

WORKSHEETS FOR



JOHN PSATHAS'

THREE PSALMS
VIEW FROM OLYMPUS
OMNIFENIX

JENI LITTLE

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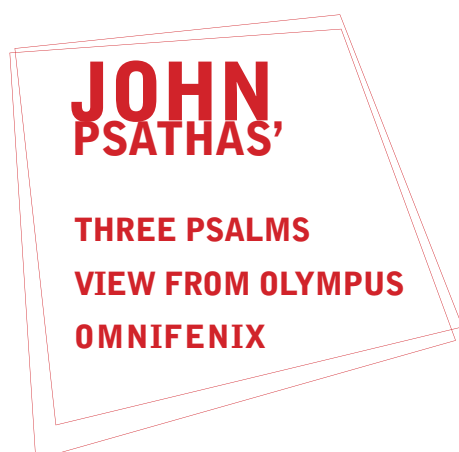
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www.timgummerdesign.com, and Nigel Brookes.



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A LEARNING GUIDE TO



Answers and background to these worksheets can be found in the accompanying **LEARNING GUIDE TO JOHN PSATHAS' THREE PSALMS, VIEW FROM OLYMPUS, AND OMNIFENIX** available from the JOHN PSATHAS LEARNING CENTRE: chimaera.co.nz/psathas

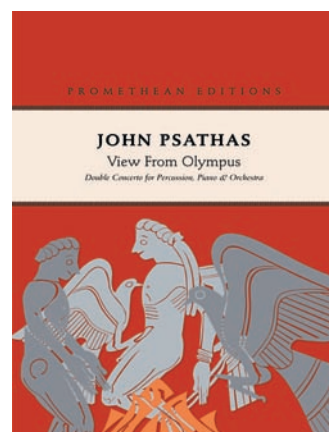
The CD/DVD of these works is available from Rattle: www.rattle.co.nz

Scores of these works are available from Promethean Editions:
www.promethean-editions.com

Other Learning Guides by Jeni Little and published by CHIMAERA:

- *Drum Dances and Abhisheka* by John Psathas
- *Pacific 3 2 1 Zero (Parts 1 and 2) and Global Hockets by From Scratch* (in collaboration with Phil Dadson)
- *Kembang Suling and Volume Pig* by Gareth Farr
- *Baxter – a learning guide to the CD*
- *Cook Islands - The Music of Nga Pu Toru*

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Research Activities

1. Research and represent (write, illustrate...) a one-page history of the development of composition in the 20th century. You could investigate and include information about the following concepts: Free jazz, Minimalism, Chance music, Electronic music, Microtonal Composition and instruments, and Serialism/Atonality. Name prominent composers from each style you discuss and, where possible, list at least two of their works.
2. Research and write a biography on the composer John Psathas. Try the Internet - use a good search engine like Google (www.google.com), and see what you can find. Include information about John Psathas: education, influences and anything else you think is directly related to the development of his musical work.
3. Research and present a short summary/report (up to half a page) on the following:
 - John Psathas: www.johnpsathas.com

PERFORMERS:

- Evelyn Glennie: www.evelyn.co.uk
- Joshua Redman
- Lance Philip
- Michael Brecker
- Nathan Haines
- New Zealand Symphony Orchestra
- Pedro Caneiro
- Lenny Sarkofsky
- Philip Smith
- Michael Houstoun

PUBLISHERS:

- Promethean Editions: www.promethean-editions.com

RECORDING COMPANIES:

- Rattle Records: www.rattle.co.nz
- Trust Records: www.trustcds.com

RELEVANT MUSICAL INFLUENCES:

- Greek Music: www.nexusbooks.org/Gkmusitxt.htm
 - Dave Weckl: www.daveweckl.com
 - Chick Corea: www.chickcorea.com
 - Keith Jarrett: www.keithjarrett.net
4. Keep a listening journal. Listen to as many different examples of 20th and 21st century music, both jazz and contemporary classical, as you can. Some examples

will be played in class but you should do some additional listening research also. Comment on as many of the aspects relating to the music as you are able to. Use the lists provided throughout this resource as a way of finding some new works and ideas.

5. Research some scales and tunings found in other musical cultures, write them out and use them in your composition work. Try to get a different sound than you might normally aim for. Alternative tunings can be used effectively to create an atmosphere or feeling. Try and create a strong atmosphere using scale that you have not utilised before. Look at Greek modes and the half whole diminished scale.
6. Research a list of works by John Psathas. Include the names of some of his other works (title, year, and instruments) and any other relevant information you have gathered in your research. SOUNZ (the Centre for New Zealand Music) site, composer pages: www.sounz.org.nz
7. Research some reviews of John Psathas' musical works, then write one of your own after listening to a work by him.
8. Research some unusual techniques that can be utilised when writing for the saxophone – see bars 1-4 and the notes on instrumentation for some ideas.

The JOHN PSATHAS LEARNING CENTRE
contains comprehensive links and video:
chimaera.co.nz/psathas

20th Century Composers Research Tasks

1. Read aloud and discuss a good concise history of twentieth century music. How do the students think the music might sound? From your oral descriptions of each emerging style of music, what do they think they would want to hear? What would they say had been the greatest changes and innovations from the Romantic period?

Read it aloud again and make notes.

Have the students work in teams do an internet search and create PowerPoint presentations to show to the class.
2. The following questions apply to the list of composers found below. You should supplement the list with others you think of or become interested in.
 - a) Using dictionaries, write in their dates (a quick read through of each composer will be useful for the next activities). Create a continuum, which represents to you the connections between composers of this period. You may choose to do a chronological timeline, but are there other ways of grouping and classifying?
 - b) Have a listening tour through some examples of 20th and 21st century music which you have available to you (your local library might be able to provide more recordings if you need them). Play 2-3 two-minute excerpts for each composer and discuss similarities and differences. Include at least eight composers from the list below. (Be sure to listen to some work by women composers as part of your tour).

Claude Debussy
Eric Satie
Arnold Schoenberg
Bela Bartok
Karlheinz Stockhausen
Olivier Messiaen
John Cage
Terry Riley
George Crumb
Ornette Coleman
Steve Reich
Philip Glass
Igor Stravinsky
Ethel Smyth
Meredith Monk
Luciano Berio
Pierre Boulez
Nadia Boulanger
Nicola LeFanu
Elizabeth Lutyens
Benjamin Britten
John Coltrane
Harry Partch

Sergei Prokofiev

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Read more about Sergei Prokofiev and add further detail to this timeline. | 1891 Born 23 April. |
| | 1896 Writes his first composition. |
| | 1902 Begins piano lessons with Gliere. |
| 2. Write a list of his most notable works. | 1904 Enters St Petersburg Conservatory. |
| | 1908 First public performance. |
| 3. Research the reasons why Prokofiev travelled so widely and settled in several countries before returning to the Soviet Union. | 1912 Completes first piano concerto. |
| | 1914 Travels to London. |
| | 1916 Scythian Suite. |
| | 1918 First trip to USA. |
| | 1920 Settles in Paris. |
| | 1922 Moves to the Bavarian Alps. |
| | 1923 Marries Lina. |
| | 1927 First Russian tour. |
| | 1930 Fourth tour of America. |
| | 1936 Returns permanently to live in the Soviet Union. |
| | 1938 Romeo and Juliet. |
| | 1941 Germany invades Russia. |
| | 1944 Symphony and the "war" Sonatas. |
| | 1947 Marries Mira. |
| | 1952 Symphony No. 7. |
| | 1953 Dies in Moscow. |

New Zealand Composers Research Task

- Look at the list of New Zealand composers below. Divide the list among the class - each group (you can decide on suitable numbers per group) should research at least three composers (half page report back on each). Each group will present their three composers to the class. Everyone pieces together an overview of New Zealand composers, their connections, and their place in the development of composition in this country.

Annea Lockwood
Gareth Farr
John Psathas
John Cousins
Juliet Palmer
Douglas Lilburn
Eve de Castro-Robinson
John Rimmer
Chris Cree Brown
Jack Body
David Hamilton
Ross Harris
Jenny McLeod
Leonie Holmes
John Elmsly
Dorothy Kerr
Edwin Carr
Dorothy Buchanan
David Farquhar
Peter Scholes
Gillian Whitehead

- Create some continuums with the information you have discovered: a variety of timelines e.g. a line of who knew whom, a line of common education experiences, lines of similarity of style...
- Listen to any recordings you have of New Zealand compositions and describe any of the similarities you can see between the ongoing development of composition in New Zealand, and the development of music composition on a global level.

John Psathas

1. What is John Psathas' ancestry? Is it an influence in his music?

2. Are there any threads of ideas, themes or philosophies, which are detectable in the music of the composer?

3. List some other works by John Psathas.

4. Give a brief outline of John Psathas's education.

5. Who is the international percussionist who frequently performs and commissions music by the composer?

6. How did this extremely beneficial liaison come about?

7. Why does this performer not ever pay money for her commissions?

8. How are performances more beneficial for the composer than a large sum of money for a commission?

9. Name the organisation that collects royalties on behalf of composers in New Zealand.

10. Name some jazz-performers who have been a significant influence on John Psathas's musical development.

11. Name some rock-performers who have been a significant influence on his musical development?

12. Who is the publisher of John Psathas's scores?

13. Which recording companies produce John Psathas's audio CDs?

NZ Geographic Article About Contemporary New Zealand Music

Read the article about New Zealand Contemporary Music by Andrew Caldwell that was featured in Issue 83 of the the New Zealand Geographic magazine. A link to this article can be

found in the John Psathas Learning Centre:
chimaera.co.nz/psathas

After reading the article, answer the following questions and fill in the gaps:

1. Kenneth Young (a NZ composer-conductor-performer) conducted the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra in a week-long program dedicated to new New Zealand music. What was the name of the festival that featured?

2. List the pieces and composers from NZ whose music was performed.

3. Make a list of what the author sees the composers inventing and exploring.

4. How does the author describe a musical score?

5. How did Lyell Cresswell come to be embraced by the Scottish arts community? Name one of his works.

6. What issues can affect the performance of a new work negatively?

7. Name some of the common or shared threads we find in New Zealand music.

8. Who is considered to be the father of NZ composition and when did he die?

9. Who was his contemporary that died in 2003?

10. Where does composer Jack Body draw much musical inspiration?

11. What was Jack Body's opera *Rewi* about?

12. Describe Body's work *Pulse*.

13. What political event did Chris Cree Brown include as footage in the performance of his piece *Black and White for Orchestra plus Tape and Video*.

14. What action did some of the NZSO players take when they felt they were being used as a mouthpiece for a political viewpoint they don't necessarily support?

15. List some other music with a strong political point of view.

16. Write a few facts about Lilburn's contribution to music and why he was so important.

17. What music publishing company did he establish at Victoria University?

18. What was the famous comment made by Dame Kiri Te Kanawa during an interview in 1995 when asked if she would perform any NZ music?

19. Which large-scale events usually feature a good proportion of NZ music?

20. What evidence is there that the opportunities for NZ composers are increasing?

21. List some of the winners of the Lilburn prize.

22. List some performers, ensembles and conductors who champion NZ music.

23. Name two mid career composers who have made a major impact with their writing?

24. List some highlights from John Psathas' career.

25. List composers who have moved overseas and spent time away from New Zealand.

26. Describe the collaboration between Gillian Whitehead and Richard Nunns.

The Music

1. How does John describe the orchestra?

2. How does this present a challenge for composers?

3. What does John think about the operatic voice?

4. What has John focused on when writing his concerti?

5. What kind of performer is John drawn to?

6. Did the soloists influence the composition process?

7. Who were the soloists?

8. When John speaks of his "post adolescent" desire to transfer a sense of positive energy, who does he attribute that influence too?

Omnifenix

1. What does Joshua Redman think is the great thing about this piece?

2. What two things did John need to do in this piece?

3. Why should composers always try and go to performances where their works are being played?

4. Who were the three potential sax soloists who were suggested as the soloists?

5. What were Brecker's initial concerns about the work?

6. How did John ensure he was really writing for a jazz/classical fusion?

7. Was this helpful?

8. What kind of harmony is used?

9. Why does the end of the piece feel like the end?

Improvisation in the Classical Context.

1. Which aspects of the piece are fully notated and which are left to the performer's discretion?

2. Which combination of instruments keeps the feel of the jazz ensemble in tact?

3. Why was the drum part important?

View From Olympus

1. Who is the New Zealand pianist interviewed at the beginning of the segment?

2. What does Pedro Caneiro say about John's writing for percussion?

Composing the Work.

1. Describe the relationship between John and Evelyn Glennie.

2. Where did some of the ideas that formed the work first arise?

3. Where does the Dulcimer originate?

The Three Movements.

1. Who were the Furies?

2. Why did John write the second movement To Yelasto Paidi?

3. How does Michael Houstoun respond to the second movement?

4. Who are the Maenads?

5. How does Pedro describe the feeling of performing the concerto?

6. What decisions did John make that would not have been considered 15-20 years ago?

7. Which two musicians were sources of inspiration for this piece?

Three Psalms

1. How does Michael Houstoun describe his first hearing of music by John Psathas?

2. Is the piano concerto form popular?

3. How does the conductor Marc Taddei describe John's music?

4. Why was it written?

5. How does working with the best musicians impact on the writing?

6. What instrumental sections did John leave out of the concerto and why?

7. How does John describe the long trajectory of his concerto?

8. In what order did he write the movements?

9. What major success inspired the energy and ecstasy heard in the first movement?

10. How does the second movement contrast against the others?

11. The third movement returns us to a more positive platform and uses an idea from what composer?

Premiering the Work

1. Why was Michael Houstoun unable to play the work's premiere performance?

2. Who replaced Michael for the first performance?

3. List the pieces that Houstoun has played that were written by Psathas.

4. Was the pairing of John Psathas writing for Michael Houstoun a successful one?

The Music

John Psathas - A Portrait of Creativity

1. Does John have much of a plan or structure decided before he begins composing?

2. At what age did John feel that music was his pathway? What were his first inspirations?

3. What does John say about View from Olympus?

4. What part of his life would Omnifenix have suited and why?

Development as a Composer

1. Did John always think he would be a composer?

2. Who were his composition teachers at Victoria University?

3. What were the options in making music?

4. What is his relationship with Victoria University?

5. Has having a composition job which was so incredibly widely reported – composing the key music at the Olympic Games in Athens in 2004 – been a positive thing in every way?

The Greek Heritage – Childhood

1. Where did John Psathas spend his childhood?

2. What did he learn growing up in a Greek household?

3. What ideas work in his compositions?

4. What kinds of instruments are needed to successfully create the direction or propulsion?

Zeibekiko

1. Who were the Greek musicians who were part of this groundbreaking performance?

2. What is the last piece in Zeibekiko called and why was it unusual?

3. What was the improvised material?

4. What is the bread analogy that John uses to describe his composition?

5. Two schools of thought in making music – what are they?

6. Who does John aspire to be like and why?

The Recording

THE RECORDING PROCESS – A LOOK BEHIND THE SCENES

1. Who produced the VFO album?

2. What sorts of things are important in the recording process?

THE COMPOSER AS PRODUCER

1. Was John confident about producing his own CD?

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

1. What was a key thing in the recording?

2. How did they achieve some of the separation?

ACHIEVING MAXIMUM ENERGY

1. How does John achieve maximum energy within this piece?

2. How does the recording process allow the piece to be captured at its maximum energy?

3. Why were the brass players pleased with being a part of this project?

THE ROLE OF THE CONDUCTOR

1. The conductor brings out of the group a consistency on many musical levels. What aspects does Marc Taddei say need to be musically aligned?

2. Why did John choose Marc to conduct his recordings?

3. Joshua Redman didn't think he needed a conductor for Ominifenix. Did he change his mind?

4. What is the crucial thing about Marc Taddei?

Mixing and Editing

1. What was the first step in editing?

2. What happened next?

3. How does John feel about his music?

After Recording

INTERVIEW AFTER RECORDING OMNIFENIX

1. What were some of the moments when John worried that things were not going well?

2. What does he feel happy about?

3. What was one of the challenges for John around the original performance by Michael Brecker?

4. In working with the piece Michael had an advantage in the performance of Omnifenix – why?

5. What is the idea behind the three concerti?

6. How has recording been useful in embodying the goals John set out to achieve thirty years ago?

Listening Activities

Listen to the work several times before beginning any of these tasks.

1. Name the instruments that perform this work.

2. Listen to the construction of the piece. How many movements are there? Describe each movement, and sections within them – do they contrast with each other?

3. Using your aural perception, locate examples of monophonic, homophonic and polyphonic texture?

4. On a separate piece of paper create a tempo map of the movement – show where there are changes in tempo.

5. Draw a map with signposts of style marked against the time passed. Listen for any recognisable repetition of material or sound sources. You will need to spend a reasonable amount of time listening to be able to do this.

6. Listen for and locate examples of syncopation, polyrhythm, use of a pulse or *ostinato*.

7. Listen to the piece and identify what unusual performance techniques are used, and to what effect.

8. Can you hear a pulse or beat in the music? What time signature(s) could be applied?

Score Reading

MOVEMENT 1 - ARIA

The student score features bars 1-11, 64-77, 157-172, and 271-286 (the end of the movement). These questions are about those extracts.

1. Look at the first eleven bars of the work – how does the composer achieve the uplifted and energetic mood of the opening?

2. Make a comment about the rhythmic texture between parts.

3. What rhythmic compositional device is used effectively in the opening 11 bars?

Analysis & Score-Reading Activities

1. Start by looking up every dynamic marking, phrase marks, terms of expression, performance instructions found in the scores and define their meaning.
2. Create a score reading exercise with questions and answers and swap with other students.

4. From bar 64 heading into D we make a transition into a groove section. Examine the piano part – does it repeat exactly?

5. This section has a very stable feel about it and yet achieves the composers desire to give a live and dynamic feel, like improvisation and very in the moment. He achieves this by having the violin reflect back aspects of the piano part. What is another way this section achieves it stableness?

6. Compared to the first extract how does the role of the strings differ?

7. The extract beginning at bar 157 has a building shimmering effect. How is this achieved in the instrumentation?

8. The final extract has a sense of completion because of what reason?

MOVEMENT 2 – INFERNO

The student score features bars 1-37, 61-71, 100-124, and 233-261 (the end of the movement). These questions are about those extracts.

Bars 1-37

1. What does the opening time signature mean, and what effect will it have on the music?

2. Analyse on which of the seven semiquavers the triplet lands in bars 1-3 and 5-

3. What instruments join the piano at bar Q and describe what they bring to the music?

4. How does the piano part change at letter R?

5. Which instruments pick up the running semiquavers in a gamelan like effect?

6. At letter R we are clearly in a recognisable key – what is it?

Bars 61-71

7. Describe the chords created by the stings as they add notes between bar 61 and 7.

Bars 100-124

8. Which earlier section does this section resemble? How is it different?

9. Which instruments play the main melody from bar 100-108?

10. Which strings take the melody up at bar 109-114?

11. What features stand out in bars 117-122?

Bars 233-261

12. Which section does play in this extract?

13. How do the string parts reinforce the divided violin chords?

14. At the end of the movement – only one “voice” is still heard, having cut off all the other voices (instruments) – who remains and why is this significant as part of the expression of this movement?

MOVEMENT 3 – SERGEI BK.3 CH.1

The student score features the whole of movement three.

1. Analyse the changing key signatures through the movement and fill in this grid.

[illegible]

2. Describe the impact of what happens at bar 153 – it is not what we might expect and it changes the pathway of the movement.

3. Find examples of the use of a drone or pedal point – where some instruments hold a sustained note while a melody plays out over the top.

4. Locate some examples of interesting string techniques.

5. Locate some examples of doubling or "almost unison" between the timpani and string parts.

6. How does John successfully create a sense of uplift from movement 2 in the first few bars of the third movement?

7. Look for further examples - in any part - of material that is related to the opening run (upward scale-like movement with some repetition of pitches). John has described this passage as “permeating the movement – it’s there all the time”.

[illegible]

8. What rhythmic device does John use to take us from the “*anti cadenza*” of Letter W1 into the section beginning at X1 that pulls us headlong to the ecstatic end of the piece?

Analysis Activities

Answer the following questions for movement 3:

1. Is there a tonic or home key? A tonal centre? (If you answer no, explain your reasons clearly).

2. Are there any rhythmic motifs?

3. Identify the form or structure using bar numbers. How did you decide where the sections divided? What were the clues that a new section had begun?

4. Draw a map of one of the movements using only your ears (the CD) - no score! Use signposts to summarise what you can recognise. Divide the work into smaller sections and listen to one section at a time, completing that part of the map before moving on to the next.

You could even divide into several small groups, each managing the details of one section. This information could then be combined into a full road map at the end.

5. Can you make any comments about the harmony? What choices made by the composer (relating to key/scale/harmony/mode) have had a strong impact on the "sound" and "feel" of the piece?

Composing Activities

This activity requires you to compose your own piece of music either individually or in small groups, using some of the ideas contained in the music of John Psathas as a starting point. Write each step you work through on manuscript or into Sibelius; number clearly as you go.

Using Less Common Time Signatures and Triplets to Create Interesting Rhythms

See the piano in the opening of movement 2.

Try using a new approach to thinking about rhythm. You can create very interesting rhythmic textures effective for expressing a motivating energy.

Choose a time signature with either 5 or 7 as the top number – *i.e.* 5/4, 7/

Compose a 4 bar rhythm using many notes which divide the beat into two – *i.e.* in 5/4 you would use many quavers (quarter notes) or in 7/8 you would use many semiquavers (eighth notes)



For the first two bars where a semiquaver (eighth) note or quaver (quarter) note sit – use a triplet once in a bar, for the second two bars – use the triplets twice in each bar. Let no bar be a repeat.



Now you have developed a rhythm from an easy 4-bar rhythm. Take your rhythm and add pitch and a second part that uses the same rhythmic concepts.

Go as far as you wish - develop it! Things to consider:

- length and form
- instrumentation
- tempo
- rhythm
- melody
- harmony - scale, tuning
- texture
- dynamics

Compose a 1-Minute Piece for the Piano

Explore the timbres and tones available on the piano – explore different pedal effects:

- pedal down while knocking or tapping the instrument
- using the *una corda* pedal
- playing a note silently with the pedal down and then striking an octave/two octaves higher or lower
- The piano has an excellent ability to sustain pitch – play with the chance to have a sustained drone (either in the lower or higher registers) over which you can layer other pitches.

Using a Series of Rising or Falling Key Signatures.

In movement 3, John Psathas uses a series of rising key signatures – see page 37

Write a plan for a piece that will transform through 5 key signatures/modes in one page – they do not have to go up or down in steps as we see in movt 3 – but you must find a way to transition from one key to the next via some shared notes in each scale or mode

Developing Existing Material to Begin a Piece.

Choose an idea from a piece for piano. It could be a bar, phrase or chord progression. Beethoven, Chopin, Bartok and Mozart are all rich sources to search.

Prelude 1 - Bach



1. Take your idea and augment the rhythm – double the note values. And diminish the rhythm by halving the note values.

Augmented



Diminished



2. Choose one of the ideas from step one and turn the line back to front – start with the last pitch and work backwards – this is called retrograde. Invert the pitches – when the note went up, put it down and vice versa. This is called inversion.

Retrograde



3. Try a retrograde inversion, where you do both a backward order of pitch and opposite movement between notes.

Inversion



Description Activities

Listen to the music (without reference to scores) and discuss how it sounds. This talking might stimulate your desire to understand more about the work.

As a class, or in small groups, create a list of descriptive words that might help you to complete the task below successfully.

Now complete the following task.

1. You have been asked to provide the programme notes for a performance of "Three Psalms". Write a paragraph that helps the listener to have an understanding of the music.

You should give a brief background of the music (When was it written? Who was it written for? When was it first performed?) Discuss the composer/s style, influences and any highlights you have discovered within the piece. Include your own understanding of what the music is describing or expressing.

2. Imagine you are a critic who is writing a review of "Three Psalms" after having attended a performance

of the work (or watching the performance on the DVD or on youtube).

Give a comparative overview of the work, making reference to such things as the purpose and function of the music; the historical and cultural context; the musical style in terms of structure, language and musical resources; and what the composer intended to express.

Finish with a short critical evaluation of the effectiveness of the work in your opinion, referring to specific parts or elements of the works studied.

3. Describe and discuss with the class how the music affected you.

- What was the impact of the recording/performance?
- How did it make you feel?
- Can you articulate why?
- Do others share your views and understanding?
- How would you categorise this music? Why?

Debate your reasons, with "evidence" from the music itself, for your classification of this music.

Recall Activities

1. When was this work first performed?

2. Who were the original performers?

3. Why was the piece composed - what was John Psathas trying to express or where did the inspiration come from?

4. Describe the work. How many movements? Describe the mood of each. Any references to timbre, texture, dynamics, form etc.

5. What rhythmic devices does John Psathas employ to create interest?

6. How would you explain the harmony in "Three Psalms"?

7. What are the strongest contrasts between sections?

8. Where would you expect to hear "Three Psalms"? Who would you expect to perform it?

9. Name the instruments required in this work? Are they used in a traditional way?

10. On a separate piece of paper map out your knowledge of the musical elements you can recall.

- rhythm
- melody
- tonality
- harmony
- texture
- timbre
- form/structure

John Psathas

1. What is the ancestry of John Psathas? Is it an influence in his music?

3. Are there any threads of ideas, themes or philosophies, which are detectable in the music of the composer?

5. List some other works by John Psathas.

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9. Who is the international percussionist who frequently performs and commissions music by the composer?

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19. Name some jazz-performers who have been a significant influence on John Psathas's musical development.

21. Name some rock-performers who have been a significant influence on his musical development?

23. Who is the publisher of John Psathas' scores?

25. Who is the publisher of John Psathas' debut audio CD?

Listening Activities

Listen to the work several times before beginning any of these tasks.

1. Name the instruments that perform this work.

2. Listen to the construction of the piece. How many sections are there? Describe each section – do they contrast with each other?

3. Using your aural perception, locate examples of monophonic, homophonic and polyphonic texture.

4. On a separate piece of paper create a tempo map of the movement – show where there are changes in tempo.

5. Draw a map with signposts of style marked against the time passed. Listen for any recognisable repetition of material or sound sources. You will need to spend a reasonable amount of time listening to be able to do this.

6. Listen for and locate examples of syncopation, polyrhythm, use of a pulse or ostinato.

7. Does the composer successfully balance the soloists in View From Olympus – do they have an equal relationship? Or is one part more dominant? Does it change throughout the piece?

8. Listen to the piece and identify what unusual performance techniques are used and to what effect.

9. Can you hear a pulse or beat in the music? What time signature(s) could be applied?

Guided Listening – Imaginative Listening

“THE FURIES – The Furies are avenging spirits of retributive justice whose task was to punish crimes outside the reach of human justice. Their names were Alecto, Megaera and Tisiphone. This movement contains an adapted transcription of a fragment of improvised playing by one of my favourite Greek violinists, Stathis Koukoularis. It appears as a solo for violin after rehearsal letter D.” *Program note by John Psathas.*

Understanding the composer’s intention really helps to focus the listener on the story in the music. Find pictures of the Furies (also known as the Eumenides) to help with visualising the story – with the Furies there is inevitable revenge – there can be no escape.

Listen carefully many times over and write out the story that unfolds as you listen.

Analysis & Score-Reading Activities

Start by looking up every dynamic marking, phrase marks, terms of expression and performance instructions found in the scores and define their meaning. Create a score reading exercise with questions and answers and swap with other students.

Score Reading

THE FURIES

The student score features bars 1-18, 40-46, 89-96, 134-141, 163-166, 178-211, and 219-22. These questions are about those extracts.

Exposition - Bars 1-18

- Identify some of the 20th century performance techniques and composition devices used in the first extract (bars 1-18):
 - viola in bar 10-11
 - piano in bar 3
 - flute in bars 2-3

2. When does the piano first play as the soloist?

3. What is the climax of this section?

Bars 40-46

4. Describe what the harp player does in bars 40-43.

5. How do the trumpets change their sound at bar 40?

6. How do the dynamics of this extract compare to the first extract?

Bars 89-96

7. Who is the solo instrument in this passage?

8. Describe the writing for soloist.

Development - Bars 134-141

9. The solo percussionist is playing marimba and solos with the piano – describe their relationship.

10. Describe the brass parts, comparing them with the string parts.

Bars 163-166

11. Describe these bars.

Recapitulation - Bars 178-211

12. What kind of section is this excerpt and what would you expect to happen?

13. The role of the conductor changes in this passage – how?

Bars 219-222

14. Describe the melodic material played by the piano and woodwind in this extract.

TO YELASTO PAITHI

The student score features bars 1-42 These questions are about that extract.

1. The start of movement 2 is linked to the end of movement 1 by a sound/instrument. Name the instrument.

2. Describe the intervals heard in the R.H. of the piano part in bar 1-6.

3. How many people play in the first bar of movt 2? What is unusual about one of those players?

4. Look at bars 7-12 and listen to the piano part. John is creating an effect used in the recording process to digitally enhance sounds and create a sense of space and echo. What is that effect?

5. When does this extract reach its rhythmic highpoint?

6. How is some of this energy retained?

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5. Is this key signature friendly to both the string players and the woodwind and brass?

6. Describe the relationship between the woodwind, upper strings and piano at bar 55-68

7. Describe the composition device used in the clarinet 1 and 2 and trumpet 1 and 2 parts at bar 73-84

8. There is an instruction to some of the players shortly after letter E1 – what the does the composer intend for them to do at this point?

16. There is a startling moment at G1 where the texture changes – what is the texture at this point?

9. A dulcimer solo occurs from bar 16 How does the orchestra change in style to accompany the solo and let it be heard clearly?

10. Describe what the solo percussionist should do at bar 182? Describe the effect of the paying technique.

11. Describe the basic harmonic movement in the passage from bar 206-220.

12. From L1 to the end is an almost exact repeat of an earlier section. Use both your eyes to search the score and your ears to locate the original appearance of that section.

Analysis

1. Is there a tonic or home key? A tonal centre? (If you answer no, explain your reasons clearly).

2. Are there any rhythmic motifs?

3. Identify the form or structure using bar numbers. How did you decide where the sections divided?

4. What were the clues that a new section had begun?

5. On a separate piece of paper draw a map of one of the movements using only your ears (the CD) - no score! Use signposts to summarise what you can recognise. Divide the work into smaller sections and listen to one section at a time, completing that part of the map before moving on to the next.

You could even divide into several small groups, each managing the details of one section. This information could then be combined into a full road map at the end.

6. Can you make any comments about the harmony? What choices made by the composer (relating to key/scale/harmony/mode) have had a strong impact on the "sound" and "feel" of the piece?

Composing Activities

This activity requires you to compose your own piece of music either individually or in small groups, using some of the ideas contained in the music of John Psathas as a starting point. Write each step you work through on manuscript or into Sibelius, number clearly as you go.

Sustained Notes

Sustained notes can be achieved in many ways: using the sustain pedal on instruments like the piano and vibraphone, held notes on woodwind and brass, sound sustained through rapid rolling of mallets on percussion instruments, or reiterated notes or chords.

Create a piece for small ensemble that models the effect of reverberation as heard in movt 2 and *Fragment* (*View From Olympus* optional encore). Play with dynamic shaping and use of crescendo and decrescendo, and a wide range of dynamic difference.

Compose a 1-Minute Piece For Marimba

- Explore the timbres and tones available on the marimba – explore different mallets or even drum sticks, brushes, or bowing.
- The marimba does not have an excellent ability to sustain pitch – so you will need to work with this by using rolls to create any sustained notes.
- Use the marimba in a melodic or harmonic way rather than purely in its percussive roll.

Compose a 1-Minute Piece for Harp, Focusing on Using it in a Percussive Way

- Explore the timbres available on the harp.
- Try “prepared” harp techniques (where objects are placed on and in between strings, to achieve less traditional and more exotic timbres). Be certain to use non-destructive methods - paper
Threaded between strings is OK but drawing pins are not!
- How can the harp be played to produce specifically percussive tones?

Description Activities

1. Listen to the music (without reference to scores) and discuss how it sounds. This talking might stimulate your desire to understand more about the work.

2. As a class, or in small groups, create a list of descriptive words that might help you to complete the task below successfully.
3. You have been asked to provide the programme notes for a performance of *View From Olympus*. Write a paragraph that helps the listener to have an understanding of the music.

You should give a brief background of the music (When was it written? Who was it written for? When was it first performed?) Discuss the composer’s style, influences and any highlights you have discovered within the piece. Include your own understanding of what the music is describing or expressing.

4. Imagine you are a critic who is writing a review of *View From Olympus* after having attended a performance of the work (or watching the performance on the DVD).

Give a comparative overview of the work, making reference to such things as the purpose and function of the music; the historical and cultural context; the musical style in terms of structure, language and musical resources; and what the composer intended to express.

Finish with a short critical evaluation of the effectiveness of the work in your opinion, referring to specific parts or elements of the works studied.

5. Describe and discuss with the class how the music affected you.
 - What was the impact of the recording/performance?
 - How did it make you feel?
 - Can you articulate why?
 - Do others share your views and understanding?
 - How would you categorise this music? Why?
 - Debate your reasons, with “evidence” from the music itself, for your classification of this music.

Recall Activities

1. When was this work first performed?

2. Who were the original performers?

3. Why was the piece composed - what was John Psathas trying to express or where did the inspiration come from?

4. Describe the work. How many movements? Describe the mood of each. Any references to timbre, texture, dynamics, form *etc.*

5. What rhythmic devices does John Psathas employ to create interest?

6. How would you explain the harmony in "View for Olympus"?

7. What are the strongest contrasts between movements?

8. Where would you expect to hear *View From Olympus*? Who would you expect to perform it?

9. Name the instruments required in this work? Are they used in a traditional way?

10. On a separate piece of paper map out your knowledge of the musical elements that you can recall:

- rhythm
- melody
- tonality
- harmony
- texture
- timbre
- form/structure

John Psathas

1. What is the ancestry of John Psathas? Is it an influence in his music?

2. Are there any threads of ideas, themes or philosophies, which are detectable in the music of the composer?

3. List some other works by John Psathas.

4. Give a brief outline of John Psathas' education.

5. Who is the international percussionist who frequently performs and commissions music by the composer?

6. How did this extremely beneficial liaison come about?

7. Why does this performer not ever pay money for her commissions?

8. How are performances more beneficial for the composer than a large sum of money for a commission?

9. Name the organisation that collects royalties on behalf of composers in New Zealand.

10. Name some jazz-performers who have been a significant influence on John Psathas' musical development.

11. Name some rock-performers who have been a significant influence on his musical development.

12. Who is the publisher of John Psathas' scores?

13. Who is the publisher of John Psathas' debut audio CD?

Listening Activities

Listen to the work several times before beginning any of these tasks.

1. Name the instruments that perform this work.

2. Listen to the construction of the piece. How many sections are there? Describe each section – do they contrast with each other?

3. Using your aural perception, locate examples of monophonic, homophonic and polyphonic texture.

4. On a separate piece of paper create a tempo map of the movement – show where there are changes in tempo.

5. Draw a map with signposts of style marked against the time passed. Listen for any recognisable repetition of material or sound sources. You will need to spend a reasonable amount of time listening to be able to do this.

6. Listen for and locate examples of syncopation, polyrhythm, use of a pulse or ostinato.

7. Does the composer successfully balance the parts, which come together in Omnifenix? Is it equal parts Jazz and Classical music? Or is one style more dominant? Does it change throughout the piece?

8. Listen to the piece and identify what unusual performance techniques are used and to what effect?

9. Can you hear a pulse or beat in the music? What time signature(s) could be applied?

Analysis & Score-Reading Activities

Start by looking up every dynamic marking, phrase marks, terms of expression and performance instructions found in the score and define their meaning.

Score Reading

1. Create a score-reading exercise with questions and answers and swap with other students.
2. Describe the chords in the first five bars. At letter B John has used the same chords again but in a more slowed down and stretched out state. Describe them when they reappear at letter B.

3. What happens at C harmonically? And rhythmically?

4. In which sections does the drum kit/drum set not appear?

5. Is the saxophone omitted from any sections?

6. There are two cadenzas in this work – one for the saxophone and one for the drums – where do these cadenzas appear?

7. Sometimes the saxophone and drum kit play in a non-solo capacity – find examples of when they are the featured soloist and when they are part of the ensemble.

8. The tubular bells and tam-tam are used sparingly. When do they play, and what impact does their timbre have on the music when they appear?

9. Describe what the strings do at bar 105-108

10. Explain what the following terms for the saxophone mean:
• L.D. -
• S.B. -
• Multiphonic –

11. Look at the last page of the score and describe the cadence that features.

Analysis

Answer the following questions:

1. Is there a tonic or home key? A tonal centre? (If you answer no, explain your reasons clearly).

2. Are there any rhythmic motifs?

3. Identify the form or structure using bar numbers. How did you decide where the sections divided? What were the clues that a new section had begun?

4. On a separate piece of paper draw a map of one of the movements using only your ears (the CD) - no score! Use signposts to summarise what you can recognise. Divide the work into smaller sections and listen to one section at a time, completing that part of the map before moving on to the next.

You could even divide into several small groups, each managing the details of one section. This information could then be combined into a full road map at the end.

5. Can you make any comments about the harmony? What choices made by the composer (relating to key/scale/harmony/mode) have had a strong impact on the "sound" and "feel" of the piece?

7. When the saxophone plays as a soloist, the music they perform is not written out in full as it is improvised. What details are included in the score for the soloist to work up their improvised section from?

Composing Activities

This activity requires you to compose your own piece of music either individually or in small groups, using some of the ideas contained in the music of John Psathas as a starting point. Write each step you work through on manuscript or into Sibelius; number clearly as you go.

Syncopation

See the syncopated rhythms from bar 72 in the lower string parts.

Try using syncopated rhythms in your compositions. They can create very interesting sound textures and are effective when used to express a motivating energy.

1. Create a four bar rhythm using only minims and crotchets (half notes and quarter notes).



2. Substitute each crotchet (quarter note) with a quaver (eighth note) rest and note.



3. Anywhere you have used a minim (half note) - substitute a quaver (eighth note) rest on the beat followed by a crotchet (quarter note), and then a quaver (eighth note) rest.



Now you have a syncopated rhythm developed from an easy 4-bar rhythm. You can further develop the rhythm by reintroducing a few quavers and tying them across the bar.

Take your rhythm and add pitch.

Go as far as you wish - develop it! Things to consider:

- length and form
- instrumentation
- tempo

- rhythm
- melody
- harmony - scale, tuning
- texture
- dynamics

Ostinato

Ostinato can be created from pitch or rhythm. Try using ostinati in your compositions. They can create very interesting rhythmic textures and are readily developed into interesting musical material.

Half-whole diminished scale



Melodic Ostinato Using The Half-Whole Diminished Scale

1. Choose 7 pitches and arrange them in an order (one note will be left out).
2. Use the pitches in this order but with a rhythm that varies as it plays. Don't match the rhythm to the pitch

in any way; aim for a random effect.

3. This is a melodic *ostinato* (the melodic material is repeated, the rhythmic material is not).
4. Introduce the one missing pitch from the scale and use it sparingly. Become more consistent in using it before the piece finishes.

Rhythmic Ostinato

1. Compose a 5-note rhythm that takes two beats.
2. In 5/4, repeat your rhythm 2 and one half times in each bar. In the time of 2 bars you should have repeated your rhythmic *ostinato* a total of five times.
3. This is a rhythmic *ostinato* (the rhythmic material is repeated; the melodic material is not).

Compose a 1-Minute Piece for Vibraphone

- Explore the timbres and tones available on the vibraphone – explore different mallets and play with the motor on and off, and vary the motor speed.
- The vibraphone has an excellent ability to sustain pitch – play with the chance to have a sustained drone over which you can layer other pitches.

Compose a 1-Minute Piece for Saxophone, Focusing on using it in a Percussive Way

- Explore the timbres available on the saxophone.
- Try “20th century” techniques like lip bends and multiphonics!
- Play just the keys with no air flow and then build from nothing to the level of your choice.

Description Activities

Listen to the music (without reference to scores) and discuss how it sounds. This talking might stimulate your desire to understand more about the work.

As a class, or in small groups, create a list of descriptive words that might help you to complete the task below successfully.

1. You have been asked to provide the programme notes for a performance of “Omnifenix”. Write a paragraph that helps the listener to have an understanding of the music.

You should give a brief background of the music (When was it written? Who was it written for? When was it first performed?)

Discuss the composer/s style, influences and any highlights you have discovered within the piece. Include your own understanding of what the music is describing or expressing.

2. Imagine you are a critic who is writing a review of *Omnifenix* after having attended a performance of the

work (or watching the performance on YouTube – see the JOHN PSATHAS RESOURCE CENTRE: chimaera.co.nz/psathas).

Give a comparative overview of the work, making reference to such things as the purpose and function of the music; the historical and cultural context; the musical style in terms of structure, language and musical resources; and what the composer intended to express.

Finish with a short critical evaluation of the effectiveness of the work in your opinion, referring to specific parts or elements of the works studied.

3. Describe and discuss with the class how the music affected you.
 - What was the impact of the recording/performance?
 - How did it make you feel?
 - Can you articulate why?
 - Do others share your views and understanding?
 - How would you categorise this music? Why?
4. Imagine you are a producer at Rattle Records wanting to nominate the work *Omnifenix* by John Psathas for a Music Award.

Will you nominate it in the “Classical” or “Jazz” category?

Debate your reasons, with “evidence” from the music itself, for your classification of this music.

Recall Activities

1. When was this work first performed?

2. Who were the original performers?

3. Why was the piece composed - what was John Psathas trying to express or where did the inspiration come from?

4. Describe the work. How many movements? Describe the mood of each. Any references to timbre, texture, dynamics, form etc.

5. What rhythmic devices does John Psathas employ to create interest?

6. How would you explain the harmony in *Omnifenix*?

7. What are the strongest contrasts between sections?

8. Where would you expect to hear *Omnifenix*? Who would you expect to perform it?

9. Name the instruments required in this work? Are they used in a traditional way?

10. On a separate piece of paper map out your knowledge of the musical elements that you can recall?

- rhythm
- melody
- tonality
- harmony
- texture
- timbre
- form/structure

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