

**Boston University**

**OpenBU**

<http://open.bu.edu>

---

School of Music

Boston University Concert Programs

---

1984-12-04

# Omnibus: Music of the Twentieth Century, December 4, 1984

---

<https://hdl.handle.net/2144/33930>

*Downloaded from DSpace Repository, DSpace Institution's institutional repository*

**BOSTON  
UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF  
MUSIC**

Phyllis Curtin, *Dean, School for the Arts*  
Ethan Sloane, *Director, School of Music*

**OMNIBUS**

**MUSIC OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY**

**Charles Fussell, Robert Sirota**  
*directors*

---

**Fifth Piano Sonata (1983)** **+Martin Amlin**

Pantoum (Perpetuum Mobile I)

Cadenza

Circle of Fifths (Perpetuum Mobile II)

Intermezzo

Toccata (Perpetuum Mobile III)

Martin Amlin, *piano*

**Autumn Elegy (1983)**

**William Coble**

*Mr. Coble is the winner of the  
Boston University composition contest.*

*\*Charles Mokotoff, guitar*

**A Dream of My Parents Dancing  
(1983)**

**Bruce Adolphe**

The Boston University Collegium  
in Contemporary Music  
Robert Sirota, *conductor*

--INTERMISSION--

**Pierrot Lunaire (1912)**

**Arnold Schoenberg**

Marianne Gedigian, *flute/piccolo*

Stephen Jackson, *clarinet/bass clarinet*

+John Daverio, *violin/viola*

William Rounds, *cello*

+Martin Amlin, *piano*

Phyllis Curtin, *sprechstimme*

Robert Sirota, *conductor*

+Faculty, Boston University School of Music

\*Guest Artist

*Student assistants for the OMNIBUS Series are Jackson  
Galloway and Sean Thibadeaux.*

*The use of recording devices during public performances  
is forbidden.*

---

4 December 1984  
Tuesday, 8 p.m.

Concert Hall  
855 Commonwealth Avenue

COLLEGIUM IN CONTEMPORARY MUSIC  
Personnel for Dream of My Parents Dancing:

Flute

Geralyn Coticone

Oboe

Disa English

Clarinet

Laura Dennis

Bassoon

Jim Lazzell

Trumpet

Karen Martin

Horns

John Aubrey

Thomas Hadley

Piano

Daniel Horne

Violins

Magdalena Suchecka

Gina Feinauer

Viola

Paul Swantek

Cello

William Rounds

Double Bass

Mary Potter

## PROGRAM NOTES

### Fifth Piano Sonata

Martin Amlin

At the time of writing this piano sonata, I was interested in the ways that the interval of the perfect fifth could be combined in either asymmetrical tonal harmonic structures or symmetrical non-tonal (or less tonal) ones. The first movement (Pantomim) uses a rapid melodic motive that will appear throughout the entire sonata. This movement has the form ABA, BCB, CDC, etc., with each small unit having the length of fifteen 16th notes. In the third movement the pitch content of long strings of notes is gradually altered so that the piece goes through a circle of perfect fifths, and in the last movement fifths are used in their most apparent, "open" way in a through-composed, toccata-like texture. These three very tonal perpetual-motion movements are separated by two which are decidedly less tonal and more rhapsodic in character. The entire piece went through several stages of writing and revising from 1982 to the present.

Martin Amlin

### Autumn Elegy

William Coble

Autumn Elegy was composed during the fall of 1983 at the request of Boston guitarist Charles Mokotoff. In this my first piece for guitar, I was interested in reconciling my desire to create a powerful and virtuosic work with the instrument's delicate and fragile nature. An elegy is typically a musical composition of mournful character intended as tribute to one deceased. My Autumn Elegy is a nostalgic work, an ode to a passing season aurally conjuring the melancholy that one feels as fall becomes winter. The work's highly eclectic nature, at times fiery and virtuosic then serene and gentle, calls to mind the highly changeable nature of a New England autumn.

William Coble

### A Dream Of My Parents Dancing

Bruce Adolphe

After having seen two of my operas produced in 1982 and another in 1983, my mind was reeling with thoughts of plots, casting, cutting, rehearsal schedules, set designs, lighting concepts, and budgets. In the summer of 1983, I was suddenly free to compose pure instrumental music, and-- strange as this sounds-- I was glad to be without a commission. Now I could set to work on a piece that I had been thinking about for some time. It concerned a dream I had had more than once, a dream of my parents dancing high above the ground to layers of dance music. These layers of music fit together, and yet were distinct. In composing the work I have tried to capture the poetic atmosphere of this dream. The piece is dedicated to the memory of my parents, who were, in fact, excellent dancers.

Bruce Adolphe

### Pierrot Lunaire

Arnold Schoenberg

Pierrot Lunaire was composed from March 12 through May 30, 1912, in Berlin. Only Kreuze was completed later, July 9. The first performance took place on October 16, 1912, in Berlin, with Schoenberg himself conducting. It is interesting to note from Joseph Rufer's catalogue that each movement was written in a single day. This points to the importance in performance of catching the "right" flavor for each movement, a dominant mood and flow. And it reveals a certain lightness of touch in the music itself, often mentioned by Schoenberg, but difficult to perceive during note-learning stages of preparation.

(Pierrot Lunaire)

The poems are taken from a cycle by the Belgian poet Albert Giraud, fifty poems published in 1884 and translated into German by Otto Erich Harleben. Schoenberg's selection of three times seven poems corresponds to the opus number 21. Each poem is an old French Rondeau; that is, thirteen lines, one and two repeated as seven and eight, and one again as thirteen.

Schoenberg called the work a melodrama and conceived a staged presentation, with instruments hidden and the soloist costumed. Perhaps it is the formidable difficulty for the voice of memorization that prevents more frequent stagings today.

The first group of seven poems gives us images of night and a moonstruck Pierrot. Here is the opening poem, Mondestrunken.

I Moondrunk

The wine which through the eyes we drink  
Flows nightly from the moon in torrents,  
And as a spring-tide overflows  
The far and distant land.  
Desires terrible and sweet  
Unnumbered drift in floods abounding.  
The wine which through the eyes we drink  
Flows nightly from the moon in torrents.  
The poet, in an ecstasy  
Drinks deeply from the holy chalice,  
To heaven lifts up his entranced  
Head, and reeling quaffs and drains down  
The wine which through the eyes we drink.

Group two raises more violent images of crime and guilt.

VIII Night

Heavy, gloomy giant black moths  
Massacred the sun's bright rays;  
Like a close-shut magic book  
Broods the distant sky in silence.  
From the mists in deep recesses  
Rise up scents, destroying memory.  
Heavy, gloomy giant black moths  
Massacred the sun's bright rays;  
And from heaven earthward bound  
Downward sink with sombre pinions  
Unperceived, great hordes of monsters  
On the hearts and souls of mankind...  
Heavy, gloomy giant black moths.

And finally, the third grouping gives way to homesickness and yearnings for old times.

XXI Nostalgia

O ancient scent from far-off days,  
Intoxicate once more my senses!  
A merry swarm of idle thoughts  
Pervades the gentle air.  
A happy whim makes me aspire  
To joys which I too long neglected.

## (Nostalgia)

O ancient scent from far-off days  
 Intoxicate me again.  
 Now all my sorrow is d spelled,  
 And from my sun-encircled casement  
 I view again the lovely world  
 And dream beyond the fair horizon.  
 O ancient scent from far-off days!

It is important to remember that this composition comes twelve years before Schoenberg's elaboration of his twelve-note method. I would like to mention four works which precede Pierrot, which are written in the same freely atonal or chromatic style, and are to my mind closely related in character: Book of the Hanging Gardens (1908-1909), a cycle for voice and piano on poems of Stefan George; Five Pieces for Orchestra (1909); Erwartung (1909), text by Marie Papeenheim; Herzgewächse (1911), text by Maurice Maeterlinck. Familiarity with these earlier scores prepares one for the poetic and musical climate of Pierrot.

The distribution of instruments throughout Pierrot is of great interest. All eight are employed by the five players only in the last movement. Flute, clarinet, violin, and cello each have solo movements, that is, accompanied by piano and voice. The piano gets his chance at the opening of XIV, Kreuze. In addition, there are duets, trios, and quartets to balance.

Schoenberg left interesting comments on the score, two of which I'd like to quote. From a letter, 31 August 1940, to the conductor Fritz Stiedry: "We must thoroughly freshen up the speaking part, too-- at least that, for this time I intend to catch perfectly that light, ironical, satirical tone in which the piece was actually conceived."

From a letter in 1949 to Hans Rosbaud: "I was a little annoyed by the idea of over-emphasis on the speaker-- who, after all, never sings the theme, but, at most, speaks against it, while the themes (and everything else of musical importance) happens in the instruments."

Finally, the resistance Schoenberg's language has found with the public at large lies, in my opinion, chiefly in its lack of consistency with harmonic materials; those constantly changing chord types! An added factor of contrapuntal thickness increases the difficulties. The basic language in which Schoenberg composed at the time of Pierrot was retained for his serial work, indeed, almost to the end of his life, not including a late, rather tonal band commission. Familiarity with this entire oeuvre reveals a world suspended in zero-harmonic-gravity, but with great beauty in its weightless climate.

The fact that he chose to end this cycle with a yearning for older, simpler times need not be taken as deliberately or solely ironic. Perhaps the "father of dissonance" himself anticipated in his own psyche our present day return to older, more harmonically unified, and sometimes simpler methods.

Charles Fussell

PIERROT LUNAIRE

English translation by Ingolf Dahl and Carl Beier  
from the German translation by Otto Hartleben

Part I:

1. Moondrunk

The wine that only eyes may drink  
Pours from the moon in waves at nightfall,  
And like a springflood overwhelms  
The still horizon rim.

Desires, shivering and sweet,  
Are swimming without number through the  
flood waters!  
The wine that only eyes may drink  
Pours from the moon in waves at nightfall.

The poet, by his ardor driven,  
Grown drunken with the holy drink--  
To heaven he rapturously lifts  
His head and reeling slips and swallows  
The wine that only eyes may drink.

2. Columbine

The moonlight's palest blossoms,  
The whitest wonder-roses,  
Bloom in summer nightfall.  
O might I break just one!

My anxious pain to soften  
I seek by darkest waters--  
The moonlight's palest blossoms,  
The whitest wonder-roses.

Fulfilled would be my yearning  
Might I, as one enchanted,  
As one in sleep, unpetal  
Upon your auburn tresses  
The moonlight's palest blossoms.

3. The Dandy

With lightbeams so weird and fantastic  
The luminous moon lights the glistening  
jars

On the ebon, high-holiest washstand  
Of the taciturn dandy from Bergamo.

Resounding in bronze-tinted basin  
Brightly laughs the fountain with  
metallic ring,

With lightbeams so weird and fantastic  
The luminous moon lights the glistening  
jars.

Pierrot, with waxen complexion,  
Stands musing, and thinks: How shall I  
make up today?

He shoves aside rouge and the Oriental  
green,

And daubs his face in most dignified  
style

With moonbeams so weird and fantastic.

4. A Pale Washerwoman

A pale washerwoman  
Washes nightly pallid kerchiefs,  
Naked, silverwhitest arms  
Reaching downward to the waters.

Through the clearing steel the breezes  
Gently stirring up the stream.

A pale washerwoman  
Washes nightly pallid kerchiefs.

And the gentle Maid of Heaven,  
By the branches softly fondled,  
Spreads out on the darkling meadows  
All her light-bewoven linen--  
A pale washerwoman.

5. A Chopin Waltz

As a faint red drop of blood  
Stains the pale lips of one stricken,  
So there sleeps within these tones  
A morbid, soul-infecting lure.

Chords of savage lust disrupt  
The icy dream of bleak despair--  
As a faint red drop of blood  
Stains the pale lips of one stricken.

Warm and joyous, sweet and yearning,  
Melancholy-somber waltzes  
Haunt me ever through my senses,  
Cling in my imagination  
As a faint red drop of blood.

6. Madonna

Rise, O Mother of All Sorrows,  
On the altar of my verses!  
Blood from your poor, shrunken breasts  
By the sword's cold rage was spilled.

Your deep wounds forever open  
Seem like eyes, so red and staring.  
Rise, O Mother of All Sorrows,  
On the altar of my verses.

In your thin and wasted arms  
You hold up your Son's broken body  
To reveal it to all mankind--  
Yet the eyes of men avoid your grief,  
O Mother of All Sorrows.

7. The Sick Moon

You somber, deathly-stricken moon,  
There on the heaven's darkest couch,  
Your gaze, so feverishly swollen,  
Charms me like a strange enchanted air.

Of insatiable love-pangs  
You die, die, by yearning overwhelmed,  
You somber, deathly-stricken moon,  
There on the heaven's darkest couch.

The lower who, with rapturous heart,  
Without a care to his mistress goes  
Is happy in your play of light,  
In your pale and tormented blood,  
You somber, deathly-stricken moon.

## Part II:

8. Night

Somber, shadowy, giant mothwings  
Killed the splendid shine of sun.  
An unopened magic-book,  
The dark horizon lies-- in silence.

The dark fumes of lower darkness  
Give off vapor-- stifling memory!  
Somber, shadowy, giant mothwings  
Killed the splendid shine of sun.

And from heaven down to earth  
Sink, with heavy, swinging motion  
Monsters huge, an unseen terror  
On all mankind's hearts now falling--  
Somber, shadowy, giant mothwings.

9. Prayer to Pierrot

Pierrot! My laughter  
I have forgot!  
The image of splendor  
Dissolve, dissolved.

Black waves my banner  
Now from my mast.  
Pierrot! My laughter  
I have forgot!

O give me once more,  
Horse-doctor of souls,  
Snowman of lyrics,  
Moon's maharajah,  
Pierrot-- my laughter!

10. Theft

Princely, luminous red rubies,  
Bloody drops of ancient glory,  
Slumber in the dead men's coffins  
Below, in the catacombs.

Nights, with his boon companions,  
Pierrot creeps down to plunder  
Princely, luminous red rubies,  
Bloody drops of ancient glory.

But look-- their hair stands straight up,  
Pale with fright they stand rooted;  
Through the fearsome gloom-- like eyeballs  
Staring from the dead men's coffins,  
Princely, luminous red rubies.

11. Red Mass

For evil's dread communion  
In blinding golden glitter,  
In candleshine-and-shudder,  
Mounts the altar-- Pierrot!

His hand, the consecrated,  
Tears off the priestly vestments  
For evil's dread communion  
In blinding golden glitter.

With sign-of-cross and blessing gestures  
He shows to trembling, trembling souls  
The Hose all red and dripping:  
His hear-- in bloody fingers--  
For evil's dread communion.

12. Gallows Song

The haggard harlot  
With scrawny neck  
Will be the last  
Of his mistresses.

In his brain there  
Sticks like a sharp nail  
The haggard harlot  
With scrawny neck.

Thin as a pine tree,  
With hanging pigtail,  
Lustily she will  
Embrace the rascal,  
The haggard harlot!

13. Beheading

The moon, a glistening scimitar  
Set on a black and silken cushion,  
Unearthly huge, it threatens downward  
Through sorrow-stricken night.

Pierrot wanders so restlessly,  
Lifts up his eyes in deathly fright  
To the moon, a glistening scimitar  
Set on a black and silken cushion.

His knees are shaking with fright,  
Fainting, he suddenly collapses.  
He thinks that on his sinful neck  
Comes whistling down with brutal force  
The moon, the glistening scimitar.

14. The Crosses

Holy crosses are the verses  
On which poets, mute, are bleeding,  
Blindly beaten by the vultures,  
Fluttering swarms of ghostly phantoms.

In their bodies daggers revelled,  
Blazoning in the blood of scarlet!  
Holy crosses are the verses  
On which poets, mute, are bleeding.

Reft of life, the locks are rigid--  
Lo, the rabble's noise is fading.  
Slowly sinks the sun in glory,  
Like a crimson Emperor's crown.  
Holy crosses are the verses.



## Part III:

15. Homesickness

Sweetly plaintive-- a crystal signing  
From the old Italian pantomime  
Rings across time: how Pierrot's grown  
awkward

In such sentimental modern fashion!

And it sounds through the wastes of his  
heart

Echoes softly through his senses also,  
Sweetly plaintive-- a crystal sighing  
From the old Italian pantomime.

Now Pierrot forgets his somber mien.  
Through the silvery fireglow of  
moonlight,

Through the flooding waves of light,  
his yearning

Soars on high to native skies so distant--  
Sweetly plaintive-- a crystal signing.

16. Vulgarity

Into the bald pate of Cassander,  
Who rips the air with screaming,  
Blithe Pierrot, affecting airs so kind!  
And tender-- bores with a skull drill!

He then plugs with his big thumb  
His own genuine Turkish tobacco  
Into the bald pate of Cassander,  
Who rips the air with screaming.

Then screwing his cherry pipestem  
Deep into the polished baldpate,  
Quite at ease he puffs and draws  
His own genuine Turkish tobacco  
Out of the hot bald pate of Cassander!

17. Parody

Steel needles, twinkling brightly,  
Stuck in her graying hair,  
Sits the duenna, murmuring,  
In her knee-length scarlet skirt.

She's waiting in the arbor,  
She loves Pierrot with aching heart--  
Steel needles, twinkling brightly,  
Stuck in her graying hair.

But suddenly-- hark-- a whisper!  
A windpuff titters softly;  
The moon, the cruel mocker,  
Is aping with its bright rays  
Steel needles' wink and blink.

18. The Moonspot

With a spot of white, of shining  
moonlight,

On the collar of his jet-black jacket,  
So Pierrot goes walking in the evening,  
Out to find some joy and high adventure.

Suddenly, in his dress something disturbs  
him.

He examines it-- and yes, he finds there  
A spot of white, of shining moonlight,  
On the collar of his jet-black jacket.

Hang it, thinks he, another spot of  
whitewash!  
Whisks and whisks, yet he cannot remove  
it.

So he goes on, full of spleen and fury,  
Rubs and rubs until the early morning  
A spot of white, of shining moonlight.

19. Serenade

With a bow grotesque and monstrous,  
Pierrot scrapes away at his viola;  
Like a stork on only one leg,  
Sadly plucks a pizzicato.

Pop, out comes Cassander,  
Raging at the nightly virtuoso--  
With a bow grotesque and monstrous,  
Scrapes Pierrot at his viola.

Now he throws down his viola:  
With his delicate left hand  
Grabs the baldpate by the collar--  
Dreamily plays upon his tonsure  
With a bow grotesque and monstrous.

20. Homeward Bound

A moonbeam for the rudder,  
Water lily for a boat,  
So Pierrot travels southward  
With fresh prevailing wind.

The stream hums deep cadenzas  
And rocks the little skiff;  
A moonbeam for the rudder,  
Water lily for a boat.

To Bergamo, the homeland,  
Now Pierrot returns;  
Faint glows the green horizon  
With dawning in the east--  
A moonbeam for the rudder.

21. O Fragrance Old

O fragrance old from days of yore,  
Once more you intoxicate my senses.  
A prankish tropp of rogueries  
Swirls through buoyant air.

A cheerful longing makes me hope  
For joys which I had long despised;  
O fragrance old from days of yore,  
Once more you intoxicate me.

I have abandoned all my gloom  
And from my window framed in sunlight  
I freely gaze on the dear world  
And dream beyond in boundless transport--  
O fragrance old-- from days of yore.