

BBC ENTRY  
FOR THE 1991 PRIX MONTE-CARLO

**“WHO PAYS THE PIPER?”**

a poem with music

The music is by almost everybody

The poem is by RICHARD STILGOE

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With

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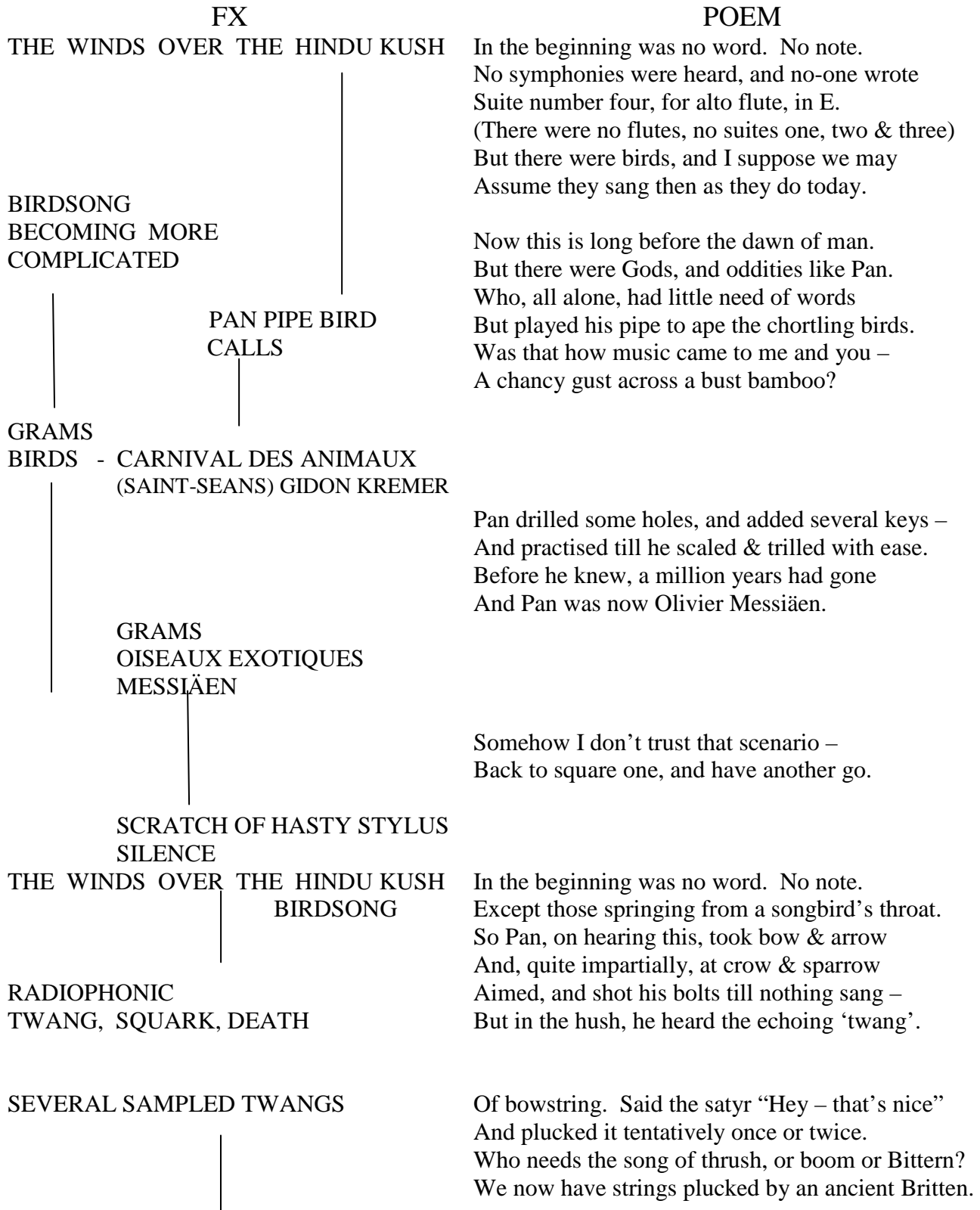
## **INTRODUCTION**

Music has always used up a lot of notes. “Who Pays The Piper” is the story of patronage – a musical bank statement tracing the history of music from the point of view of those who picked up the tab.

The story is told in the form of a radio cartoon, with the musical frames linked by a narrative poem.

# “WHO PAYS THE PIPER?”

A poem with music  
The music is by almost everybody  
The poem is by RICHARD STILGOE



GRAMS  
PLAYFUL PIZZICATO (SIMPLE  
SYMPHONY – BRITTEN – MARRINER)

F  
A  
D  
E

Too big a leap? Perhaps – but he'd have found  
Within a day or two of that first sound  
By simple tests, or happy accidents  
The notes he played upon his string made sense –

RADIOPHONIC  
MINIMALIST DEMO ON  
PARTIALS (SAMPLED SRNIG)  
C, C, G, C, E, G, A,  
REPEAT

For instance: if the string were half as long  
Then twice as high it sang its plucky song.  
Divide the string by three, or four, or five  
And other notes harmoniously arrive.

ADD SAME  
ON PAN PIPE  
(CHIFFER)  
E, E, , E, G, B

Now this is true (and always has been so)  
Not just for strings on different lengths of bow  
But for the air inside a bamboo shoot  
(which, as we've heard, can grow into a flute).  
The air inside the horn cut off a cow

RADIOPHONIC  
NATURAL HORN (SAMPLED)  
E /B , E /B

Is slave to mathematics, then, as now –  
To simple knowledge, waiting for the knowing.  
For Pan to change the way the wind was blowing.

FADE TO TACET  
WINDS OF HINDU KUSH

In the beginning was no word. No note.  
But Pan could hear beneath his hairy coat,  
A beating, which got louder when he ran  
Or hunted, or made love with Mrs. Pan

HEARTBEAT  
ACCELERATE  
LOUDER

As well as notes defined by timeless sums  
Man has been left a set of cardiac drums,  
And while they beat, you live. They stop – you die.  
So rhythm's quite important. You and I  
By whistling, can maintain our spirits high.

GRAMS  
COLONEL BOGIE (RIVER KWAI)

DRUMS ENTER

With rhythm, we can bridge the River Kwai.

The heartbeat sends us marching off to war,  
In fact, each time we ask ourselves for more.

CROSSFADE

GRAMS  
RIGHT OF SPRING  
(STRAVINSKY)

It's easy, if we're driven by the thud  
Of thumping pulses, summoning the blood.

F  
A  
D  
E  
|

Again we go too fast – our headlong flight  
Has made us spring too quickly to the rite.  
Pull back a bit, and give the folks a chance:  
So far we have the rhythm of the dance  
And simple notes on string, and horn and pipe  
Enough perhaps, for something of this type.

TACET

**GRAMS**

BRANDENBURG No. 2 (BACH)  
(MUNCHINGER)

|

The second Brandenburg by J.S.B. –  
For my money – (though you may not agree) –  
For my money the paradigm of bliss.  
Hang on a mo' – who's paying for all this?  
We started off with reeds & bits of string –  
This lot would strain the pocket of a King.

And there is music's problem, I'm afraid-  
Who pays the piper? For he must be paid.

To find out, this is just the place to start.  
Johann Sebastian subsidized his art  
In every way provided by the age –  
He taught, he played, and thus got patronage  
From princip'ly the Prince of Anhalt-Cöthen.  
(And since the moods of Princes are uncertain  
He sent concertos off to other nobs  
With notes appended asking them for jobs)  
To Brandenburg he wrote, to the Margrave  
Enclosing several sheets of 16-stave,  
The Margrave never, sad to say, replied –  
Indeed, years later when the old boy died  
Those six concertos Bach wrote, full of hope  
Were found, unopened in their envelope.

STOP

“If earthly lordlings leave me in the lurch,  
I should be safe”, thought Johann, “in the church,  
Most powerful of all, they can afford  
The forces needed for this sort of chord”.

SANCTUS (B minor Mass, BACH)  
LOUDLY

F  
A  
D  
E

|

It doesn't happen now, but it did then –  
(Religion governing the lives of men)  
The church, the world's first multinational,  
Ruled with a cross of iron over all.  
It levied taxes, bled the people dry  
To build stone warnings pointing to the sky.  
Fan-vaulted ceilings loweringly tall –  
Designed to make the rest of us feel small.

RUSTLE OF LARGE CONGREGATION

F  
A  
D  
E

TREBLE  
(TUNE: ONCE IN ROYAL) (JOE)

Christmas Eve in King's College chapel  
And the clock's approaching three.  
Twenty trembling trebles waiting –  
“Please, sir, do not point at me.  
I can't sing the opening solo  
I'm half way through my last Polo.

GRAMS VERSE 2

This is the singing of a gentle God –  
When Popes and Bishops trampled us roughshod.  
They did it with loud Latin, to convince  
The people to serve them, not some poor Prince.

GRAMS  
'BEATUS VIR' MONTEVERDI  
LOUD

CROSS FADE GRAMS  
'MISERERE' ALLEGRI

Easy to rule the earth, or turn the tide,  
Given this sort of music on your side.  
Fortunes were spent on orchestras and choirs  
Bands serenaded unbelievers' pyres.  
The pontiffs understood this music's might  
And guarded furiously its copyright.  
No other choir could offer these notes breath  
Except the Vatican, on pain of death.  
Allegri was performed, ten locked away,  
Two centuries went by, and then one day  
A little boy called Mozart came to town –  
Heard this just once, went home and wrote it down.

The Pope was livid. “Stealing!” he intoned.  
But can the air's vibrations thus be owned?  
Who knows? – but e are rushing on again  
Back at the battle, God's team versus men.

GRAMS  
[PASTIME WITH GOOD COMPANY  
(HILLIARD CONSORT?)

Though no-one could define the very hour  
When princes overhauled the church's power,  
The rot began, I guess, with Henry Tudor  
Who, wishing to consort with someone ruder  
Fell out with prudish Catholics, so he  
Decided he would form the C of E.  
His England, we are told, was rather fun

With music (Hal himself composed this one).  
Composers found if churches sold them short  
Employment was available at court.  
For Henry, if he like a maidens' wiggle  
Would fain impress her with a new mad wriggle.

NOW IS THE MONTH OF MAYING  
(KING'S SINGERS)

One truth is universal, more or less,  
That people part with money to impress.  
Well, orchestras & singers cost the earth  
So church & state both want their money's worth –  
Obedient congregations quelled by chants –  
King Henry's pliant ladies flushed with dance –  
But out in Venice, they'd a simpler aim  
They'd only pay if music bought them fame.  
Like oil-sheikhs of the most unpleasant kind  
To value was each rich Venetian blind.  
They weren't content with little pipes and tabors  
They wanted something to impress the neighbours.

TANCREDI E CLORINDA  
(MONTEVERDI)

Claudio Monteverdi, take a bow –  
(Not Clordio, but Claudio with a 'Clau')  
He left the Duke of Mantua and went  
To Venice (frankly, one bus-fare well spent).  
(That Duke of Mantua's the self-same fella  
Whom Verdi made perform 'Questa o Quella').  
In Venice Monteverdi spent the dosh  
Of millionaires aspiring to be posh,  
On operas with wonderful machinery  
To fly the Gods, the singers and the scenery.  
Surprisingly, behind this grand design  
The music was, improbably, divine.

ULISSE – ALL' ALLEGREZZE  
(ACT 2)  
(MONTEVERDI)

Poor opera, by the rich Venetian's crime  
Condemned to cost a fortune for all time.  
Half-understood it finally reversed  
And backed into the court of George the First  
Accompanied by Hanoverian snoring  
For Handel operas, honestly, are boring.

ORCH. OMBRA MAI FU

COUNTER TENOR

Under this tree  
That's where they look for me  
That's where I'll always be –  
Beneath this tree  
Under this tree  
I stand completely still  
From curtain up, until  
Act five, scene three.  
There is no rest for me,  
Under this tree.  
Here must I stand till I

Finally fall down and die  
Then they'll bury me –  
Under this tree.

ORCH. OVERTURE FIGARO  
(MOZART)

When op'ra looked set fair to quit the scene  
Young Mozart, with his life-support machine,  
Breathed life in it by writing Figaro.  
This is the plot, in case you didn't know.

BAR 18 (RICHARD)

Going to be wed  
Going to be married  
So he's measuring the bed,  
Married to Susanna  
In the customary manner  
But the count'll put a spanner  
In the works.

PURCELL – DIDO'S LAMENT  
INTRODUCTION

We say 'Young Mozart'. He was always young.  
Composers' passing bells are often rung  
Too soon. And in their thirties they depart,  
Burnt out by the inferno of their art.  
Bellini, Schubert, Mendelssohn as well –  
The list goes all the way back to Purcell.

ORCH. DIDO'S LAMENT (MARIA)

Purcell expired at 36, so did George Bizet  
While Weber and Chopin reached thirty-nine  
Mozart, most famously, died at thirty-five,  
Franz Schubert 31  
Bellini at 34 did decline.  
And Mendelssohn, and Mendelssohn was  
only 38.  
Poor Mendelssohn before 40 met his fate.  
They died, oh. They died, oh –  
They quietly passed away.  
So quietly.  
They never, never reached forte.

ATTACA  
GRAND MARCH (AIDA)

To tell you they all died young would be naughty  
A lot crescendoed on to double forty.  
And, since time makes the public more forgiving  
By old age some made quite a decent living.  
Old Byrd, made eighty, while Josquin des Prés  
Made eighty-one – just two more than Faure.  
Haydn was seventy-seven, Heinrich Schutz  
At eighty-seven years hung up his butz.  
The same as Verdi. Monteverdi though  
Reached seventy-six. Rossini – well, you know,  
Rossini was a funny sort of chap  
For in this exercise he spans the gap.  
Though seventy-six before applying to heaven

OVERTURE  
BARBER OF SEVILLE



He wrote his last big work at thirty-seven.  
Instead of being young, and poor, and dead.  
He lived on and collected all the bread.  
(Oh, by the way, d'you know Rossini's pa  
Was health inspector at an abattoir).

ORCH. QUESTA O QUELLA

Tenor: Salmonella

SUDDEN HALT

Now look this is all getting out of hand,  
Be silent, Duke of Mantua, Shut up, band.  
We must get back to pipers and to pay,  
Not bother when composers passed away –  
Or how.

WEBERN (SIX PIECES)

(Though it's amusing to relate  
How some of the poor devils met their fate).

MONTAGE

ALKAN (Piano study)

CHAUSSON (POEM)

Poor Webern (who wrote this – it's not a joke)  
Went outside after curfew for a smoke,  
He lit up and a nervous G.I. shot him  
(Though others think a music lover got him).  
A bookcase stopped Charles Alkan in his stride  
Chausson fell of his bicycle and died.

F/X BYCYCLE BELL

SCRIABIN COLOUR SYMPHONY

Scriabin perished with a septic pimple.

LULLY OVERTURE (ARMIDE)

Lully – well, with him it's not as simple.  
Lully used to beat a firm four – four  
By banging with a baton on the floor.  
One day he hit himself on the foot –  
It festered, and poor Lully – well, kaput.

POLKA - SYLVIA (DELIBES)

Ker plunka plunka plunka plunka plunka  
Thump Merde!

I know that's by Delibes and not by Lully  
But Lully didn't write a tune that silly!

FIGARO FINALE ACT II

(SIGNORE, DI FIORI)

FIGARO'S ENTANCE

Mozart distracted us to thoughts of dying  
Where were we? Figaro! There's no denying  
Patronage can be a paradox –  
The patron pays to buy the hecklers rocks.  
How strange that the nobility would pay  
For Mozart (in the wake of Beaumarchais)  
To trumpet revolution on their stages –  
(Few murder victims pay their killer's wages)  
But now with revolution in the air,  
The people ask for cake, and Robespierre

F/X  
GUILLOTINE

Removes the heads that coughed up for the play

And left the starving people free to pay.

BEETHOVEN 9<sup>TH</sup>  
(FREIHEIT - BERNSTEIN)

Terrific for the artist to be free.  
But not all of the new rich bourgeoisie  
Believed they owed the brotherhood a living –  
Composers found a harder, less forgiving  
Regime, replete with publishers and such,  
Who drove you hard, and didn't pay you much.

Poor Beethoven and Schubert, had to learn  
New ways to get ripped-off at every turn.  
So Schubert sold, but never for enough.  
Business, Schubert found, is pretty tough.

PIANO AND RICHARD  
THE TROUT

Our free range chicken business was on its final legs  
And so, in desperation, we bought some fishes' eggs.  
We threw them in the duck pond, and stirred them roundabout –  
And soon to our amazement the pond was full of trout.

We put a little sign up, folk came from miles around  
They fished them out, and paid us at 90p a pound.  
But fashion can be fickle – what's in can soon be out.  
The punters all stopped coming, and left us with the trout –  
The punters all stopped coming, and we were stuck with trout.

But still we had the chickens – cooped up in pens.  
We ground the trout up into powder, and fed it to the hens.  
It didn't cost us nothing, so chicken is now a cheaper dish –  
But that is why at Tesco's, the chickens taste of fish.  
Yes that is why, at Tesco's, the chickens taste of fish.

MONTAGE OF CONCERTOS  
BEETHOVEN 5 (LAST MOV'T)  
SCHUMANN, LISZT,  
BRAHMS, CHOPIN

We should, in passing, since you've heard it, mention  
Cristofori's thousand-part invention.

The pianoforte.

How many musicians  
Have found that if they played their composition  
Those for whom the music never lingers  
Paid to watch their wildly sprinting fingers?

All these keyboard giants, what are they?  
Players who write, or writers who can play?  
Take Chopin's life, with all that crammed in  
While filling up the unforgiving minute.

## PIANO & RICHARD

### MINUTE WALTZ

(CHOPIN)

Chopin was born in Zelazowa Wola. Chopin's mother was a Pole although his father Nicholas Chopin was French. He came from Nancy. Anyone who comes from Nancy must be rather strange. Off Frédéric went for lessons with Elsner at the age of twelve full-time. Then Chopin at the age of seventeen left the conservatoire and went off to Vienna and Berlin, where he met Hummel and Paganini the great violin virtuoso. Then at the age of only nineteen he wrote two concertos for pianoforte and performed them at two concerts in the town of Warsaw so the two concertos might be called "Warsaw Concertos". But these Warsaw Concertos aren't to be confused with the great Warsaw Concerto penned by Richard Addinsall and played by Anton Walbrook, in the film "Dangerous Moonlight" during an air-raid. Then he left the family home, went to Breslau, Prague, Vienna, Dresden, Rome and finished in Paris winning fame for his individuality. His sophisticated sound was heard with joy by all the French underground. Every night he could be found underneath the bridges of Paris with Liszt and Berlioz and Moscheles and Cherubini, Auber, Hiller, Meyerbeer, Rossini. Everyone who lived in Paris thought Chopin was great especially Madam Dudevant who wrote romantic books under the name of George Sand – which you will notice is a man's name. And indeed she was an odd creation. Women's liberation was her creed – she used to smoke cigars, and would habitually wear trousers, collar, tie and crew cut hair but Chopin (who's father came from Nancy, you'll recall) thought George was the sort of girl he fancied after all and took her straight up to his room to find out who did what, with what, and how, to whom. That lasted till the summer of eighteen-forty-seven when Chopin and Sand had a quarrel so he went to England and stayed with Jane Stirling his pupil and played Edinburgh, Manchester and Glasgow. But after his health got worse although George Sand would minister unto him in bed and hold his hand but Chopin's constitution lost its resolution and gave up the struggle so that in the autumn of the year eighteen forty-nine he died in Paris, France at the age of only thirty-nine, poor thing. Which only goes to show that no-one can expect to become bronzed and healthy just by lying on the Sand.

## SEGUE

### TCHAIKOSKY PATHETIQUE SYMPHONY

While most were touring round the Steinway stools  
Some still found ways to play by the old rules.  
Tchaikowsky found his odd ideas on sex  
Were right in tune with Nadezhda von Meck's  
She didn't like it either. But she paid  
While he composed, or wrestled with rough trade  
Till, racked with guilt and grief, he lost the tussle.

And died, before he'd even met Ken Russell.

Tchaikowsky was just terminally sad  
King Ludwig of Bavaria was mad.  
Doolally. Nuts. Two bricks short of a load.  
At this point Wagner wanders down the road.

## WAGNER - RIDE OF THE VALKYRIE

We'd never have heard Tristan, of the Ring.  
If Wagner had not charmed the crazy King.  
(He also charmed Matilda Wesendonk,  
Indeed his constant quest for a new bonk  
Makes Parsifal's vain searching for the grail  
Look, by comparison with Richard, rather pale).  
But, unaware that Wagner was a jerk,  
King Ludwig paid, and got this wondrous work.

TRISTAN - LIEBESTOD

With eighty in the band, how far we've strayed  
From Pan, and that first set of pipes he played

DEBUSSY - L'APRES MIDI

Or have we? Here's Debussy's little tune  
Portraying what Pan did one afternoon.  
And here perhaps, is music's great divide –  
The new against the tested and the tried.  
Along one road, the moderns with no map,  
Along the next your solid, blinkered chap.

POMP & CIRCUMSTANCE  
NUMBER 3

The gap between the parties widens more,  
The whole world teeters on the edge of war.  
A man takes aim, and by a lucky fluke  
Shoots Ferdinand, his target, an Archduke.

HOLST - MARS (THE PLANETS)

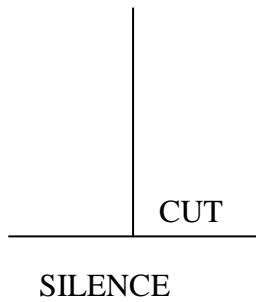
F  
A  
D  
E

For four years, man stares into the abyss  
And wonders how it ever came to this.  
But most of all the people wondered why  
They'd let the bosses order them to die.  
From now on, said the public, we shall choose -  
You keep your Berg. We'll have Berlin & Blues.

MONTAGE ELLINGTON,  
BERLIN, DANCE BANDS

The trouble was, the public knew too much –  
New things arrived to help them keep in touch.  
The gramophone with dog, from HMV,  
The wireless, and of course the BBC.  
All meant there was more music than before  
And more and more the public knew the score.

MONTAGE OF  
BIRTHWHISTLE, BERIO  
& BOULEZ



PHILIP GLASS - AKNAHTEN

TUNING - OPERA HOUSE  
ATMOS.

APPLAUSE

ORCH. PEARL FISHERS DUET

TENOR We need a bigger grant  
Can we survive? We can't  
Pavarotti wants more

BARITONE Pavarotti wants more

TENOR He cost too much before

BARITONE He cost too much before

TENOR The dancers won't do steps  
And the band are all deps.  
But the house is sold out, sold out.  
The cabinet's here.  
Let us hope they can see we need  
more subsidy.

BARITONE They take us all for granted  
We carry on on peanuts  
We can't survive on peanuts.

BOTH Thirteen million five hundred thousand  
Pounds a year Covent Garden gets  
So they can freight in fat Italians  
And build enormous and elaborate sets  
Must keep the price of the seats down  
Still we run up astronomic debts,  
Thirteen million five hundred thousand

Now, modern music. Just an easy laugh?  
No bear in mind that we hear all the chaff  
Which history will sift from the good wheat.  
Though, frankly, it's a dubious conceit  
That silent compositions by John Cage  
Will suddenly be voted all the rage.  
(For those of you who've not heard Cage's charms)  
Here's a snippet –

(PAUSE)

Eat your heart out, Brahms.

Will serialists and minimalist survive  
And aleatorics oust Beethoven Five?  
Will lovers in the future make a pass  
To music by Steve Reich, or Philip Glass?  
Who knows? When even the most trusted critic  
When asked to be profound or analytic  
About the latest sip from music's cup  
Says, "Is this it, or are they tuning up?"

Meanwhile back at the Opera they try  
Upon the thinnest shoestring to get by.  
Poor Covent Garden trying hard to cope  
On pennies from the Arts Council, and hope.

Pounds a year from the public purse  
For the flights and fees of Italians –  
(More if the contract says they must rehearse)  
Must keep the price of the seats down  
Gosh we're lucky that is isn't worse.

Keep the prices within bounds  
Stalls seats are only ninety pounds.

STOCKHAUSEN - HYMNEN?

LLOYD WEBBER - PIE JESU

Of course there's freedom in the private sector  
No self-respecting managing director  
Would ever dare to tell the Sinfonietta  
"Drop Stockhausen – we like Lloyd Webber better".  
Instead, next year, he'll pull out of the arts.  
And sponsor something he enjoys – like darts.  
The carousel goes on. You can't get off it –  
We bleed the living world to make a profit,  
Then spend it on the artists who suggest  
Good reasons we're so bitterly depressed.  
Cut down the forest – graze the rapid beef  
Here's fast-food buzz, but long un-nourished grief.

ORCH. BACHIANOS BRAZILEIRAS No. 5

SOPRANO:

Hear the chainsaws singing in the forests of Brazil  
Ah – they've come to kill.  
Amazon – make your will  
Add a rueful codicil.  
I leave the world to everyone  
Everyone who survives beneath the blazing sun.

There is nowhere to run –  
Aaaaaaaaaaaaaah .....

Maybe eighty in the shade  
But the piper must be paid  
There is money to be made  
That's the chainsaw serenade.

Hum .....

MIX CHAINSAWS, FALLING TREES

ADD FEEDBACK ECHO

We search for speedy profits to maintain  
The artist, with his mission to explain

That happiness lies in my soul, in me –  
Not cast in chipboard from a chainsawed tree.  
It's one of those dilemmas that will last  
Till evidence of man and art is past.

LAST NOTE

F  
A  
D  
E

THE WINDS OF THE HINDU KUSH

SAMPLED LARGE  
PAN PIPES (BREATHY  
CHIFFER BUT WIDER  
& BREATHIER)  
PLAYING 'LAST POST'

But then, as winds invade the desert sand  
Where Amazonian forests used to stand  
A lonely chimney, or the last exhaust  
When breath across its mouth is gently forced  
Will play the same harmonics played by Pan –  
The piper's known them since the world began.  
He needs no pay, he needs no five-year plan  
Music is free, and older far than man.

FADE TO BLACK, AS IT WERE