

String Quartet (outline)

Influences

- > Bruch: 'Kol Nidrei'
- > Shostakovich 'String Quartet no.8'
- > Strauss 'Metamorphosis' > Ginsberg 'Howl'
- > Brahms 'Wiegenlied'
- > Schumann Träumerei

Structure

Summary

Movement 1 → An innocent child is tempted by Moloch, who devours it, in an ecstatic ceremony. There is denial and grief that the child has been consumed.

Movement 2 → The child haunts those around it, and brings up the spirits of the dead. Moloch reappears.

Movement 3 → The vision of an angel reappears, who brings a message promising that the Day of Judgement will herald the garden of Eden

Movement 4 → The day of judgement is upon the people. All vows between individuals and god are annulled, the arc is opened and the divine light is revealed to humanity, which causes it to wither. All people are inscribed in the book of judgement

Movement 5 → The dead are resurrected including the child, the child looks out on the world and sees nothingness, the promise of the garden of eden has been broken. The child weeps softly.

1st Mvmt

- The loss of innocence
 - child related theme
 - Based loosely on Schumann's Träumerei
- temptation and sin
 - A passionate alluring theme must be portrayed in the music Sin will be portrayed in some minor/diminished key omen in the music
- prayer to Moloch
 - Moloch was a Canaanite deity to whom children were sacrificed. In this particular piece the depiction of Moloch:
 - will be based on the story of the Carthaginian sacrifice of children to Moloch
 - Part II of Allen Ginsberg's poem 'Howl', the 'Howl' or prayer in this case to Moloch through the sacrifice of the child
 - The lowest register of the cello and viola will be used to portray the power of Moloch

- The high squeaking *sul tasto* will be used on the violins to portray the screaming of the victims before Moloch
- Death
 - death of the child - Brahms' Lullaby (minor key)
 - Shostakovich theme 2nd Mvmt, String Quartet no.8
 - The insanity and desperation of the dying will be invoked through a variation on this theme
 - Kadish
 - Kaddish is the traditional Jewish prayer for the dead. This will portray the divine authority of god, instead of Moloch
 - denial & grief
 - Denial will be portrayed as a bickering conversation between the Traumerei theme in major and a diminished key in minor. Grief must be portrayed in the manner of Strauss, with an unending harmonically mutating river of sadness

2nd Mvmt

- haunting
 - rattling of the skeleton child
 - *col legno* will be used for the rattling sound of bones
 - The crying and babbling of the child will be portrayed on a high register of the violin
 - Possibly encode the following message from 'Howl': 'Moloch in whom I dream Angels!'
 - whispering by the supernatural
 - Harmonics will be used to create the whispering sound
 - The viola will be used to soothe the child
 - Moloch reappears in a different form
 - The Moloch theme will either modulate in key or through some change in texture

3rd Mvmt

- vision of an angel
 - Flight through the sky Flight may be represented through light, legato phrases in a major key
 - heavenly message The divine message will relate to the promise of the Gan Eden at the end of Judgement Day

4th Mvmt

- Judgement Day
 - Theme of Koi Nidrei
 - Kol Nidrei is the opening declaration on the service of Yom Kippur It is a declaration stating that all vows made between individuals and gods will be annulled so as not to commit the sin of breaking vows.
 - opening of the arc Within the arc lies the divine light
 - light of god is revealed to mankind
 - This is the Climax of the piece The light of god must be portrayed as overpowering and withering all creatures with its revelation I suppose I may model the sound after the explosion of an atomic bomb, a sudden cessation in sound Followed by an overwhelming 'explosion' with all instruments in fortissimo. The 'divine' quality of the light Will be portrayed in a homophonic texture, symbolizing its penetration and clarity.
 - inscription in the book of judgement
 - The sound I seek here is very intense

5th Mvmt

- resurrection of the dead child
 - resurrection of the dead
 - The child's bones will be put together using col legno The child will then rise and look out into the nothingness at the end of the world, and the broken promise of Eden
- child related theme
 - The traumerei variation will be repeated in a descending, chromatic scale with diminuendo until silence Return of the river of sadness: It must sound like the soft weeping of a child. High register, with soft repetitive sounds, decreasing in loudness.