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SOUNDSCLASSICAL.COM: INTRODUCING CLASSICAL MUSIC THROUGH
COMPARISON WITH MODERN MUSIC

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ABSTRACT

This thesis serves as a steppingstone for a larger project which aims to build a website introducing classical music to a broad audience in new and innovative ways. Soundclassical.com is distinct from other introductory websites in that it attempts to bridge the gap between the classical and modern music worlds more effectively than many other introductory classical websites do. In this thesis, there are two sections: 1) reviews of other classical music websites and ways they are less effective than they could be, and 2) a series of articles that demonstrate some of the content that will eventually be on Soundclassical.com. These medium-length articles compare certain modern genres and/or artists to classical equivalents, in order to create stronger emotional and contextual ties between seemingly unrelated composers and their work.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Soundsclassical.com: Introducing Classical Music through Comparison

Classical music has a problem. The “golden” age of classical music—where the educated and affluent would enjoy weekly concerts of Brahms and Tchaikovsky—was disrupted by wave-after-wave of music and cultural revolutions, scattering audience attention. What it has been replaced by, however, is an era where an enormous wealth of styles and genres cross-breed and reciprocate, with instant access available to anyone with an internet connection. While this diversity is certainly a positive asset to global music and culture, it is also the root of classical music’s problem: it is now widely perceived as “classical”—truly a historic artifact. While history is certainly studied and appreciated, with music being no exception, the greatest portion of audience attention is centered on the present music scene, where a plethora of new artists are vying for attention. As a result, there has been a large decline in the classical audience over the past 40 years, with ticket sales falling as much as 8% between 2002 and 2007 (Audience Demographic Research Review, 4).

Solutions to this problem have been met with mixed success, with educational outreach and school programs creating pockets of interest within small communities. However, solutions thus far have masked a larger problem that needs addressing: classical music is perceived as a simple and dated genre. Many people associate classical music with a small set of composers who lived prior to 1900, which doesn’t accurately represent the genre as a whole. This misconception becomes problematic when one is constantly reminded that classical music is supposed to be “sublime” and “the greatest music ever written,” yet a given listener doesn’t immediately hear it as such. Therefore this person never forms an emotional connection to this music and never becomes interested in hearing more. Current methods of introducing classical music are failing to address this issue, resulting in a slowly declining audience base.

This brings up a personal story: when I was in middle school, I enjoyed playing in the school band, where we performed music geared towards kids our age—a mixture of modern styles with hints of past classical influences. My understanding of classical music at that time was solely shaped by what the local radio station played—baroque and early classical—which was what I assumed “classical” music primarily consisted of. I wasn’t interested in this music, therefore my listening palette remained confined to 90’s rock. My one “breakthrough” moment came after some coercion from my private instructor, who dispelled my theory and encouraged me to seek out music outside what the radio played. Online, I stumbled across a podcast with the third movement of Ravel’s Piano Trio. It was beautiful, complicated, yet somehow absolutely familiar and relevant to my current musical interests, therefore changing my whole view on classical music.

The internet, as shown by my experience, has the power to change one’s perspective with its wealth of content and instant accessibility. However, many websites on the topic of classical music fail to deliver moving yet accessible content, and they perpetuate the idea that classical music all sounds the same. This thesis will set the groundwork for a website which attempts to introduce classical music in many new and interesting ways. Instead of focusing heavily on music of the classical, baroque, and early romantic eras as being the “defining” sub-genres of the classical world, Soundsclassical.com will consider a broader spectrum of classical music—with a special focus on 20th and 21st century works—then compare them to other artists and genres that are shaping the modern music community. It doesn’t aim to be the another “wiki” database; instead, SoundsClassical will primarily compare classical works and composers to modern works outside the classical realm that listeners may be more familiar with. The reasoning behind this method is to build emotional connections between seemingly distant musical styles, allowing for the listener to achieve a more effective listening experience. Inspiration for Soundsclassical.com comes from the popular music website www.pitchfork.com, which features news and reviews of modern music, leaning towards the indie realm. Soundsclassical.com, aside from featuring

comparison articles, will include album reviews, contemporary classical sections, composer showcases, news, and general blog posts.

The groundwork presented in this thesis represents some of the content that will exist on the website. The structure of this thesis is as follows. Chapter 2 will include reviews of four classical music websites and analyze their effectiveness. In Chapter 3, objectives for Soundsclassical.com will be discussed—including a brief segment on comparison articles. Finally, Chapter 4 includes four individual comparison articles that will appear on the site.

Chapter 2

Effectiveness of Modern Classical Music Websites

1. **Introduction:** Websites are valuable tools in presenting and organizing of materials in a flexible manner. The convenience and instantaneous nature allows for content to reach widespread audiences, who then have the option to share information with others via social media or by word-of-mouth. Therefore, websites have the power to alter a large number of people's perspectives in a short amount of time.

Before critiquing specific websites, it is important to establish criteria as to what makes an effective website. Dave Lawrence and Soheyla Tavakol outline basic concepts applicable to almost all websites in their book, *Balanced Web Design*; they include “aesthetics, usability, and purpose” (14). While the purpose for certain websites may be obvious, Lawrence and Tavakol point out that a site's purpose becomes nebulous when it grows in size to accommodate a large amount of content. Classical music is a complicated subject, and therefore the danger of losing a clear-cut sense of purpose exists. In this case, a website about this topic must understand who the audience is and what they would like to learn and/or experience. Jason DeMers of Forbes writes, “Creating a content strategy without a clear understanding of your audience is a bit like setting a boat adrift without navigational tools.” The website is bound to veer wildly off-course and become an unfocused, confusing mess. Studies such as the Webby Awards 2000 Study have shown that the content of a website is the most important factor in terms of judging a site's “overall experience”; ironically, visual design and aesthetics were the worst predictor of success (Barnes, Josephson, and Lipton 2010). Therefore, if usability and aesthetics make up the bones and clothing, respectively, content is a website's muscle and internal organs.

Successful usability can be defined as “when we use something almost or completely without noticing that we are using an interface to do things we want to do” (Lawrence and Tavakol 38). In the realm of websites, this means being able to easily explore content without getting confused or winding up at a dead end. In terms of a music-centric website, this could mean being able to view

related artists or articles without having to click through many different header items. Similar to content, establishing a plan is vital before jumping into action, even with the realization that a plan could change.

Lawrence and Tavakol go into detail about aesthetics as well; most importantly, they list what can damage aesthetics: “Nonfunctional items, poor combinations or positioning of items, bad navigation, wrong size text, clogged page, use of many or wrong colours, pages that would not fit the screen, unnecessary sound/music, and sudden changes to existing pages of websites” (75). To summarize, aesthetics should enhance the content that is already in place as opposed to taking attention away from it in a negative manner or jeopardizing site functionality. As mentioned before, aesthetics is the least important aspect to creating a quality website; at their best it may garner the website a few style points.

With the above definitions of purpose, usability, and aesthetics firmly rooted, the following criteria will be used to evaluate classical music websites: purpose, functionality, content, and appearance. The example websites (getintoclassical.com, classical.net, classical.com, and classicfm.com) represent a few major sites that appear in a web search for “classical music introduction.” In general, problems exist in all facets of design, but most notably in the purpose category: most of these sites perpetuate the idea that classical music is old, dated, and dominated by the same overplayed composers. If the classical world wishes to be seen in a less dated perspective, it needs to change how it presents its own content.

2. Site 1: <http://www.getintoclassical.com>



Figure 1.1 Get Into Classical Banner

A. **Purpose:** This website is a clean and basic introductory website to classical music—as described in the banner. It includes a few articles and a basic composer guide—clearly meant for someone setting foot into the classical world. One immediately noticeable aspect is some of the rhetoric used, which is deliberately aimed at a specific audience (more specific than an audience that is looking for general information on classical music). For instance, in the article entitled, “7 Reasons Nerds Should Listen to Classical Music,” the author describes a personal anecdote on how he discovered classical in his mid-twenties and how the genre appeals to nerd culture. Many of the other articles are directed at this type of audience as well, demonstrating clear planning on the author’s part.

B. **Functionality:** The layout of the website features a header, a drop-down menu section, a main content area, and a footer section (as seen in figure 1.2). The homepage features an image slider which links to featured articles. The small amount of content on the site means there is less of a chance for a link to break or the user to get lost, and overall the website feels like a finished product, regardless of the limited number of articles on it.

C. **Content:** What is seen in the header column encompasses almost all the content the site offers. Categories include “Get started!,” “Recommended pieces,” “The Composers,” “Guide to the Eras,” “Musical Forms,” “Why Classical?,” and “Contact Me.” In the “Pieces to start with” article (under the “Recommended Pieces” tab), the author lists one or two pieces per era, starting with Baroque and going all the way to contemporary (with a total of eight categories and a total of fourteen pieces). Aside from Adams and Schnittke, the rest of the composers are common 17th-19th century composers, which is understandable for a website with roughly 25 articles total, but still disappointing considering how many composers are currently alive and writing.

The “7 steps to get started” section features rough guidelines on how to dive into the genre and is for the most part colorfully written. However, one notable weakness is that the author gives some rough ideas on where to get good recordings and how to listen selectively,

yet the emotional aspect of “getting into” a piece consists mainly of the suggestion to “try this and try it again if you don’t like it at first.” Basically, the author is using “you’re a geek” as a reason for listening to classical music, as opposed to “this music will make you feel a certain way.” Some composer articles on the site do touch this issue, but the author leaves much to be desired.

Under the “Get started!” tab, there is an article entitled, “Why classical?” which lists five reasons to get into the classical world. Two out of the five points the author makes are valid (“It’s cost effective,” and “It’s more varied than you realize”); the other three include that “It’s richer and more rewarding than popular music,” “It’s an intellectual challenge,” and “It’ll make you sound impressively cultured.” While these ideas further appeal to a “geek” audience, I think these three reasons perpetuate the elitist classical mentality and are therefore damaging (even though this article is mainly sarcastic). The point that soundsclassical.com wishes to make is that the genre isn’t inherently different than other musical genres, aside from the time period it was written in—which obviously affected what instruments were used. Composers’ emotional motives behind composition haven’t changed dramatically over time.

Get Into Classical

A Beginners Guide to Classical Music

[Get started!](#)
[Recommended pieces](#)
[The Composers](#)
[Guide to the Eras](#)
[Musical Forms](#)
[Why classical?](#)
[Contact Me](#)

Classical Music Is Awesome.

Don't be put off by all the fancy language, or worry that you are supposed to find Beethoven amazing straight away (you probably won't). It's just music. Really good music. And you don't need to dress up and shell out \$200 for concert tickets to get into it. All you need is a bunch of MP3s, and most importantly, determination: **don't expect to make any sense of even a single movement until you've heard it at least 10 times.**

Start with the [first steps](#), or jump straight into the [recommended pieces](#).

Featured Articles

Stravinsky
Stravinsky's best-known piece -- the Rite of Spring -- is famous for causing a riot when it was premiered in Paris.

Getting started

Take a look at the best [pieces to start with](#) or the [first steps](#) for getting to grips with the wild world of classical music.

Baffled by Beethoven?

[Start exploring the major composers](#)
Every page has a description of their style, along with several youtube videos of some of their stand-out pieces.

Nerdy?

Read [7 reasons nerds should listen to classical music](#).

Figure 1.2 Get Into Classical Homepage

D. **Appearance:** The layout is clean but feels sparse and unimaginative—a side effect of not having much content. There are basically five page components—the header, menu, body, and footer—which is very common for a standard blog format. The color selection is safe but plain—it doesn’t draw any attention but also doesn’t detract from the site, which is a notable aspect. However, the site would benefit from a side column or feature bar, and the addition of some extra colors (taking advantage of the red lettering in the banner).

E. **Comments:** Overall, getintoclassical.com is a decent tool with an easily navigable design but lacks the content necessary to serve as a major website. In addition, it perpetuates some traps classical music needs to escape from in order for the genre to remain sustainable. What would help the site would be the addition of more material and more sections, potentially discussing modern classical artists and reviews.

3. **Site 2:** <http://www.classical.net>



Figure 2.1 Classical Net Banner

A. **Purpose:** Classical.net, as seen above, claims to be “The Internet’s Premier Classical Music Source.” Based solely on its wealth of content, this claim is not entirely inaccurate. The main draw of classical.net is the ability to easily purchase classical albums directly on-site; while this option is available at other classical introductory websites, this site’s collection spans over 7,000 CDs DVDs, Books, and reviews. This availability is both good and bad in my opinion; it turns the premise of an introductory website into more of a commercialized entity, where artists, albums, and composers now have to compete for a

listener's attention (in order to be heard and purchased). This feature therefore becomes problematic for people with little experience to the genre. As for the audience, Classical.net doesn't clearly define what its audience should be or what it could eventually become. There are suggestions for basic repertoire and introductory listening guides alongside links to music education, acoustics, ballet, and music industry organizations. This leads me to believe that this site is meant more for people who already know much about classical music—potentially older listeners looking to buy obscure recordings—than people in their mid-twenties exploring various musical genres or than teens with no background knowledge of classical music. Essentially, Classical.net attempts to do everything and ends up being mediocre overall.

B. Functionality: Immediately, a recognizable problem with the website is its form and complexity. A website this large should be better formatted to make navigation easier and faster. The layout appears simple on the home page, but after a few clicks, one gets overwhelmed by the sheer mass of content and has to resort to clicking the banner to return home. For instance, the homepage of the “Reviews & Articles” section doesn't include a listing of the latest reviews, but links to a chronological and alphabetical list (of potentially hundreds of reviews written by volunteers). To a complete beginner (or even a casual listener), this section becomes overwhelming. The organization of the composer section is greatly lacking—Classical.net provides an alphabetical list of hundreds of composers, in which one can click on a name and read a composer's bio. No links exist on any bio page; the reader therefore is unable to find similar composers. Even more frustrating is the alphabetical list, which isn't separated by time period. One could click on John Field then Brian Ferneyhough—two composers that are completely different yet are alphabetically next to each other.

C. Content: Classical.net is massive. To quote the home page, “*Classical Net* features more than 9000 pages and 20,000+ images including more than 7000 CD, SACD, DVD, Blu-ray, Book and Concert reviews and over 5500 links to other classical music web sites.” That is an enormous amount of content, but it doesn't lend itself to easy navigation. Take for

instance the section entitled, “Basic Repertoire.” The side column features seven eras, from Medieval through Modern. Clicking on a side link will either lead to a short segment about that time period or a list of pieces sorted by composer, with recommended ones with a star next to them. There are many pieces with stars next to them, but no discussion as to why they are “important” pieces exists; Classical.net is saying, “Here are some pieces—go listen to them,” without providing any reasoning. Another content area that is lacking is the mention of living composers. The Modern Repertoire section is in reality an extension of late 20th-century material, with only a few living composers mentioned (mainly important minimalists such as Reich and Adams). The site also doesn’t discuss classical music’s relevance to other genres of music—which aren’t even mentioned in the first place. In order for a classical website to gain a broader audience, arguably it has to look beyond the realm of classical art music and into what classical music influenced and has been influenced by.

Classical.net’s introductory article, “How to Go About Finding Classical Music You Like,” is informative but comes across as technical and uninteresting. The basic points the author makes include listen constantly, be informed about composers, and find good recordings. Details on each point are discussed. Once again, this article fails to give a specific reason to listen to classical music in the first place. The author provides many tools that help those with a foundational interest, but for casual listeners and music lovers outside the classical realm, the article (and website as a whole) would probably not hold their interest for very long.

D. **Appearance:** It is obvious that a professional graphic artist was not involved during the design stages of the website. The color scheme—green for the header and footer, yellow/sand for the body, and orange for the menu and certain fonts—doesn’t make any aesthetic sense. The sidebars—which feature advertisements and links to other classical sites—are poorly organized and clash with the site’s design and color scheme. Most problematic of all, however, is the size of the font used in the articles, which appears to be under 10 with 1-point

line spacing. While it is certainly easy to zoom in on any webpage, reading through walls of text becomes an unpleasant browsing experience. Once again, appearance matters much less than actual content, but when one has to strain in order to read articles, there clearly is a problem with a site's design.



Figure 2.2 Classical Net Homepage

E. **Comments:** Classical.net feels like a great resource that fell by the wayside after original developers stopped updating the site. Only a few new articles have been added in the past month, with most of them being reviews of concerts and CD's. No new features and content means no growing audience, which may hurt the website's future. Classical.net is a great resource for people with a solid grasp of the classical world, but arguably not for listeners of modern music genres looking to expand into different territory.

4. **Site 3:** <http://www.classical.com/home>



Figure 3.1 Classical.com Banner

A. **Purpose:** Classical.com primarily exists for the purpose of listening directly onsite; it features articles and listening sections but uses playlists and listening lists as its biggest draw. This is a positive asset for those who don't want to read detailed articles with program notes and general composer information; the music is there for them to listen to, as reinforced by the slogan, "Relax... you don't have to think..." One problematic aspect of Classical.com is that it is a subscription-based service, meaning credit is charged to one's account upon purchasing of music, along with a potential monthly fee. On their Facebook page, users have been complaining that the site has been overcharging and holding money—obviously a warning to those thinking of subscribing.

B. **Functionality:** Classical.com sports a modern interface and a visually attractive design. Categories for listening and learning are clearly marked on the side column, and the center column features articles or playlists, depending on the page one is on. One feature of note is the recommendations section, which potentially uses an algorithm to suggest playlists based on one's listening history. This feature is available only to subscribers, therefore I did not get a chance to test its effectiveness. Classical.com's biggest problem is noticed almost immediately. Clicking on the "Browse All Recordings" button under specific composers brings one to a dead-link page (see **Figure 3.2**). More dead links can be found when clicking through musical periods. This indicates that either the website is unfinished as of now, or something broke—a sign of flawed structural design. However, navigation isn't inherently

difficult; one can easily access related content in articles such as recordings or other articles—

assuming there isn't a broken link.

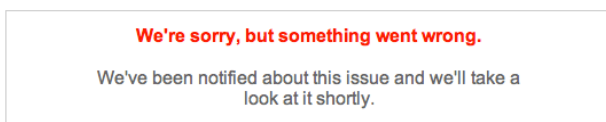


Figure 3.2 Classical.com Dead Link

C. **Content:** As stated before, this website features a subscription option which allows for paid listening to a large catalogue (it claims to have over 800,000 tracks). Along with the recommended playlist system, Classical.com features “Free album of the week,” top albums of the week (sorted by category), and other playlists sorted by composer, genre, era, ensemble, and more. This feature allows this listener to navigate through large amounts of music—though the casual listener may have a tendency to get stuck listening to classical “standards” that reside at the top of every list.

Among the features that are in place, the Classical Academy is the website’s classical introductory page. Information is split into categories such as eras, genres (including film music, musicals, folk, and jazz), instruments, performers, composers, and a small “Just For Fun...” section. This section currently includes two articles (the third being a dead link)—one article on concert etiquette and the other entitled “Classical One Hit Wonders.” The first one is straightforward—how to not make a fool of yourself at a live concert. The author gives generic suggestions such as turn off one’s cell phone, clap when everyone else does, and wear comfortable clothing. The one bit of advice that bothered me was, “If boredom sets in, a quick read of the programme should re-kindle your interest.” Program notes are great; using the term “boredom” may have not been the best choice, at least without an explanation as to why one would be bored at a concert. The second article—“Classical One Hit Wonders”—is quite intriguing: it lists composers who are widely known for one specific piece of music but then suggests other exemplary pieces for that composer. For instance, Samuel Barber is infamous for his *Adagio for Strings*, but Classical.com suggests listening to his piece, *Rain*

has Fallen. To people with some background knowledge, these features are very useful, but there should be more of them and fewer dead links.

D. **Appearance:** A definite improvement over the last two websites, Classical.com features a cleaner layout than classical.net and more features than getintoclassical.com. The

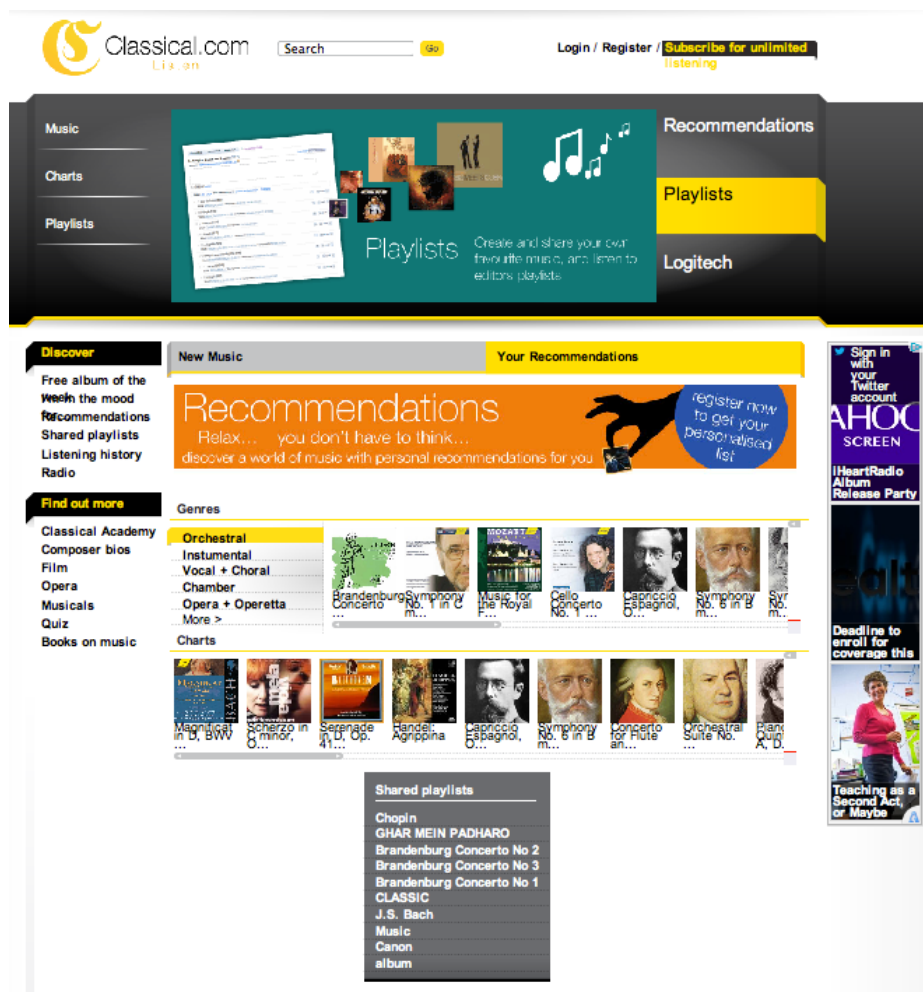


Figure 3.3 Classical.com Homepage

E. **Comments:** Overall, Classical.com is satisfactory in concept but still needs a lot of work to make fully functional. The developers seem to know who their audience is, especially since they are trying to attract people to purchase their subscription service—both a positive and negative aspect in my opinion. The other features are satisfactory, and the

sidebar and advertisements don't clash with the main body, and the color scheme represents a modern, intelligent approach to design. Sliders in the center of the page work horizontally, allowing playlists to be viewed without having to excessively scroll up and down. However, problems exist when navigating away from the home page. The reader is confronted by long composer lists and large blocks of text, which are in a small size and aren't spaced very well, making them potentially hard to read over a long period of time.

articles are generally well-written. However, I worry about the numerous dead links and lack of other specialty articles, which don't seem to update regularly. In fact, their Facebook page hasn't been updated in about six months. I would personally be wary of subscribing, understanding the potential for accidental charges and other legal issues.

5. **Site 4:** <http://www.classicfm.com>



Figure 4.1 Classic FM Banner

A. **Purpose:** Classicfm.com may be one of the most established and active multipurpose classical music websites today. With over 100,000 Facebook likes, it has a huge fan base and a large wealth of content ranging from news and interviews to composer information and many other informative articles and lists. The immediate draw of Classic FM is well-organized content that ranges from historic information to modern events, along with the ability to tune in and listen to their radio show. The front page—with its top heading bar featuring ten website categories—sits above a slew of articles, news bites, and lists that are visually engaging and laid out in an easily navigable grid. Classicfm.com's purpose is massive but clear: to provide current news on classical performances, releases, and artists, while simultaneously informing listeners on historic content and fun, factual information. The site's primary audience resides in the United Kingdom—where the site and radio station are based—but its audience has grown worldwide when some of its articles have gone viral. Unlike classical.net, classicfm.com is an example of how to do everything and be good at almost all of it.

B. **Functionality:** Classicfm.com's layout is one of its stronger points. Directly from the homepage, one can access the newest content in basically every category, then explore

more areas of that category—without having to navigate through extensive menus or lists. This feature is achieved via a multi-section layout that is interconnected based on related material. For instance, clicking on the “Discover” heading button yields seven sub-categories: “Film music,” “Discover Music,” “Classical Music Periods,” “Music Collections,” “Album Reviews,” “Classical Music Guides,” and “Opera.” Clicking on the “Discover Music” category brings one to lists of many pieces and articles, such as one on Strauss’s *Till Eulenspiegels lustige Streiche*. This short article includes some information about the piece and an embedded link to a Youtube recording. What is more interesting, however, is this article is not in the “Discover” section, but the “Composers” section. Classicfm.com essentially uses one’s interest in learning about this Strauss piece to bring readers directly into the heart of the Strauss section. Here, listeners can explore album reviews, piece guides, performance reviews, and interesting facts about the composer, without having to search very hard or click through menus.

C. **Content:** Classicfm.com mainly specializes in news and current events. However, the “Discover Music” archive features hundreds of articles and lists such as the previously mentioned Strauss article, to “viral” lists such as “10 weird and wonderful Bach video parodies,” and “10 signs that you’re a classical music nerd.” It is quite possible that most of the site’s audience grew out of an attraction to these lists (similar to why BuzzFeed is popular). While these articles are certainly important and add character to the site, they may be drawing attention away from informative articles about the music itself. For instance, “21 inspirational quotes about classical music” had 30 times more Facebook likes than “Romantic music: a beginner’s guide.” Arguably, Classicfm.com is not at all to blame for this imbalance. Both of these features are equally well-made, but as a business it makes sense to push for more popular features (more visitors equals more money).

Classicfm.com features “Fast and Friendly Guides”—short videos outlining a composer’s life and work. They are excellent in that they give a basic premise while remaining humorous

and not too focused on minute details, and the animations add depth and character. After watching one of these guides, users can explore content related to the composer, ranging from reviews of modern performances to guides to specific pieces. However, there are many composers and only a few of these guides, therefore the option to simply read about composers exists. As with other composer sections of many classical music websites, Classicfm.com's composer section lacks important 20th and 21st century composers. While it is completely understandable for there to be more articles on Rossini than Xenakis (there are none), there is significantly more content on Hans Zimmer than all of the 20th century serialists. It seems as though Classicfm.com tends to shy away from controversial content, portraying the impression that this music is impossible to perceive or enjoy. Maybe if the writers would use more familiar composers or modern musical artists to coax an audience into more extreme forms of music, the audience might be less hesitant to reject it immediately.

Finally, another issue with the content was some of the information was factually incorrect or misleading, such as the claim that Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire* is a 12-tone work, and Igor Stravinsky was one of *America's* top composers (from a list of top American composers). Classicalfm.com, being stationed in the U.K., doesn't have a tremendous understanding of American classical music; much of it is relegated to big film composers (Zimmer and Williams), a few of the greats (Copland and Bernstein), and Eric Whitacre (who gets a great deal of attention). Some of America's most important contemporary composers such as Corigliano and Higdon aren't even mentioned.

D. **Appearance:** Classicalfm.com features a layout that changes between sections but features a consistent design theme. The front page (**Figure 4.2**) demonstrates this theme—squares that each display an image and a caption which links to an article. These squares fall under categorized headers and may be easily updated when new articles are added. When one clicks on an article link or to a feature page, the central squares are replaced by text or are



Figure 4.2 Classic FM Homepage

E. **Comments:** Classicfm.com is a decent hub for classical music and a wonderful resource for those living in the United Kingdom. However, there is room for improvement in terms of content, since it is disconnected from the American classical scene. As a side note,

moved to the bottom of the page. The one design feature that is always consistent in terms of positioning (aside from the banner and top menu) is the right-hand column, which is made up of more squares. This section is especially important, since it can direct the reader towards related content without the reader needing to scroll either all the way to the bottom or the top of the page.

There are arguably two appearance flaws: the green-gradient stripe at the top of the page doesn't match the consistency of the square theme (since it is a smooth gradient), and the text style appears to be *Georgia*—a font that doesn't flow well in *italics* or show up clearly when viewed at longer distances (as seen here). However, Classicfm.com features the most effective design scheme out of all the classical music websites analyzed.

another slightly unusual feature includes an all-encompassing online dating service; I'm not sure as to what that says about Classicfm.com, but it certainly says something.

6. **Discussion:** What can be concluded through this analysis is there is no shortage of information in regards to classical music on the internet. However, the presentation of this information is in general problematic—from incomplete websites to poor organization of materials. Out of all the websites analyzed, Classicfm.com was by far the most comprehensive and well organized; its large audience is indicative of its quality. Classical.com was problematic due to the subscription service, which may engage in questionable business practices. In addition, its content was sparse, and it contained many dead links. The website containing the most content was Classical.net, though it felt more like a database and than an easily navigable website—problematic for beginners to the genre. Finally, Getintoclassical.com successfully fulfilled its purpose of introducing a specific demographic to classical music. Its content was clear and somewhat entertaining, and the small size of the site made it easy to navigate. However, the small size was a big problem, and the lack of frequent updates implies it will never gain the audience Classicfm.com has. What can be learned in regards to all four of these websites is that there is a fine line between not including enough information on a website and completely overwhelming the viewer with content. The key—as demonstrated by Classicfm.com—is to keep related content close to what the viewer is reading and use lots of visuals while doing so.

One other problem with these websites is they focus more on music written over 70 years ago than modern artists and composers. While it would be silly to not mention Bach, Beethoven, and Mozart on a classical website, its also impractical and potentially damaging to not talk about living composers. Truthfully, there aren't many other genres of music that focus more on the past than the present; jazz is most likely one of them, and along with classical, that also has a limited audience. Classical music websites should dispel the assumption that because something is “contemporary” it will automatically sound unpleasant. The inclusion of modern composers on

these websites could change the older audience's perspective on new music, and it could also change the modern music community's perspective on "traditional" classical music by using modern composers as a bridge.

One last minor suggestion for these websites is they have a limited perspective on the American classical community. Classicfm.com feels especially limited due to its U.K. centralization. A lot of big names in modern American composition are highly underrepresented—Higdon, Adams, Corigliano, Bolcom, etc. Classicfm.com rated Eric Whitacre, John Williams, Stravinsky, and Schoenberg as a few of America's(!) best composers, without even mentioning Higdon or Corigliano. In addition, there are literally hundreds of active composers with successful careers in America worth discussing or listening to, and all four classical music sites remain firmly tied to European-centric composers. Soundsclassical.com hopes to fix this issue by creating articles and features which link modern American compositions to American pop, folk, and non-classical art music.

Chapter 3

The Soundsclassical Difference

What will separate Soundsclassical.com from the example websites is how it will compare classical music to modern music. This idea came from a realization that the way music is being produced currently—mainly in a studio, sometimes by electronic means—sounds very different than going to a concert hall and experiencing Bach’s Mass in B minor, for instance. Therefore, it is hard for someone who is only familiar with modern music to sit in a concert hall and understand what is going on—not necessarily in a technical way, but from an emotional standpoint. Soundsclassical.com hopes to alleviate this effect by seeking out compositions that relate to modern works by how they sound, what they are about, or most preferably a combination of the two. The majority of these comparisons will be featured in articles, and four of these articles are shown in Chapter 4.

My own methodology for creating these articles has evolved out of a trial-and-error process. I would start by analyzing a classical piece that I had a strong fundamental knowledge of prior to beginning research. For instance, in the Barber-Newsom article, I had a strong understanding of some of Barber’s vocal works before seeking out similar material. It also was the case for that specific article that I was also intimate with Joanna Newsom’s music, which once again helped the selection process. If I was struggling to find material to discuss, I would start with a classical piece then look for a similar modern work, as opposed to the other way around. This was especially the case in the *Apocalypse Saga* article—I knew a lot of pieces in the classical realm that applied to the apocalypse theme, but I had to aggressively search for modern pieces and songs that sonically and contextually matched the classical ones. One big resource that is worth mentioning is Glenn McDonald’s “Every Noise at Once” tool, which he describes as “an algorithmically-generated, readability-adjusted scatter-plot of the musical genre-space, based on data tracked and analyzed for 1119 genres by The Echo Nest.” Basically, it allows the user to explore genres on a map that organizes them by how similar they sound, then listen to many

artists in a specific genre. It allowed me to discover large amounts of unfamiliar music for the purpose of finding viable comparison examples. Once I had examples selected, I would research both the classical and modern work in detail, seeing if there were any important links in terms of a composer's or artist's motives behind a piece. In a surprising amount of cases, there were, which helped to reinforce the idea of universal musical "topics," where emotions and sounds are linked.

Soundsclassical.com will also attempt to focus more on modern composers—especially American ones, which was something the example websites failed to do. Classicalfm.com did demonstrate the importance of consistently updating material with an emphasis on news and performance reviews; therefore eventually Soundsclassical.com will include those features. As for a specific audience that Soundsclassical.com will target, the goal is to attract people that have some knowledge of modern music and are looking to venture out of their comfort zone—people willing to seek out new or unfamiliar sounds but are unsure where to start. Hopefully, the comparison articles will prove to be effective in these types of situations.

The site's design will be generated through a template-based service known as Wordpress. Originally, Wordpress proved quite useful for simple blogs, but as more features and options were added, it became a powerful tool for creation of more intricate websites. The first template that was chosen was a theme called "Frameworks," which allowed for a flexible homepage, an attractive menu, and an intuitive tagging system for sorting content. However, the company behind Frameworks proved to be unsatisfactory in terms of technical support and pricey, confusing updates. Therefore, Soundsclassical.com is currently in the process of finding another Wordpress-based theme company that will hopefully look and function effectively.

As stated in the introduction, a long-term vision of Soundsclassical.com is to become a hub that links together the modern music and classical world with the intent of mitigating the separation between the two. The next phase of development will include continuing to build content—including reviews and articles not directly pertaining to the comparison section. This step

is definitely not for one person to do alone; Soundsclassical.com will require a team including writers, at least one designer, and potentially a developer—based on how capable the Wordpress system will be compared to how ambitious the site’s framework becomes. Most importantly, however, is to find capable writers informed in regards to the classical and modern music worlds. Thankfully, I have made connections to brilliant-minded people through music festivals and through Penn State.

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Chapter 4

Comparative Articles

Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony and Pussy Riot: Protest Music Compared

Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony, with its raw emotional power and expressiveness, is regarded as one of the great 20th century symphonic triumphs. Its success was a godsend for Shostakovich, especially with the Soviet regime breathing down his neck after the failure of his previous, more experimental works. The public response was overwhelmingly positive—both among ordinary citizens and Soviet culture bureaucrats, who ironically perceived the work in two completely different manners. Even today, audiences and scholars can't quite grasp Shostakovich's true intentions—whether the work was a desperate attempt to please the regime, or a cry to the commoners asking them to rise against Stalin and his atrocities. At the other end of the spectrum, Russian punk rock band Pussy Riot is a forceful cry against Russian governmental policies, fueled by explosive energy and controversy. In this article, the music of Shostakovich and Pussy Riot will be compared, as their methods of protesting the Russian system are analyzed.

Being on thin ice with the Soviet Regime wasn't the most ideal situation to be in during the 1930s. Shostakovich found himself in that position when the premiere of his provocative opera *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* was initially well-received but completely and utterly tarnished by the unsigned article "Muddle Instead of Music." His Fourth Symphony was in the rehearsal process when he painfully made the decision to withdraw it, out of fear that the limits he pushed in that work would be reason enough for the regime to finally incarcerate him (he probably assumed correctly). Simply put, he needed a piece that pleased Stalin and his critics while maintaining his own artistic integrity, which was ironically anti-Stalin in nature. Thus came the Fifth Symphony, which premiered in 1937. The audience was so taken by the work that the ovation lasted for almost the length of the piece itself—culture bureaucrats suspected that the premiere was fixed and organized a private performance. The praise there was the same. Two key editorials further helped justify the work in the eyes of Stalin—one by Stalin's favorite critic, Alexei Tolstoi, and one by

Shostakovich himself, entitled “My Creative Answer”—one of the vaguest articles he ever released¹. With the party pleased, Shostakovich’s well-being and reputation were secured.

How is it possible that one can assume the Fifth Symphony is a subtle protest against the government, when musically speaking the ending sounds as joyful as a Bruckner finale? The key lies within musical quotations in the fourth movement (the first three movements are powerful in their own right, but the fourth creates the most controversy). Besides subtly quoting Berlioz’s *Symphonie fantastique* and Strauss’s *Till Eulenspiegel*—two pieces that involve an execution, Shostakovich points to the concept of death by using material that would eventually appear in a later work, in which “an outlaw hero is led to ‘the gallows tree’” (Volkov 148). Perhaps the biggest indicator of internal pain masked by a veil of feigned glory comes from another self-reference—a setting of Soviet poet Pushkin’s *Rebirth*, which contain the lines:

*An artist-barbarian with his lazy brush
Blackens the painting of a genius
And senselessly he covers it with
His own illegitimate drawing.*

Pushkin (and Shostakovich) perceived Stalin as the “artist-barbarian” who breaks the work of geniuses and twists it for his own purposes—both positive and negative. This poem embodies the struggle that Shostakovich and Pushkin dealt with; Stalin eventually broke Pushkin, and Shostakovich was never far away from his own tipping point. The Fourth Movement is an audible representation of that tipping point; even Soviet critics “agreed that in his music, as one of them put it in 1938, ‘the emotional tension is at the limit: another step—and everything will burst into a physiological howl’” (Volkov 148) [**Audio Example 1-1**]. Due to the complexity of emotional content present, however, the work’s true meaning remained ambiguous and therefore received

¹ “Moi tvorcheskii otvet” [My creative answer]. Trans. Richard Tarskin. *Vechernyaya Moskva*, 25 January 1938, p. 30.

many different interpretations. Those who perceived it as triumphant were part of the regime, those that cried in agony during the finale weren't, and those that had no relationship with either (including Americans and Europeans) found the work somewhat confusing—at least initially.

Shostakovich subtly tricked the system into accepting music that could be classified as a form of protest. On the complete opposite end of the spectrum, Russian punk rock band “Pussy Riot” is an example of how not to succeed in an artistic protest (“succeed” in this case being a subjective term). After storming Moscow’s main cathedral, members filmed a music video protesting Putin and his ties to the church. As an example, one verse includes the phrase, “Church praises the rotten dictators, The cross-bearer procession of black limousines!” In addition, the chorus is based off a Rachmaninoff theme and reads, “St. Maria, Virgin, Drive away Putin, Drive away!” [Audio Example 1-3] As a response to the filming of the video, the church and government predictably arrested members Nadezhda Tolokonnikova and Maria Alyokhina, who were charged with hooliganism motivated by religious hatred. A third was arrested shortly thereafter, and Tolokonnikova has recently chosen to go on a hunger strike in protest of despicable working conditions that violate the labor code. “My brigade in the sewing shop works 16 to 17 hours a day . . . [the administration] sees us solely as free slave labor.”

Musically speaking, Shostakovich and Pussy Riot share similarities, even though sonic production differs between the two. Both push for high-energy content with aggressive tempi and loud, percussive elements, and the piercing, atonal vocals of Pussy Riot resemble the frantic violin runs and disjunct melodic figures of the fourth movement. Shostakovich as a composer has the remarkable ability to hold listeners’ interest even through a very long work with his solid melodic writing and the constant creation of tension. Even through soft and slow sections, there is a continuous feeling of forward motion; punk rock is exclusively focused on forward momentum. However, since Shostakovich and Pussy Riot come from two completely different schools of thought, their music is understandably different. Shostakovich’s 5th Symphony is large and filled with moments of deep introspection and quasi-romantic agony, while Pussy Riot follows the punk

tradition of short, loud, and in-your-face. Metaphorically speaking, the style of Pussy Riot's music parallels their professional career: short, direct, and definitely offensive. If Shostakovich had followed that path, he and his family would have perished with many other artistic and political figures under Stalin.

For this reason, the musical protesting of Shostakovich was arguably more successful than Pussy Riot's absurd demonstrations. The compositionally sensitive yet bombastic writing of the 5th yielded two separate emotional responses that shared equal endearment—stemming separately from the government and the common people. Pussy Riot's is very much one-dimensional, and their aggressive feminist views and lack of subtle lyrics make them look more like a fringe group. A comparison here can be made to the cultural revolutionists of the 1960s: their intention to bring global peace was strongly desired by many people, but the rhetoric they used was too extreme for moderates to accept. Pussy Riot's music elicited an emotional response that, unlike Shostakovich's music, separated pro-government and anti-government protesters even further. Does this outcome devalue the existence of punk culture? No; punk culture never intended to diplomatically bring about social changes; it mainly exists to make a point—which Pussy Riot did effectively. Realistically, Pussy Riot would have never gotten close to succeeding under Stalin's rule—an era where one had to live a double-life to survive. Shostakovich fought to restore normality through his music and was about as “punk” as he could have possibly been without being ostracized, thanks to his perfect compositional blend of conservatism and aggressiveness. The triumphant brass chords of the finale along with the bombastic timpani hits are just as charged as the opening sledgehammer sounds of “Like a Red Prison,” but didn't elicit a negative reaction from pro-Stalinists—they had no idea what it actually was about [**Audio Example 1-2**]. Solomon Volkov describes how Shostakovich avoids depicting negative feelings toward the regime: “Shostakovich . . . is trying to overcome the forces of evil through a show-stopping creative act. Tragic music does not have to be dragging or boring” (226). The Fifth is neither dragging nor boring, and it certainly didn't come across to Stalin's critics as tragic.

Pussy Riot and Shostakovich share one final important quality: that of unabashed humanity. Both are a reaction to the tragic Russian system, doing so in the sweatiest and most powerful ways imaginable. Neither could trade places with the other—Pussy Riot would not have survived under Stalin, and Shostakovich would not have achieved the greatness we know him for today if the Fifth had been published in 2004. Shostakovich was the Soviet answer, the saving grace for millions of desperate society members constantly living in fear, and Pussy Riot currently embodies a wake-up call that modern Russia needs in light of stricter social and political policies. As a musical experience, they complement each other but don't truly exist on the same plane, though both represent solid Russian protest listening material.

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Olivier Messiaen and King Crimson: Bridging the Gap through Birdsong

Most casual listeners would describe French 20th Century composer Olivier Messiaen's music as unbearably edgy or in some cases nonsensical due to the extreme harmonies and rhythmic complexity. However, listeners rejoice at the mention of the popular progressive rock group, King Crimson, who were the forerunners in the experimental rock scene of the late 1960s through the 70's and 80's. One of the band's strongest achievements, "Larks' Tongues in Aspic (parts I through IV)," makes direct references to birdsongs in a similar way that Messiaen incorporates birdsong in his orchestral compositions. While arguably the correlation is the result of an absurd coincidence, a few elements merit the linkage of Messiaen and King Crimson, therefore demystifying the harsh sounds of Messiaen—ultimately making him more accessible to the progressive rock fan.

In a perfect world, one wouldn't need a great deal of contextual understanding of Messiaen's music in order to appreciate it, at least on purely sensory level (in my opinion that should be the case for almost all music). However, the uniqueness of Messiaen demands some sort of historical understanding from the listener. There are a few things to know about Messiaen: 1. he was deeply rooted in his Catholic faith, 2. he didn't quite have synesthesia, but he frequently associated sound with color, 3. he was incredibly fond of nature and was an accomplished ornithologist. Even though Messiaen dabbled with alternative ways of musical organization, he was firmly rooted in his spiritual interests, which were at the heart of his compositions. Arguably, this is what made him truly distinct from the hoards of other serial composers of the mid-20th century. Nicholas Armfelt discusses the raw emotive power of Messiaen in *The Musical Times*: "Messiaen's music. . . demands all or nothing. . . Many listeners, while admitting the expression to be forceful, have found it hard to cope with a music so extreme in its emotive demands" (856). Essentially, Messiaen attempted to communicate such vivid emotions that the audience couldn't help but feel overwhelmed unless adequately prepared.

Much of the emotional energy in Messiaen's music stems from a sort of universal love. Armfelt notes that "One cannot naively distinguish [his secular music] from his religious music, since he views life as a whole" (857). Therefore, everything he wrote had a sort of worldly implication—that the feeling of love was present in both the power of God and the connection between beings. While Messiaen's *Turangalîla-Symphonie* is the ultimate definition of an epic love song, the pieces I would like to discuss are three medium-length birdsongs for orchestra: "Un Vitrail Et Des Oiseaux" (A Stained-Glass Window and some Birds), "Le Réveil des oiseaux" (Awakening of the Birds), and "Oiseaux Exotiques" (Exotic Birds). While his use of birdsong was present in many other pieces, including his infamous "Quartet for the End of Time," these works feel more similar to the spontaneous and experimental qualities of King Crimson's "Larks' Tongues in Aspic."

The first question that many will ask is simply, "Why birds?" Why did Messiaen go through such amazing trouble to catalogue and notate the songs of birds for the sake of accurate recreation in his pieces? Trevor Hold quotes Messiaen in an interview with Antoine Goléa:

"If you want symbols, let us go on to say that the bird is the symbol of freedom. We walk, he flies. We make war, he sings. . . I doubt that one can find in any human music, however inspired, melodies and rhythms that have the same sovereign freedom of bird-song." (122)

To Messiaen, this freedom is the closest link humans have to God, therefore tying his faith and love for birds together. [Audio Example 2-1] "Le Réveil des oiseaux," written in 1953, was a way for him to return back to nature, away from the tonal experiments he had been previously utilizing. Written for piano and orchestra, the work quotes a total of 38 different birds. The form of the work is meant to simulate different parts of the day—different birds are represented, and individual birds have different songs depending on the time of day. The work begins with the nightingale, crescendos to dawn (where there are many birds present at once), and then ends with the calm sounds of the cuckoo as midday arrives. While each orchestra instrument is assigned to

one or two birds, the piano must represent many birds; the final cadenza calls for 16 birdsongs to be played subsequently. Does the work actually sound like birds? Not really, and especially not if one is unaware that the piece is a series of birdsongs in the first place. Trevor Hold remarks that the problems with the recreation exist in the speed of the songs (birds talk fast), the pitch (which is much too low and inflexible), and rhythm (birds don't think and sing metrically) (118-121). This by no means implies that the work is a failure—it is quite remarkable to listen and hear how elements build and deconstruct over time—but accurate birdsong it isn't.

[**Audio Example 2-2**] “Oiseaux Exotiques” was written in 1955 and premiered in 1956, with Messiaen's second wife, Yvonne Loriod, playing the demanding piano part. The meaning behind the title comes from Messiaen's mixing of birds from around the world: “I have quite arbitrarily placed side by side bird songs of China, of the [East] Indies, of Malaysia, of North and South America, that is to say songs of birds which never meet” (from LA Phil program notes on the piece). Arguably, this piece is less formulaically strict than “Le Réveil des oiseaux” in that the birdsongs are sometimes paraphrased and the percussion use Eastern rhythms to tie sections together; there is no 24-hour cycle of time portrayed here. Richard Freed calls the work a “sound fantasy—an exploration of timbres and rhythms which happened to be suggested to the composer by his fascination with ornithology but which is not a direct expression of that fascination.” The result is a work that is both more accessible and more intense than *Le Réveil*—the dramatic tutti section at the end has the full ensemble hammering out separated quarter notes similar to the end of a Beethoven Symphony.

One of Messiaen's last major works was a shorter birdsong piece: “Un Vitrail Et Des Oiseaux,” written in 1986. The piece reflects colored stained glass and birds, though arguably the birds are the more important element. Once again, the form of the song is derived from the passing of time through the day, though in this case there is less development and more elongation and repetition of short motivic ideas. The work itself is structured into three strophes (sections), and ends with a series of large brass chords, and therefore arguably implies less

literally the form of a day and more-so the emotional experience and colors as they change over time.

How do these three pieces relate to “Larks’ Tongues in Aspic, Part I?” Basically, Larks’ Tongues is a conglomeration of eastern harmonies and rhythm, solo violin bird imitation, and the aggressive, driving force of what would eventually morph into heavy metal. The opening of the song is played by a cyclic mbira (an African thumb piano), which sounds stunningly similar to the opening of “Un Vitrail Et Des Oiseaux.” (the Messiaen: [Audio Example 2-3]; King Crimson: [Audio Example 2-4]) Regardless of whether this was actually a coincidence (it probably was), the similarity is actually worth listening to. The massive, slow build up to the first ensemble climax begins at around 2:20, in which high-pitched percussion create a sea of texture similar to a mass of birds singing at once. A rhythmic violin figure establishes a strict tempo and creates tension, building all the way to the 3:38 mark, where pounding drums and guitar take over in a traditional rock feel—except it’s played in 7/4. [Audio Example 2-5] This formal motion corresponds to the giant crescendo to dawn in “Le Réveil des oiseaux,” where more and more textures are added until the whole ensemble is playing.

The next similarity between “Larks’ Tongues” and Messiaen’s birdsong pieces is slightly less literal and more contextual. [Audio Example 2-6] At the 7:40 mark, a solo violin enters, accompanied by sampled bird sounds and the constant, arhythmic strumming of a clean guitar. Eventually, the other sounds fade out, giving way to a violin cadenza paraphrasing Ralph Vaughan Williams’s “The Lark Ascending.” [Audio Example 2-7] To give a brief synopsis of that work, Vaughan Williams began writing a piece prior to World War I, but had to hold off finishing it until after the war in 1920. The basic premise of the piece lies within George Meredith’s poem, “The Lark Ascending,” which describes a soaring bird and implies a powerful feeling of love for the Earth and beyond. A few key lines that Vaughan Williams includes in the score are, “For singing till his heaven fills, ‘Tis love of earth that he instils, And ever winging up and up, Our valley is his golden cup, And he the wine which overflows, to lift us with him as he

goes” (Meredith 65-70). This extreme sense of love is on par with Messiaen’s obsession with love; whether Robert Fripp and King Crimson were utilizing the concept of love in their recording will remain an enigma, but the fact that “The Lark Ascending” is there in the first place implies the intense feeling of love.

This implication also raises the question in regards to Fripp’s own personal philosophy behind King Crimson, and how it may relate to Messiaen’s beliefs. Arguably one of the most important musical elements to Fripp is spontaneous and complete communication between both the musicians and the audience. He felt that rock was one of the best means of achieving this; “rock is an immediate expression of something very direct. Rock and roll is therapy on the street, it’s available to everyone.” This is coming from a person who indulged in Bartok’s String Quartets just as much as in Jimi Hendrix. Fripp attempted to avoid at all cost what a lot of rock musicians of his time (and nearly all classical musicians) ended up falling into—performing the same set of notes repeatedly and potentially mindlessly without any sense of the audience and how they are responding. Instead, he and King Crimson attempted to focus on group improvisation, which was not present in many other Western genres at the time. The result was this sort of “magic,” as Fripp himself put it, that was a bridge to a higher state of being. It is important to note that Fripp’s stance on religion was more spiritual than doctrine-based; “. . . we can all have direct contact with music through faith and effort, that to speak directly to God we don’t need all the accumulated ritual, regulation, and written tradition. . .” (Eric Tamm, Ch 3). The connection with Messiaen is almost painfully obvious here. Messiaen strove for a universal connection with the beyond, and birds were the medium for doing so. Fripp’s methodology for achieving nirvana was not specifically bird-related, but more centered on the individual assimilating into a larger conglomerate to form something more powerful than the sum of the two parts. In a way, that is similar to the nature of birds; they tend to stay together during flight.

For some, Olivier Messiaen is probably a tough pill to swallow, which is completely understandable considering how far he pushed his own musical boundaries. However, when

coupled with the more well-known and understood (yet still experimental) King Crimson, Messiaen can be more easily comprehended. There are quite possibly many more connections between the two artists, both in a specifically musical sense as well as a philosophical sense, but Messiaen's birds and Crimson's Lark felt like such an optimal fit. For those who are interested in hearing more of Messiaen, his *Turangalila-Symphonie* and *Quartet for the End of Time* are more accessible, yet still bear a significant emotional impact upon the listener. And as for King Crimson—Robert Fripp is in the process of reforming the group (for the fourth time)—therefore expect new music from them sometime soon.

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The “Apocalypse Saga,” Music for the End of Time Compared

In a quest to find meaningful musical connections that span across large genre gaps and time periods, I analyzed significant life questions that most of humanity has had to struggle with, such as those pertaining to love, life, and death. While there is plenty of material in regards to love and life that will eventually be discussed in later articles, death—more specifically, the apocalypse—will be the topic for this series of articles.

Humanity has used music to either attempt to explain what will happen in the end or as a coping tool for when it may come. While many ideas and speculations have remained relatively consistent over time (such as those pertaining to specific religions), humanity’s picture of the apocalypse has also simultaneously shifted away from a strictly religious ending to one of our own doing. The original Greek definition of the term apocalypse is “to uncover or disclose,” as in God (or gods) revealing himself to humanity. Usually, retellings of the apocalypse are associated with violence and destruction, then redemption and hope (with the most notable retelling being the Book of Revelation). In this particular retelling, as described in the *Encyclopedia of Psychology and Religion*, there is a series of “trumpets blowing in violence, and the vials pouring forth destruction in three great sequences of sevens, each linked forward and backward. . .” (Strozier 62-4). At that point God judges who will rise to heaven or descend, and the Earth will end tragically yet bring forth a wonderful beginning. Other key elements to retellings of the apocalypse include some sort of journey—where there is a return to the starting point, as well as transformation to a higher level of wisdom (transcendence). While these are less literal interpretations, they are important at a symbolic level, especially considering how powerful the implications of the end of the world are.

Since the discovery of the atomic bomb and the realization that humans could bring about their own end in a matter of seconds, there has been a higher focus on the apocalypse, both in a spiritual and practical sense. This focus on how the world will end has shifted away from God’s wrath upon man (which has a fair share of music itself), and more towards our own wrath upon

ourselves. Due to this quick shift, a dramatic change in aesthetics related to the apocalypse occurred, and composers such as Husa and Penderecki expressed these aesthetics through their music. However, not all composers sought to represent the tragedy destruction; some wrote images of the withering away of the Earth. This aesthetic concept is present in T.S. Eliot's poem, "The Hollow Men," which describes our end as "not with a bang, but a whimper" (100).

How do these "interpretations" differ, and how does that affect the music made in response to them? Basically, there are three loosely defined categories which define where selections of apocalypse-based music may fall into: wrath and destruction, transcendence and the mystic, and finally Eliot's fade into silence. While there is music that floats between all three of these categories, for the sake of comparison more "obvious" comparisons will be grouped into their respected category.

Part I: Wrath and Destruction

Penderecki and Husa were two notable composers that caused quite a stir in the mid-20th century. Their music was known for its extreme dissonances which reflected upon the political uncertainties and horrible pains felt during that time period. Karel Husa's *Apotheosis of this Earth*, as the composer himself writes in the program notes, "was motivated by the present desperate stage of mankind and its immense problems with everyday killings, war, hunger, extermination of fauna, huge forest fires, and critical contamination of the whole environment." The piece is in three movements: "Apotheosis," "Tragedy of Destruction," and "Postscript." The first movement is an exercise in memory, where the memories grow larger and get more vivid, with tragedies showing through. The next movement depicts the Earth literally imploding, while also a reflection of man's atrocities to the planet. Finally, the last movement shatters all of these previous elements into space, which materialize in the form of the choir's chant, "Why have we let this happen?"

Two modern equivalents can be found within two distinct genres of music. Tom Waits' guttural voice is heard howling his the track, "The Earth Died Screaming" from the '92 album *Bone Machine*. While the song's subject matter contains hints of mysticism and personal questions that Husa's music doesn't have, the key similarity lies within Waits' vocals, which bear resemblance to powerful vocal cries in the 2nd movement of the Husa. Here are the examples played back-to-back: [Audio Example 3-1], [Audio Example 3-2]. The major difference between the two in terms of subject matter exists within who exactly is causing the destruction: Husa's depiction blames humanity for the Earth's demise, while Waits' lyrics point to some sort of higher force, God or otherwise: "There was thunder, There was lightning, Then the stars went out, And the moon fell from the sky. . ." Regardless, the two sonically sound similar enough to merit a vague musical connection.

The other piece of music that resembles Husa's "Tragedy of Destruction" movement is Hellsystem's "The End of Time." Arguably, many songs from techno's hardcore sub-genre would fit, because hardcore is known for its high energy and aggression, with an emphasis on darker and more painful themes than traditional techno. The buildup in the Husa example [Audio Example 3-1] to the low percussion and choir entrance resembles the build in Hellsystem's song, chanting "future, future" until the bass kicks in for the drop section [Audio Example 3-3]. What can be said about hardcore techno and many other reincarnations of EDM is the music itself takes precedence over the context the music was written for. In the case of hardcore, there will always be the characteristic pulsating, droning dissonances that sound like death, even though the music itself isn't directly meant to symbolize death; it is meant to be danced to. Therefore, many songs in this genre of EDM can potentially fit within the context of Husa's *Apotheosis* without necessarily having to go out of their way to try. This isn't necessarily a bad thing; it's just a thing that happened and people seem to gravitate to. Into hardcore? Try some Husa.

Dies Irae by Penderecki was first performed in 1967 at Auschwitz, dedicated to the victims who were brutally murdered there [Audio Example 3-4]. The Latin term *Dies Irae* translates to

“Day of Wrath” and is part of the traditional requiem mass, also known as the Mass for the Dead. The actual text used in Penderecki’s piece comes from many sources including the bible, Polish poems and Greek mythology. The three-movement piece tells a tale very similar to Husa’s *Apotheosis*, albeit more biblical and less focused on man’s own power. The second and third movements, respectively, are “Apocalypse” and “Apotheosis”; it is important to note the distinction, in which the apocalypse refers to the painful judgement, while apotheosis refers to a sudden, climactic realization. To make a generic comparison to this piece, I chose Antichristus’s “La Fin des Temps,” meaning “the end of time” [Audio Example 3-5]. The wash of voices in the Penderecki leading up to the huge timpani entrance of the 2nd movement has the same texture as Antichristus’s build, which includes the spoken lines, “It’s a good day to die,” followed by the drop section.

The list of songs inspired by the death and destruction associated with the apocalypse is limitless; other notable examples include Metallica’s “Four Horsemen,” Machine Head’s “Elegy” (which strongly resembles the Husa in terms of subject matter), Rage’s “Dies Irae,” and The Clash’s “London Calling.” While these all relate contextually to what Husa’s and Penderecki’s works and thus are worth mentioning, the discussed examples seemed to fit better musically. In part two of this series, comparisons between works relating to more mythical elements of the apocalypse will be discussed.

Part II: Transcendence

While classic images of the apocalypse usually include large amounts of fire, plagues, and other grisly details, other visions include scenes of transcendence and the ultimate power of love. *The Book of Revelation* reveals that after the Earth is destroyed by the four horsemen, the seven trumpets, and the fires that devour Satan, a new heaven and earth are created, marking the end of all suffering. In other religions and schools of thought such as Hinduism, that of the Egyptians, and even Marxism, it is believed that there will be some sort of large clash (either human or god-

related), where forces of good and evil square off, ending in some sort of climactic creation of a utopian society or some other form of transcendence. The concepts of a utopian society and transcendence are reflected in the work of many late romantic composers, as well as modern artists and composers, though generally in a less religiously-inspired context. Some notable examples in the classical realm include Mahler's 2nd Symphony, Menotti's *Apocalypse*, and Scriabin's *Mysterium*; Sufjan Stevens's "Transfiguration," Genesis's "Supper's Ready," and John Lennon's "Imagine" will be used as modern examples.

If there's ever a list of musical compositions that one must hear before he or she dies, Mahler's 2nd Symphony (entitled "Resurrection") should almost certainly be on it. It is one of the most complete musical experiences imaginable—Mahler himself believed that a symphony should express the world. Not only is the work—specifically the fifth movement—a representation of the apocalypse followed by judgement and resurrection, it also explores the broader concept of death and the meaning of life—along with what possibly happens afterward. Simply put, the work is a behemoth, representing the darkest of darks and lightest of lights. The first movement depicts a funeral of a loved one, with images of his accomplishments passing before our eyes, and the ultimate question of life after death pervading one's mind.² The next two movements alternate between a happy, dream-like state and a sorrowful reality where life becomes meaningless and unbearable. With movement four comes a soprano soloist, who pleads to end man's suffering through God's light and power. That leads directly into the finale—which is a literal representation of the apocalypse. Tragedy erupts and all souls are called to march in procession for their final judgement. The Earth ends in climactic fashion with the seven sounds of trumpets calling; the piccolo, representing the bird of death, is the last to leave the planet [**Audio Example 3-6**]. When all is quiet, a giant chorus enters almost imperceptibly, with the text, "Thou wilt rise again." The proceeding build up to the ending is both epic and powerfully touching [**Audio Example 3-7**].

² See Floros *Gustav Mahler: The Symphonies* pgs 51-66 for detailed information on Mahler's 2nd Symphony—including more details on the text.

There aren't many modern music examples that are akin to the scope and length of this Mahler (or any Mahler) Symphony. However, the closest example would probably be going to a concert and seeing an hour-and-a-half show, where the pacing resembles that of a major symphony. Mahler's 2nd is an entire concert experience and was purposely written that way. Length and force aside, the subject matter of resurrection is used in many modern songs. Genesis's "Supper's Ready" from their 1972 album, *Foxtrot*, is "a personal journey which ends up walking through scenes from Revelation." The song is massive: it is divided into seven sections and cycles through many different styles, with thematic material tying it all together. The gist, however, is a story following two lovers through the book of Revelation, with the sixth and seventh sections correlating to the end of Mahler 2. "Apocalypse in 9/8 (Co-Starring the Delicious Talents of Gabble Ratchet)" describes the destruction of the Earth, with the key line being, "Seven trumpets blowing sweet rock and roll," similar to Mahler's trumpet calls [**Audio Example 3-8**]. The final section, "As Sure as Eggs is Eggs (Aching Men's Feet)," shows the lovers rejoicing at their freedom and God's return to carry everyone to "take them to the new Jerusalem" [**Audio Example 3-9**]. The major difference between Mahler and Genesis lies within the relationship with the audience; Mahler's pleas are directed at all of (therefore mankind—including the listeners—is direct subject matter within his story), while Genesis focuses on the wishes of a specific couple (which the listener sympathizes with). Essentially, Mahler attempts to directly communicate with an audience, while Genesis does so indirectly; the end result yields the same musical effect.

A few other songs worth mentioning in the realm of transcendence include Sufjan's "The Transfiguration," and John Lennon's "Imagine." "The Transfiguration" is not specifically about Revelation, but Jesus revealing himself to be the Messiah (which is not dissimilar to God manifesting himself in Revelation). What makes this song so effective is that it is the last track on his deeply religious album, *Seven Swans*, therefore all the built up anticipation is suddenly released in a polyphonic spree as Jesus reveals himself to be the Son of God [**Audio Example**

3-10]. John Lennon’s “Imagine,” on the other hand, is ironically anti-religious yet deals with the beauty of resurrection and universal love [**Audio Example 3-11**]. He hypothetically suggests a world without religious conflict and need for worldly desires, and is instead filled with peace and love. The connection here to Mahler’s 2nd is naturally vague, but Lennon’s concept of a utopian society ironically resembles God’s everlasting kingdom.

While transcendence occurs less frequently in the realm of modern music, examples do exist—especially when considering a complete concert experience. Picture Lennon’s “Imagine” or Sufjan’s “The Transfiguration” played in a live setting—with listeners forgetting about their worldly woes and surrendering to an ultimate listening experience. This experience is possibly what Mahler had intended to create when composing his “Resurrection.”

Part III: Fading into Silence

The last segment of this apocalypse triptych requires closer analysis of T. S. Eliot’s famous poem, *The Hollow Men*. In it, unfortunate souls find themselves trapped at the outer edges of Hell, neither able to enter nor to ask God for redemption. “This is the way the world ends, This is the way the world ends, This is the way the world ends, Not with a bang but a whimper” (Eliot 97-100). While the poem is a specific realization of the apocalypse, it also points to a societal issue; Eliot’s men are so caught up by material possessions and instant gratification that they end up masking larger problems that take strength and sacrifice to confront. In this case, there is an absence of the apotheosis—an absence of some climactic point or realization, in which men find themselves trapped in a deteriorating loop that contracts as time fades away. If music of destruction represents God’s wrath, and music of transcendence represents God’s love, music of silence represents the absence of a connection between God and man—as if there is a wall in between the two. There are some excellent examples of music that represent this idea, either specifically as a reference to T. S. Eliot’s poem, or to the concept of fading into nothing as a whole.

Two examples of music that were directly inspired by T. S. Eliot's *The Hollow Men* include Persichetti's *The Hollow Men* and Casiotone for the Painfully Alone's song, "Young Shields." Vincent Persichetti was an American composer often categorized with Hindemith and Bartok in terms of style, minus his strong American folk roots. In 1942 he wrote *The Hollow Men* for trumpet and string orchestra, based off Eliot's poem [Audio Example 3-12]. Persichetti, in the premiere's program notes, wrote, "The music springs from the disillusioned subtleties of a poem that intensifies the sense of emptiness and hopelessness of mankind." The work closely resembles music by Aaron Copland (along with many other mid-century American composers), except the mood it portrays is much more tragic and almost motionless. Through the piece, high strings paint an opaque picture, while the cellos and basses add brooding short figures that darken up the texture, separating it from Copland. The trumpet line seems to be the only glimmer of hope, like a plea to God asking to be saved. In the end, however, that plea is rejected, and the world ends quietly and desolate. As for modern interpretations go, Casiotone for the Painfully Alone's reincarnation of *The Hollow Men* manages to couple utter banality with numbing despair, and for some odd reason it manages to work. The song "Young Shields" appeared on their 2006 album *Etiquette*, which Pitchfork writer Nitsuh Abebe says is filled with "songs you sing to yourself when you have problems too banal to expect anyone else to care about—which is the college grad's mid-twenties in a nutshell" (2006) [Audio Example 3-13]. Apparently, one's mid-twenties happen to be a pretty hollow time; the opening lyrics of "Young Shields" include, "there's a shield around us, it's invisible & soundless, & we drink too much & f*** too soon, smoke cigarettes in rented rooms." The shield is comparable man's blindness of reality leading to an emotionless and unfulfilling state of being. The song resembles Persichetti's trumpet piece, in that there is a lack of forward motion—Owen Ashworth's subdued lyrics and basic synth drones cancel out the fast tempo the song is set at.

Another noteworthy piece with the premise of fading to silence includes Olivier Messiaen's *Quartet for the End of Time*, written in a Nazi concentration camp in 1941. The last movement,

Louange A L'immortalite De Jesus, signifies the everlasting presence of Jesus after time has been destroyed [Audio Example 3-14]. The violin line floats over chime-like piano chords to create an astoundingly beautiful texture. Admittedly, it was hard to find a direct comparison with this work, but a possibility could be Grizzly Bear's "Foreground," from their 2009 album *Veckatimest* [Audio Example 3-15]. This song shares similar elements with the Messiaen in which time stands still, but the melody repetitively calls out above the rest of the texture. The lyrics are ambiguous but imply a struggling relationship and a desire to move in a different direction—a somewhat cliché yet memorable subject for a song that is last on an album. To make a vague comparison with the Messiaen, consider the apocalypse as being a metaphor for a break-up (yes, that is extreme, but not necessarily for some people). Beyond the apocalypse there is a great unknown, which exists outside the plane of one's comprehension of time—eternity. While definitely a stretch, this comparison is potentially valid enough for those who enjoy one of these pieces to appreciate the other in a similar fashion.

Epilogue

The end of time will never stop being a subject of human interest and creative inspiration—that is until the end actually occurs. The three categories of destruction, transcendence, and silence represent some of the ways musicians and thinkers perceive our final fate, therefore there is a wealth of quality content to sift through and compare. The music listed above is obviously not a comprehensive list of apocalypse pieces; some of the music doesn't fall neatly into categories, and no two pieces express the exact same thing (some don't even explicitly refer to the apocalypse). However, those exploring music outside their comfort zone will probably appreciate this article for discovering music they had not heard before. Some other important pieces that weren't mentioned include Berlioz's *Requiem*, Menotti's *Apocalypse*, Scriabin's *Mysterium*, and Schoenberg's *Die Jakobsleiter*. Outside the classical realm, some songs include "The Sky is

Broken” by Moby, “Here Comes the Flood” by Peter Gabriel, and St. Vincent’s “The Apocalypse Song.”

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Samuel Barber and Joanna Newsom: Sounds Linked through Childhood

Sometimes linking together artists and genres is as theoretical as it is instinctual, in which two works sound the same by chance. These coincidences seem less like coincidences when background information about certain pieces or artists links together almost seamlessly; this happens to be the case for American indie-folk artist Joanna Newsom and mid-20th century American composer Samuel Barber. While Newsom's work doesn't directly resemble or draw from traditional art-song, her music can serve as an indirect introduction to the world of Barber's vocal compositions (specifically *Knoxville, Summer of 1915*), creating a link between the indie-folk and classical worlds.

Often times one's childhood experiences influence music his or her music later in life—this is the case for both Newsom and Barber. Joanna Newsom grew up in Nevada City, California—a laid-back “hippie” town which she formed a deeply personal connection with. Her parents both worked in medicine and played musical instruments—her father played guitar and her mother was a classically-trained pianist. While not absolutely isolated from pop culture and the “real world,” she was highly separated—being forbidden to watch TV among other things. As for her own musical training, Newsom initially wanted to start with harp, but her parents instead allowed for private piano lessons at the age of four. In a few years, however, she was given her first harp, which she grew to be “inseparable” with. She didn't start singing until one of her friends convinced her to add lyrics to her compositions; Newsom's academic background in literature and poetry became a starting point. After recording two EP's and played a few small shows, she was signed by Drag City Records, who produced and distributed *The Milk-Eyed Mender* in 2004.

Samuel Barber was born in 1910 in West Chester, Pennsylvania, an easygoing suburb of Philadelphia. His father worked as a physician and his mother was a pianist (as with Newsom's parents). Barber at an early age was exposed to classical art music through family connections—his aunt being a singer at the Met—and he quickly picked up the piano at the age of six. By the age of ten he attempted at writing his first opera, and by fourteen he was attending the prestigious

Curtis Institute of Music for piano, composition, and conducting—all three of which he excelled at. His parents were initially hesitant towards Barber's pursuit in composition, but at the age of nine he wrote a letter to his mother, pleading his desire to study music:

“Dear Mother: I have written this to tell you my worrying secret. Now don't cry when you read it because it is neither yours nor my fault. I suppose I will have to tell it now without any nonsense. To begin with I was not meant to be an athlete [*sic*]. I was meant to be a composer, and will be I'm sure. I'll ask you one more thing.—Don't ask me to try to forget this unpleasant thing and go play football.—*Please*—Sometimes I've been worrying about this so much that it makes me mad (not very).”

Barber slowly but surely gained a national reputation as a composer, and while he was heavily criticized for not following the path of many serialist composers, he produced a hefty block of work that has been described as neo-romantic—influenced by romantic composers such as Mendelssohn and Wagner but written in a modern tonal language.

Knoxville, Summer of 1915 is one of Barber's biggest achievements, a work for solo voice and orchestra, that makes an important contribution to the soprano repertoire. The text he chose, James Agee's short story “Knoxville,” reflected heavily on the longing he felt for a return of his childhood, which by 1947 was slipping quickly from his memory with the death of his father and aunt. The form of the composition, like Agee's story, is through-composed, featuring recurring motives to aid in portraying the text; Agee wrote it in 90 minutes as an improvisational, stream-of-consciousness exercise. It paints a picture of a summer evening potentially through the eyes of a child and features themes of nostalgia and a sense of comfortable belonging. Agee, like Barber grew up in a similar small-town environment and was also experiencing the loss of his father and a desire to relive his childhood. The opening lines of the solo, which occur roughly halfway through the beginning of the story itself, are as idyllic as they are expository [**Audio Example 4-1**]:

It has become the time of evening
 when people sit on their porches,
 rocking gently and talking gently
 and watching the street
 and the standing up
 into their sphere of possession of the trees,
 of birds' hung havens, hangers.

Barber's melodic writing is beautifully crafted and intricate without losing a sense of tunefulness. The soprano line floats above a warm, dreamy texture of a post-dinner haze coupled with small talk among family and friends. While not necessarily describing specific events, the text and music still send the listener back in time through general gestures and short musings that seem as simple as they are profound. ". . .the stars are wide and alive, they seem each like a smile of great sweetness, and they seem very near" [**Audio Example 4-2**].

A huge portion of Joanna Newsom's writing is influenced by her childhood and her thoughts on family members. However, *Emily* stands out as a comparison with *Knoxville* in terms of both structure and context. Orchestrated by prolific American artist Van Dyke Park, *Emily* describes Newsom's relationship with her sister (Emily), especially as they find themselves separated due to Newsom's musical career. Much like Barber, Newsom paints dramatic scenes of her childhood, either as a dreamscape or possibly actual events, which play on to contrast Emily—a wandering astrophysicist, and Joanna—a homebound musician at heart. One of the recurring lines is as follows: "And the meteorite's just what causes the light; And the meteor's how it's perceived; And the meteoroid's a bone thrown from the void that lies quiet in offering to thee" [**Audio Example 4-3**]. These various forms of space rock may refer to many things, including the two sisters, their distant relationship, the longing for return, and Joanna's inherent fascination yet confusion in regards to Emily's career (note how she mixes up meteoroid and meteorite, possibly intentionally).

The connection between *Knoxville* and *Emily* is twofold: one via nostalgia over elements of childhood, and the other of compositional similarities. The use of lush orchestration in both is an obvious similarity, but that doesn't justify linking the two together. Compositionally, however, the free-form nature and flexibility of Barber's and Newsom's writing lends to the portrayal of the dreams they are trying to recreate, and the tuneful nature and repetition of thematic material holds the two together in a comprehensible fashion. For those more accustomed to Newsom's "elf-like" voice than one of a trained opera singer, keep in mind that how Newsom and a classical vocalist use their own voices plays into what makes the works unique yet connected. Newsom's text includes more implicit and symbolic details than the text of *Knoxville*; instead of reliving or recreating dreams and experiences, Newsom is pulling them out of her memory with an urgent sense of sentimentality, creating multiple layers of perspective [**Audio Example 4-4**]. The small, scratchy nature of her voice works perfectly in this context (as though she is reciting a fairy tale). On the other hand, Barber's *Knoxville* outlines what was happening in the present moment at it's simplest state—in the eyes of a child. Therefore, this text makes the most sense when sung by a trained soprano—the precise dictation helps maintain clarity. Regardless, one shouldn't be intimidated either by Newsom's elf-like voice or an opera singer's calculated delivery; both work in their given context to amplify what the music was asking for.

While I don't foresee a performance of both Newsom's *Emily* and Barber's *Knoxville* in the same concert happening any time soon, the similarity in form and content raises an interesting possibility for future concert experiences. Certain organizations and venues have been known to feature old and new works side-by-side (Le Poisson Rouge in New York City is a well-known example). For those interested in hearing more Samuel Barber, I'd recommend his highly popular Violin Concerto, as well as his less-known but equally powerful Piano Concerto. The rest of his body of work is consistently good as well. My current favorite *Knoxville: Summer of 1915* recording is Yoel Levi conducting the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra with Sylvia McNair singing. The woodwind playing is especially great, and McNair captures the dreamy quality perfectly. For

those interested in hearing more of Joanna Newsom's intricately-woven fairy tales, her latest album—*Have One on Me*—is a multi-disk epic, that focuses more on Americana sounds than carefully orchestrated textures of *Y's*.

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Appendix A

Audio Examples

Audio Example 1-1 - Shostakovich Symphony 5 part 1

Audio Example 1-2 - Shostakovich Symphony 5 part 2

Audio Example 1-3 - Pussy Riot Punk Prayer

Audio Example 2-1 - Messiaen Le Réveil des Oiseaux

Audio Example 2-2 - Messiaen Oiseaux Exotiques

Audio Example 2-3 - Messiaen Un Vitrail Et Des Oiseaux

Audio Example 2-4 - King Crimson Larks' Tongues in Aspic part 1

Audio Example 2-5 - King Crimson Larks' Tongues in Aspic part 2

Audio Example 2-5 - King Crimson Larks' Tongues in Aspic part 3

Audio Example 2-7 - Vaughan Williams Lark Ascending

Audio Example 3-1 - Husa Apotheosis Mvt. 2

Audio Example 3-2 - Tom Waits Earth Died Screaming

Audio Example 3-3 - Hellsystem End of Time

Audio Example 3-4 - Penderecki Dies Irae Mvt. 2

Audio Example 3-5 - Antichristus La Fin Des Temps

Audio Example 3-6 - Mahler Symphony No. 2 part 1

Audio Example 3-7 - Mahler Symphony No. 2 part 2

Audio Example 3-8 - Genesis Supper's Ready part 1

Audio Example 3-9 - Genesis Supper's Ready part 2

Audio Example 3-10 - Sufjan Stevens Transfiguration

Audio Example 3-11 - John Lennon Imagine

Audio Example 3-12 - Persichetti The Hollow Men

Audio Example 3-13 - Casiotone for the Painfully Alone Young Shields

Audio Example 3-14 - Messiaen Quartet for the End of Time

Audio Example 3-15 - Grizzly Bear Foreground

Audio Example 4-1 - Barber Knoxville part 1

Audio Example 4-2 - Barber Knoxville part 2

Audio Example 4-3 - Joanna Newsom Emily part 1

Audio Example 4-4 - Joanna Newsom Emily part 2

ACADEMIC VITA

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Education

Penn State University – Schreyer Honors College, University Park, PA
Bachelor of Music, Clarinet Performance, 2010 – 2014

Awards

National/International

Second Prize, International Clarinet Association Orchestral Audition Competition, Lincoln, NE, 2012

Honorable Mention, Eastern Music Festival Concerto Competition, Greensboro, NC, 2013

Penn State

Winner, Penn State Symphonic Wind Ensemble Concerto Competition, 2013

Second Prize, Penn State Single Reed Summit Collegiate Concerto Competition, 2012

Honorable Mention, Penn State Philharmonic Concerto Competition, 2013

Recipient, Marjorie Jane Brewster Memorial Music Scholarship, 2013

Recipient, Eleanor Beene Memorial Award, 2011 – 2013

Dean's List, 2010 – 2014

Organizations

Phi Beta Kappa (junior year nomination)

Pi Kappa Lambda

International Clarinet Association

Performance Experience

Eastern Music Festival, Greensboro, NC, 2012, 2013

Philadelphia International Music Festival, Philadelphia, PA, 2011

Rocky Ridge Music Center, Estes Park, CO, 2012, declined acceptance due to Eastern Music Festival participation

Penn State Performing Ensembles

Philharmonic Orchestra, 2011 – present

Chamber Orchestra, 2012 – 2013

Symphonic Wind Ensemble, 2010 – present

Clarinet Choir, 2010 – present

Inner Dimensions Jazz Ensemble, fall 2010

Wind Quintet, 2011 – 2012

Clarinet Quartets, 2010 – 2011, 2012 – 2013