

# Michael Finnissy

## SONG 9 for Piano

### *Notes on Performance*

The pianist should aim at achieving very good definition in the extreme bass register, and a sonorous metallic quality of timbre.

For preference the lid of the piano should be removed.

'P.1.' indicates Right Hand (sostenuto) Pedal.

'P.2.' indicates Left Hand (sordino) Pedal.

Tempi should always be on the move from one to another.

Metronome Marks indicate the speed at arrival and departure only, between these the rate of Accel. or Rit. is to be even and constant, and depends upon the length of the passage and the difference between the Metronome Marks.

'Lentiss.' indicates a very slow and sustained tempo, unevenly accented and distorted.

'Rapido' indicates the fastest speed at which a rhythmically precise execution is possible.

Accacciaturas are always between beats, as fast as possible and completely unaccented.

Where the indicated metronomic speeds are in excess of the performer's physical capacities the next fastest speeds may be used, but in the same proportions as the original. Very slight distortions of the indicated durations will need to be effected to accommodate the small divisions clearly and audibly.

In places where the texture contains many unplayable simultaneities the notation *visually* prescribes the desired rhythmic articulation.

The pauses and silences are to be considered as extensions of the surrounding music at zero intensity, during which the performer mentally anticipates the succeeding passage (for example by slowly preparing the appropriate position of the hands).

The softest dynamic should be scarcely audible, and the loudest—used only for the final series of chords—must be really shattering, percussive and resonant.

(M.P.F.)

*This piece was commissioned for the Ninth "Music In Our Time" Festival, and received its first performance by Ronald Lumsden on 18th October 1968 at the Conway Hall, London.*

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Dedicated to Ronald Lignsden

# Song 9.

Michael Finnis

1  
*il più pianissimo possibile (ppppp)*  
(♩ = 40)

accl. e cresc. →

just before the beat (♩)

Piano Solo

ppppp  
ppppp echo  
non appog.  
11:8  
P1

\* This first chord is to be considered as an 'upbeat' to the A♯ (lowest line). All similar notes and chords—without definite duration—should provide "focal-points", or main beats... they may be paused over—briefly, and disrupt momentarily the rhythmic flow.  
NB. The song must start as though the pianist had already been playing for some considerable time before the first chord becomes audible—as though another person suddenly opened a door to the room where he is playing.

(p1) a piacere (arab.) gradually less and less pedal. (p1)

2

accl. e cresc. →

7:6  
11:8  
9:8  
pp  
ff  
a piacere (arab.) gradually less and less pedal.

accel. e. cresc.

sub.: ppppp

3

(♯)  
 6:7  
 5:6 (II)  
 9:8 (A)  
 4:5  
 quasi Senza Pedale  
 subito pppp  
 ppppp il più rapidamente e pianissimo possibile: legatiss.  
 senza fermata  
 (= 8va bassa)  
 P1  
 P2

Rapido:

molto cresc

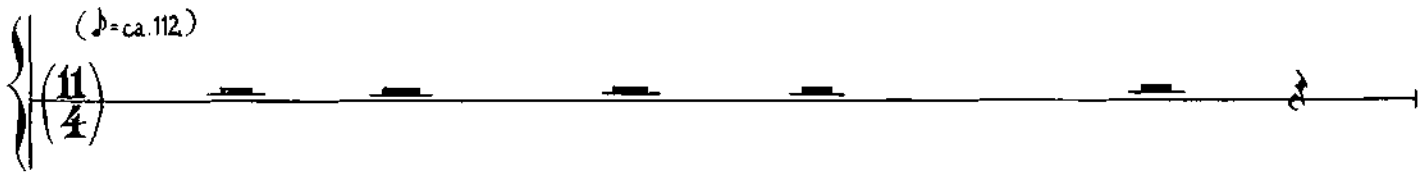
4

sfppp  
 5:7  
 7:5  
 pppp  
 non troppo  
 martellato  
 7 5 3 1  
 P1 a piacere  
 P2

5

(♩ = ca. 112)

(11)  
4

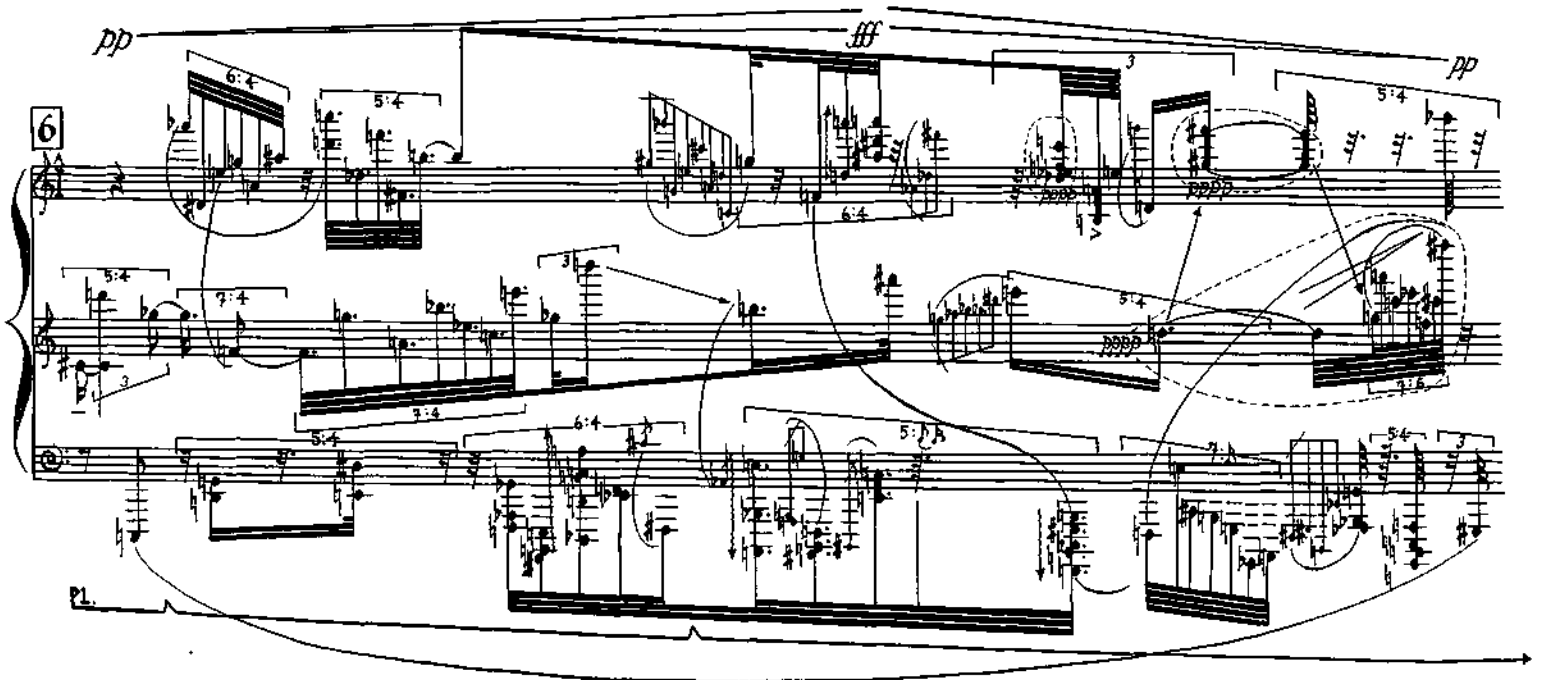


pp

ff

pp

6



7

(♩ = ca. 100)

(20)  
4

poco più mosso

(♩ = 224)

ppp

ppp sub

senza allig.

con d. poco

più marcato

ff

(senza P.L.)

5:4

staccatiss.

sfz

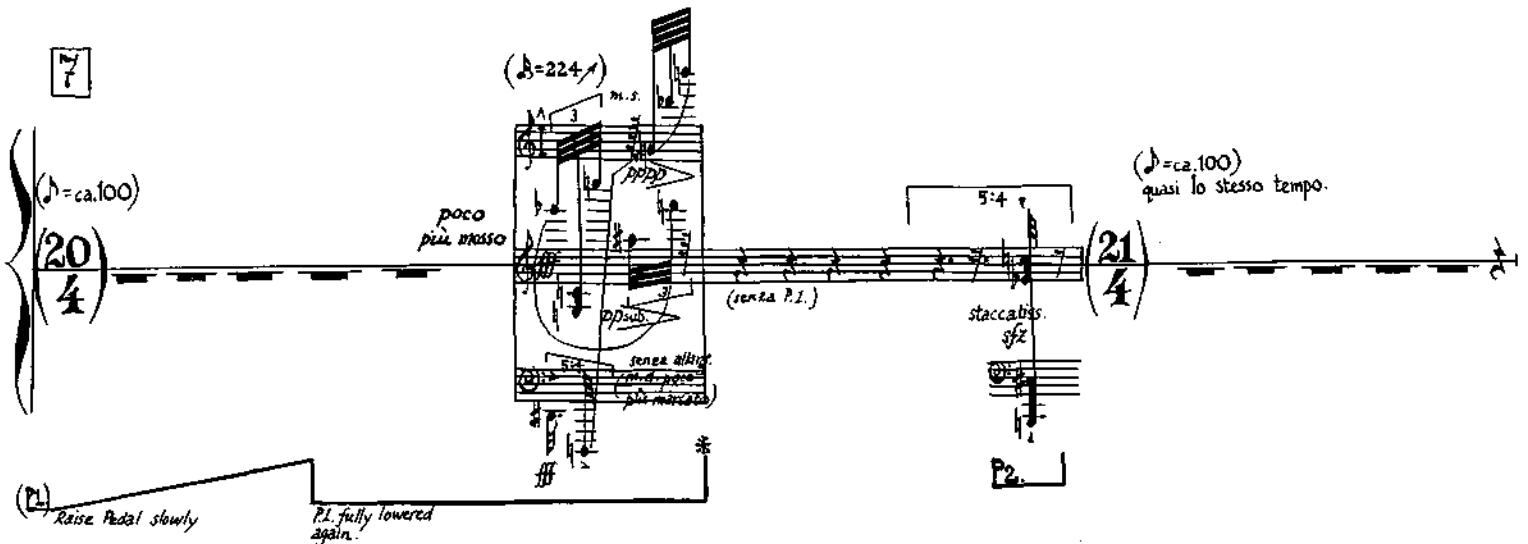
(21)  
4

(♩ = ca. 100)  
quasi lo stesso tempo.

P.L.

Raise Pedal slowly

P.L. fully lowered again.







12 accel.  $(\text{♩} = 208)$  *Lentiss. di nuovo* *ppppp* *pp sempre*

\*  $\square$  denotes a pause prolonging the  $\text{♩}$ 's by roughly 4 or 5 times their own length, or to a duration of between 5 and 10 seconds.

13  $(\text{♩} = 112)$  (35/4) (P1)

14 *il più rapidamente possibile: ppppp*  $(\text{♩} = 112)$  *non accentuato* *confuso* (14/8) (P1) *rise P1 gradually.*

15



cluster (played with the left forearm and/or elbow)

These four chords are quite fast, aperiodic, and played at any dynamic. They are followed by a relatively long pause.

These twenty chords are to be performed very violently, at a slow periodic speed — one every 2 or 3 seconds. They are arpeggiated rapidly up, down or outwards from any point in both directions simultaneously. The dynamic is to vary between *ff* and the maximum loudness (all force) possible. The Right Hand Pedal is sustained throughout all twenty chords, without (except for the sixth chord) raising, and then raised abruptly immediately after the last note of the final chord has been struck.

16



*ff* possible

harmonics: press down the indicated keys without sounding, in advance of playing the cluster.

Raise Pedal  $\frac{3}{4}$  way up before the cluster and fully up on the attack: Catch the resonances of the harmonics by lowering the pedal again, without sustaining the cluster itself.