that the major motive dominates these chords. The first four notes of the *Donne Secours* melody can also be found in these last seven chords, though the *Dies Irae* tune is only represented by two notes. By the seventh chord, the G-major triad has disappeared and it seems as if the music will fade away without a resolution of the G-major submediant chord.

Example W: An illustration of the dominance of the *Donne Secours* melody in the last seven-chordal section (p. 22, S3 to p. 23, S1).

The coda, consisting of a drum roll and a chord, sums up the whole drama. The bass drum, which has been a subtle presence underneath these soft chords, begins a slow

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62 This is a shift from the earlier chords where the *Dies Irae* melody predominated.
crescendo that grows and grows until it cannot get any louder, and the organ enters with a long \textit{ffff} chord. The sense of resolution is equivocal, at the least, as our elation is grounded in the reality of the emotional ups and downs of the drama. It is not the tonic major, as expected, but rather the relative, B-minor. The long-held final chord is very deliberate. Its 30 to 40 second length emphasizes the silence between the seven chords, both at the beginning and just before this point. The movement of the overtones in the concert hall dance despite their origin as long held notes.

This B-minor statement has historic associations that are worth noting. Many scholars and composers over the ages have asserted that certain keys have emotionally affective qualities. During the Baroque era, the B-minor tonality was an expression of sadness, or melancholia, and the acceptance of one's fate or suffering. Bach's St. John's Passion is written in B-minor and Beethoven labels B-minor as a "Black key," a reference that has particular relevance here.\textsuperscript{63} D-major, on the other hand, is known as the Baroque key of splendor. Handel's \textit{Hallelujah Chorus}, a well-known, uplifting chorus from the \textit{Messiah}, is written in D-major. The long B-minor chord here is an invitation to listen to the swirling sounds, with perhaps a thought or two about the drama and maybe the words of Lord Russell from the score preface:

\begin{quote}
"It is not so that life should be lived."
\end{quote}

CHAPTER XI

CONCLUSION

*Black Host* is a dramatic illustration of William Bolcom's eclectic style. Within a single work we find elements of popular, sacred, classical and secular music, sound and silence, aleatory, and electronic sounds. *Black Host* has many recognizable forms, gestures and styles of music, and many of the quotations in the tape part are a familiar part of American pop culture. This analysis of *Black Host* attempts to illustrate that a combination of many disparate parts can be melded into a unified whole. Bolcom is able to fuse these elements into a seamless whole even when the drama inherent in *Black Host* is essentially an expression of duality.

*Black Host* nevertheless has some shocking juxtapositions that exaggerate the contrasts. The superimposition of a G-major tonality onto a G-flat major in the rag is a strident union, and marks the degeneration of the rag into a spiraling web of terror. While the screaming glissandi are perhaps an antithesis of the chorale, they finally move downward to rest on the chorale melody on the word "hope", followed by an ensuing sense of calm.

On the other hand, the two contrasting motives sometimes fit together seamlessly within a single context. The first chords of *Black Host* express both major and minor motives. The corresponding chords at the end of *Black Host* also include both motives, and yet the character has a different focus. The strong presence of the *Dies Irae* motive
changes to a more gentle presentation of the Donne Secours major motive. The gesture is
the same but it carries a more positive message.

A constant dialogue between these two melodies takes place throughout the work,
yet it is the fragments of the hymn tunes that are memorable. The entrance of the Donne
Secours melody, just before the entrance of the rag, appears with both the major and the
minor third of the tonality, and leans towards a more unified expression of the hymn
tunes. This revisited G tonality at the end of the rag creates some cohesiveness.
Movement of the tonality in the pedal and left hand parts of the passacaglia creates a
binary form, while the enharmonic spelling of the melody notes in the same section
creates a ternary form. All these diverse elements are combined at many levels.

The glissandi in Black Host often take on a shocking character, but they also act
as a unifying agent. The glissando at the beginning of p. 2 is a wide glissando, and
balances the glissandi and arm clusters at the top of p. 20. Each acts as a bridge between
contrasting sections. The first glissando is a bridge from the loud chords to the more
sedate quick passagework with the hymn tunes. The glissando on p. 20 prepares the way
from the ffff climax of the drama to the low pedal and left hand notes and the high
glissando with the right hand. The sighing motives (pp. 2-7) develop into extended
chromatic chordal blocks of sounds that move upward or downward, creating in effect, a
slow glissando.

Black Host is, by all means, a dramatic work. Some of the satisfaction of
performing this work comes from the ensuing animated discussion of the meaning of the
piece. Both the musical and non-musical elements are suggestive, but not prescriptive.
While it may be easy to interpret the overall dark mood that pervades the piece as evil (in
the light of the title), the interaction between the two hymn tunes in the course of Black Host, and their placement in the same dorian mode, have illustrated that darkness and light cannot exist without the other. An in-depth analysis illustrates a structure that is unified at many levels. The reality is, however, that the inclusions of so many familiar gestures make a performance of this piece a very personal experience. As such, each performance will be interpreted in a manner that is dependent on one's recollections and emotions regarding these references, or how one feels at that moment. Whatever the case may be, Black Host is an expression of both "dark" and "light" as it is experienced in an everyday world. Feelings of joy at the sound of the rag may change quickly to fear, and the cry for "help" may be a cry that one does not lose "hope".
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1. Music Scores


2. Recordings


Ritchie, George, and Albert Rometo. *New music for organ and percussion.* Titanic Ti-175, 1990. CD.

3. Books, Dissertations, Theses, Database


APPENDIX I

DIES IRAE MELODY

APPENDIX II

DONNE SECOURS HYMN

1. Hope of the world, O Christ, of great compassion,
   the world, God's gift from highest heaven,
   the world, afoot on dusty highways,
   the world, who by your cross has saved us.

2. Speak to our fearful hearts by conflict rest;
   bringing to hungry souls the bread of life,
   showing to wandering souls the path of light;
   from death and dark despair, from sin and guilt;

3. Save us, your people, from consuming passion,
   still let your Spirit unto us be given
   walk now beside us lest the tempting byways
   we render back the love your mercy gave us;

4. Who by our own false hopes and aims are spent.
   to heal earth's wounds and end its bitter strife.
   lure us away from you to endless night.
   take now our lives, with them your kingdom build.

5. Hope of the world, O Christ, o'er death victorious,
   who by this sign has conquered grief and pain,
   we would be faithful to your gospel glorious.
   You are our Lord! You shall forever reign!

Words, Georgia Harkness (c) 1954. Ren. 1982 The Hymn Society. Admin. By Hope Publishing Co., Carol Stream, IL 60188. All rights reserved. Used by permission.
## APPENDIX III

**BLACK HOST FORM**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Gesture/style</th>
<th><strong>DIES IRAE</strong></th>
<th><strong>DONNA SECOURS</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dark</td>
<td>Light</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>implied gestures</td>
<td>motives</td>
<td>Minor 3rd</td>
<td>Major 3rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Major and Minor 2nd</td>
<td>Major 2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. PRELUDE</td>
<td>7 chords/block</td>
<td>top 4 notes/predom</td>
<td>top 4 notes/less</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Silence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Atonal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. INTRO TO CHARACTERS</td>
<td>flourish</td>
<td>7 chord-4 notes</td>
<td>7 chord-4 notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Atonal, chordal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Church/Baroque</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hymn tune</td>
<td>1st 3 notes</td>
<td>1st phrase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2nd &amp; 4th phrase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>/over 3rd phrase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chant tune</td>
<td>1st 2 notes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>full 2 phrases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>free rhythm</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. A STORM IS BREWING</td>
<td>Passacaglia</td>
<td>Pedal ostinato</td>
<td>Pedal ostinato</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inflexible tempo</td>
<td>LEFT hand ostinato</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rock</td>
<td>Melody min 3, Maj 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>free Jazz</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>aleatory chimes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. CARNIVAL TIME</td>
<td>Rag/Stride/1920</td>
<td>Melody, min 3,2</td>
<td>Melody, Maj 3,2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rock</td>
<td>*predominantly</td>
<td>*little</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Atonal</td>
<td>Diminished chords</td>
<td>G-Major triad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voices</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>can-can</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>electronic tape</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Section</td>
<td>Gesture/style</td>
<td>DIES IRAE</td>
<td>DONNA SECOURS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>V. DETONATE!</td>
<td>Chorale – D-min</td>
<td></td>
<td>Whole tune</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOPE?</td>
<td>Glissandi</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chimes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D-major</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reverie</td>
<td></td>
<td>Major triads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. PEACE AFTER</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE STORM</td>
<td>7 cluster chords</td>
<td>1st 2 notes</td>
<td>1st 3 notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epilogue</td>
<td>Silence</td>
<td></td>
<td>with G-major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1st 2 notes</td>
<td>Last chord</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No G-major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII. RELIEF?</td>
<td>Coda, crescendo</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coda</td>
<td>B-minor chord</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## APPENDIX IV

### RAG FORM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>measures</th>
<th>Section</th>
<th>no.</th>
<th>Key</th>
<th>Important features</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 to 11</td>
<td>Intro</td>
<td></td>
<td>D flat Major</td>
<td>walking bass line</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Alberti Bass D flat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>m.7 Tape begin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 to 19</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>D flat Major</td>
<td>m.19 Cymbals begin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 to 27</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>D flat Major</td>
<td>1st 2m=1st notes of A in alto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 to 35</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>B flat Minor</td>
<td>Tape louder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36 to 43</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>D flat Major</td>
<td>Same as m. 20-27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>B flat Minor</td>
<td>on repeat m.41 tape soft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>D flat Major</td>
<td>m.43 Bass drum one note</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>m.49 Augmented chord</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44 to 51</td>
<td>C Trio</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>G flat Major</td>
<td>Point of trad. Rag Climax -ff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52 to 59</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>G flat Major</td>
<td>m.57 end rag melody</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>m.57 begin loud G Major triad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>m.57 has Dim. chord not Aug.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>m.59 has G flat not D flat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 to 67</td>
<td>C1*Trio</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>G flat Major</td>
<td>m.67 Augmented chord</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68 to 75</td>
<td>**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>m.70 end accompaniment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lh joins chromatic chords</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76 to 83</td>
<td>D**</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>D flat Major</td>
<td>Has running bass of Intro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84 to 91</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bass line-Can-Can fragments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>92 to 101</td>
<td>D1**</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>D flat Major</td>
<td>Reminiscent of intro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Quotation of Can-Can</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>* no melody</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>** no melody and no accomp.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX V

Complete List of Organ Works by William Bolcom

Black Host (1967) (Revised 1970)
For Organ, Chimes, Cymbals, Bass Drum, and Electric Tape
Premiere: William Albright, organ, Spring, 1968

Praeludium (1969)
For Organ and Vibraphone
Premiere: William Albright, organ, 1970

Humoresk for Organ and Orchestra (1969)
Premiere: Anthony Newman, organ, American Composers Orchestra, Dennis Russell Davies conducting, Alice Tully Hall, December 3, 1979

Chorale Prelude (on Abide With Me) (1970)
For Organ. (found in Complete Gospel Preludes)
Premiere: William Bolcom, organ, Everett, Wash., October 19, 1970

Hydraulis (1971)
For Organ
Premiere: William Albright, organ, 1972

Mysteries (1976)
For Organ
Premiere: William Albright, organ, 1976

For Organ
Book 1 -- Three Gospel Preludes
1. What a Friend We Have in Jesus!
2. La Catheraleengloutie (Rock of Ages)
3. Just As I Am
Premiere: Michael Farris, Wes Gomer, Larry Palmer, organ

Book 2 -- Gospel Preludes
4. Jesus Loves Me
5. Shall We Gather at the River (Fantasia)
6. Amazing Grace
Premiere: Marilyn Mason, organ

*Book 3 -- Gospel Preludes*
7. Jesus Calls Us; O'er the Tumult
8. Blessed Assurance
9. Nearer, My God, to Thee
Premiere: Leonard Raver, organ

*Book 4 -- Gospel Preludes*
10. Sometimes I Feel
11. Sweet Hour of Prayer
12. Free Fantasia on "O Zion, Haste" and "How Firm a Foundation"
Premiere: Marilyn Mason, organ

*Complete Gospel Preludes (published 2006)*

For Organ
Premiere: Alan Morrison, organ, AGO National Convention, Princeton, NJ, July 3, 2002

*Four Preludes on Jewish Melodies* (2005)
For Organ
Premiere: Roberta Gary, organ, Plum Street Temple, Cincinnati, OH March 31, 2005
GLOSSARY

(for Free-time notation, usually preceded by a signature "free")

- = any length of note, generally not too long.

- = a somewhat longer note, proportional to the black note.

= space notes according to position on line. The note lasts as long as the beam.

= (with stems extending past beam) a jagged, uneven style of playing — in general out of rhythm with the rest of the music.

= long to short pauses, "commas", ranging anywhere from 6-10" to 1/4", relative to any number of factors, including (definitely) intuition and taste.