

Untwisting the Serpent

*Modernism in
Music, Literature,
and Other Arts*

DANIEL ALBRIGHT

The University of Chicago Press

Chicago and London

Contents

List of Illustrations	ix
List of Musical Examples	xi
Acknowledgments	xiii

INTRODUCTION: LAOCOÖN REVISITED	5
Lessing and Horace	8
Babbitt and Greenberg	10
Adorno	14
Apollo and Marsyas	18
Kokoschka's <i>Mörder, Hoffnung der Frauen</i>	21
Hindemith's <i>Mörder, Hoffnung der Frauen</i>	25
Aesthetic Paradoxes	27
Modernism, Historical and Transhistorical	29

Part One: Figures of Consonance among the Arts

1 HIEROGLYPH	37
Plotinus	39
Mozart's <i>The Magic Flute</i>	41
Perlocution and Epigram: Liszt and Wagner	45
Rapée's Dictionary of Silent Film Music and the <i>Leitmotiv</i>	48
Wagner and the Origin of Music	51
Eye Music	56
Stravinsky's <i>Renard</i> and Prokofiev's <i>Semyon Kotko</i>	57
2 IDEOGRAM	63
Pound, Fenollosa, and the Chinese Character	64
Imagism	65
3 NOH	68
Pound, Fenollosa, Yeats, and Michio Ito	69
Unnatural Nature: Kleist and Mallarmé	73
Structure of the Noh Play	75

	<i>Nishikigi</i>	76	
	Pound's <i>Tristan</i>	78	
	The Pisan Cantos as a Noh Play	82	
	The Pisan Cantos as an Opera	84	
	Britten's <i>Curlew River</i> and <i>Sumidagawa</i>	88	
4	GESTUS		101
	Dalcroze Exercises	101	
	Nijinsky, Nijinska, and <i>The Rite of Spring</i>	104	
	Lessing's Theory of <i>Gestus</i>	108	
	Rousseau and Gesticulation	109	
	Weill's Theory of <i>Gestus</i>	110	
	Brecht's Theory of <i>Gestus</i>	118	
	Farragoes: <i>Mann ist Mann</i> and <i>The Threepenny Opera</i>	122	
	Ruined Wishes: Jenny and Lilian	130	
	Inscriptive Tetrachords	132	
	Brecht's Photographs	135	
5	VILLONAUD		138
	Text-Embezzling in <i>The Threepenny Opera</i>	139	
	Pound's <i>Le testament: Troubadour Imitations</i>	141	
	<i>Le testament: Speech as Music</i>	146	
	Schoenberg's <i>Erwartung</i> and the Rejection of Sequence	148	
	Wagner on Schopenhauer	151	
	The Semantics of <i>Erwartung</i>	152	
	<i>Le testament: Rhythmic Complexity, Melodic Simplicity</i>	157	
6	NOH, AGAIN		169
	<i>Der Jasager: Teaching Acquiescence</i>	170	
	Icons of Trudge and Gluck's Hell	174	
	Tragedy in Music: Plaint vs. Wall	175	
	The Chill of Hieroglyphs	178	
	Weill's Epitaph	179	
 <i>Part Two: Figures of Dissonance among the Arts</i>			
7	LOOP		185
	<i>Parade: Whorls in Picasso's Designs</i>	186	
	Circular Skits	189	
	Satie's Furniture Music as a Barrier against Expression	190	

Phonometrography	192
Property Trees That Don't Convulse	193
Cocteau's Unspoken Text	194
8 CUBE	198
Rimbaud's "Parade"	198
Cubism and the Letter K	201
Picasso's Managers: Life inside a Cubist Painting	202
Metaphors for Cubes in Satie's Music	206
<i>Ballet réaliste</i> and Visual Collage	207
<i>Intonarumori</i> : Russolo and Boccioni	211
9 LOOP, AGAIN	216
Non-synchronicity in Silent Films	216
The American Girl's Spoof of <i>The Perils of Pauline</i>	218
Film Loops in Saint-Saëns's <i>L'assassinat du duc de Guise</i>	219
<i>Relâche</i> : Clair's <i>Entr'acte cinématographique</i> as a Film Loop	220
<i>Relâche</i> : Segment Construction and Master Bars in Satie's Score	222
Antheil's <i>Ballet Mécanique</i> : The Big Foot	225
The Léger-Murphy Film of <i>Ballet Mécanique</i> : Cinematic Abstraction	238
10 SURREALISM (LITERATURE AND ART)	244
Apollinaire's Coining of the Word <i>Surrealism</i>	244
Apollinaire's <i>Les mamelles de Tirésias</i>	246
Calligrams	256
Simultanism: Verbal Polyphony	263
Surrealism as a Codified Style: Breton's Land of Unlikeness	266
Lautréamont's Tryst of Sewing Machine and Umbrella	270
Headlessness	272
11 SURREALISM (MUSIC)	275
The Cocteau-Milhaud <i>Le boeuf sur le toit</i> : Nothing Happens	276
The Cocteau-Les Six <i>Les mariés de la Tour Eiffel</i>	278
Dadaist Music: Schwitters and Duchamp	288
Allusion in the Music of <i>Les mariés de la Tour Eiffel</i>	289
Stravinsky as Fagin	291
The Jacob-Poulenc <i>Le bal masqué</i>	292
The Éluard-Poulenc <i>Un soir de neige</i> : Theft from Ravel	295
Poulenc's Setting of <i>Les mamelles de Tirésias</i>	297
Voice-Training Lessons	308

I 2 HEAVEN

311

- Temporal Images of the Timeless 311
 Transfiguration in Strauss, Fauré, and Elgar 313
 Stein, Automatic Writing, and Dalí 315
 Stein's Early "Psychological" Style: *The Making of Americans* 316
 Stein's Objective Style: *Tender Buttons* 317
 Stein's *An Elucidation*: Discourse Vanishing into Visual Pattern 319
 The Land of Unlikeness, Revisited 323
 Stein's Landscape Style: Drama without a Story 325
 Landscape Grammar 327
Four Saints in Three Acts: An Opera with No Acts 331
 Heavenly Reconfigurings of Position 334
 Counting for Counting's Sake 336
 Thomson's Early Stein Settings: *Susie Asado*, *Capital Capitals* 339
 Thomson's Discipline of Spontaneity 341
Four Saints: Consonant Harmony, Dissonant Syntax 343
 Counting for Counting's Sake, in Music 347
 Grosser's Scenario for *Four Saints*: Imposing Narrative on
 the Inenarrable 354
 Stettheimer's Stage Set: The Knickknack Shelf Enlarged 357
 Thomson's Theory of Incidental Music 360
 Voice-Training Lessons, Again 361

Notes 365

Works Cited 381

Photo Credits 387

Index 389