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REQUIEM FOR PROMETHEUS: A MULTIMEDIA COMPOSITION IN THREE ACTS. (ORIGINAL COMPOSITION)

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REQUIEM FOR PROMETHEUS
A MULTIMEDIA COMPOSITION IN THREE ACTS

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## REQUIEM FOR PROMETHEUS

A MULTIMEDIA COMPOSITION IN THREE ACTS


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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter Page
I. ANALYSIS OF THE LIBRETTO. . . . . . . 1
II. THE LIBRETTO. ..... 8
III. ANALYSIS OF THE MUSICAL MATERIAL. . . . 19
IV. THE SCORE ..... 34

# REQUIEM FOR PROMETHEUS <br> A MULTIMEDIA COMPOSITION IN THREE ACTS 

## CHAPTER I

## ANALYSIS OF THE LIBRETTO

## Introduction

For several years I have experimented with the combination of theater and music. Requiem for Prometheus is the largest and most recent of a number of musical works which have incorporated visual and dramatic elements. An earlier work, Reza, calls for a large choir to speak and whisper words of the performer's own choosing, as well as employing rocks for percussive effect. Thus I was able to obtain a controlled sound mass from the performer's limited improvisation. Another composition, a setting of a cycle of four poems, Guarda-Noite (Night Watchman) by Ieda Schmaltz, used various theatric devices to underline the sense of a woman's loneliness. In this case a choir was instructed to enfold the female narrator as she expressed her own emotional withdrawal. In addition, this cycle incorporated both speech
and song.
While completing work on my master's degree, I was given an opportunity to compose the incidental music asked for in the stage directions of Edward Albee's Sandbox. Here, I attempted to capture in music the playwright's expression of despair by working "against the grain." For instance, in more humorous episodes I composed in an ironical manner. At points where Albee asks for polite music I supplied music written in a distorted manner.

In my instrumental works I attempt to create a sense of musical events appearing in space rather than taking place in a continuum. This is why $I$ encourage a free rather than strict metrical interpretation of my music. Also, in my performance notes I instruct performers not to disturb the silence of fermatas, so that the preceding event may linger and there may be a sense of anticipation.

Likewise, I have experimented with placement of sound in space in such works as Tempo and Music for Trombones for which the instrumentalists are placed at various points in the hall. Tempo is as much a visual and dramatic expression as it is musical. Its intent is to use humor to befuddle the audience which, expecting a "serious" work, finds the participants dressed in street clothes, one of whom is determinedly raising and lowering a chain to the ticking of a metronome. At the end a procession of actors passes by the audience, each in turn smirking and sneering.

Such an attempt to blur the traditional lines between audience and participants by theatrical means led me to attempt to write a contemporary anti-war statement on Biblical and traditional texts in the Cycle of Man for which through an ensemble consisting of pianist, clarinetist, and two vocalists I have again combined speech and song. At one moment I direct a vocalist to approach the audience and address them in a confidential manner. At another point the instrumentalists verbally respond to the musings of the singer.

While I had long wanted to create a more ambitious theatrical piece, I was unable to find a satisfactory text. I finally realized that $I$ could compose a more musically and dramatically organic work if I wrote my own libretto. I decided not to develop my characters but to portray them in stereotypical, almost cartoon-like fashion. Also, the presentation is collage-like so as to recreate the disjunct, random way in which popular culture is disseminated. The music itself contributes to the sense of disorientation, employing traditional styles and forms only in relation to specific characterizations.

## The Analysis

The libretto of Requiem for Prometheus attempts to place characters and actions in an appropriate format for a multimedia composition.

The work is in 3 Acts: Act I - exposition of facts; Act II - a reflection and commentary of the previous act; and Act III - a recaptulation and consequent coda of the whole action. In a broad sense it can be compared to sonata-form.

The central idea of the plot is the oppression and manipulation of the people by those who represent powerful institutions: the state, the church, and the media.

Characters' proper names, with the exception of Prometheus, are not used in the libretto. They are identified by their general function: People, Demagogue, Socialite, Journalist, and Religious Leader.

Demagogue, Religious Leader, and Journalist personalize those who have the power and manipulate others with this power. Some symbols generally accepted by modern Western Society are used for them.

Demagogue's speech is preceded and followed by a military march, a symbol of power related to war and politics. It sounds like a common-place march, however noisy and distorted as are Demagogue's words (Act I mm. 135-211. Act III mm. 50-91).

Religious Leader's speech is placed between a quiet procession. The tune is modal and sung by People, which symbolizes the fatalistic acceptance of their fate. This is what the Religious Leader dictates (Act I mm. 244-269).

Journalist appears in all events, observing. He returns
the events to People in the form of manipulated news. A choir physically placed to resemble a television screen gives fragmentary information. It is conducted by Journalist. People enter and emerge from the screen as they are an extention of the media (Act II Scenes I and III).

Socialite characterizes the high society women, the ones who are educated to serve and submit to men. These women use their charm and appeal to manipulate those who are powerful. Socialite plays the piano, which for many people symbolizes refinement and high status in the society. Ironically the music she plays is a very banal tune (Act I mm. 110-137).

Some elements of the plot were borrowed from Greek mythology. These include:

Prometheus - The great rebel against injustice and the authority of power was the titan who gave to men fire and the skill to develop arts and sciences. In this plot Prometheus symbolizes human intelligence and capacity for discernment, which is gradually weakened by the constant oppression by those who manipulate the power. His presence, as a reflection of the People's mind, is constantly on stage. He never talks and his presence is at times identified by a specific musical theme and special stage lights.

Lethe, in mythology, was the river of forgetfulness. In this plot Lethe, the name given to the lake, is mentioned by Journalist in Act II. It refers to what Demagogue says
in Act I: "you know what stops fire . . . water . . . what they need is water. . . ." The fire is an analogy to Prometheus and to human intelligence. The same analogy is made by Religious Leader at the end of Act I.

Tempe, in mythology, was a pleasant vale of Thessaly, where non-violent people lived in peace. In this plot NewTempe is a hypothetical country. It is first referred to when Journalist tells of the appearance of Socialite in the NewTempe embassy (Act II Scene I). In Act III Demagogue declares that his forces invaded that country.

The stage action can be summarized by the following:
Ace I, Scene I: The stage is split into two levels. Socialite and Demagogue are drinking and talking on the second level. The crowd, which is moving on the first level, is attracted by a military band announcing the Demagogue speech. Journalist circulates, observing. After the Demagogue's emphatic and senseless speech the crowd exits following the band. Demagogue talks in a friendly way with Journalist. While they talk, Socialite descends to the first level to meet Prometheus. She feels disappointed, realizing she cannot seduce him.

Act I, Scene II: People, in a procession, sing a religious tune. Then Religious Leader talks about the dangers in the world and uses Prometheus as a symbol of immorality. People answer "amen" to his words. The procession resumes. As they proceed past Prometheus they try to reach him, but cannot.

Act II, Scene I: The choir is physically placed to resemble a television screen. Journalist is conducting the choir. Fragments of news and commercial announcements are delivered randomly. Some of the news refers to the Demagogue's senseless speech and his friendly conversation with Journalist. People enter and emerge from the television screen as an extension of it.

Act II, Scene II: On the second level Demagogue and Journalist are seen conversing and drinking while Socialite watches them. Demagogue is concerned with a new invention, Radiatex, that can be useful for him in his future plans.

Act II, Scene III: Journalist again conducts the choir. His performance is suddenly interrupted by Religious Leader who advises People about the danger of following Prometheus. People answer "amen."

Act III: The stage action of Act I is resumed. Socialite is seated at the piano. Demagogue and Religious Leader are drinking and talking. The moving crowd is again attracted by the military band announcing the Demagogue's speech. In his speech Demagogue informs People about the invasion of NewTempe by his forces. He also announces that those who died in the conflict did so painlessly because of the use of Radiatex. Religious Leader and Demagogue establish an ostinato speech pattern in which they convince People to kill Prometheus. The act closes with People killing themselves while Prometheus tries to emit an impossible, silent scream.

CHAPTER II

THE LIBRETTO

## Requiem for Prometheus

## Characters:

Demagogue (man)
Religious Leader (man)
Socialite (woman)
Journalist (man)
Prometheus (man)
Crowd

Act I
Scene I
(An expressionless crowd of people is moving mechanically. Nearby is Prometheus. He is in pain and tries to communicate. Above are Socialite and Demagogue. They talk, drink, and embrace. Socialite walks to a piano and plays. Her music is banal.)
(Journalist circulates through the crowd, observing.)
(Band musicians advance. Their playing announces a political speech. The crowd follows.)
(Demagogue delivers an emphatic speech, which is occasionally interrupted by the band and the crowd. During the speech slides depicting starvation, war, and other tragedies, are shown in the background.)

Demagogue: My people . . . you who built this, the greatest country in the world . . .
(People mechanically applaud.)
Demagogue: With your help we can make even greater progress developing this land. It will be an enormous undertaking but can bring a better future . . .
(People again applaud.)
Demagogue: Who has the world's most beautiful city?
People: We do.
Demagogue: And the world's largest stadium?
People: We do.
Demagogue: Friends . . . we are the best . . . (band begins to play, but Demagogue waves to them to stop) - . . There are those who are negative, suggesting we are poisoning the earth and the air. But the only real danger is that the great spirit and soul of the people might become poisoned against the future . . .
(Band resumes military music. Demagogue slumps into a comfortable chair and drinks.)
(People slowly move apart while Journalist takes notes, photos, and gathers reactions to the speech. Socialite moves to front of the platform and watches Journalist with interest.)
(The band divides and leads the crowd out stage left and right.)
(Socialite returns to the piano. Her playing is interrupted by the appearance of Journalist on the platform. He is warmly greeted by Demagogue.)

Journalist: Great speech, great speech.
Demagogue: What was the reaction?
(Servant brings drinks. Socialite rises from the piano and kisses Journalist, but her embrace is not returned.)

Journalist: Well! I think you really moved them.
Socialite: You certainly moved me.
(Demagogue looks scornful. Then with his arm around Journalist's shoulder, the two move to the back of the platform for private discussion, barely audible to the audience.)

Demagogue: . . . You know what stops fire. Water . . . what they need is water . . .
(Socialite, standing, plays a few notes on the piano . . . thinks of something to say, but seeing that Demagogue's back is turned, she changes her mind. She slowly walks around the piano and then descends to Prometheus.

Black out

Scene II
(A choir, accompanied by trombones and singing a hymn-like music, is heard back stage. They enter in a procession, gathering before the platform.)

Religious Leader (speaking from the platform): My brothers, God's children . . . the Lord has given us much to be thankful for. Rejoice in this knowledge and seek not base temptation. Pray and be thankful . . .

People: Amen.
Religious Leader: Remeber that the Lord punished a sinful world with a tremendous flood-a mighty deluge. The next time will be by fire. But the elements are already here, tempting man to his own destruction. Prometheus, the symbol of sin and immorality . . . Prometheus, Yes.

People: Amen.
(The choir now resumes the music which announced the service. As they proceed past

Prometheus, they try to reach him but cannot. Prometheus again tries to communicate but cannot.

Fade out

Act II
Scene I
(Journalist is conducting the choir. Fragments of news and commercial announcements are delivered randomly by choir members over a background of murmurs and instrumental music. The announcements are mimed with a continuous choreography. Contrasting background may be shown by slides.)


| Solo 5: | (Musical cue for news) <br> . . Forecast for tomorrow: a chance for |
| :---: | :---: |
| Journalist: | . . . Was murdered . . . no suspect has yet |
|  | Charming and elegant, she was the star at the NewTempe embassy garden-party . . . She told our reporter she's not the least interested in Prometheus. |
| Socialite: | (Who has been seated at the piano, is suddenly exposed by the spot light): He's mean! |
| Journalist: | - . . Following the government's announcement to commit itself heavily to nuclear power, a high government source said that claims of danger from radiation have been overstated (slides of nuclear explosions, Hiroshima, etc.). |
| Solo 1: | . . . Blue shampoo . |
| Solo 3: | - . . Shimmering |
| Solo 2: | . . . Body . . . blue . |
| Solo 4: | - . Drink Jaboo . . . tropical flav. |
| Solo 2: | . . . Forgeterol for your headache . . <br> (Musical cue for news) |
| Journalist: | - . . Construction commenced today on the new reservoir. In an appearance here the governor underlined the need for the project. To be named Lethe Lake, the reservoir should be completed early next year . . . and finally, the E.P.A. today unveiled its new designer masks. Available in a |

variety of styles, they are expected to extend life expectancy by several years . . .
(Choir draws back to reveal several of its members wearing masks.)
(Black out - masks are removed. The choir reassembles and freezes.)

Scene II
(Upon the platform Demagogue and Journalist are seen conversing and drinking. Socialite, seated in a chair, watches them admiringly.)

Demagogue (pacing, troubled, deep in thought): . . . Radiatex . . .

Journalist (busy writing): . . . What?
Socialite (to Demagogue, concerned): Honey . . .
Demagogue (continuing to pace, speaking aloud but to himself): . . . Capability . . . tactical . . . (then, turning to Journalist, confidentially): . . . People just don't understand . . . We need that land . . . you know, essential material is there . . . (again pacing, quavering): . . . Radiatex . . .

Socialite (more urgent, distressed): Honey! . . .
(Socialite walks to Demagogue, embraces him, whispers something and leads him off stage.)

Journalist (quizically): . . . Radiatex?

Scene III
(Journalist approaches front of platform.
His arms slowly guides spot light toward choir. He again conducts.)

Solo 1: . . . Affordable . .
Solo 2: . . . Nothing down . . .

Solo 3: . . . Every style . . .
Solo 1: . . . Easy Payments . . .
Journalist: . . . Radiatex . . .
Solo 1: . . . Luxurious . . .
Solo 2: . . . Acrylics . . .
Solo 3: . . . Assortment . . .
Solo 4: . . . Every style . . .
Journalist: . . . Defense . . .
Solo 3: . . . Defense . . .
Solo 5: . . . Our land . . .
Solo 1: . . . People . . .
Solo 4: . . . Radiatex . . .
Solo 2: . . . Defense . . .
Religious Leader (suddenly interrupting from the platform): Be careful with fire. Don't listen to Prometheus, the symbol of sin and immorality.

Choir: Amen!
Black out

Act III
(Band crosses the stage, announcing a new speech by Demagogue. Socialite is seated at the piano, drinking and playing. Journalist again mingles.)

Demagogue: My people! . . . People of the world's greatest country . . .
(People again mechanically applaud.)
Demagogue: As your leader I must honestly inform you of actions your government has undertaken . . .
(People applaud.)
Demagogue: It has been necessary to defend our vital interests in New-Tempe. Hostile forces there precipitated a conflict which has been favorably resolved with minimal losses on our side. Those who died on the other side did so painlessly because of our deployment of Radiatex.

People (exultantly): Radiatex!
(Demagogue continues his speech, but is drowned out by band.)

People: Radiatex!
Religious Leader: Pray and be thankful.
People: Amen!
(The scene continues with all randomly participating, in crescendo, leading to chaos.

Fragmentary, repetitive news is heard amplified.)

Demagogue: . . . A preemptive and defensive action . . .
People: Radiatex?
Religious Leader: Pray and be thankful.
People: Amen!
Demagogue: Conquering for . . .
People: Radiatex!
Religious Leader: . . . Sign of sin and immorality . . .
People (divis): Amen/Radiatex.
Demagogue: Let's kill Prometheus . . .
People: Amen/Radiatex.
Demagogue: Our Nation helping . . .
People: Amen/Radiatex.
Religious Leader: For the sake of morality . . .
People: Amen/Radiatex.
(A rhythmic ostinato becomes established. Socialite and Journalist exit, indifferent and haughty. Ostinato continues while People form two lines facing each other. The ostinato diminishes to silence. Prometheus is revealed crouching.

Demagogue: Let's Kill Prometheus . . .
People: Amen/Radiatex.
Religious Leader: Don't follow Prometheus . . . for the sake of morality

Demagogue: Let's kill Prometheus . . .
Religious Leader: Don't look at Prometheus . . .
Demagogue: Kill! Kill!
Religious Leader: Don't look at Prometheus . . .
Demagogue: Kill! Kill!
Religious Leader: Don't look at Prometheus . . .
Demagogue: Kill! Kill! . . .
(The ostinato suddenly stops. People slowly and mechanically hang one another, each, in turn, slumping to the floor. At the same time Prometheus rises from a crouching position to a full standing position, trying to emit an impossible silent scream. Lights on Demagogue and Religious Leader slowly fade until dark.)

## CHAPTER III

## MUSICAL ANALYSIS

## Instrumentation and Placement of Sound Sources

The musical texture is conceived to be produced by sound sources in different places: in the pit, backstage, on stage, and an amplified whispered voice used at the end of Act III. The stage and backstage sounds required by the plot are means of integrating the work.

The total instrumentation is:
On stage/backstage
2 flutes, 2 Bb clarinets, 1 Bb bass clarinet, 2 Bb trumpets, 2 trombones, side-drum, bass-drum, piano, choir, and 4 actors.

In pit
2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 Bb clarinets, 1 bassoon, 4 horns in F, 3 trombones, 1 tuba, celesta, temple-block, xylophone, suspended cymbal, bass-drum, timpani, violin, viola, violincello, and double-bass.

Amplified voice.

## Analysis of the Musical Material

The following 12 tone series is the basic set for the work which, by interpolation and use of its small groupings, derives different related materials.

|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Po | A | C | D | G\# | C\# | F\# | G | B | D\# | F | Bb | E |
|  | F\# |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | E |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Bb |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | F |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| P3 | C | Eb | F | B | E | A | Bb | D | F\# | G\# | C\# | G |
|  | B |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | G |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Eb |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Db |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Ab |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| P5 | D | F | G |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

The twelve tones are used not in the strict Schoenbergian dodecaphonic system, but only as a recurrent sonorous material flexible enough to use in various ways without being too redundant.

Throughout the piece, almost without interruption, the low strings make a static background slowly moving the basic set. Over this background other musical events evolve.

Prometheus is musically characterized by the following chordal sequence played by the trombones. It appears in different transpositions throughout the score. This chordal sequence comes from the grouping 4-5-6/ 1-2-3/ 7-8-9/ 10-11-12 of the basic set.


The following is an isorhythmic theme for People's choreography made with the simultaneous use of prime inversion and retrograde inversion of the basic set. It is scored mainly for pizzicato violins and xylophone. It appears in different places in Acts I and II:


This isorhythmic theme is overlapped in Act I by the following waltz, also used for the People's choreography, which is melodically made with the P3 and R3 of the basic set over an accompaniment of whole-tone figures.



For the material used for the military march, which appears in the parade of Acts $I$ and III, the P3 transposition of the basic set is grouped 4-5-6/ 7-8-9/ 10-11-12/ 1-2-3, and then divided into three groups of four pitches:


Its fragments appear as the sign for news in Act II, and as a recurrent motif throughout the whole work. The three
groups counterpoint one another as in the following portion:


One modal theme for the religious procession is made from the first three pitches of the basic set, their retrograde inversion, and their transposition to the P5. It is sung by the choir accompanied by two trombones:


The preceding are materials related to the basic twelve tone series. The following are unrelated materials.

The piano piece played by Socialite is made to sound like a commonplace theme out of context. It is nothing but a banal $C$ minor accompanied melody. It also appears as a variation in Act $I$ for a choreography by Socialite, and as a recurrent motif always referring to Socialite. The following is the first portion of this theme:


Journalist is musically characterized by the following rhythmic sequence always played by the temple-blocks:


Scenes I and III of Act II are built as choir structures, although there is some orchestral interference. For these structures non-pitch material is used such as nonunderstandable words, whispers, lengthened vowels, rhythmical and non-rhythmical phrases, and a few solo understandable words. These materials are used to create a contrapuntal texture.

## The Musical Form

The formal design can be represented in a large dimension as the following:

Act I
A
Exposition
Introduction $\mathrm{a}-\mathrm{b}-\mathrm{a}^{\prime} \mathrm{c}-\mathrm{b}^{\prime}-\mathrm{c}^{\prime}$

Act II
B
Development

Act I (A) is an exposition not only of the events of the plot but also of the musical events. Its two large scenes shape two musical sections. The first section (a-b-a') is more intense and more rhythmic, while the second (c-b'-c') is calmer with a religious character. Both sections have speeches as central subsections.

Act II (B), although having a new texture delineated more by the choir, has a narrative character. The subsections ef e' refers to the three scenes of this act. It is a commentary about the events of Act $I$ which justifies its classification as a development. It is not without reason that the image of television broadcasting appears as Journalist-conductor who manipulates the news as a conductor manipulates the mass of voices of an ensemble.

In addition to the televised quality of Act II, the following musical events translated from Act I also justify the developmental character of Act II. These are not mere repetitions of motifs, although they always refer to some events of the previous Act:

1. The isorhythmic theme for the People's choreography of Act $I$ appears again in Act II at the beginning and the
end of Scene I as the People enter and exit the television screen.
2. The sign for the news is a motif from the military march.
3. One motif from the piano piece also appears in this section as a commentary about Socialite.
4. In the central section of Act II, an almost silent stage action is delineated by an orchestral development based on Socialite's theme and the military march. Act II ends with a reminiscence of the second section of Act $I$.

Act III (A) recapitulates Scenes I of Act I (a") in a very similar texture: the choir sings lengthened vowels, low strings make a slow moving background, and over this background the waltz of the first Act comes again, now as a canon. Socialite plays the piano piece and the military parade occurs again. These events are followed by Demagogue's speech (b") with the interference of Religious Leader. This speech leads to a crescendo of sonority and an overlapping of events (g), all of which are suddenly interrupted by a large, completely silent scene. The work finishes with a quiet coda where Prometheus' theme and the religious theme are heard once more.

## Description of the Musical Events

The musical material and the musical form in a large dimension have been previously analyzed. The stage events
are explained in the libretto and therefore need no further exegesis. The following is only a chronological description of the musical events. These musical events overlap one another throughout the piece.

The themes will be identified by the names used in the analysis of the musical material: Prometheus' theme, isorhythmic theme, waltz, military march, religious theme, piano piece, and Journalist's theme.

## Act I

Introduction: after some soft strokes played by the bass-drum (mm. 1 to 4), the strings, the brass, and the choir sections start a cluster containing the twelve tones marked pp. Over this sound-mass the woodwind and the celesta state fragments of the waltz, the religious theme, and the military march (mm. 5 to 16). This sound-mass is gradually dissipated, leaving only a pp note $A$ by the double-bass (m. 19). At this point the curtain rises.

Scene I, Subsection a (mm. 19 to 177): throughout this section the strings move the original 12-tone set in a slow and low range to form a sound-mass background. The dynamics move irregularly from pp to $f$ to pp. This sound-mass background is helped by the bass drum's continuous tremolo marked pp. Over this background other events occur.

From measure 19 to 133 the choir sings lengthened vowels with random pitches marked pp. From measure 19 to 30 the
orchestra deals with the original twelve tone set in an undefined mass of moving sound. The first defined event to appear is Prometheus' theme always played by trombones (mm. 31 to 32). From measure 33 to 98 occurs the isorhythmic theme played by the xylophone and pizzicato violins. From measure 54 to 89 the waltz, played by woodwinds and celesta, overlaps the isorhythmic theme. From measure 93 to 112 appears Journalist's theme which is always played by temple-blocks. From measure 99 to 105 Prometheus' theme appears again and interrupts the other events. From measure 112 to 137 Socialite plays her piano piece. Before the piano piece is finished, the military march starts playing backstage. From measure 131 to 177 the military march (on stage), played by the flute, clarinet, bass clarinet, trumpet, trombone, side drum, and bass drum is the main musical event. From measure 165 to the end of the subsection the woodwinds and the bass gradually are added to the string background and finish in a tutti. This is suddenly stopped by Demagogue's voice.

Scene I, Subsection b (mm. 178 to 191): Demagogue's speech is intercalated by applause and exclamations from the choir. The band starts to play but is interrupted by Demagogue. At the end of the subsection the orchestra gradually increases its volume of background sound, shadowing Demagogue's speech.

Scene I, Subsection a' (mm. 192 to 243): from measure 192 to 211 the military march is played again. Journalist's
theme appears from measure 193 to 202. Before the military march finishes it is overlapped by the waltz and by the beginning of the piano piece. At measure 217 these events are dissipated, leaving only the low string background. From measure 226 to 233 a violin solo performs an ornamental variation of the piano piece, overlapped by Prometheus' theme. From measure 234 to 243 again only the string background remains, colored by some small events played by the woodwinds. A small speech by Demagogue and the piano piece are heard once more. Before the piano piece is finished the religious theme is played backstage.

Scene II ( $\left.c-b^{\prime}-c^{\prime}\right)$, in contrast to the previous section, is very quiet. It has no orchestral background, except at the end of the Act.

Scene II, Subsection c (mm. 242 to 254): the religious theme is performed by the choir and two muted trombones.

Scene II, Subsection b': Religious Leader's speech. Scene II, Subsection c' (mm. 257 to 270): the religious theme is played again. From measure 264 to 267 this theme is overlapped by Prometheus' theme. At the end of this subsection the low string background occurs once more, marked ppp.

Act II
Introduction: before the curtain rises the orchestra plays 15 measures of loud and rhythmical events which are overlapped by Journalist's theme.

Scene I, e, (mm. 16 to 184): when the curtain rises, Journalist is seen conducting the choir. The choir is divided into three groups: male, female, and mixed voices. It has a structure built with: (a) uncomprehendible words spoken at different speeds and with determined and undetermined rhythm; (b) clusters of sung vowels; and (c) whispers. The three groups counterpoint one another with this material. At times, the events are colored by some percusion instruments. From measure 35 to 79 the choir is overlapped by the isorhythmic theme in which the xylophone and the violins are colored by woodwind instruments. Between measures 52 and 57 the whole astion is interrupted by Prometheus' theme marked ff. From measure 76 to 115 some solo words or phrases suggesting television advertising are spoken by members of the choir. These events are underlined by the orchestra. At measure 115 a motif from the military march is heard as a sign for the news given by Journalist in the following measures. This news is spoken over the murmur of the choir. At measure 133, before the news about Socialite, a motif from the piano piece is heard over the choir background played by the flute and celesta. From measure 145 to 164 a new section with advertising words is followed by another Journalist's news section. From measure 169 to 180 the isorhythmic theme is again heard over a background of low strings and woodwinds.

One pontillistic orchestral interlude from measure 185 to 199 connects Scene I to Scene II.

Scene II, f (mm. 200 to 238): in this section the almost silent stage action is delineated by an orchestral development based mainly on two themes: the first motif of the piano piece - an upward leap of a 6th and its resolution down by step; the upper voice of the military march - a leap of a 4th followed by a repeated pitch, and another upward leap of a 3rd. Besides these two motifs some small events in accelerando and non-periodical strokes by the bass drum are heard. A small amount of fragmentary dialogue occurs over this orchestral sound.

Scene II is linked to Scene III by a completely silent transition (m. 238) when Journalist guides the spotlight toward the choir.

Scene III, e' (mm. 239 to 312): this scene repeats Scene $I$ in the use of the choir and its basic sonorous material. The choir in this section has a more canonic texture. At measure 278, Prometheus' theme overlaps the choir. At the end a crescendo in sonority is made with some understandable words spoken randomly by the entire choir. A small coda (m. 312) recalls the end of Act I: one speech by Religious Leader and part of the religious theme are heard.

## Act III

Introduction (mm. 1 to 10): a new sound produced by one cymbal laid over the timpani is presented in this introduction. This undulating siren-like sound will appear again
at tne end of this act. The small accelerando figure and the bass drum strokes appear again, all over a background of soundmass by choir, low strings and some small figures by the woodwinds and brass.

Scene I, a" (mm. 10 to 66): This briefly recapitulates
Scene I of Act I. From measure 10 to 50 the choir sings lengthened vowels and the strings make the continuous low background. From measure 12 to 14 Prometheus' theme is stated. From measure 16 to 40 the waltz is stated in the form of a canon which involves the woodwinds, horns, celesta, and strings. During the last part of this canon the waltz is stated in the form of a melodic variation. From measure 22 to 30 Journalist's theme is heard. From measure 38 to 43 the piano piece appears briefly. These events are interrupted by the military march (on stage) from measure 50 to 66.

Scene II, b" (mm. 66 to 70): after some silent expectation, Demagogue starts his speech which is interrupted at times by applause and exclamations from the choir. These events are underlined by small events from the orchestra.

Scene III, g (mm. 70 to 154): this is a large crescendo section in which the solo voices work in an ostinatolike event. The low strings perform the slow background in a variable dynamic leading to a ff. At the end of the section the strings play clusters of sound marked ff. From measure 70 to 92 the military march is heard in a fortission to pianissimo dynamic and finally fades away backstage, leaving only
the bass drum strokes which continue answering, as an echo. another bass drum in the pit. From measure 78 to 83 Prometheus' theme, almost drowned by the whole sound event, is heard. At measure 87 the sound of the cymbal laid over the timpani starts again. At measure 100, an amplified whispered voice starts to sound over the audience. From measure 107 to 122 the trumpets backstage play the motif from the military march. From measure 95 to 154 a discontinuous dynamic texture attained by adding groups of instruments from the pit and the instrumental group backstage leads to a final fortissimo mass of sound. Measure 154 ( .) is a long completely silent scene (circa 40 seconds).

Coda (measure 155 to 168): in this section the two bass drums (backstage and in the pit) continue their strokes in an echo-like sound, the low strings once more state their slow soft background, Prometheus' theme is heard softly once more (mm. 159 to 161), and the backstage trombones play the religious theme (mm. 163 to 165).

## REQUIEM FOR PROMETHEUS

ESTERCIO MARQUEZ CUNHA

# INSTRUMENTATION, CHORUS, SOLOISTS, AND ACTORS 

IN THE ORDER NOTATED IN THE SCORE

## Stage

2 flutes
2 clarinets Bb
1 bass clarinet Bb
2 trumpets Bb
2 trombones
side drum, bass drum, and Journalist
Religious Leader
Demagogue
Choir solos and amplified voice Choir
Piano and Socialite

## Pit

2 flutes
2 oboes
2 clarinets Bb
1 bassoon
4 horns F
3 trombones and 1 tuba percussion I - 2 timpani: 25 and 28 inches percussion II - bass drum percussion III - xylophone and suspended cymbal
percussion IV - celesta and temple-blocks violin
viola
violoncello
double-bass

## GENERAL REMARKS

|  | The piano and solo voice events are approximately place in the score. They do not need to be exact with their rhythmic entrances. |
| :---: | :---: |
| Choir | The choir is expected to double performance functions of singing and dancing. |
|  | The lengthened vowel sections (Act I ms. 20-133. Act III ms. 10-50.) are intended to be performed with slow body-movement by individuals of the choir. Its notation is an approximation and is intended to be shaped according to the choreographer's needs. |
|  | The division of the choir into groups allows for more chance of variety in the choreography. |
|  | In Act II Scenes, I and III, when the choir functions as television voices, and if they stand static, it is meant to be accompanied by small solo choreographies. |
| Unmess | Whisper the indicated phonemes. |
|  | Speak any words, not understandable, unless indicated. Each member of the choir should pre-plan his own words. The levels of the staff indicate the range of the voices (low, medium, high). |
| $x \nless x$ | Speak any words following the indicated rhythm. |
|  | Sing any vowel at any pitch for the approximate indicated duration. Each vowel indicates one part of the divisi (divisi a 5). |
| [i <br> $i$ | Cluster of vowels. |
| G | As high as possible. |
| Solos | M. = male $\quad$ F. = female |
| KiLL | Spoken words or texts by the characters and/or spoken solos by different individuals of the choir are enclosed in boxes. |

Timpani A large cymbal is laid over the timpani. Beat on the cymbal. Also press timpani pedal as indi-

ACTI






























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#### Abstract

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ACT II
introduction




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END OF ACT III

