

o unspeakable madness of our age

for Countertenor, Baritone, and chamber ensemble of 8 players

I. *O Canenda / Quem Metrorum / Rex Regum*

II. *Douce Playsance / Garison Selon Nature / Neuma Quinti Toni*

Suggested Program Note:

I've long been interested in responding artistically to the music of Philippe de Vitry. It has held a certain fascination to me ever since I became acquainted with the isorhythmic motets in my early graduate studies. The striking similarity to the kinds highly individualistic solutions to the compositional problems of the 14th century and those of the 20th and 21st centuries is provocative to me. Take for instance a situation in which pitch and rhythm are organized (in part) by two coordinated lists of values that reassert themselves cyclically in interlocking patterns over the course of the work. The "freer" materials of the *triplum* and *duplum* are in actuality quilt-work assemblages constructed from a reservoir of pre-compositional rhythmic gestures (the rhythmic modes, derived from the familiar poetic modes). In short, the isorhythmic motet is in some ways a kind of *ur-integral serialism*. In the 14th century world of de Vitry, as in our own, there is nothing entirely like a "common practice" although there are several common practices. In our own time, especially today when the severity of integral serialism seems to us like a relic of an idealistic (and not too recent) past, one is tempted to resort to system as a means of compositional... self – defense (?). It feels easy to defend those things that can be explained – that contain a kind of ethical force of reason – but it is the ineffable that affirms human artistic freedom (though one should not confuse the merely spontaneous with the truly free). De Vitry's works contain both in themselves – this *kunstverienigung* of intellect and sentiment forms a synthesis that destroys if possible the stale demand to plant one's flag in the soil of some antiquated binary (tonal/atonal, uptown/downtown, abstract/programmatic, etc).

The first song in the cycle "O Canenda / Quem Metrorum / Rex Regum" is a polytextual motet in praise of Robert of Anjou, the 14th century king of Sicily. The Triplum text contains the title line of this collection. In the motet, de Vitry speaks with such a fervent patriotic affection for Anjou, that the madness it seems, actually lies with the poet himself rather than the baying detractors of the Sicilian monarch. My setting is intentionally cartoonish and ridiculous. The movement descends into musical madness as the lines are passed around fanatically between instruments, pulled apart registrally, and destabilized tonally by "wrong notes" and noises. The entire time, the two vocalists are droning away quite disconnected from what is happening in the ensemble. This sense of detachment is intentional and constant in the cycle. The original motets feature the same sense of detachment between the languid, neat, boring, nearly wordless isorhythmic lines and the peppy, coked-out, naive vitality of the modal lines. It conveys some ineffable thing(s) that I can't entirely pin down – but which I believe are crucial to retain. The second motet "Douce Playsance / Garison Selon Nature / Neuma Quinti Toni" concerns the fiery passionate pains of love. Instead, I decided to play opposites in my setting. The detachment in this derrangement is amplified by the fact that the vocalists, who here sing the triplum and motetus lines of the original, are accompanied by the isorhythmic line that has been orchestrated into the ensemble (with an additional pair of elements that gradually lift the movement to a strange and, paradoxically, "calmly anxious" state of profound inner monotony).

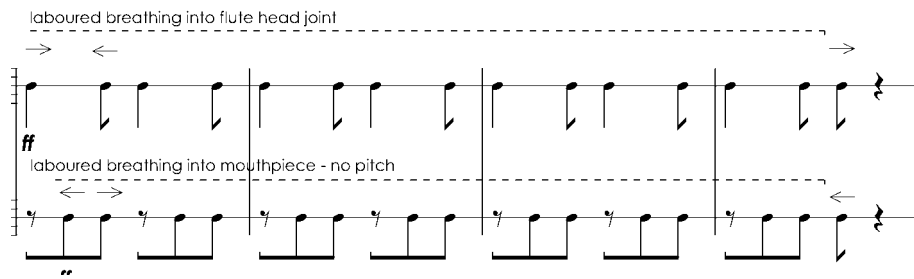
Performance Notes



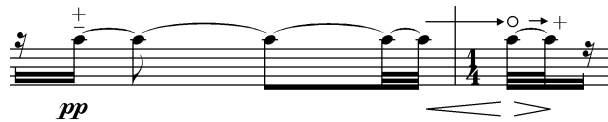
FLUTE / BASS CLARINET: Slap Tongue, VIOLIN / DOUBLE BASS: Snap Pizzicato



FLUTE: Jet Whistle (cover the flute mouthpiece entirely and blow an extremely full and fast breath through the instrument).



FLUTE / TRUMPET: Breath in and out of the instrument without making any definite pitch.



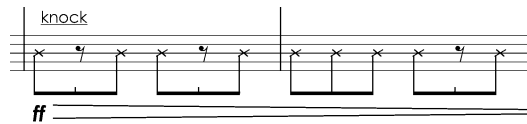
TRUMPET: Wa-wa mute in closed position = +, Wa-wa mute in open position = o

non vibrato —————> molto vibrato

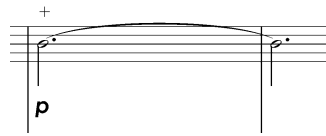
GENERAL: Solid unidirectional arrows indicate a gradual transition between two kinds of timbres



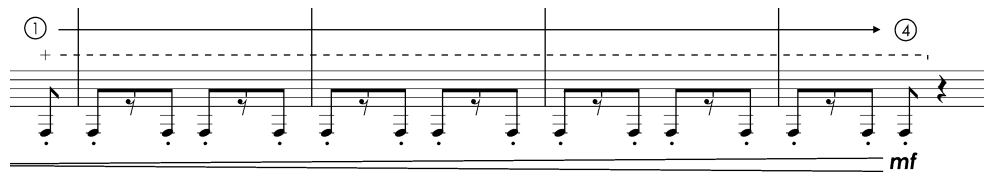
GENERAL: Indicates that the player should stop the sound from ringing – forcibly cutting off the natural resonance of the instrument.



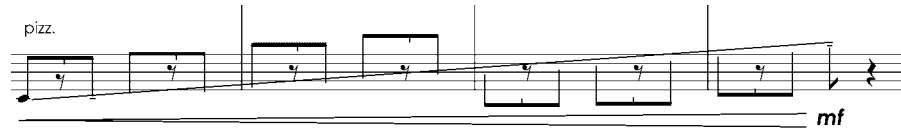
VIOLIN, DOUBLE BASS, HARP: Knock on the body of the instrument with the knuckles of the fist.



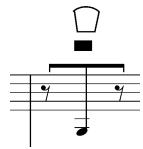
PIANO: Stop the string with a finger on the Left Hand while playing the note on the keyboard with the right hand.



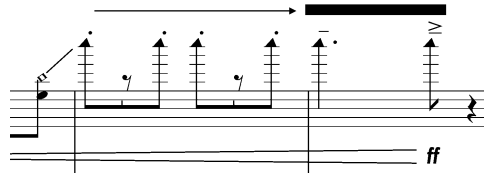
PIANO: Play the rhythm while stopping the appropriate string with one hand, gradually slide it from a position closest to the tuning pegs (represented by the number 1), to a position closest to the damping pads (represented by the number 4). The resulting sound will be a gradually transforming complex percussive timbre of diffuse pitch.



BASS: Gradually glissando while re-plucking the string



VIOLIN: Scratch tone on winding of string behind the bridge.



VIOLIN: Scratch tone on string in front of bridge.

VOCALISTS:

O Canenda – continue to sing the “e” of “Rex” until the Landini cadence in the last two measures (at which point sing “Re – gum”). With each note change, re-attack the “e.”

Douce Playsance should be sung by both voices in a very clear falsetto without vibrato. Each note should be given a bell-like dynamic shape.

C SCORE

O UNSPEAKABLE MADNESS OF OUR AGE

I. O CANENDA / REX QUEM METRORUM / REX REGUM

philippe de vitry / j bunch

increasingly ridiculous ♩ = 108 - 120

The score is written for a large ensemble. The instruments and their parts are as follows:

- Flute:** Starts with a *f* dynamic, includes a *piccolo* section. Features a *H* (Harmonics) marking and a *N* (Natural) marking.
- Bass Clarinet:** Includes an *E♭ clarinet* marking. Features a *H* marking and a *f* dynamic.
- Trumpet in C:** Includes a *wa-wa mute* marking. Features *sfp* dynamics and a *N* marking.
- Vibraphone:** Includes *ped.* (pedal) markings.
- Percussion:** Includes *crotales* markings.
- Harp:** Includes a chord diagram: $\begin{matrix} E & F & G & A \\ D & C & B \end{matrix}$. Features a *f* dynamic.
- Piano:** Features *sfp* dynamics and a *N* marking.
- Baritone:** Includes *sostenuto* and *mf* markings. Features the word *REX*.
- Bass:** Includes *mf* markings. Features the word *REX*.
- Violin:** Includes *f*, *arco*, *sfp*, and *N* markings. Features the word *REX*.
- Double Bass:** Includes *f*, *pizz.* (pizzicato), and *arco* markings. Features a *N* marking.

The score includes various performance instructions such as *f* (forte), *sfp* (sforzando), *mf* (mezzo-forte), *ped.* (pedal), *arco* (arco), *pizz.* (pizzicato), *sostenuto*, *H* (Harmonics), and *N* (Natural). A copyright notice *© 2008* is located at the bottom center.

Fl. *pp* *ff* **A**

B. Cl. *sfz* *p* **N**

C Tpt. *sfz* *p* **H** *f* *p* **N**

Vib. *f* *p* *f* **N** *ped.*

Perc. *f* **N**

Hp. **H**

Pno. *f* *p* *f* **H**

bar. *f*

bass *f*

Vln. *pizz.* *arco* *sfz* *sfz* **N**

D.B. *f*

31

Fl. *ortless* **ff** *pp* **ff**

B. Cl. **p** **f** *pp* **ff**

C Tpt. *secco* **pp** **H** **f** **ff**

Vib. **p** **f** **p** *pp* **ff**

Perc. **H** **f** **N** **p** **f**

Hp. **E F G A**
D C B

Pno. **f** **ORD** **N** **N** **f** **p**

bar.

bass

Vln. **H** **MSP** **arco** **pizz.** **arco** **p** **sfp**

D.B. **f** **pp** **f** **sfp**

arco cantabile

cowbells

arco

secco

pp

p

f

ff

N

ORD

MSP

pizz.

sfp

arco

p

sfp

41 to flute

Fl.

41 bass clarinet

B. Cl.

41

C Tpt.

mp *mf* *f* *p* *ff* *sfp* *f*

41

Vib.

41

Perc.

crotales

41

Harp.

E F# G H
D C# B

E F# G A
D C B

knock

ff

41

Pno.

f *ff* *f*

ped.

41

bar.

41

bass

41

Vln.

sfp *f* *ff* arco

41

D.B.

arco

pizz.

arco

knock

ff *sfp* *ff*

This musical score page includes the following parts and markings:

- Fl.:** Starts with a *ff* dynamic, followed by *p* and *ff*. Includes a *ORD* marking.
- B. Cl.:** Features dynamics *p*, *f*, *ff*, and *pp*. Includes a *N* marking.
- C Tpt.:** Starts with *pp* and ends with *ff*.
- Vib.:** Starts with *p*, includes *mf* and *ff*, and ends with *pp* and *ff*.
- Perc.:** Includes a *cowbells* section with *p* and *mf* dynamics, and *ped.* markings.
- Hp.:** Starts with *p*, includes *mf* and *ff*, and ends with *pp*. Includes a *knock* marking and a chord diagram: $\begin{matrix} E & F & G & A \\ D & C & B \end{matrix}$.
- Pno.:** Starts with *mf* and ends with *pp*. Includes circled numbers 1 and 4.
- bar.:** Standard baritone part.
- bass:** Standard bass part.
- Vln.:** Starts with *pp*, includes *pizz.*, *ff*, *pp*, and *arco* markings.
- D.B.:** Starts with *p*, includes *pizz.*, *mf*, *pp*, and *knock* markings.

62 **D** **H**

Fl. **ff** **to piccolo**

B. Cl. **N** **ff** **p** **f**

C Tpt. **p** **f** **p**

Vib. **ff** **p** **f** **ped.**

Perc. **H** **crotales** **mf** **f** **ped.**

Hp. **ff** **N** **H** **E F# G A** **D C B**

Pno. **ff** **p** **8va** **ped.**

bar.

bass

Vln. **ff** **H** **arco** **pizz.** **f** **arco** **sfp** **N** **molto legato** **ff** **p** **arco** **f**

D.B. **pp** **ff** **mp**

This page of a musical score contains the following parts and markings:

- Flute (Fl.):** Starts with a dynamic marking of *ff*. Includes articulation symbols *H* and *N*. A dynamic marking of *p* appears in the second measure.
- Bass Clarinet (B. Cl.):** Features dynamic markings *pp*, *ff*, *pp*, *f*, *p*, and *ff*. Includes articulation symbols *N* and *H*. A *ORD* marking is present.
- Cornet Trumpet (C Tpt.):** Starts with a dynamic marking of *sfp*. Includes articulation symbols *H* and *N*. Dynamic markings *f*, *mf*, and *pp* are used.
- Vibraphone (Vib.):** Includes a *crotales* marking and dynamic markings *f* and *sfp*. A *ped.* marking is also present.
- Percussion (Perc.):** Starts with a dynamic marking of *f*.
- Harp (Hp.):** Includes chord diagrams: $E \ F\# \ G \ Ab$ / $D \ C \ B$ and $E \ F \ G \ A$ / $D \ C \ B$. A *PDT* marking is also present. Dynamic marking *f* is used.
- Piano (Pno.):** Includes articulation symbols *N* and *H*. Dynamic markings *mf* and *p* are used.
- Baritone (bar.):** No specific markings.
- Bass (bass):** No specific markings.
- Violin (Vln.):** Starts with a dynamic marking of *mf* and a *pizz.* marking. Includes articulation symbols *N* and *H*. Dynamic markings *f*, *sfp*, and *ff* are used. A *ORD* marking is present.
- Double Bass (D.B.):** Starts with a dynamic marking of *f*. Includes articulation symbols *N* and *H*. Dynamic markings *p*, *f*, *ff*, and *sfp* are used. A *arco* marking is present.

Fl. **F** **N** **f** **p** **f** **sfp** **f**

B. Cl. **mf** **f** **p** **f** **sfp** **f**

C Tpt. **p** **sfp** **mf**

Vib. **non pedal**

Perc.

Hp. **E F# G Ab**
D# C# B **ff** **E F# G A#**
D C# B **E F G A#**
D# C B

Pno. **mf** **sfp** **sfp** **sfp** **f** **8va**

bar.

bass

Vln. **pesante non decrescendol** **f**

D.B. **f**

115

Fl. *ff* *mp* molto rallentando al fine

B. Cl. *p* crescendo poco a poco al fine *p* crescendo poco a poco al fine simile al fine

C Tpt. *p* crescendo poco a poco al fine

Vib. *p* crescendo poco a poco al fine

Perc. *p* crescendo poco a poco al fine ped.

Hp. *f* E F G A D C B crescendo poco a poco al fine

Pno. *p* crescendo poco a poco al fine

bar. *p* crescendo poco a poco al fine

bass *p* crescendo poco a poco al fine

Vln. *pp* *ff* *p* *ff* *sfp* leggero, giocoso, un poco pazzo arco o pizz.

D.B. *p*

II. Douce Playsance / Garison Selon Nature / Neuma Quinti Toni

philippe de vitry / j bunch

listless ♩ = 48-60

Flute

Bass Clarinet

Trumpet in C

Vibraphone

Percussion

Harp

Piano

Baritone

Bass

Violin

Double Bass

f > *n*

f

mp

mf

sempre falsetto e sempre *mf*

Dou ce play sence est d'a mer loy ai ment qar au tre ment ne por reit bo ne ment a

Ga ri son se lon na tu

n ————— *mp* ————— *n*

f > *n*

Fl. *fl*

B. Cl. *fl*

C Tpt. *fl*

Vib. *fl*

Perc. *fl* cowbells

Hp. *fl*

Pno. *fl* *8*

B *fl* *3* *3* *3*

B *fl* *8*

Vln. *fl*

D.B. *fl*

whistle tone

p *n*

p *n*

ORD

p

p *n*

mans suf frir ce le do lour ar dant qui d'a mours naist quant ces

re de si ree

B

21

Fl.

B. Cl.

C Tpt.

Vib.

Perc.

Hp.

Pno.

B

B

Vln.

D.B.

3/4

mf \rightarrow n

pp

ORD

p

mf

mf

8

don't rush!

re gars par son sou fil a trait en re gar dant par mi soy mes mes trait sans soy nav rer l'im pres

de sa dou lor toute hu mai

mf \rightarrow n

32

Fl.

B. Cl.

C Tpt.

Vib.

Perc.

Hp.

Pno.

B

B

Vln.

D.B.

whistle tone

cowbells

p *n*

mp

pp

p *n*

p *n*

si on de ce qu'il veut a mer jusqu' a son cuer lors es teut re mem brer et sou ve nir du

ne cre a tu re mais ie

42

Fl.

B. Cl.

C Tpt.

Vib.

Perc.

Hp.

Pno.

B

B

Vln.

D.B.

D

mf *n*

pp pedal

f

mf *n*

gen til cors qu'il vit au de par tir puis le con vient trem bler mu er fre mir en tre sai lant

qui ai d'un ar dour nay

flautando (pick up as resonance of piano note)

pp

p *p* *pizz.* *similie*

p

Fl. *pp* ORD non vib.

B. Cl. *mp* *n* simile

C Tpt.

Vib.

Perc. cowbells subtle retakes as necessary

Hp. *mp*

Pno. *pp*

B. et sou pi rer cent fois en un te nant le dous sou pirs qui li li vrent au cuer n'ont par les con duis

B. sant de loy al a mour

Vln. *p*

D.B.

64

Fl. *n*

B. Cl.

C Tpt.

Vib.

Perc. *n*

Hp.

Pno.

B
por quoy de sirs qui est ac cel le dui es prent et

B
es pris de ga rir n'ay cu

Vln. *n*

D.B. arco (pick up as resonance of piano note) *pp*

F

dark, with rich earthy vibrato

Fl. *p* dark, rich, but without vibrato *mf* *p* *mf* simile *n* *mf* *n*

B. Cl. *mf* *n* *mf* *n*

C Tpt.

Vib.

Perc.

Hp. *mf* pale

Pno. *mf*

B. art et croist en ar dant puis fay re le doit a reu ha

B. re ains me plaist de

Vln. dark, rich, but without vibrato (pick up as resonance of flute) *p*

D.B. *mf* *n* *mf* *n*

81 G

Fl.

B. Cl.

C Tpt.

Vib.

Perc.

Hp.

Pno.

B

B

Vln.

D.B.

mf *n* *mp* *p* *n* *mf* *n*

reu ceurs hu mains ne por roit cel mal sou frir se play san ce n'es toit qui sou vent l'oint
 iour en iour simlie

H

rich, earthy tone - with vibrato like a bell

whistle tone

97

Fl. *p* *mf* *p* simile *p* *n*

B. Cl. *mf* *n* *mf* *n*

C Tpt.

Vib.

Perc. *n* *p* *n*

B. *mf* *n* *f* *p* *n*

Vln. *n* *f* *p* *n*

D.B. *mf* *n*

pons en es pe rant d'a voir bon geu re don por en sai sir quant il leur se ra

deu re ne pour quant elle est si

pizz. arco

Fl. *p* < *mf* > *p* *similie*

B. Cl. *similie*

C Tpt.

Vib. *mp* *pedal* ORD

Perc.

106 *crescendo*

B. *3* bon en vret plus seurs en tra veyl lant sans ces ser nuit et

B. *3* du re que nuls hons n'au royt

Vln. *pizz.* *f*

D.B. *similie*

K

Fl. *p* *mf* *p* *similie*

B. Cl. *n* *similie* *mf* *p* *similie* calm, ponderous, weightless

C Tpt.

Vib.

Perc.

ff

f calm, ponderous, weightless

mf *n* *similie* calm, ponderous, weightless

B
te Dont bon a ment a plus seurs sa ou le.

B
chour qui vient de play san ce pu re.

Vln.

D.B. *n* *similie* *mf* *n* *similie* calm, ponderous, weightless

141

Fl.

B. Cl.

C Tpt.

Vib.

Perc.

141

141

141

B.

B.

Vln.

D.B.