RAYMOND YIU

THE ORIGINAL CHINESE CONJUROR

A Musical Diversion Suggested by the Lives of Chung Ling Soo (2003-06)

Libretto by Lee Warren

Full Score

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Printed in England.

Dramatis Personae

William Robinson

Dot Robinson

Alexander Herrmann, Voice of Ching Ling Foo (Low)

Chai Ping

Counter Tenor

Soldier, Audience Member, Donald Stevenson, Newspaper Boy,

Announcer, Reporter and Harry Elson, Voice of Ching Ling Foo (High)

Tenor

Content

Prologue Soldier (silent), Robinson (silent), Herrmann Scene 1 Herrmann, Dot, Robinson, Audience Member, Donald Stevenson Newspaper Boy, Robinson Scene 2 Robinson, Herrmann Scene 3 Announcer, Herrmann, Robison Scene 4 Dot, Reporter Scene 5 Dot, Robinson, Herrmann Scene 6 Scene 7 Dot, Chai Ping, Robinson Scene 8 Chai Ping, Robinson, Dot, Harry Elson, Herrmann, Voices of Foo (High and Low) Scene 9 Dot, Chai Ping, Robinson, Harry Elson, Herrmann Scene 10 Robinson, Dot, Chai Ping Scene 11 Herrmann, Robinson, Dot, Chai Ping Scene 12 Herrmann, Robinson, Dot, Chai Ping, Soldier

Note: Names listed in order of appearance.

Note on Scene 12

Musically, this scene is conceived for speaking voice (Herrmann), whose words are echoed by four singing voices, with harmonic background provided by the ensemble. The written parts for the singing voices can be interpreted as guidelines if they prove to be too difficult, except where fragments from previous scenes should be executed as accurately as possible.

To achieve the desired effect with improvisation, the singer must listen to the text recited by the speaking voice, pick up vowels that are obvious, and elaborate on them using the pitches indicated. Cues if required maybe taken from the chords sustained by the instruments.

Duration: 70'00"

Instrumentation:

Clarinet (doubling Bass Clarinet)

Accordion

Piano (doubling Celesta, Toy Piano, Finger Cymbals, Chinese Temple Block,, Whirling Tube (in G) and Chinese Gong)

Percussion

2 Wood Blocks, Almglocken, Button Gongs, Chinese Gong, Chinese Palm Balls, Chinese Temple Blocks (large and small), Claves, Crotales Finger Cymbals, Glockenspiel, Gun Shot (on stage), Hi-Hat, Jew's Harp Marimba, Mark Tree, Metal Wind Chime, Pedal Bass Drum (optional as part of the Drum Kit), Rin (low), Small Chinese Clash Cymbals, Snare Drum, Suspended Cymbal, Tam-Tam, Tanggu, Triangle, Whirling Tube (in

G)

Violin

Double Bass (doubling Small Chinese Clash Cymbals, can be shared with percussionist)

World Première

15th, 17th and 18th June 2006, Southwold Pier, Aldeburgh, Suffolk. 1st 2nd and 7th July 2006, Almeida Theatre, Islington, London.

Richard Morris as William Robinson Sophie Louise Dann as Dot Robinson Paul Leonard as Alexander Herrmann Andrew Watts as Chai Ping Phillip Sutton as Harry Elson and other roles

Almeida Ensemble, conducted by Timothy Redmond.

Production directed by Martin Duncan. Design by Francis O'Connor. Lighting Design by Chris Ellis.

Commission

The Original Chinese Conjuror was commissioned and developed by Aldeburgh Almeida Opera with the support of the Genesis Foundation.

Acknowledgements

The composer would like to thank the following parties for their pelp and support to make this project possible: Julian Anderson, Richard Baker, British Music Information Centre, Mel Cooper, Patrick Dickie, Martin Duncan, John Fallas, Ben Foskett, Lukas Foss, Genesis Foundation, Gill Graham, Jonathan Gunthorpe, Andrew Kurowski, Christopher Lemmings, Odaline de la Martinez, Ian McQueen, Imogen Mitchell, Abigail Pogson, Timothy Redmond, Jonathan Reekie, David Sawer, Society for the Promotion of New Music, Andrew Watts, John Woolrich, David Wordsworth.

Date of Score Printed: 25th June 2007

The Set

The stage set should suggest a vaudeville theatre, but must be flexible enough to fluidly represent both on stage and off stage moments, as well as Herrmann's workshop, a street and Robinson's living room.

I imagine it as a dark box with some tables and small props, just enough to suggest the necessary places. Obvious footlight across the front.

Note on Magic

The magic that is performed in the opera is technically very basic and could easily be learnt in half a morning after a trip to a magic shop.

It would also be possible however to perform without using any magic tricks at all. For example, when Herrmann vanishes a flower, he could simply toss it behind him. In this case, we would rely on Robinson's reaction to tell the audience that he had seen magic. I leave it entirely to the discretion of the director and the actors.

Lee Warren



LIBRETTO: LEE WARREN

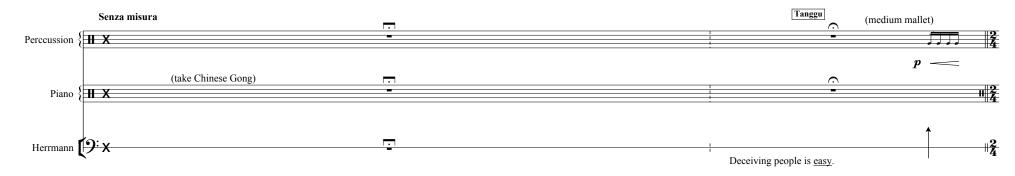
PROLOGUE

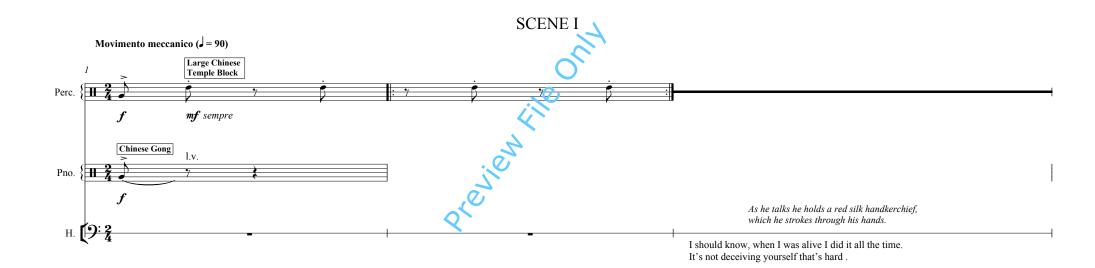
RAYMOND YIU (2003-06)

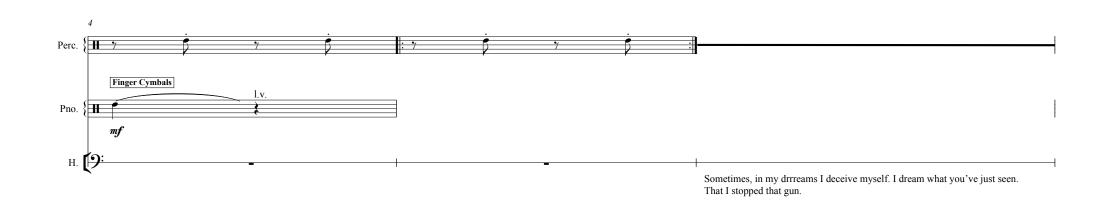
A dark stage.

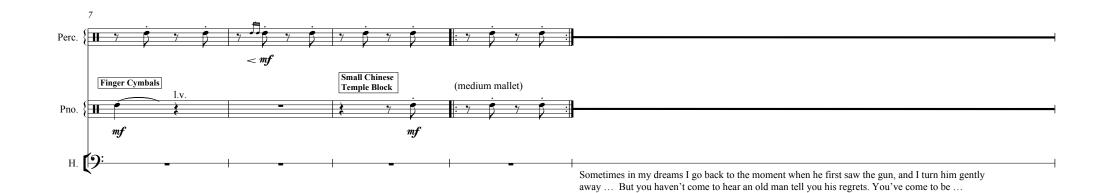
On one side of the stage, in the manner of Music Hall, is an easel with a card resting on it. The card changes with each scene. At the moment, the card reads 'The Original Chinese Conjuror'.

We hear the heavy sound of a stage handle being pulled and a spotlight falls from above on a man, garbed in Chinese robes at stage left. We hear the same sound and a spotlight falls from above Stage Right onto a soldier. Pause. The soldier slowly loads his rifle. He places two bullets in the loading chamber and closes the gun. Very slowly he raises the rifle and points it at the Chinese man opposite him. as the soldier is about to fire the gun, there is a flash of light and smoke Stage Left. Alexander Herrmann enters, a satanic looking figure with a moustache, top hat and tails. He looks every inch the magician, and the soldier and Chinese man freeze. Herrmann walks to the gun, takes it out of the Soldier's hand and rests it on a stand near the easel. The soldier and the Chinese man exit as Herrmann changes the card to read 'Herrmann the Great'.





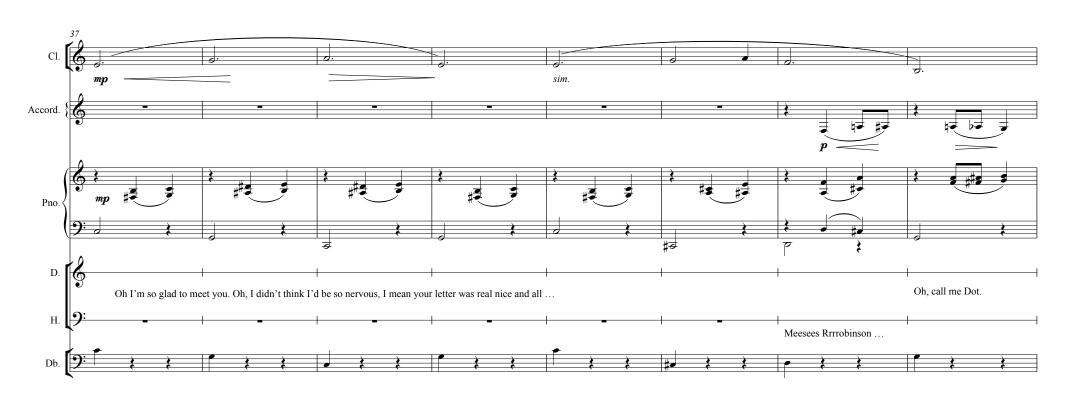






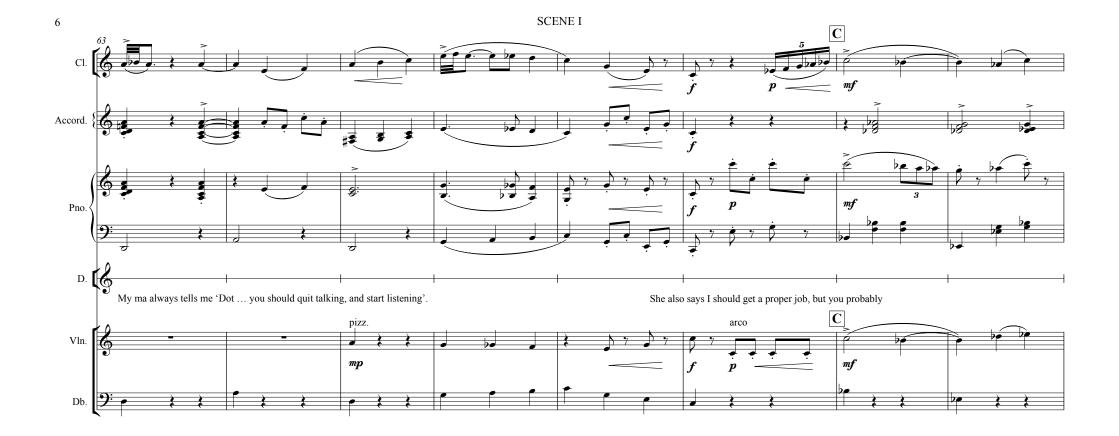






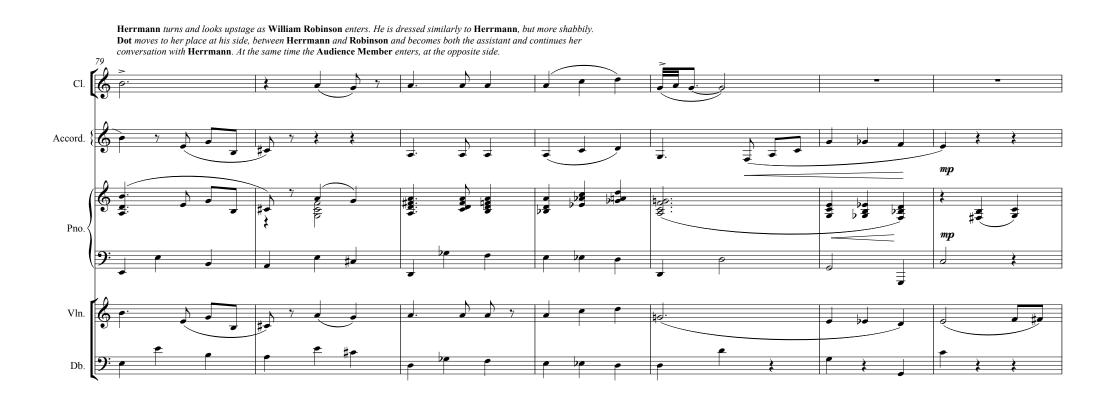














She produces three silver rings from behind the easel. **Robinson** links and unlinks them in a disinteresting manner.















pp

mp





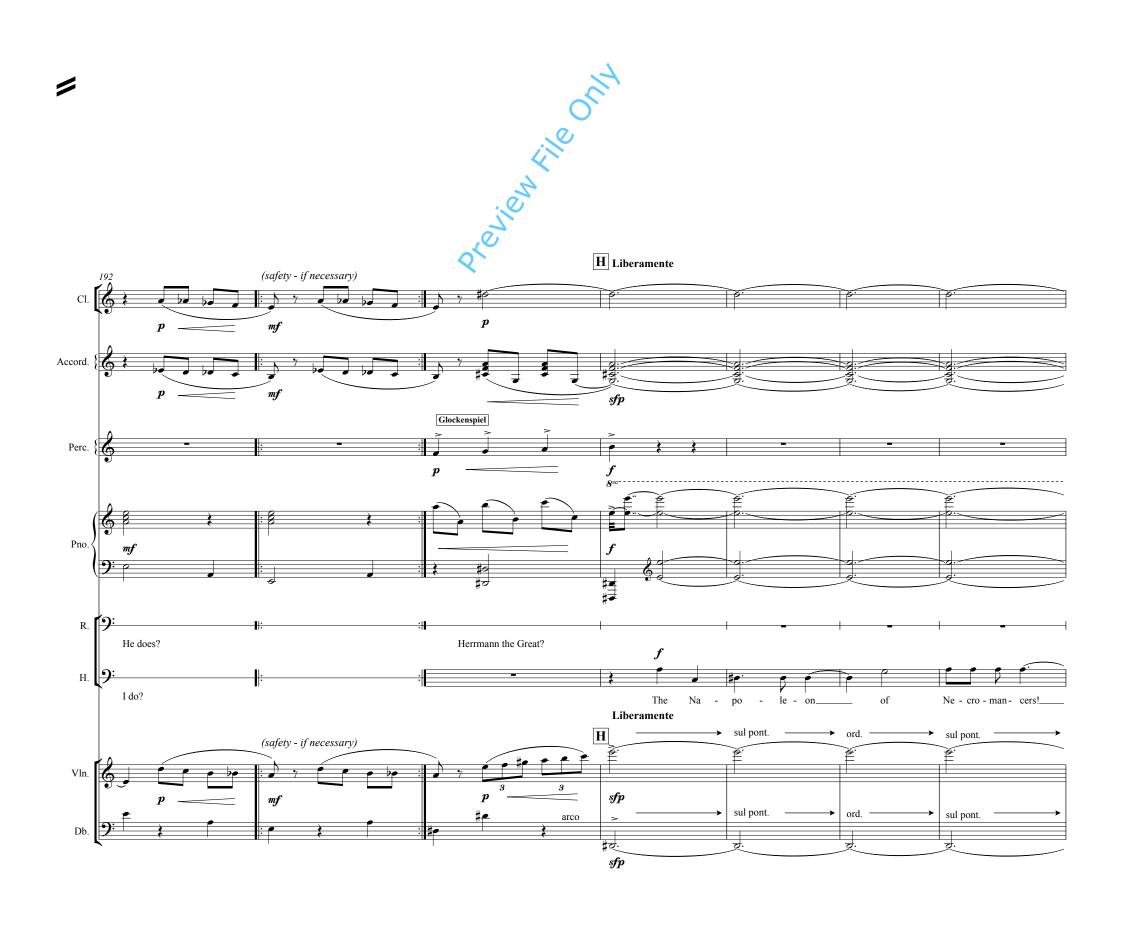
Н.

G poco accel. ...



A tempo (= 180)

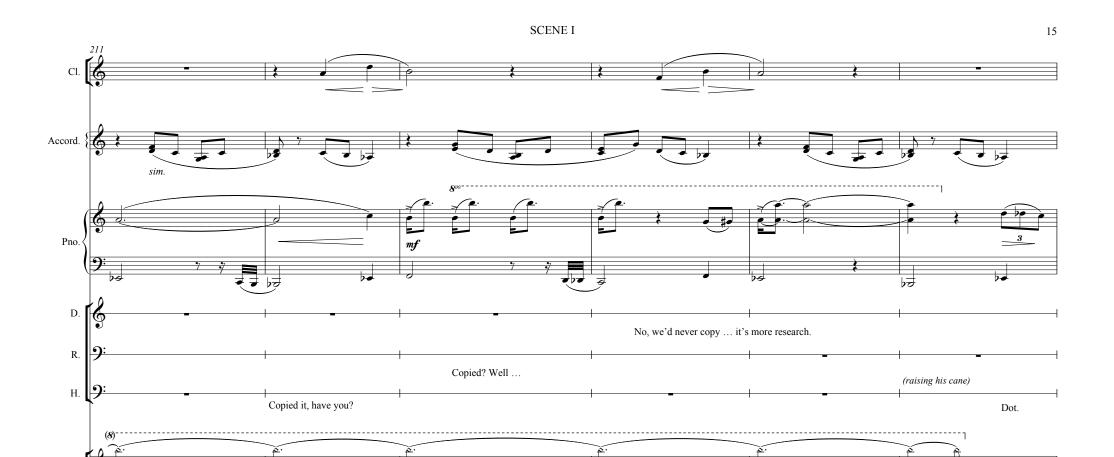








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Herrmann: (a flower appears) Delightful girl.

Robinson: I've seen enough of your show to know how to improve it, Mr Herrmann.

Herrmann: Improve MY show...?

 $\textbf{Robinson:} \ Yes. \ Except \ the \ Bullet \ Catch. \ That's \ astounding, \ Mr \ Herrmann.$

Herrmann: Herrrmann.

Robinson: Herrrrmann.

Herrmann: Verrrry gooood.

Robinson: Verrrry gooood

Db.

Herrmann: Yes. (Pause) Herrmann knows exactly how you could help in his show. Have you ever become somebody else, Mr Rrrobinson?

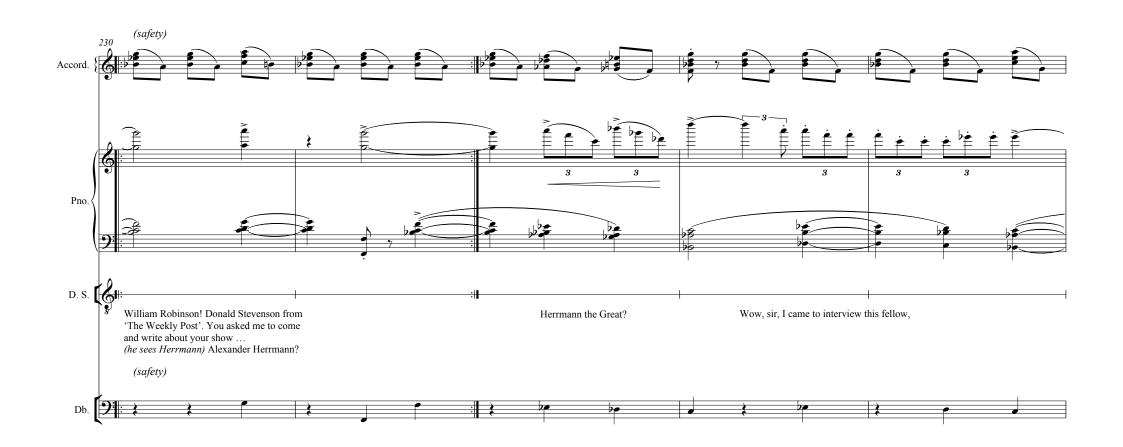
 $\textbf{Robinson:} \ Please \ call \ me \ Billy. \ No, \ I've \ done \ an \ Arab \ act, \ but \ that \ didn't \ work \ out \ \dots$

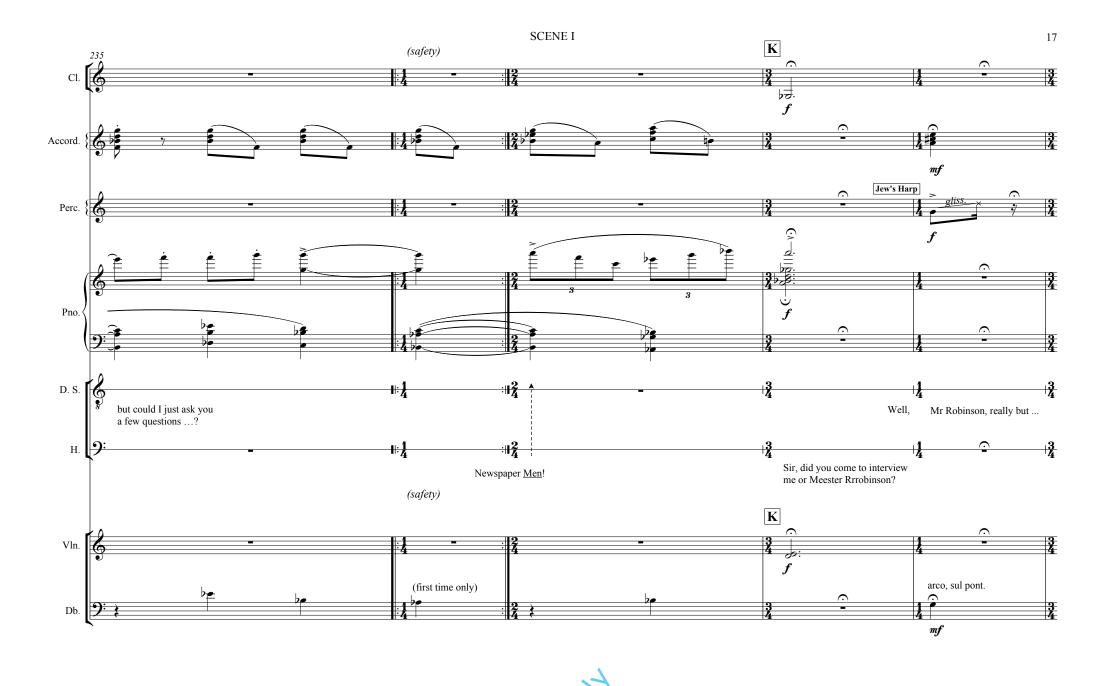
Dot: Except for my dancing! They loved that!

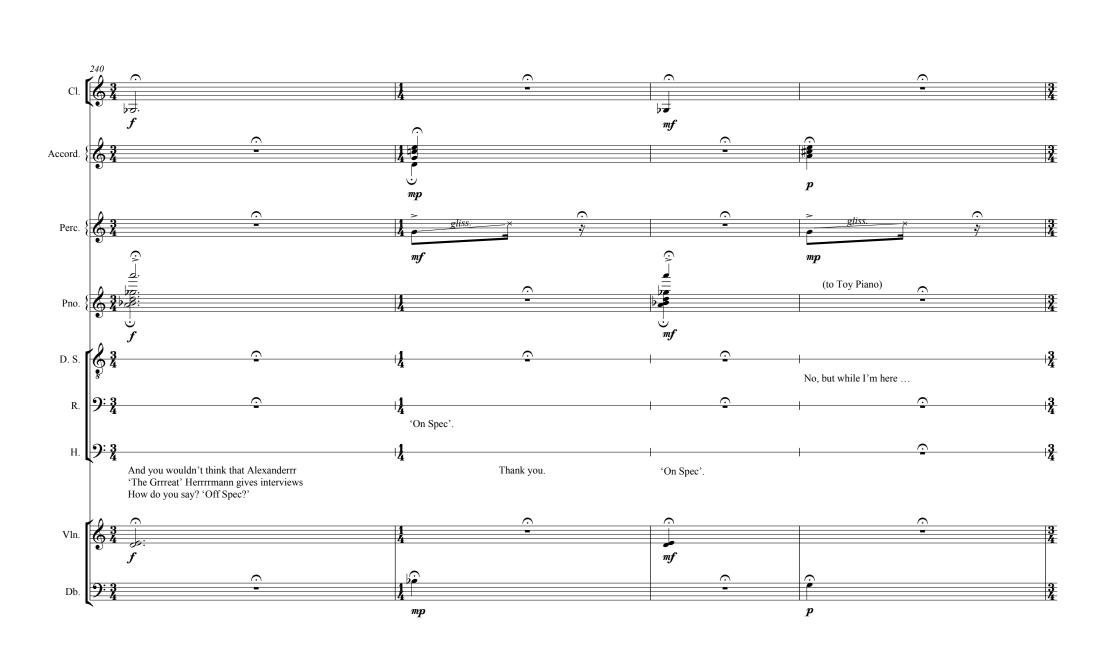
Herrmann: Well, we're going to worrrk at it. I need your obvious skill. You have a good eye for tricks, but the performance is awful.

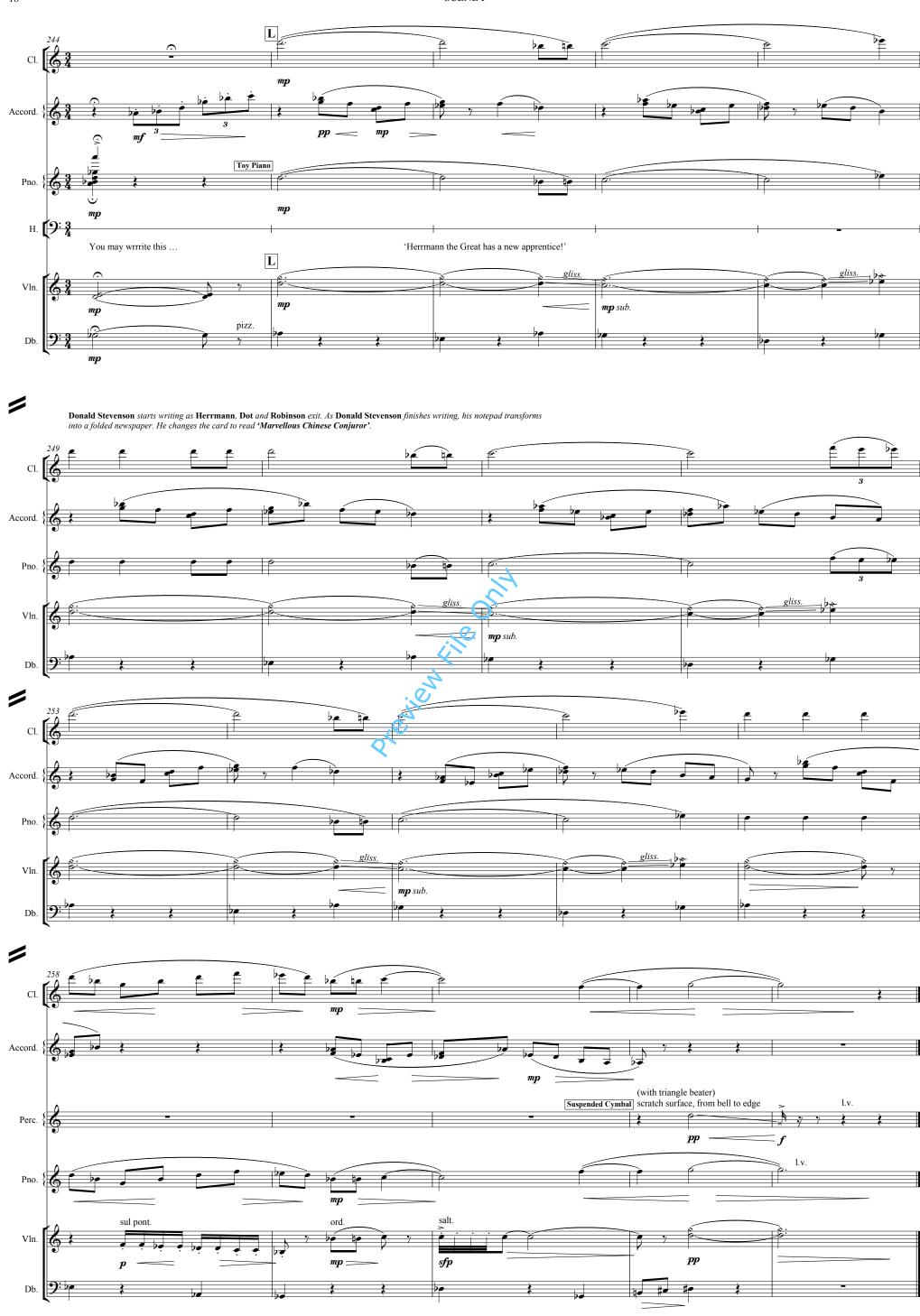


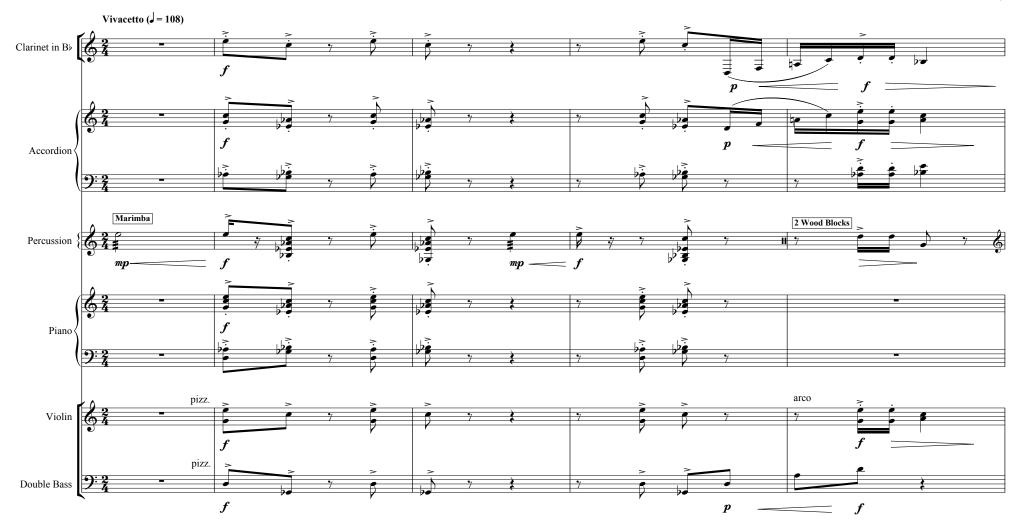








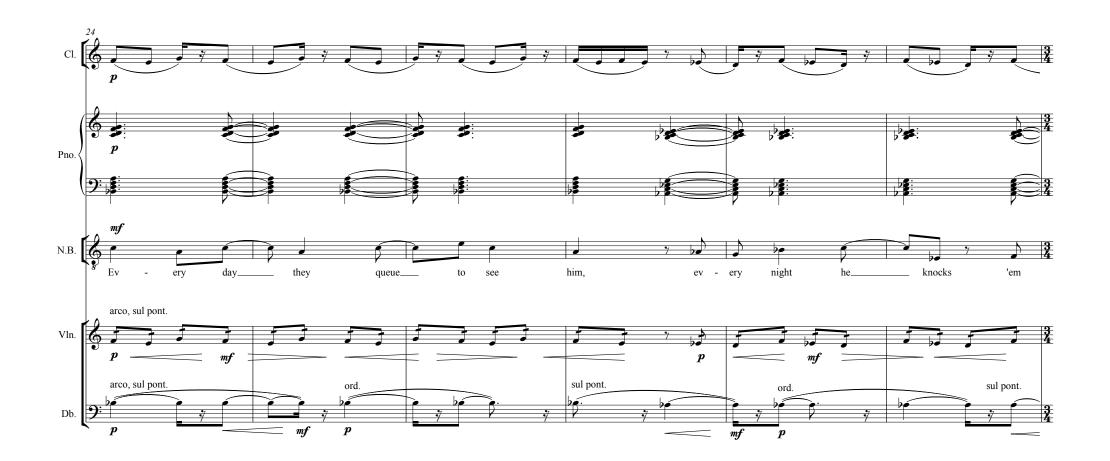


















24 SCENE II accel. poco a poco (until original tempo is reached at bar 60) Accord. \overline{mp} mp (with mock Chinese accent) ma -Chung Ling Soo. You'll be - lieve you. тp R. Real - ly...? Vln. Accord

