

# The Search for the Past: Postmodern Historical Consciousness in the Operas of Istvan Anhalt

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## Abstract

*The literature on the Hungarian-Canadian composer Istvan Anhalt (1919–2012) has centered on Anhalt's immigrant status and on the connections between his life story and his creative work—deservedly so, as his compositions reflect an interest in issues of displacement, memory, and the relationship between the present and the past. These biographical and geographical themes, however, have yet to be explored as they have been expressed temporally in his music. An examination of his historically based operas, La Tourangelle (1975) and Winthrop (1986) through literary theorist Steven Connor's lens of contemporality reveals the ways in which these works reflect a postmodern conception of temporality and experience. Through their temporal flexibility, these operas demonstrate the genre's ability to express historical processes and experience in a way that literary accounts cannot. The models of subjectivity and contemporality expressed in these works moreover reflect the composer's own complex identity as one that celebrates the continued life of the past in the present.*

“We leave behind ‘traces’ [...] and ‘looking back’ we see ‘lines’ and x-dimensional patterns formed by what we did, didn’t do, but thought of doing, etc., etc. all in a wonderfully complex whirl.”<sup>1</sup> The Hungarian-Canadian composer Istvan Anhalt wrote these words in a 1997 letter to his close friend, the composer George Rochberg, foregrounding the backward glance that had been central to both his self-concept and his compositional output. Although Anhalt’s negotiation of difference was geographical, acknowledging both a Canadian “here” and a European “there” in the construction of his identity, it was, I will argue, more significantly temporal in nature, focusing on the relationship of “now” and “then.” Anhalt’s works, and his operas in particular—the focus of this article—skillfully play with temporality, linking past and present in fascinating ways and thereby reveal something unique about historical processes and forms.

Istvan Anhalt is one of Canada’s most significant composers, one who embodied, according to Rochberg, “a sense of the absolute seriousness of the composer,” and whose compositions, theorist William Benjamin has written, represent “a body of work as technically refined, as rich in meaning, and as fully engaged with musicality

This study of the historiographical potential of Istvan Anhalt’s operas grew out of my dissertation, “Sounding the Past: Canadian Opera as Historical Narrative” (Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto, 2011). I am grateful to Robin Elliott for comments on an earlier version of this article, and to the three anonymous readers for this journal for their valuable feedback and careful consideration. Jordan Pal assisted with the formatting of musical examples. I must also thank Istvan Anhalt for his generous spirit and support of my work.

<sup>1</sup> Istvan Anhalt, letter to George Rochberg, 16 April 1997. Quoted in Alan Gillmor, ed., *Eagle Minds: Selected Correspondence of Istvan Anhalt and George Rochberg, 1961–2005* (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2007), 325. Rochberg and Anhalt met in the summer of 1960 at an International Conference of Composers held in Stratford Ontario, and began a friendship that developed primarily through letter writing. *Eagle Minds* captures their spirited and insightful exchanges.

as any other from this period.”<sup>2</sup> Although relatively unknown outside of circles familiar with Canadian modernist composition, Anhalt is the subject of a growing literature that explores his significance not only as a musical thinker but also a philosophical and literary one.<sup>3</sup>

Born in Budapest in 1919, Anhalt studied with Zoltán Kodály, Nadia Boulanger, and Soulima Stravinsky, and worked alongside many of the twentieth century’s most influential composers, including Karlheinz Stockhausen and György Ligeti. The development of Anhalt’s compositional voice was entwined with a negotiation of cultural difference and displacement that would define the rest of his life’s work.<sup>4</sup> From his own accounts, his immigration to Canada in 1949 was a life-changing event; he was forced to reconfigure his identity following harrowing experiences as a Jew in World War II Hungary and a remarkable escape from persecution in his war-torn homeland.<sup>5</sup> Upon emigration, Anhalt settled first in Montreal, where he taught at McGill University and established its renowned electronic music studio in the late 1950s. Following a period of political unrest in the province of Quebec in the 1960s, he moved with his family to Kingston, Ontario in 1971 where he would serve as head of the music department at Queens University for thirteen years. In his retirement years, Anhalt continued to be productive as a composer and author, passing away in 2012 just shy of his 93rd birthday.

Anhalt’s compositional output is large and varied, encompassing works for chamber ensemble, orchestra, piano, voice, and multimedia. He began his career composing in instrumental genres (*Trio*, *Symphony*, and *Symphony of Modules*, for example), and later in life his orchestral work, *The Tents of Abraham*, won a Juno Award for the best classical composition. Anhalt composed for voice throughout his career as well; his extensive writings about the human voice suggest its prominence

<sup>2</sup> George Rochberg, “Reflections on a Colleague and Friend,” in *Istvan Anhalt: Pathways and Memory*, ed. Robin Elliott and Gordon E. Smith (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2001), 355; William E. Benjamin, “Alternatives of Voice: Anhalt’s Odyssey from Personalized Style to Symbolic Expression,” in *Istvan Anhalt: Pathways and Memory*, 164.

<sup>3</sup> The literature on Istvan Anhalt includes Anhalt’s own book, *Alternative Voices: Essays on Contemporary Vocal and Choral Composition* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983); Robin Elliott and Gordon E. Smith’s edited collection *Istvan Anhalt: Pathways and Memory*; Gillmor, *Eagle Minds*; Friedemann Sallis, Robin Elliott, and Kenneth DeLong’s edited collection *Centre and Periphery, Roots and Exile: Interpreting the Music of István Anhalt, György Kurtág, and Sándor Veress* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2011); and Gordon E. Smith’s essays “From New France to a ‘Millennial Mall’: Identity Paradigms in Istvan Anhalt’s Operas,” *American Music* 24/2 (2006): 172–93; “Deep Themes, not so hidden’ in the Music of Istvan Anhalt,” *Queen’s Quarterly* 98/1 (Spring 1991): 99–119; and “Roots and Routes: Travel and Translation in Istvan Anhalt’s Operas,” in *Centre and Periphery*, 175–98.

<sup>4</sup> Anhalt’s émigré status, his artistic negotiations with displacement, and his unease with nationalist cultural narratives resonate with the experience of figures in the mid-century New York intellectual scene. See Brigid Cohen, “Diasporic Dialogues in Mid-Century New York: Stefan Wolpe, George Russell, Hannah Arendt, and the Historiography of Displacement,” *Journal of the Society for American Music* 6/2 (2012): 143–73.

<sup>5</sup> Robin Elliott’s account of Anhalt’s epic escape from the Hungarian army in the late fall of 1944 is fascinating, and contributes to the heroic nature of the composer’s emigration story. The superior of the Salesian order in Rákospalota, Pater János Antal, likely saved Anhalt’s life by providing him temporary accommodation, a disguise in the form of priest’s clothing, and identity papers; Anhalt remained in touch with Antal and dedicated his first opera *La Tourangelle* to him. Robin Elliot, “Life in Europe,” in *Istvan Anhalt: Pathways and Memory*, 3–32.

in his compositional oeuvre.<sup>6</sup> Of particular interest here are Anhalt's four operas: *La Tourangelle* (1975), *Winthrop* (1983), *Traces* (1995), and *Millennial Mall* (2000). The first two works are historical, but are distinctive in that they speak not only to the figures and events they represent, but also to our experience of the historical process itself, and in doing so challenge conventional approaches—both literary and operatic—to historical representation. By playing with narrative form, perspective, subjectivity, and temporality, Anhalt aligns himself with deconstructivist historians in the tradition of Hayden White, who insist on the conscious articulation or admission of one's historical perspective.<sup>7</sup> This tradition acknowledges that “history” is a result of the historian's subjective voice or perspective; past and present are thus linked inextricably.<sup>8</sup> This approach led Anhalt to explore narrative and temporality in unconventional ways, producing in *Winthrop* and *La Tourangelle* “organic tangles” and “interlocking chains of memory cells” that reflect the immigration stories of these operas' protagonists.<sup>9</sup> This compositional practice intersects in fascinating ways with trends in the philosophy of history that insist on examining the historical past with a simultaneous examination of the present. As historical theorist Frank Ankersmit has argued, the past will remain unknowable if it is approached by way of an objective analysis of documents. “Language,” Ankersmit believes, “is where experience is not, and experience is where language is not.”<sup>10</sup> Opera, I will argue, is an ideal medium through which this postmodern relationship with history can be expressed. Specifically, I am interested in the musical and historiographical insights

<sup>6</sup> Anhalt's 1983 essay collection, *Alternative Voices*, examines “Western vocal and choral composition since 1945” through his new appreciation for linguistics and phonetics; in it he devotes particular attention to innovative uses for the human voice in works by Berio, Ligeti, and Lutoslawski. Anhalt, *Alternative Voices*, ix.

<sup>7</sup> White's ideas about historiography's literary nature were fundamental to the “linguistic” or “discursive” turn in the philosophy of history. This movement, which emerged in the 1970s, responded to the empirically focused nature of historical studies in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that stressed the unmediated, objective, and fully accessible nature of the past. See, for example, Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973); David Carr, *Time, Narrative, and History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986); Keith Jenkins, *Rethinking History* (New York: Routledge, [1991], 2003); Louis Mink, *Historical Understanding*, ed. Brian Fay, Eugene Golub and Richard Vann (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1987); and Geoffrey Roberts, *The History and Narrative Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2001).

<sup>8</sup> Anhalt does not probe this interest exclusively in his operas; many of his instrumental and electronic works seem motivated by a similar interest in the fallacies of time and memory. In a discussion of the orchestral work *Simulacrum*, Alan Gillmor notes, “if there is an overriding ‘deep theme,’ it is that the notion of time as a linear construct is an illusion, a mirage.” Alan Gillmor, “Echoes of Time and the River,” in *Taking a Stand: Essays in Honour of John Beckwith*, ed. Timothy J. McGee (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 32.

<sup>9</sup> Istvan Anhalt, quoted in Gordon E. Smith, “The Kingston Years (1971–present),” in *Istvan Anhalt: Pathways and Memory*, 76.

<sup>10</sup> See Ankersmit, *Sublime Historical Experience* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005), 79. Focusing on historical experience does not preclude understanding experience as narrative in nature. Whereas Ankersmit, particularly in his writing on the historical sublime, focuses on historical experience as that which includes the messy details of history—details that have yet to be organized, prioritized, and narrativized—David Carr (among others) believes that we experience our daily lives in narrative form, thereby annulling the categorical distinction between experience and narrative and the link between language and narrative. See Carr, *Time, Narrative, and History*.

that arise from acknowledging the present as a time frame that envelops past and future in Istvan Anhalt's operas, *La Tourangelle* and *Winthrop*.

### Contemporality

*Winthrop* and *La Tourangelle* resonate in many ways with postmodern theories of temporality, specifically cultural theorist Steven Connor's concept of "contemporality."<sup>11</sup> In this model, and in these two operas, modernity's unidirectionality and irreversibility are replaced by a more flexible temporal organization that reflects a coexistence of past and present. Connor explains the interaction of divergent temporal realms by way of an intriguing, musically inspired metaphor:

In contemporality, the thread of one duration is pulled constantly through the loop formed by another, one temporality is strained through another's mesh; but the resulting knot can itself be retied, and the filtered system also simultaneously refilters the system through which it is percolating. The scoring of time constituted by one temporality is played out on temporal instruments for which it may never have been intended, but which give it its music precisely in the way they change its meter and phrasings, and remix its elements.<sup>12</sup>

In Anhalt's first two operas contemporality is created on a fundamental level by music's own narrative properties, particularly through a foregrounding of its inescapable present mode. Music, as Carolyn Abbate memorably claimed, has the "fundamental and terrible" distinction of "[trapping] the listener in present experience and the beat of passing time, from which he or she cannot escape."<sup>13</sup> Whereas traditional literary historical narratives often attempt to conceal the present position from which a historian writes, opera—through music's and theatre's presentist mode—is forced to embrace it, thus embedding any historical referents in a temporal realm that speaks, consistently, in a present tense. Music's narrative "presentness" is in fact full of potential in historical works, because it emphasizes the construction

<sup>11</sup> Steven Connor, "The Impossibility of the Present: or, from the Contemporary to the Contemporary," in *Literature and the Contemporary: Fictions and Theories of the Present*, ed. Roger Luckhurst and Peter Marks (London: Longman, 1999), 31. Contemporality, though postmodern in a sense, contrasts with many postmodern notions of time that fixate on the present's inexhaustible consumption of past and future, or on contemporary time as a time that has run out, disappeared, or been displaced into various other realms such as space. Contemporality acknowledges the possibility for the past to exist alongside other times, as well as the possibility for one temporal realm to be filtered *through* another. Thomas Clifton describes this kind of temporal organization as one that encompasses "the directional 'rays' of consciousness which relate past, present, and future to each other, as well as different but simultaneous presents, interrupted times, parenthetical times, and other time relations which consciousness is capable of forming." Clifton, *Music as Heard: A Study in Applied Phenomenology* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1983), 56. Bernd Alois Zimmermann's concept of the sphericity of time and Bruno Latour's "helical model of time in which progression and recurrence are coiled together" are also theoretical models that consider the intersection of past and present. See Michel Serres and Bruno Latour's *Conversations on Science, Culture, and Time*, trans. Roxanne Lapidus (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995), 50. The fourth chapter of David Metzger's *Quotation and Cultural Meaning in Twentieth Century Music* discusses some of these ideas (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), including those theories of George Rochberg, who explored the related concept of what he called "radial time."

<sup>12</sup> Connor, "The Impossibility of the Present," 31.

<sup>13</sup> Carolyn Abbate, *Unsung Voices: Opera and Musical Narrative in the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton: NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), 53.

of temporalities alongside that of the present—not in conflict, but in collaboration with it.

Anhalt's tendencies towards a philosophical consideration of music—and more importantly, of temporality—frequently come out in his program notes, public lectures, and writings; they emerged as well as in my own conversations with the composer in the years before his death.<sup>14</sup> In a 1988 talk given at the University of Toronto about his composition *Simulacrum*, Anhalt remarked:

What is this three-fold something that we call the past, the present, and the future? Increasingly [...] I had to think of it as a pluridimensional maze. Normally when we say “past,” it is really the current act of “remembering” whatever we are referring to. And when we envision the “future” it is also an act, a projection, undertaken in this terribly narrow sliver of an existential moment to which we give the name “present.” And the present? It may be, from one angle at least, an awareness of the process of living, of existing in all the dimensions and at all the levels that are perceived as being “active,” as a result of having become energized by outside or inside stimuli or by both. [...] So you see, past, present, and future are intertwined, one melting into the other in organic tangles, so many interlocking chains of memory cells interacting with each other in a manner never to be unraveled.<sup>15</sup>

The integration of past, present, and future are quintessential to Anhalt's concept of memory, a theme that figures prominently in his oeuvre, and which fascinated the composer throughout his career. *La Tourangelle* and *Winthrop* revel in the saturating powers of the present—a present that dilates in order to welcome the historical past.<sup>16</sup> As a result, these works emerge as examples of opera's historiographic potential.

### *La Tourangelle* (1975)

*La Tourangelle*, Anhalt's first opera, was commissioned by John Peter Lee Roberts on behalf of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation in 1970, and was premiered in 1975 at the University of Toronto.<sup>17</sup> Roberts approached Anhalt, asking him to compose “a work expressing the search for order and meaning in life through the focus of religion—the search for God in other words.”<sup>18</sup> Anhalt explored

<sup>14</sup> Through written correspondence and four telephone conversations over the course of my dissertation research between 2008 and 2010, Istvan Anhalt shared with me his thoughts on the creative process behind *Winthrop* and *La Tourangelle*, as well as his ideas about opera's abilities where historical themes were concerned.

<sup>15</sup> Anhalt's talk appears as chapter 14, “From ‘Mirage’ to *Simulacrum*,” in *Istvan Anhalt: Pathways and Memory*, 415.

<sup>16</sup> I borrow the concept of temporal dilation from Connor, who writes: “Rather than being the dimensionless membrane that separates time and tenses, the present envelops all times and tenses; the already of the aorist, the projective possibility of the future, become merely subordinate modalities of that tense we might call the ‘present perfect.’ From now on, in this dispensation of the modern, time can no longer move, but only, so to speak, dilate.” Connor, “The Impossibility of the Present,” 20.

<sup>17</sup> A recording of Istvan Anhalt's *La Tourangelle* is accessible on the Canadian Music Centre website at <http://www.musiccentre.ca/node/7145>. The full opera is available for streaming through the AV Preservation Trust of Canada collection. The full score of Istvan Anhalt's *La Tourangelle* is also available for loan through the Canadian Music Centre and through several university music libraries in Canada. The score can be purchased from Berandol Music Ltd.

<sup>18</sup> Istvan Anhalt, “An Operatic Triptych in Multiple Texts,” in *Istvan Anhalt: Pathways and Memory*, 371. In “Roots and Routes,” Smith describes *La Tourangelle* and *Winthrop* as compositions that

this theme through the story of the Ursuline nun, Marie de l'Incarnation (born Marie Gruyart in 1599 in Tours, France), who became the protagonist of *La Tourangelle*. Widowed at age nineteen, and alone with a young son, Marie later abandoned the boy, a decision that would haunt her for the rest of her life. A woman of deep religious faith who experienced terrifying spiritual visions from a young age, Marie entered the convent, a life she hated, leaving in 1637 to found a school for girls in New France. In 1639, after a difficult three-month journey by boat, she and a small group of Ursuline sisters and priests arrived in New France, settling at the Jesuit mission on the St. Charles River. She lived until 1672, spending the rest of her days teaching the daughters of the French colonists and the local people of the First Nations in a convent she established in Québec City. In 1980, more than 300 years after her death, she was beatified by Pope John Paul II.

Anhalt's interest in this dramatic story lay primarily in exploring Marie's experience, specifically her conflicted conscience as she made the difficult decision to abandon her life and her son in France and journey to the New World. In describing the opera, Anhalt explains that the work shows, "instead of a realistically enacted plot, a succession of almost static situations, characteristic attitudes, frames of mind, emotional states, decisive moments, crises, in the lives of individuals."<sup>19</sup> Anhalt referred to the work as "an interior opera,"<sup>20</sup> based on its ability to represent and evoke *through music* the curious relationship of past, present and future as Marie experiences them.<sup>21</sup> Although the opera was performed unstaged in concert at its 1975 premiere, Anhalt described it as the most complex production he'd been involved with.<sup>22</sup> When asked in 2010 if he would stage the piece today in a revival,

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helped the composer put down roots in his new country of Canada as well as explore Canada's two predominant religions, Roman Catholicism and Protestant Calvinism. Smith, "Roots and Routes," 180. Anhalt's third opera, *Tikkun (Traces)* features a protagonist who is, according to the composer, "a much travelled Europe-born Jew who settled in and let down roots in Canada after his experience in, and survival of, the years between, say 1920–1950, in Europe"—obviously paralleling the life of Anhalt himself. The opera also negotiates the relationship between the past and the present by exploring the protagonist's "rich storehouse of his memories." Smith, "Roots and Routes," 182.

<sup>19</sup> Anhalt, program notes to *La Tourangelle*. In Anhalt vertical file at the Canadian Music Centre National Office in Toronto, Ontario.

<sup>20</sup> Leslie Thompson, "Anhalt Takes Musical Cues from History," *Music Magazine*, (March/April, 1980): 24.

<sup>21</sup> Jonathan Kramer goes as far as to compare the non-linear temporality of twentieth-century music to the temporality of inner thought processes. See Jonathan Kramer, *The Time of Music: New Meanings, New Temporalities, New Listening Strategies* (New York: Schirmer, 1988), 15.

<sup>22</sup> Smith insightfully observes that Anhalt's four operas are not fusions of music, staging, drama and plot, but are rather "mind operas that do not depend principally on conventional operatic devices." Smith, "Roots and Routes," 176. These operas require audiences to rely on their imagination to interpret the piece fully. Smith continues: "Thus, in their different explorations of relationships between inner and outer worlds, they don't require visual dimensions, but rely on music and words to induce the listener into imaginary worlds of memory, history, and contemporary society" (Smith, "Roots and Routes," 177). Indeed, the composer's last opera, *Millennial Mall (Lady Diotima's Walk)* is subtitled "A Voice Drama for the Imagination." These "mind operas" place additional significance on the music in order to effect the temporal shifts and movement that I propose.

Anhalt replied: "I wouldn't need that. There was so much suggestion in the music [staging would be] *un peu de trop*."<sup>23</sup>

From the first moments of the work, it is clear that the opera does not follow a traditional historical narrative. Although the scenes are arranged chronologically to represent various points in Marie de l'Incarnation's history, the linearity of the work stops here. Indeed, as he would also do in *Winthrop*, Anhalt tells the story through a series of historical tableaux, often disconnected temporally and geographically. These are, essentially, snapshots of significant points in the protagonist's life. In addition to representing Marie by way of three solo voices, a technique he was to use again later in *Winthrop*, Anhalt made use of a chamber orchestra, as well as five tape operators in charge of cuing pre-taped recordings of texts from a variety of historical perspectives and sources.<sup>24</sup> He also employed electronic sound to create disorienting effects and to depict divergent temporal and geographical realms. The work is primarily post-tonal and employs unusual timbres and instrumentation to evoke the simultaneity of past and present. As Table 1 shows, the intersection of musical and temporal elements underlines the notion of contemporality: sonic, musical, and textual material reference both the seventeenth century, the period in which the story takes place, and the present day, the perspective from which the story is being told and viewed.

The commingling of divergent temporalities in *La Tourangelle* is motivated by the protagonist's struggle to reconcile past and present throughout the work. Indeed, Marie is compelled by her spiritual visions to imagine the future, and also racked with guilt about the past when she considers her son after she has made the decision to emigrate. For example, in scene 5, "Mission," Marie is confronted with the decision to immigrate to New France. Past and present are represented here as interdependent realities, an example of Connor's contemporality. This scene, like most in the opera, is constructed, both textually and musically, in a complex multi-layered fashion, and is therefore intensely disorienting—a reflection perhaps of Marie's own experience.<sup>25</sup> The various voices that are heard in the scene originate both in Marie's mind as well as from other historical figures (for example, the scene begins with taped female voices speaking entries from Marie's letters, and the King's Chancellor enters with a declamation at rehearsal number 5), and they impinge upon one another's space, as thoughts are wont to do. The scene's lack

<sup>23</sup> John Gray, interview with Istvan Anhalt for "The Composer's Chair, Episode 12," The Canadian Music Centre Podcast, 3 August 2010, <https://www.musiccentre.ca/node/65693>.

<sup>24</sup> Anhalt used text from Marie's letters and her spiritual writings to craft the libretto. Anhalt employed three voices to represent Marie in order to express Marie's inner self or "inner voices," which he felt was a more authentic depiction of the character: "[T]o invent a pseudo-Marie I needed the temerity that only that kind of questioning could begin to 'authorize'. After reaching that phase all I needed to do was to listen to my own inner voices (in this I had the splendid example of Marie herself, whose closest models dwelt in her own 'inner voices')." Anhalt, "A Continuing Thread? Perhaps," in *Istvan Anhalt: Pathways and Memory*, 442.

<sup>25</sup> The scene is comprised, for example, of taped voices and of text in French and English, providing perspectives other than that of the protagonist herself. Marie's perspective is also central to the scene, however, and as he would also do in *Winthrop*, Anhalt calls on three voices to express this one character's thoughts; indeed, three sopranos sing the part of Marie, typically each with their own line of music, but occasionally in two-part textures and in unison.

**Table 1:** Relationship of temporal and musical structures in *La Tourangelle*

Scene	Temporal Framework	Musical Elements	Textual Elements
1. Panegyric	Looking back on Marie's story from the present.	Taped voice; electronic distortion; 3 Marie voices.	Bilingual; text relays elements of early life.
2. Disciple	3 Maries tell story in past tense.	Declamation; 3 Maries sing in unison, then 2–3 parts; taped voices.	Bilingual; excerpts from her writings.
3. Communion	3 Maries tell of her communion with God.	Glockenspiel, bells; distorted recordings of Ursuline sisters, boys choirs; 3 Maries in high tessitura.	Bilingual; excerpts from her writings.
4. Isaac	Marie at 32; decision to leave son and enter convent recounted in past tense.	Conga, woodwinds, horn, tuba, viola, cello; fugal piano; children's voices; electronic distortion; 3 Maries sing to simulate "a whine."	Bilingual.
5. Mission	Present	Harp, percussion, taped voices, lower strings, tuba, contrabassoon; 3 Maries tell story; children's tune ("Quand ce beau printemps je voy").	Bilingual; excerpts from her writings.
6. Interlude (Voyage)	Voyage to Canada in 1638.	Palestrina's <i>Missa Ad Fugam</i> ; piano, water gong, harp.	Agnus Dei.
7. Destination	Arrival in New World told in past tense.	Horns announce "Te Deum Laudamus"; chant with atonal orchestra; euphoric celebration with bells; 3 Maries sing in unison and in 2–3 parts, tape plays "Quand ce beau printemps je voy" and "Mon Dieu la belle entrée du grand roi."	"Te Deum Laudamus"; "Quand ce beau printemps je voy"; "Mon Dieu la belle entrée du grand roi"; excerpts from her writings.

of traditional, or even predictable structures, and its stream-of-consciousness text reveal its presentness—the presentness of the past.

A closer look at the scene reveals how aspects of texture, harmony, and rhythm project this sense of presentness. In its sparsely textured opening, the harp simply repeats an ostinato of E3–D3/F3, the only regular, continuous sound, a ticking "clock time."<sup>26</sup> Over the harp, the strings, contrabassoon, and spoken text enter unpredictably, providing a sense of suspension rather than progression or retrospection. The music moves forward but does so with trepidation, and like many other scenes in the work, it merely "fills" time—an example of Stockhausen's "moment time."<sup>27</sup> If we experience in the present Marie's calling to the New World as it happened to

<sup>26</sup> This is Susanne Langer's term, which she describes as a "one-dimensional, infinite succession of moments." See Langer, *Feeling and Form: A Theory of Art* (New York: Scribner, 1953), 111.

<sup>27</sup> The term "moment time" was first formulated by Stockhausen in the article "Moment Form," *Texte zur elektronischen und instrumentalen Musik*, vol. 1 (Cologne: DuMont, 1963), 189–210, and can be defined as a discontinuous time marked by stasis that starts rather than begins and ceases rather



her, then we are also led musically to experience a memory, or a shift from present to past, at m. 60. Indeed, as though to underline her trepidation and uncertainty about her journey and the future, Marie's mind shifts to the past, conjuring what we can assume to be the image of her son—her greatest source of guilt and anxiety. Here, we hear a pre-taped song, the sixteenth-century French song “Quand ce beau printemps je voy,”<sup>28</sup> which is sung softly (and I suggest distantly, temporally speaking) by a children's choir projected on tape. Harp, glockenspiel, vibraphone, and piano punctuate the song with bird-like quintuplets, lending it the mirage-like, hazy feel of an indistinct memory. When the memory first emerges, the dynamic drops, the tempo decreases, and the “present” sound of the harp's regular beats becomes less prominent as it plays more complex chords with a more varied rhythmic placement. The piano plays sixteenth-note quintuplets followed by sustained chords (all blurred with the sustaining pedal), and the vibraphone performs similar figures, gradually moving out of sync with the piano. The woodwinds and brass alternate with the piano and vibraphone, creating the effect of bird calls sounding at random. This section differs so markedly from the surrounding sections that the effect is one of entering a new temporal realm. One of the most striking moments in the opera is its audible dissolving, marked by the re-emergence of the three soprano voices, denoting Marie's return to consciousness.<sup>29</sup>

Further consideration of the song “Quand ce beau printemps je voy” reveals how this scene might be heard as an example of musical contemporality. First, the song—as a melodic “whole” that is unusual in the opera—elicits a listening style that anticipates its entity as a complete form due to its phrasing and melodic structure, distinguishing it from the surrounding musical texture, and approximating, arguably, the musical form of a memory. Recalling Victor Zuckerkandl and Raymond Monelle's models of melodic listening strategies concerning the identification of temporal gestalts in musical units, the end of the song fulfills in a way what was already known to be (musically) from the song's beginning.<sup>30</sup> Thomas Clifton suggests a similar idea when he writes that we “could not experience a melody if it did not [...] push back the borders of the present to include itself,

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than ends. Kramer expands upon it in chapter eight of *The Time of Music*, “Discontinuity and the Moment.” See Kramer, 201–20.

<sup>28</sup> The song is “Quand ce beau printemps je voy,” by Pierre de Ronsard (1524–85). The song appeared in 1564 in *Recueil des Nouvelles Poësies*, and was soon set to music by the lutenist Adrian le Roy (appearing in his *Airs de Cour* of 1571). The text has appeared in numerous parodic versions in French, Dutch, German, and Italian. In 1586, the text was changed to reflect one of the worst years in the history of religious wars that France had yet seen. See M. Leroux de Lincy, *Chants historiques du XVIe siècle* (Paris: Aubry, 1857). The text used in the opera reflects the anxiety surrounding the religious wars, about which many song texts had been set, and Marie de l'Incarnation's own anxiety about her impending trip overseas (hence, the double meaning of the text “Je ne voy que toute erreur et horreur courir ainsi que fait l'onde” (“I see nothing but transgressions and horrors flowing like the tide”) that appears at the end of the excerpt of the song heard in this scene of Anhalt's opera).

<sup>29</sup> The static nature of this reclaimed present mode is also reinforced by tritones in the horns in m. 204.

<sup>30</sup> See Raymond Monelle, *The Sense of Music: Semiotic Essays* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000); and Victor Zuckerkandl, *The Sense of Music* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1971).

Fl.  $\text{♩} = 46$  *Sostenuto*

Ob.

Cl. in Eb

Bsn.

Trpt.

Hn.

Tuba

Perc. 1 (snare)

Org.

Harp

Tap 1

Tap 2

	23'	25.5'	28'	31'	33'	34'	35.5'	38.5'	42'
Endless rows of crosses									
and an edifice of marvellous size built instead of stones of persons crucified.									

1. *Sostenuto*

S. 2.

3.

VI.

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

**Example 1.** Istvan Anhalt, *La Tourangelle*, scene v, "Mission," mm. 56–68. Reprinted with permission from Berandol Music Ltd.

as a singular event,"<sup>31</sup> a form of retention that is "a form of memory which is articulated with the present, the two interacting with and influencing the content of both."<sup>32</sup> In other words, the song expresses a simultaneous sense of pastness (articulated musically as a familiar melodic whole that "includes itself as a singular event") and presentness (as it "pushes back the borders of the present"), seemingly

<sup>31</sup> Clifton, *Music as Heard*, 58.

<sup>32</sup> Clifton, *Music as Heard*, 60.

60 A tempo (♩ = 46) subito ♩ = ca. 60

Fl. 3/4 4/4 3/4 4/4

Ob. 4/4 4/4 4/4 4/4

Cl. in E♭ 3/4 4/4 3/4 4/4

Bsn. 4/4 4/4 4/4 4/4

Trpt. 3/4 4/4 3/4 4/4

Hn. 4/4 4/4 4/4 4/4

Tuba 3/4 4/4 3/4 4/4

Perc. 1 (Gong, Perc.) 3/4 4/4 3/4 4/4

Perc. 2: VIBR. marcato mf ped. sim.

Pf. 3/4 4/4 3/4 4/4

Harp 3/4 4/4 3/4 4/4

Soprano p

Alto p

Organ p mf

Tape 1

Quand ce dur prin - - - tempo je voy, je co - gnis tout - e male -

Quand ce dur prin - - - tempo je voy, - - -

18 0" ca. 17.5"

Tape 2

60 A tempo (♩ = 46) subito ♩ = ca. 60

1 3/4 4/4 3/4 4/4

S. 2 3/4 4/4 3/4 4/4

3 3/4 4/4 3/4 4/4

60 A tempo (♩ = 46) subito ♩ = ca. 60

VI. 3/4 4/4 3/4 4/4

Vla. 4/4 4/4 4/4 4/4

Vc. 3/4 4/4 3/4 4/4

Db. 4/4 4/4 4/4 4/4

Example 1. Continued.

suspending time. Anhalt's own ideas about the coexistence of past and present in memory resonate with this idea, and several musical details in the scene support this dramatic function. In addition to the melody emerging as a marked event due to the post-tonal musical context in which it is found—a musical texture and idiom that is not melodically based—this moment also emerges as what might be heard as a memory because of the contrastingly slow tempo at which the children sing the song, confirming the sensation of temporal manipulation and evoking the feeling that Marie is entering a different temporal realm. And finally, a sonic or timbral clue indicates its difference; that is, it lacks embodiment on stage because it is recorded

65

Fl.

Ob.

Cl. in Eb

Bsn.

Trpt.

Hn.

Tuba

Perc. 2 (Cym.)

Pf.

Harp

Voce 1

Voce 2

1

S. 2

3

65

VI.

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

cu. 31.5

heur - - - lie au monde - - - de. Je ne voy que toute er - reur

je co - - - gnais tout - - - e mal - - - - -

**Example 1.** Continued.

on tape, therefore seeming to emerge from a different temporal space, disembodied and unbound to any one place or time.

Other scenes in *La Tourangelle* further demonstrate music's special ability to evoke a sense of contemporality. Scene 6, "Interlude: Voyage," depicts Marie de l'Incarnation's difficult journey across the Atlantic through an ingenious use of the Agnus Dei from Palestrina's *Missa ad fugam*. Anhalt defamiliarizes the music, employing a strange compliment of accompanying instruments (piano, water gong, and harp), increasing the duration of notes (thereby offsetting harmonic resolutions), changing the text underlay, and deploying three sopranos with the

tenor and bass (as opposed to Palestrina's original SATB setting). Palestrina's work only gradually becomes recognizable; the effect is the spectacular one of looking through a lens and having an object slip into focus. As the fugue emerges, the music expresses Marie's liminal experience of being between states—both physical, and temporal, echoing Marie's trans-Atlantic journey. It also suggests Connor's image of the straining of one temporality through another's mesh, as well as the unintended scoring of one temporal realm on another's instruments.

The reliance on musical quotations in scenes 5 and 6, "Quand ce beau printemps je voy" and "Agnus Dei," respectively, underscores Anhalt's interest, like that of George Rochberg, of exploring the concepts of time and space in music that he felt serialism did not allow.<sup>33</sup> Both Rochberg and Anhalt saw in a varied combination of musical languages the potential to express the contrasting realities of consciousness (such as memory) and human experience. But unlike the music of Rochberg or Ives, in which a nostalgic past overwhelms and collapses the present, in Anhalt's opera, past and present manage to coexist, evoking a musical contemporality.

### *Winthrop* (1986)

Anhalt further explored contemporality in his second opera, *Winthrop* (1986), based on the life of the seventeenth-century English immigrant and founder of Boston, John Winthrop (1587–1649). Anhalt designated this nearly three-hour opera "an historical pageant" (as opposed to the "musical tableau" of the much shorter *La Tourangelle*). More elaborate than his first opera, it employs six solo singers, a mixed choir of at least twenty-four voices, a small boys' choir and an instrumental ensemble of at least thirty players.<sup>34</sup> In its treatment of the life of John Winthrop, the opera—whose libretto Anhalt assembled from historical sources—provides an English American parallel to the French Canadian story told in *La Tourangelle*.<sup>35</sup> In 1630, Winthrop sailed across the Atlantic to become the first governor of The Massachusetts Bay Company, the founder of Boston, and a spiritual and nationalist figure who expressed his vision for the moral character of the New World in his

<sup>33</sup> Anhalt turned to serialism after his arrival in Montreal, but soon abandoned it, after his Symphony of 1958, for a style that combines free atonality, tonal gestures, and collage techniques. See Gillmor, *Eagle Minds*, xviii. Like Anhalt, by the 1960s Rochberg believed that both serialism and chance music were "inherently incapable of projecting the three-dimensionality of time perception—past, present, and future—in artistically meaningful ways." Gillmor, *Eagle Minds*, xx.

<sup>34</sup> The work was premiered by the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony Orchestra, in association with the CBC on 6 September 1986.

<sup>35</sup> Winthrop, an English Puritan, provided an ideal contrast to the French Catholic character of Marie de l'Incarnation in *La Tourangelle*, who represents an ideologically influential figure from French Canada. Anhalt also notes that "A claim that John Winthrop might be considered a founding father of Canada also would have to—and I think does—rest on the evidence of the vital role Massachusetts, and other parts of New England, played in the history of Nova Scotia and Lower and Upper Canada before, during, and after the American Revolution." Anhalt, "Winthrop: The Work, The Theme, The Story," *Canadian University Music Review* 4 (1983): 185. A CBC Broadcast of Istvan Anhalt's *Winthrop* can be heard at the Canadian Music Centre website at <http://www.musiccentre.ca/node/7860>. The full score of Istvan Anhalt's *Winthrop* is also available for loan through the Canadian Music Centre.

## 6 Interlude (Voyage)

$\text{♩} = 60$  RALL. 5  $\text{♩} = 52:2$

Perc. I (water-gong) *ppp* (*ppp*)  
 Pf. *p* *pp*  
 (una corda)  
 Harp *p* *pp*  
 C#D EFG A B B# (L.V.)  
 S. 1 *p* *mp* *p* *p*  
 S. 2 *p* *mp* *p* *p*  
 S. 3 *p* *mp* *p* *p*  
 T. *p* *mp* *p* *p*  
 B. *p* *mp* *p* *p*

On the Agnus Dei from the "Missa: Ad fugam" by Palestrina

10

Perc. I (w.-gong) *p* *poco* *poco*  
 Pf. *p* *pp*  
 Harp *p* *pp*  
 S. 1 *mp* *p* *mp* *mf* *p* *mf* *mp*  
 S. 2 *mp* *p* *mp* *mf* *p* *mf* *mp*  
 S. 3 *mf* *mp* *mf* *mp* *mf* *mf* *mf*  
 T. *mf* *mp* *mf* *mp* *mf* *mf* *mf*  
 B. *mf* *mp* *mf* *mp* *mf* *mf* *mf*

\*\*Medium sized tam-tam (continuing from the preceding movement);  $\frown$  signify raising and lowering of pitch. At steady pitch sometimes don't excite the gong, but L.V. At changing pitch always play tremolo.

**Example 2.** Istvan Anhalt, *La Tourangelle*, scene vi, "Interlude," mm. 1-7. Reprinted with permission from Berandol Music Ltd.

oft-quoted speech, "A Model of Christian Charity," which outlines the nature of community life in the New World.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>36</sup> See John Winthrop, *The Winthrop Papers*, vol. 2 (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1931).

In ways that parallel *La Tourangelle*, and as Table 2 shows, *Winthrop*'s unconventional form—a series of tableaux-like scenes, each of which touches on an isolated incident or episode in the protagonist's life—foregrounds a present-based perspective. Furthermore, the work's formal structure places it in dialogue with a fragmented and fluid postmodern subjectivity, resulting in a unique relationship with its content, a narrative of the past.<sup>37</sup> “If putatively real events are represented in non-narrative form,” Hayden White has asked, “what kind of reality is it that offers itself, or is conceived to offer itself, to perception in this form?”<sup>38</sup> In response, I would suggest that Anhalt created in *Winthrop* a non-narrative form that has more of a claim to “reality” than a more organized and structured presentation might. Although non-linear doesn't necessarily mean non-narrative, the opera clearly questions the mediating role that narrative plays with respect to historical events.

The opera opens with a scene entitled “Pilgrimage and Discovery” in which the audience is invited to embark on a pilgrimage through time to the late sixteenth-century world of John Winthrop. The work quickly reveals its complex temporal structure—it moves into the historical past *from the present*, a movement that is effected both textually and musically. Atop sustained sonorities in the piano, anonymous voices declaim: “Visit to England . . . the county of Suffolk,” and the music enacts a slow breakdown of typical “clock time” as musical events enter and fade in random patterns and at unpredictable intervals.<sup>39</sup> This first scene can be divided into five sections, each with a unique musical texture and text content. The transition from section to section occurs nearly imperceptibly, as in a dream, or, as evoking the feeling of moving further and further into the past. The first section (mm. 1–19) forms a free, dreamy introduction whose static character signals a present and “typical”—if heightened—sense of time.<sup>40</sup> Although it begins pianissimo and builds gradually, this section seems to negate traditional signals of development and progression. This is likely due to the absence of rhythmic activity and predictable phrase structure, both of which are key to the perception of linear time. The section is also characterized by a clear lack of harmonic directionality; its quartal chords, which do not contain the traditional pull to resolution of functional harmonies, evoke a temporal disorientation or suspension that the libretto seems to suggest. The buildup of quartal harmonies comprised of various combinations of the pitches A–D–G–C–F#–B and later, E (see mm. 1–9 in Example 3), is experienced as a linear event, formed gradually. The present-signifying slow progression of

<sup>37</sup> Although Anhalt referred to *Winthrop* as an historical pageant, he agreed that it was also an opera of sorts. In an interview before its 1986 premiere, he expressed a distinct lack of interest in assigning the work a generic label. Anhalt, comments preceding the broadcast of *Winthrop* on CBC Radio 2, 14 September 1986.

<sup>38</sup> White, *The Content of the Form*, 4. White is speaking of annals and chronicles here, the only two types of non-narrative histories that he identifies.

<sup>39</sup> Jonathan Kramer explains this phenomenon as such: “[T]he more static a passage, the more its perceived length agrees with its clock-time duration.” See Kramer, *The Time of Music*, 54.

<sup>40</sup> I interpret this as “present,” given Anhalt's own description of it: “A pastoral scene near Groton, in Suffolk, England. It is a beautiful summer afternoon, in the present. . . . The pull of the past is felt and is constantly increasing.” Istvan Anhalt, “*Winthrop*: a Brief Synopsis,” in Anhalt vertical file at the Canadian Music Centre National Office in Toronto, Ontario.

**Table 2:** Relationship of Temporal and Musical Structures in *Winthrop*

Scene	Temporal Framework	Musical Elements	Textual Elements
1. Pilgrimage and Discovery	Present becoming the past; eventually arrive in 1587, birth year of Winthrop.	Coplandesque “open” sonorities; texture increasingly dense, chaotic, exultant; crescendo from <i>pp</i> to <i>ff</i> at m. 136.	Dialogue between man and woman; inscriptions on Winthrop family tombstones; Rossetti poem “Sleep at Sea”; messenger confers rights on Adam Winthrop.
2. Young John	Ca. 1600–10, yet present is acknowledged.	Amplified harpsichord in quasi-Renaissance tune; nonsense syllables from young Winthrop; boys choir imitates psalmody; women’s chorus recites prayer formulae.	Nonsense syllables become intelligible, as young Winthrop becomes an adult; commentary on Winthrop’s sexual urges.
3. John and Margaret	Ca. 1620.	Chromatic love duet.	Letters of John Winthrop.
4. Famous Brittany	Leading up to 1649 (English Civil War 1641–51).	Choral battle depicts political unrest; hymn, polka, recitation by the Herald.	Groups shout conflicting beliefs; slogans, patriotic hymns, laughter, bawdy song, preacher’s words; Herald speaks of new haven in America.
5. Call and Response	Ca. 1628–30.	Renaissance idiom returns, but microtonally distorted.	Description of parliamentary history; debate on emigrating; governor’s oath; lists of items needed in New World.
6. Covenant and Lesson (Voyage)	Ca. 1630, covering 6 years; orchestral interlude presents lapse of 12 years.	Dream-like orchestration, interrupted by “look-out”; tribal drums announce arrival in North America.	Dialogue between Winthrop and men about covenant; catechism of young boys; fantasy description of Boston; “look-out”.
7. Boston. . . A City	Ca. 1630–36; text in present tense	“Indians” depicted with percussion; mayhem depicted with cacophony; “anchor-chain” sounds, air-raid siren; extended vocal techniques.	Despair as reality sets in; mutiny develops; crowds shouting; town crier announces crisis.
8. A Crisis	The trial in present tense; Winthrop ages (addition of third Winthrop, a bass, to other 2 Winthrops).	Cacophony in orchestra; choral statements with extended techniques; Anne’s aria.	Debate between John and Anne; children’s slogan songs; psalm “snatches” heard in whispers.
9. Interlude	Ca. 1638–48; interlude shows lapse of 12 years.	Orchestra only; begins <i>ppp</i> , strings muted, including glides and microtonal slides	



Table 2: Continued.

Scene	Temporal Framework	Musical Elements	Textual Elements
10. Stocktaking	1648; modern auctioneers look back on Winthrop's possessions.	Paeans sung in Winthrop's honor; solo violin following his death.	3 Winthrops take stock of his life; chorus with text from Winthrop's letters; auctioneers take stock of modest estate

clock-time and an awareness of self prepare the listener for the temporal dislocation that is to follow.

In the brief second section (mm. 20–21, see Example 4) all sense of metric organization is blurred, as players are instructed to repeat their particular motive until the conductor signals the move to the third section, but without a sense of hurry; the composer notes in the score that “[e]ven at its maximal density and loudness (that are to coincide) these bars should not sound overly busy, or restless.”<sup>41</sup> The disorienting effect of the pulseless rhythm is paralleled melodically and harmonically, as no pitch or interval classes are favored—again, contributing to a non-hierarchical musical structure, and an historical experience of un-rootedness, movement, or perhaps time travel. The lack of rhythmic and harmonic directionality contributes to a texture wherein sonorities are heard for their experiential qualities, thereby stalling any sense of progression and conjuring a sense of presentness, of being bound by the music. Timbre plays a role in this process as well; the work's use of instruments traditionally associated with dreaming and the otherworldly (such as bells, flute, and vibraphone) reflect the temporal dislocation suggested by the text. This shimmering, kaleidoscopic musical texture is not merely a representation of the past, but an evocation of the experience of time travel.

At m. 22, the third section begins with the important text “Come to me in the silence of the night,” which invites—nearly pulls—the listener further into the historical realm. Given that this line of text is sung by the entire alto section of the choir rather than a solo voice, it might be heard as originating in the music itself, perhaps as a portal through which the historical realm might be accessed. The “me” in “Come to me” is unidentified—it may not even be an actual character in the drama—and reaffirms the music's agency in the act of temporal manipulation. The uncanny sensation of time travel is a result of music's unique temporal qualities, as well as this call from the musical realm that invites the listener into the action of the scene. This link between the scene's historical referents, its repeated mention of memory, and its temporal features is not an accident. In his notes entitled “A Brief Synopsis of the Opera,” Anhalt links the opening scene's musical idiom to the search for the past: “The past and present constantly tug and pull the hearer/viewer. [...] One is uncertain whether one is awake, dreams, imagines, or is actually transported

<sup>41</sup> Istvan Anhalt, *Winthrop*, full orchestra, seven-volume orchestral score, 1986, photocopy of manuscripts in the possession of the Canadian Music Centre.

# WINTHROP

## 1. Pilgrimage and Discovery

Istvan Anhalt

M.M. ♩ = ca. 36; ♩ = 72

\* Amplified, intimate voices; those of Margaret and Winthrop (2)

**Example 3.** Istvan Anhalt, *Winthrop*, scene i, “Pilgrimage and Discovery,” mm. 1–10. Reprinted with permission from Berandol Music Ltd.

back into a living past. [...] The latter wins out. [...] The present fades away [...].”<sup>42</sup>

Through careful choices with regard to form, melody, harmony, rhythm, timbre, and voicing, Anhalt creates an opening scene that immediately grasps hold of the audience, immersing listeners into its temporal action. More specifically, this scene creates the impression of travel back in time, a journey that culminates in the audience’s arrival in the past to meet the young John Winthrop in scene 2.

<sup>42</sup> Anhalt, “*Winthrop*: A Brief Synopsis.”

\*In bars 20-21 increase density until about 15"; decrease it during the next 13". Even at its maximal density and loudness (that are to coincide) these bars should not sound overly busy, or restless.

\*\*Each of the 10 patterns maintains a stable speed.

\*\*\*End pattern here.

\*\*\*\*The dynamics *pp* — *p* — *mf* — *f* — *ppp* applies to each and all parts that have here repeating patterns. An additional task here is to establish a dynamic balance within this event.

**Example 4.** Istvan Anhalt, *Winthrop*, scene i, "Pilgrimage and Discovery," mm. 20-21. Reprinted with permission from Berandol Music Ltd.

The protean relationship of past and present is evident on a variety of levels in the opera, perhaps most obviously in the use of a strikingly modernist idiom to connote the seventeenth century. As Figure 2 shows, the co-presence of both past- and present-referencing realms (effected musically and textually) reaffirms

the opera's postmodern perspective on history. The examples highlighted above are only two of the more prominent and interesting ones, but there are many more; for example, at the beginning of scene 2, the harpsichord in the Renaissance-inspired introduction to the young Winthrop is electronically amplified, creating an uncanny distance between the historicized Renaissance material and our present time. This effect is reinforced by the atonal treatment of this originally modal idiom, as well as by the intermittent assertion of melodic and rhythmic shapes common to Renaissance dance idioms; both remind us of historiography's contemporality, the fluid in-between space that historical narratives occupy.

### The Search for the Past

Jonathan Kramer has suggested that the contemporary world can be characterized by a "time-obsessed sensibility," arguing that much modern music is, in fact, about temporality.<sup>43</sup> Indeed, Anhalt's explorations of the relationship between past and present in *La Tourangelle* and *Winthrop* reflect a very contemporary conception of time. Consistent with deconstructivist trends in the philosophy of history, the concept of time expressed in these works is a postmodern one. Interpreting the polytemporal soundscape in Anhalt's operas through theories such as Connor's contemporality consequently sheds light on a whole realm of meanings in the music, and reveals as much about Anhalt's historical reality as that of the historical figures of John Winthrop or Marie de l'Incarnation.

Anhalt's interest in nonlinear structures was not only compositional and theoretical, but also personal. As Robin Elliott and others have suggested, his fascination and personal struggle with the meaning of history colored most of his compositions. "The experience of living through the persecution and hardships of life as a Jew in WWII Hungary," Elliott has written, "transformed Anhalt in ways that can scarcely be imagined, much less understood."<sup>44</sup> One of the deep themes—a term Anhalt himself used—running through his work is the "search for the past."<sup>45</sup> As a Jewish immigrant who spent much of his early life fleeing from persecution, Anhalt developed a unique perspective on the nature and significance of memory, and on the relationship of the past to the present. Anhalt's writings about his experiences—for example, *The Bridge* (1991) and *Indictment* (1992)—are evidence of his personal struggle to deal with the lasting effects of history and of the perpetual life of the past in the all-encompassing present. The most potent sites of his historical soul-searching, however, are his compositions, including *Three Songs of Love* (1951), *Thisness* (1985), *Simulacrum* (1986–87), *Sonance-Resonance (Welche Töne)* (1989), and of course his four operas.

<sup>43</sup> Kramer, *The Time of Music*, 167.

<sup>44</sup> Robin Elliott, "Life in Europe," in *Istvan Anhalt: Pathways and Memory*, 18. Anhalt's "search for the past" can be interpreted in the broader context of the shattering of linearity among many modern composers. Jonathan Kramer has suggested other reasons for this approach to temporality, including the experience of listening environments other than the concert hall, an interest in non-Western cultures, and the availability of recording techniques that offer the possibility of splicing time. See Jonathan Kramer, "New Temporalities in Music," *Critical Inquiry* 7/3 (Spring 1981): 543.

<sup>45</sup> Anhalt, *Alternative Voices*, 176–77.

In *Winthrop*, Anhalt's most significant contribution to the exploration of historical narrative arises out of his unconventional deployment of three vocalists—a tenor, baritone, and bass—to depict the various ages of the protagonist. In the composer's hands, Winthrop becomes a conceptually postmodern subject: humanized, varied, fractured, and indefinite in nature. Anhalt showcases the heteroglossia of the historical field, highlighting the turmoil that Winthrop felt over his requested leadership on the New World expedition, which he expressed in his journal in the form of inner debates.<sup>46</sup> These debates particularly interested Anhalt: as he explained to me, "Winthrop wasn't sure that [accepting the leadership of this expedition] was the right thing for him to do—it created a crisis in him. And among the Winthrop papers, you find [. . .] Winthrop writing up an argument with himself, in the form of a dialogue."<sup>47</sup> Rather than view Anhalt's depiction of Winthrop by way of three singers as a historical fabrication, I would argue that what Anhalt has created is, rather, a more faithful depiction. More broadly and most significantly, as a study of a character's historical agency, *Winthrop* reconfigures both operatic subjectivity and convention.

The same can be seen in *La Tourangelle*. Whether the three voices that represent Marie depict three separate identities or one complex one, they clearly represent the multi-layered identity of a subject and in doing so speak to Anhalt's own experience. As Gordon E. Smith has observed, "we might say that Anhalt's various searches for the past are also searches for the present; stories from the past are also stories about now."<sup>48</sup> Recognizing the parallels with his own experiences, Anhalt once noted: "it is the memory of being in transit that I was composing in these works."<sup>49</sup>

This complex temporal self-concept might be configured in a variety of ways; in an interview with Robin Elliott, the composer reflected on Lydia Goehr's notion of "doubleness," a term she employs to describe the "transformations" and tensions in the experience of exiled musicians, and the effect of a sense of "foreignness" on these musicians' creative expressions. "Why double?" Anhalt asks, "Why not multiplicity? A person might have had a complex life, which is not homogeneous; it might have consisted of a number of elements, influences, insights, whatever."<sup>50</sup> He then suggests how this notion of multiplicity might reflect his own experience: "I was far from being homogeneous before I became a landed immigrant in Canada upon landing in Halifax in January 1949; I was pretty much a 'multiple' figure in

<sup>46</sup> Anhalt is fascinated by this aspect of the character, and sees this struggle as central to the story and to the man. See John Winthrop, "General Considerations for the Plantations in New England, with an Answer to Several Objections," in R. C. Winthrop, *Life and Letters of John Winthrop 1588–1630* (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1864), 309–17.

<sup>47</sup> Anhalt, in conversation with the author, 21 April 2010, Toronto, Ontario.

<sup>48</sup> Smith, "From New France to a 'Millennial Mall,'" 189.

<sup>49</sup> Smith, "'Deep themes, not so hidden' in the Music of Istvan Anhalt," 116. Anhalt has acknowledged, for example, the parallels between the description of the scene where the Puritan settlers first see land in the opera and his own experience of his arrival in Canada in 1949.

<sup>50</sup> See Sallis, Elliott, and DeLong, *Centre and Periphery*, 423. See also Lydia Goehr, "Music and Musicians in Exile: The Romantic Legacy of a Double Life," in *The Quest for Voice: On Music, Politics, and the Limits of Philosophy; the 1997 Ernest Bloch Lectures* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 174–207.

my mind. A survivor of this and a survivor of that.”<sup>51</sup> Despite Anhalt’s criticism, Goehr’s concept of doubleness resonates quite aptly on a temporal level with his ideas about the function of memory, and with his concern with the persistent life of the past in the present. It seems that Anhalt’s insistence on “multipleness” allows for Goehr’s idea that artistic creativity demands elements of both “home” and “estrangement” if we consider it in temporal terms, as I have done in the present study.

Anhalt has defended his operatic project in historiographical terms. As he wrote in the epilogue to *Alternative Voices*:

Every generation that sees the world in a different light than earlier generations will demand a mirror to reflect, clearly and sharply, that very new perception. [. . .] To provide that mirror is a task for poets, artists and composers, along with scholars and scientists and creative thinkers in other domains.<sup>52</sup>

Although *La Tourangelle* and *Winthrop* certainly offer a nuanced representation of two historical figures in their temporal flexibility, their contemporaneity draws the listener as much to the present as the historical past. As a result, the historical subject might be, at once, Marie de l’Incarnation or John Winthrop and Istvan Anhalt, sharing opera’s continuous present to negotiate not the past itself, but our present journey towards it.

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<sup>51</sup> Sallis, Elliott, and DeLong, *Centre and Periphery*, 425.

<sup>52</sup> Quoted in Gillmor, *Eagle Minds*, xvii.

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