

A Resurrection Series
Nine Movements After Images by Randall Speck

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Instrumentation:

Flute
Oboe
Clarinet in Bb
Bassoon

Horn in F
2 Trumpets in Bb
Tenor Trombone (with bass extension)

Percussion I:
4 Timpani
Medium Suspended Cymbal
Vibraphone (Motor Off)
Gong

Percussion II:
Large Suspended Cymbal
Glockenspiel
Marimba
Tubular Bells
4 Large Tom-Toms

Piano, Doubling on Synthesizer
(*Optionally, handbells may replace the synthesizer*)

2 Violins
Viola
Violoncello
Contrabass

Score is in concert pitch. Following standard conventions, accidentals apply only to the octaves and measures in which they occur.

Performance Notes

Instrumentation

The piano part is written so that the pianist doubles on a synthesizer set to produce a handbell-like sound. If a set of handbells is available, they can be used instead, so long as all of the required pitches are available. In that case, the handbells should be stationed on either side of the stage, flanking the orchestra. Alternatively, handbell players can be scattered throughout the performance space or in a balcony, at the conductor's discretion. As a third and less desirable option, the synthesizer part can be played on a set of crotales by an additional percussionist, transposing by octave any passages which are out of range.

Concert Performance

In a concert setting, the score should be performed as a continuous work, ideally with careful observance of tempi and the indicated musical silences between movements. No presentation of the drawings is required; however, reproductions (available from the composer) could be provided in a printed program, projected onto a screen during the performance (each image accompanying the corresponding movement, of course), or displayed near the entry to the concert hall. Likewise, the quoted liturgical tunes and texts need not be explicitly identified, as long as they are discussed in a program like the one above.

Liturgical Use

The *Series* is not intended to replace a regular Sunday worship service. Rather, it might provide the backbone of an evening service during Holy Week, on Easter, or on some other appropriate occasion. In this context, the images should be represented, either by projecting each during its corresponding movement or by placing and labeling the drawings where congregants can see and identify them during the course of the service.

Also, the movements should be performed without observing the prescribed periods of intervening silence. Instead, they should be complemented by other liturgical elements, particularly those inviting congregational interaction and response. For instance, the congregation could sing some of the hymns and songs quoted in the piece, read (or hear) selected passages of scripture, and/or pray. The service becomes, in effect, an extension of the dialog within the piece itself, such that the worship planners and leaders collaborate with the congregation to realize the import of the piece.

Hymn Tunes

In order to clarify the musical argument, fragments of liturgical melodies are labeled in the score with abbreviated titles (see Appendix B for complete titles). In the case of consecutive phrases or fragments of a particular tune, only the first instance is labeled when the fragments occur in the same part without intervening material. Likewise, parts which harmonize these fragments are labeled to indicate which part has the melody they are accompanying.

The seven fundamental chorale melodies are distinguished with the prefix “CH,” even in cases where the melody is obscured by some transformation. The harmonizing parts of the chorale are generally not marked, however, since they provide the structural harmony of the piece. Rehearsal numbers 1 through 7, in the score, mark the announcement of each chorale by bell percussion. Additional numbers (such as 1a, 1b, etc.) correspond to labels on the fundamental chorales (see appendices).

FOREWORD

Background

I first saw Randall Speck's artwork in early 1995 at a show of his drawings and paintings in Eugene, Oregon. Most of the works displayed reflected a cheerful charm, in my estimation, whether painted landscapes, portraits in oil, or a collection of goblets done in watercolors. However, his recently-completed nine-part work, *A Resurrection Series*, revealed a more intense and deliberate expressive character, one which immediately sparked my imagination. It was not long before the two of us were discussing how the images might be "set" to music and what role such a project might have in Christian worship.

Thus the present project was conceived, a nine-movement instrumental composition for a sixteen-player chamber orchestra in which each movement corresponds to one of the nine drawings. The musical material is based on twenty-five Protestant hymns and liturgical songs, many of which have to do with the passion and resurrection of Christ.

Perhaps inspiration had something to do with the uncharacteristic gravity of the *Series*. In a written note displayed with the images, Speck describes the way he came to draw them:

On November 18, 1994, I saw a dead man's face in my mind's eye when reading in a chronological Daily Bible late at night, of Jesus' crucifixion and burial. I saw closed eyes, a gaping mouth, bruised flesh. The image would not go away and I wanted to draw it. That night I had only a lead pencil with which to draw. When the face came the second night, I was prepared with colored pencils I hadn't touched in eighteen years. The drawings occurred over a span of nine days (with a two-day gap) until I recognized the final image.

This is the entire series.

We flogged him, spit on him and pushed thorns into his head and nailed him to crossed beams on a Jerusalem hilltop. "Father, forgive them for they do not know what they are doing," he said. As he died, graves split open and the temple curtain ripped apart. There were some who saw his face as his body was taken to a borrowed tomb.

His description implies a strongly Romantic notion of inspiration, but the impression is misleading. It is, in fact, quite a surprising contrast with the consistently unassuming and unpretentious attitude he has demonstrated throughout our friendship, particularly when discussing his artwork. Having no inclination toward claims that he is a "mouthpiece of the divine," he simply relishes the charm and beauty of his subjects.

A Resurrection Series is unique in his output, then, both in expressive character and conception. The images are semi-abstract studies of a human face with closed eyes and a crown of thorns across its forehead. The first, drawn in pencil, depicts a dismal gray corpse, mouth agape, in

soft shading and scrawling lines. The remaining pictures, done in colored pencil, are similar in style, constructed of scrawling lines and scribbles, yet they capture a startling range of expressive character, including two faces with open eyes. The final image defies the first with a dense, vibrant blast of color.

My approach to the task of composing music to complement the drawings has been much more considered, though I share Speck's disinterest in dogmatic pretense. I arrived at a musical conception not through an inspired impulse but by gradually working out a formal design and piecing together various musical materials. The faces I drew (so to speak) took shape slowly, becoming clear only with patient effort.

This process is perhaps best illustrated by a description of the purpose and design of the music. The performed score is intended to fulfill two roles, to address two distinct sorts of audiences. Firstly, it serves as a piece of concert music, sensible and appreciable as music apart from a familiarity with Speck's images or the hymns which serve as source material. Whether it succeeds as such in practical use is a matter of some speculation, since it is likely that performances would be supplemented with program notes or similar explanations. Secondly, and more significantly, it acts as a contribution to the Protestant liturgy, not as a replacement for the traditional Sunday service but as a supplemental service for the Easter season, to name a likely example.

The following account assumes this second context, in which the imagined audience has some familiarity with Speck's *Series* and knows a lesser or greater number of the hymns it employs. In their book, *The Dialogue of Worship*, pastor Gary Furr and seminarian Milburn Price describe the practice of Christian worship in expansive dialogic terms: "For whatever else it may or may not be, worship is a dialogue—one that begins long before a community of believers gathers on a particular day to 'worship God,' and one that does not end when the sound of concluding benediction is no longer audible."¹ They describe commonly-held conception of worship in which believers commune and communicate with one another and with God. This dialogue is further described in terms of "revelation" and "response." In particular, Price notes that "music at the service of, and in the context of, worship can contribute revelatory dimensions to the experience."² This, in short, is the objective of the present musical score.

Description

The piece in question is a recipe for performance and worship. It articulates a network or "field" of relationships between Speck's images, several hymn tunes, and the composed musical argument. While each of the components is "engaging" and "expressive" in itself, the relationships between them magnify the potency of the "expressive experience."

¹Furr, Gary A. and Milburn Price, *The Dialogue of Worship: Creating Space for Revelation and Response* (Macon, Georgia: Smyth & Helwys, 1998), p. 1.

²Ibid., p. 42.

To be complete, this component list should include listeners, because they are an integral part of the collaboration which makes the meaningful existence of musical experience possible. That is, what I envision in composing a score depends on performers to realize it and listeners to actively hear it in order for the musical process to be complete, to be whole. Only in such a case can music take part in the dialogue of worship described above. However, the present discussion is concerned more with the comparatively persistent and tangible relationships between score, drawing, and hymn tune—though of course the relationships imply those who observe and appreciate them.

Note also that the use of hymn tunes effectively imports, or indexes, the active presence of their associated lyrics. This of course depends on the listener's familiarity with a given tune, which is why such knowledge is assumed. However, the character of this knowledge is various (and varies with each listener), including not only the actual contents of the hymn texts but also the listener's experiences with (and responses to) the hymns in the practice of worship. Nevertheless, despite variances in grasp and experience among listeners, the hymns represent focused theological ideas which are brought onto the field of expressive relationships.

This being stated, there are three interrelated ways to characterize the field of relationships which the music proposes for the listener's consideration. One is to consider the formal structure and argument of the piece. The second involves the uses of hymn tunes and fragments as source material for the music. The third concerns analogies between musical and visual elements which relate the music to the drawings.

Formal Characteristics

The music is organized according to two formal principles. The large-scale physical form is obvious: the work is divided into nine movements of irregular lengths, each paired with one of the nine images. The intervals between movements are measured silences, however, such that the music is conceptually continuous, and may actually be so in performance (see the performance notes, below).

Such an ideal accommodates the division of the music into seven sections, each announced by the sounding of percussive bells. The sections are three minutes in length, and each is constituted by a different "fundamental chorale," a single statement of a reharmonized hymn tune (see Appendix A). The chorales are analogous in function to a cantus firmus, forming the essential harmonic progressions and larger-scale melodic impetus of the piece. Thus the "physical" nine-movement form, being articulated through superficial features of musical gesture, texture, and the like, is at odds with the seven chorale periods. The tension is obviated when the physical form is abruptly interrupted by bells announcing the next chorale.

A measure of numerological play is evident in formal proportions. The first chorale annunciation is seven seconds long, and each subsequent one grows by multiples of seven: the second annunciation occupies fourteen seconds, the third twenty-one seconds, and so forth. Likewise, the movements are separated by intervals of silence in multiples of three seconds, each

pause shorter than its predecessor. The chorales are each given three minutes (not including the annunciations and the coda, which is also annexed by bell sounds). The music is scored entirely in triple meter as a largely symbolic gesture, though such a grouping is occasionally convenient. The final movement has 84 measures (3 x 4 x 7), which may mean something—the fact is incidental, but interesting.

The process of reharmonizing the chorale tunes is important because it embodies my approach to expressing wonder and transcendence. It also illustrates one way in which the hymn tunes account for the musical substance of the piece. The steps of the process are shown in figure 2, using the first chorale as an example. In each case, I began with the first five unique pitch classes in the hymn tune, taking them in order as a series. This series constitutes a five-by-five matrix of pitch classes, whose diagonals of positive slope—that is, from lower left to upper right—form a sequence of nine (!) pitch-class sets which are symmetrical around the first pitch class in the series. This harmonic material is used in the music to announce the chorale and establish its pitch center.

Getting from an abstract series of pitch-class sets to the reharmonized chorale is a more intuitive matter. The tune is preserved, of course, as is the notion of a functional four-part chorale texture. However, the chords are a blend of tonal tradition and the symmetrical sets derived from the melody. In effect, the reharmonization is an extension of the essential melodic identity of the hymn. This extension is abstruse, and perhaps even ineffable, but arguably brings the character and identity of the hymn to bear on the musical form. The tenuous connection lends the music a mysterious harmonic logic, but one which resonates with traditional tonal practice as well as the rigors of modernist compositional practice.

The relationships proposed by this sort of construction have theological connotations, such as the idea that God's ways go beyond human understanding and explication. Like the harmonic logic here, which guides listeners but confounds their rational accounting, the outworking of divine purpose is mysterious. Whether a listener will observe such a relationship remains a matter of debate. Certainly, the range of interpretive perspectives is not exhausted in the above summary. The purpose, however, is to provoke such a dialogue. As relationships like this are compounded with others (as described below), they contextualize one another, thus focusing the interpretive field for the listener. At the same time, listeners are invited to take part in the field of relationships, to seek out further understanding.

Hymn Tunes

As mentioned before, twenty-five hymns are represented throughout the music, including the seven chorales. In accordance with the listener's memory and experience, the quoted fragments call forth not only the hymn tunes but also their texts, as well as their liturgical and theological significance. For convenience, I will refer to the quotations simply as hymns. As the performance notes describe below, each instance of a hymn is labeled in the score (see the List of Abbreviations for complete titles).

The seven chorales described above provide the musical context for an associative network of hymns, which are sometimes mixed together or layered over one another. The juxtapositions in effect forge associations between the hymns, such that the listener is urged to consider how they relate to one another (and to the “host” chorale) and what significance there might be in the relationships. The wealth of possibilities far exceeds my deliberate intentions, simply because of the listener’s substantial role in observing and interpreting the possibilities. Again, it is very important to keep in mind the collaborative dimension of the musical process, like that of the practice of worship.

The relationships vary in kind. In several cases, like the opening of the ninth movement, hymns are crowded together, competing for attention, suggesting the possibility of unexpected relationships, or even of contrasting perspectives on the central chorale subject. Hymns also associate on the basis of shared melodic contours. This is evident, for instance, in mm. 101-04, which combines bits of “I Will Arise,” “Wondrous Love,” and “Alas and Did.” A large part of the third movement highlights the similarities in these tunes *via* the pretense of melodic imitation.

Frequently the similarities tie hymns together diachronically, across temporal space. “Beneath the Cross” (mm. 218ff., m. 256) and “Old Rugged Cross” (mm. 211-13, mm. 234-38) share a prominent double-neighbor figure—a “cross” motive, if you will—tying their distinct sentiments together. (Incidentally, the example in mm. 234-38 illustrates the continuation of musical ideas across breaks between movements, which is relevant to earlier discussion.) More dramatically, the opening contour of “Away in a Manger” (occurring in movements II and VIII) is virtually identical to “He Hideth My Soul” (see the horn part in mm. 296-98). On a few occasions one hymn becomes another in mid-stride. In mm. 326-9, what begins as the end of a segment of “Up From the Grave” is taken by the flute and first violin as the last phrase member of “Jesus Lives.”

Again, the interplay invites listeners to correlate various theological ideas and sentiments, sometimes making unexpected comparisons.

Analogies of Musical and Visual Language

The analogy described by asserting nine movement-image pairs, discussed above, is trivially interesting. A more tangible set of relationships is established by deliberately imitating visual features of line, color, and texture with musical elements of melody, timbre, and (musical) texture. In this realm, one-to-one correspondences between musical and visual instances are difficult to link and justify. My compositional approach amounts to establishing a more general kinship by aligning the characteristic style and use of musical features with those prominent in Speck’s artwork. These relationships are generally self-evident, as the shared vocabulary in music and visual art demonstrates.

Perhaps most importantly, the ubiquitous scrawling lines in the drawings are emulated in the melodic character of the music (this conveniently admits the hymn tune into the relationship).

In the same way that individual colored lines emerge from the images and trail off in various directions, hymn quotations tend to begin at a point within the prevailing harmonic context and then wander off, typically fragmented and incomplete. In both cases, lines overlap and sometimes intertwine. This explains the polyphonic clutter recurring throughout the music, as well as the occasional heterophonic rendering of a hymn tune.

Similarly, the crowded overlapping visual textures of abstract scribbles and crosshatching, in conjunction with the layered mixing of colors, relates to a similar density of texture and orchestrational insistence (so to speak) throughout the music. The first movement is an exception to this, reflecting its gray visual partner by limiting orchestral color almost exclusively to flute and strings as well as partly dissolving the harmonic structure in rhythmic disarray. Melodic fragments are few and isolated, like their visual counterparts.

The comparatively focused presence of the chorale tune here, particularly when the texture comes together after m. 21, reflects the clear representational purpose of the drawing (a face with a crown of thorns), which keeps the abstract textural fray in check. Throughout the *Series*, the face undeniably emerges from fantastic elemental gestures of line and shading. Likewise, the everpresent chorales, though at times submerged in the musical background, direct the larger narrative shape of the music and tie together the pieces of hymns and musical textures.

None of this should discount the importance of compositional intuition. Part of my work process involved contemplating each image while I drafted its corresponding movement, adding an immediate expressive impulse to the rationalized formal and structural design of the piece. The subtle variations in the middle three images bring to my eye distinctly different moods and attitudes in the subject: drawing IV is noble and painfully stern, drawing V more stoic and complacent, and drawing VI is more determined and purposeful, anticipating the next picture. The opened eyes in the seventh image, like their reclosing in the ninth, is a monumental expressive event, aside from the explosion of color and texture. Though some of this character can be expressively addressed through the various means described here, there is no substitute for the process of engaging in the very sort of collaborative, dialogical “listening” I expect from others.

Significance

The discussion of meaning in *A Resurrection Series* is open-ended. However necessary they are, words only approximate the collaborative dialogue to which the present composition is addressed. It is important to note, though, that while this kind of expression is invitational rather than dogmatic, the results are not arbitrary or infinitely variable, given the contextual grounding I am proposing. After all, good interpretation on the hearer’s part implies a certain responsibility to cooperate with the speaker’s intent and frame of reference, just as it is the speaker’s job to exercise intention and craftsmanship in addressing his words to the listener’s perspective.

Collaboration also requires that the participants abdicate some control. Despite the weight of

my intentions for this work, and in keeping with them, I have deliberately left space for performers and listeners to collaborate.

This is not a new idea, by any means. C. S. Lewis describes the process of “receiving” a work of art as an act in which “we exert our senses and imagination and various other powers according to a pattern invented by the artist.”³ In speaking of his approach to composing electroacoustic music, Paul Lansky has described a similar intention to space for the listener to actively fill. Likewise, Paul Hillier, in the preface to his book on Arvo Pärt, eloquently encapsulates the issues of control and responsibility, as well as the importance of context, with these words:

*The scores [of Pärt’s music] I saw then . . . seemed primarily to consist of just a few dots on the page and some sustained, drone-like square shapes. There was almost nothing there . . . but from my experiences with medieval music, I knew that therefore everything might be there.*⁴

³Lewis, C. S., *An Experiment in Criticism* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1961), p. 88.

⁴Hillier, Paul, *Arvo Pärt* (Oxford University Press, 1997), p. vii.

Hymn tunes used, in order of appearance

(excluding the seven “source” chorales)

- I** Were You There (When They Crucified My Lord)
Alas, and Did My Savior Bleed
- II** [Were You There, cont.]
[Alas, and Did, cont.]
Away In a Manger

Wondrous Love
- III** [Away, cont.]
I Will Arise and Go to Jesus {3rd phrase of “I will arise” = “and did my sov(ereign die)”}
Wondrous Love (again)
Alas, and Did (again) {throughout: similar contours and scales = melodic metaphors?}
- IV** Behold the Wood
Go to Dark Gethsemane
- V** Up From the Grave (verse)
My Faith Has Found a Resting Place
Christ lag in Totesbanden
The Old Rugged Cross
Jesu, meine Freude
Beneath the Cross of Jesus
- VI** [Old Rugged Cross, cont.]
Christ Lag (again)
Beneath the Cross (again/cont.)
Jesu, meine Freude (again)
My Faith has Found a Resting Place (again)
- VII** [Up From the Grave (verse cont.)]
Up From the Grave (chorus)
He Hideth My Soul
Jesu, meine Freude (again)]
O Sacred Head, Now Wounded
Hallelujah, What a Savior
Lift High the Cross
When I Survey the Wondrous Cross
Wondrous Love (again)]
Jesus, I Am Resting, Resting
- VIII** Away In a Manger (reprise)
- IX** [previous hymns recalled throughout]
Mighty God, While Angels Bless Thee (sounded in gaps)

Alphabetical List of Hymn Tunes

<i>Short Title (used in score)</i>	<i>Full Title (TUNE NAME: Composer, Date)</i>
“Ah, Holy Jesus”	“Ah, Holy Jesus, How Hast Thou Offended?” (HERZLIEBSTER JESU: Johann Crüger, 1640)
“Alas, and Did”	“Alas, and Did My Savior Bleed?” (MARTYRDOM: Hugh Wilson, c. 1800)
“Away in a Manger”	“Away in a Manger” (CRADLE SONG: William J. Kirkpatrick, 1895)
“Behold the Wood”	“Behold the Wood” (BEHOLD THE WOOD: Daniel Schutte, 1976)
“Beneath the Cross”	“Beneath the Cross of Jesus” (ST. CHRISTOPHER: Frederick C. Maker, 1881)
“ <i>Christ Lag...</i> ”	“ <i>Christ Lag in Totesbanden</i> ” (CHRIST LAG: Martin Luther, 1524. Arr. J. S. Bach)
“Cross of Jesus”	“Cross of Jesus, Cross of Sorrow” (CROSS OF JESUS: John Stainer, 1887)
“Gethsemane”	“Go to Dark Gethsemane” (REDHEAD: Richard Redhead, 1853)
“Hallelujah, What a Savior”	“Man of Sorrows, What a Name” (HALLELUJAH, WHAT A SAVIOR: Philip P. Bliss, 1875)
“He Hideth My Soul”	“A Wonderful Savior is Jesus My Lord” (KIRKPATRICK: William J. Kirkpatrick, 1890)
“I Will Arise”	“Come, Ye Sinners, Poor and Needy” (ARISE: Traditional American melody)
“ <i>Jesu Meine Freude</i> ”	“Jesus, Priceless Treasure” (JESU, MEINE FREUDE: Johann Crüger, 1653)
“Jesus, I am Resting”	“Jesus, I am Resting, Resting” (TRANQUILITY: James Mountain, 1876)
“Jesus Lives”	“Jesus Lives, and So Shall I” (ZUVERSICHT: Johann Crüger, 1653)
“Lift High the Cross”	“Lift High the Cross” (CRUCIFER: Sydney H. Nicholson, 1916)
“Mighty God”	“Mighty God! While Angels Bless Thee” (AUTUMN: Arranged from the Genevan Psalter, 1551)
“My Faith Has Found”	“My Faith Has Found a Resting Place” (LANDAS: Norse Melody, arr. William J. Kirkpatrick, 1891)
“O Sacred Head”	“O Sacred Head, Now Wounded” (PASSION CHORALE: Hans Leo Hassler, 1601)
“O the Deep Deep”	“O the Deep, Deep Love of Jesus” (TON-Y-BOTEL: Thomas J. Williams, 1890)

“Old Rugged Cross”	“On a Hill Far Away,” or “The Rugged Cross” (OLD RUGGED CROSS: George Bennard, 1913)
“Rock of Ages”	“Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me” (TOPLADY: Thomas Hastings, 1830)
“Up From the Grave”	“Low in the Grave He Lay” (CHRIST AROSE: Robert Lowry, 1874)
“Were You There”	“Were You There?” (Traditional Spiritual)
“When I Survey”	“When I Survey the Wondrous Cross” (HAMBURG: Lowell Mason, 1824)
“Wondrous Love”	“What Wondrous Love is This” (WONDROUS LOVE: from <i>Southern Harmony</i> , 1835)