

A PERFORMANCE GUIDE FOR SELECTED WORKS
FOR PIANO BY HENRY COWELL

by

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ABSTRACT

The four works selected incorporate a number of the innovations that Henry Cowell brought to writing for the piano. The chord clusters of *The Tides of Manaunaun* and *Tiger* and the direct manipulation of the strings (strumming with the fleshy part of the finger or with the nail, scraping, plucking) in *Aeolian Harp* and *The Banshee* are just two of the techniques that forced Cowell to develop new notational symbols and made it necessary that he accompany these with detailed explanations and performance instructions. Cowell's own variations from the written score in his recordings have set an example for other performers to take liberties in their performances of these pieces.

The performance guide consists of one chapter for each work. Each chapter includes a brief history of the inspiration and background of the piece, offers strategies for the practical handling of physical difficulties encountered in producing sounds in unconventional ways (including those caused by differences in the construction of pianos), and deals with deciphering the notational complexities. A presentation of suggestions and considerations for preparing these pieces for performance is included, and each chapter concludes with a comparison of selected available recordings showing the range of interpretations given by artists including Cowell, and comments on how closely Cowell's own interpretations have colored those of others.

DEDICATION

This document is dedicated to the memory of my great-grandma, Georgia “Georgie” Peterson; to my grandparents, Jack and Marge Peterson; and to my parents, Everette and Sandy Borg. Although I was never able to meet Great-Grandma Georgie, it was her talent and love for the piano and the gift of her baby grand piano that sparked the beginning of my musical studies. I will always be grateful to Grandpa Jack and Grandma Marge for their love, encouragement, and interest in my life and studies, and to Mom and Dad for their many years of love, sacrifice, patience, backing, driving to and paying for lessons, and being my best cheerleaders.

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I would not have been able to finish this document without my family’s loving help. I appreciate the many delicious meals, the patience that Dad and Mom showed while I created messy work spaces all over their home, the encouragement to finish, the motivation and technical support from my brother Anders, and the tender care of my baby girl, Lexi, by so many family members but especially by Dad, Mom, and my brother Benjamin, allowing me time to write.

Much love and appreciation goes to my supportive and remarkable husband, John Paul Clough, for always encouraging me throughout this degree and in so many other ways. His patience, kindness, Christ-like example of love for me, and support are just a few of the amazing things that I deeply admire about him.

Most importantly, I praise my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. He loved me and had mercy on me enough to die for me. I am so grateful that he has enabled me to finish my DMA degree and to serve him with the music that he gives me.

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1. INTRODUCTION

This document concentrates on four works for solo piano by Henry Cowell: *The Tides of Manaunaun*, *Tiger*, *Aeolian Harp*, and *The Banshee*. The study offers background information including a brief history of the composition of each work and the inspiration behind it; an explanation of the notation used in each; suggestions for preparing the works for performance; and a study of recorded performances. This study tracks the performance practice beginning with Cowell's own recordings from the 1950s and progressing chronologically. Although Cowell's own recordings may not necessarily be considered definitive, as the earliest available recordings of these works they may well have influenced other artists who later recorded the pieces. The liberties that Cowell took in his performances, including variation from the scores that can be heard even from one recording to another of the same work, may have suggested to other artists that such variations from the score were not only permissible but appropriate.

These pieces were written during the years circa 1911–1929. Cowell eagerly focused on creating new sounds on the piano, often using new methods of playing to produce those sounds. He developed a number of unconventional techniques: the tone clusters in *The Tides of Manaunaun* and *Tiger* and the sounds created inside the piano in *Aeolian Harp* and *The Banshee* were steps in his quest to create new sounds to reflect his inspirations. His imaginative adaptation of moving beyond the keys to the inside of the piano has been used up through the present day by many other composers seeking unorthodox methods of creating sounds in their music, including John Cage, Lou Harrison, and Karlheinz Stockhausen.

Some of the unusual sounds that Cowell created are well outside the range of standard piano music. Therefore, in order to discuss these pieces in this document, descriptive terms without conventional musical meaning are sometimes used—e.g., moaning, screaming, and rumbling. At the first use of such terms, a description of how each sound is produced is included to aid in the understanding of the term.

Cowell wrote over one thousand works, of which approximately one hundred are incomplete fragments. He wrote approximately three hundred and twenty works for keyboard which includes seventy-nine published works for solo piano. William Lichtenwanger cataloged these works in *The Music of Henry Cowell: A Descriptive Catalog*. Lichtenwanger's catalog number, prefaced by the letters HC, will appear at the beginning of each chapter that discusses an individual work.

Henry Dixon Cowell (March 11, 1897–December 10, 1965) was born in Menlo Park, California. His father, Harry Cowell, had emigrated from Ireland and married Carissa Dixon. His parents divorced when Henry was six years old, and although Henry lived with his mother, he remained in close contact with his father, who taught him songs and dances from his native Irish heritage.¹ Both of his parents were writers and encouraged Cowell to be a freethinker. He spent much of his time at home with his mother and was homeschooled by her for most of his formative years.

As a young child, Cowell studied violin but eventually stopped the lessons due to the symptoms of Sydenham's chorea, and his parents sold the violin.² This illness, commonly known as “milkmaid's grip,” causes the afflicted to exhibit violent movements, sometimes clenching

¹ Cowell, *Essential Cowell*, 13.

² Koch, *Reflections on Composing*, 62.

fists along with other spastic muscle movements. Cowell suffered from Sydenham's chorea from age six until the approximately age fourteen.³ He knew he wanted to be a musician, but lacking an instrument, he decided to become a composer. Before acquiring a piano, he claimed he would sit for an hour daily, preparing to become a composer by listening to the sounds in his environment and contemplating how to recreate each sound.⁴

When Cowell was a teenager, his mother developed breast cancer. During her illness, he supported both himself and his mother by working odd jobs such as wildflower peddler, farm laborer, yard worker, and janitor and by 1912 was able to save enough money to buy a second-hand piano for sixty dollars.⁵ The following year his mother underwent a mastectomy, but she ultimately lost her struggle with cancer, dying in 1916.⁶

Throughout his life, Cowell was interested in the sounds around him and often incorporated them into his music. He referred to himself as being "bi-musical" or "multi-musical."⁷ Living near San Francisco's Chinatown district, he was familiar with Chinese music and often visited the Chinese opera. In the 1930s, while studying in Berlin on a grant from the Guggenheim Foundation, he learned to play gamelan music and studied both North and South Indian music and music theory with Sarat Lahari and Professor Sambamoorthy.⁸ One of Cowell's frequent lecture topics was "Music of the World's Peoples." His desire was to make people aware of and able to play modern and world music.⁹ His life and music seem to be characterized by his statement, "I want to live in the whole world of music!"¹⁰

³ Hicks, *Henry Cowell, Bohemian*, 47; Carwithen, "Henry Cowell: Composer and Educator," 30–31.

⁴ Perlis and Van Cleve, *Composers Voices*, 159; Cowell, *Essential Cowell*, 13.

⁵ Cowell, *Essential Cowell*, 13; Nicholls, "Cowell, Henry."

⁶ Hicks, *Henry Cowell, Bohemian*, 48.

⁷ Cowell, *Essential Cowell*, 23.

⁸ Galvan, "Fleisher Collection," 166; Weisgall, "Music of Henry Cowell," 485; Stone, *Sidney and Henry Cowell*.

⁹ Cowell, *Essential Cowell*, 21.

¹⁰ Weisgall, "Music of Henry Cowell," 498.

In 1914, Cowell began formally studying composition with composer and musicologist Charles Seeger at the University of California at Berkeley. Seeger encouraged Cowell to “systematize his musical resources” and to “create a repertoire using his innovations.”¹¹ Cowell began writing *New Musical Resources* in 1919. Written as a “technical primer for experimentalists,”¹² *New Musical Resources* included Cowell’s thoughts and theories of overtones, tone clusters, rhythm, dynamics, form, and tempi to explain some of the techniques he used in his music.

In the 1920s, Cowell was privileged to be asked by the Pleyela Company of France to record five of his pieces on piano rolls for its player pianos. He recorded *The Tides of Manaunaun* along with four of the Five Encores to *Dynamic Motion*. After the rolls were recorded and placed in the stores, Cowell went to one of the stores and, without revealing who he was, asked to hear a piano roll by Henry Cowell. The salesman “put in the selected roll, turned on the mechanism-then looked down at the [piano] in consternation. First all the notes on one side of the keyboard went down, then all those on the other side.”¹³ Thinking that something was wrong, the salesman apologized and tried another roll. When the same thing happened with the next roll, Cowell rescued the distraught salesman by telling him who he was and explaining tone clusters to the man.¹⁴

Cowell suffered heavy criticism when he first introduced the public to his new ideas of playing the piano. Some laughed, others thought his ideas were embarrassing or simply child’s play, and still others threw books and programs at him while he performed.¹⁵ Luckily, the criticism did not stop Cowell from writing new music, and some even defended his ideas. Some

¹¹ Cowell, *New Musical Resources*, 50.

¹² Oja, *Making Music Modern*, 143.

¹³ Goss, *Modern Music-Makers*, 270.

¹⁴ Goss, *Modern Music-Makers*, 270; Hicks, *Henry Cowell, Bohemian*, 130.

¹⁵ Hicks, *Henry Cowell, Bohemian*, 111–12.

of the people in the cities that he visited while on various performing tours received his ideas well. The encouragement and openness on the part of Cowell's supporters helped to pave the way for further exploration and changes in modern music.

In an article in *Perspectives of New Music* entitled "A Memoir and Appreciation," Richard Franko Goldman writes, "All of us, whatever our musical tastes and practices, owe him a great deal. He [Cowell] helped two generations to see and think and hear, and he helped to create and build a foundation for 'modern' music in America. This is not a small achievement; it is a gigantic one, and should not be forgotten."¹⁶ As Frederick Koch, one of his students, explained, "There was never a moment in [Cowell's] life when he devoted himself to any one thing. It is for this reason that his ideas in his music are always overlapping."¹⁷ Cowell imagined a variety of unique sounds for his music and developed inventive methodologies for producing them on the piano as well as establishing an accompanying system of notation. He was widely influenced by world music and Irish folklore and experimented with ways to embody those sounds and ideas. His music, while fascinating, presents a challenge to those who are more accustomed to traditional methods of playing.

¹⁶ Goldman, "Henry Cowell: A Memoir," 28.

¹⁷ Koch, *Reflections on Composing*, 70.

2. THE TIDES OF MANAUNAUN

Cowell described the creation of *The Tides of Manaunaun* (HC 219/1):

When I was fifteen years old [1912] I was invited to write music for an Irish play, the theatrical music which would introduce the home and the deep tides of Manaunaun, the god of the sea. I had to write some music that would put you in the mood of the deep tides, as well as the waves of the sea. This was rather a big job for a fifteen-year-old boy. I tried a couple of low octaves in a certain rhythm. They sounded just a little too definite, so then I tried a couple of chords, which were better than the low tidal rhythm, but this wasn't quite enough. Then, I had the idea of having all thirteen of the lowest tones of the piano played together at the same time, but since I didn't have thirteen fingers in the left hand, I played this with the flat of the hand, being very careful to get all of the notes exactly equal and to have what I considered a reasonable tone quality there. In other words, I was inventing a new musical sound later to be called tone clusters.¹⁸

Background

Cowell wrote *The Tides of Manaunaun* for *The Building of Bamba*,¹⁹ the theatrical play (Cowell later referred to this as an opera)²⁰ mentioned in the quotation above. The play was written by John Osborne Varian (1863–1931), a mystical poet whom Cowell met at Halcyon, a Theosophical community (also known as the Temple of the People) headquartered in California.²¹ Cowell's interest in his Irish ancestry, first encouraged by his father, continued when he was introduced to the Irish mythology espoused by Varian. Cowell retained his interest

¹⁸ Perlis and Van Cleve, *Composers' Voices*, 160–61.

¹⁹ Some scholars refer to this as *The Building of Banba*; Hicks, *Henry Cowell, Bohemian*, 85.

²⁰ Cowell, *Piano Music*, Smithsonian/Folkways, Track 20.

²¹ Perlis and Van Cleve, *Composers' Voices*, 155.

and efforts to study Irish mythology and wrote several pieces based on Irish legends; one of them, *The Banshee*, will be discussed in chapter five of this document. *The Tides of Manaunaun* serves as the prelude to *The Building of Bamba* and sets the stage for the Irish god, Manaunaun.

In the score, the heading above the piece reads:

Story according to John Varian; Manaunaun was the god of motion, and long before the creation, he sent forth tremendous tides, which swept to and fro through the universe, and rhythmically moved the particles and materials of which the gods were later to make the suns and worlds.²²

The Building of Bamba was presented at The Temple of the People in Halcyon in August, 1917, five years after Cowell claimed he began the piece. Discrepancies in dating have never been resolved.²³ Sidney Robertson Cowell, Henry's wife, explained in 1983 after his death that her husband "had for many years given the date for *Tides* as 1912, 'but later decided he was mistaken and that it should be 1914.'"²⁴ Though the piece was probably begun in 1911 or 1912, it was probably not written down, or at least in its final form, until later. Biographer Joel Sachs writes, "Although it reached its final form in 1917, Sidney thought he probably worked on it for about five years and may even have played it in one or more preliminary forms."²⁵

Two important life events occurred in the years surrounding the composition and performances of *The Tides of Manaunaun* for piano: Cowell began studying with Charles Seeger, and Cowell's mother passed away.

²² Cowell, *Piano Music, Vol. 1* (Associated Music Publishers), 2

²³ Some sources, including Lichtenwanger and Johnson, cite 1917 as the year in which *The Tides of Manaunaun* was written (Lichtenwanger, *Music of Henry Cowell*, 54; Johnson, "Worlds of Ideas," 17). Other sources, such as the score by Associated Music Publishers and the liner notes to Cowell's 1963 Folkways recording, list the year 1912. Cowell gave both 1911 and 1912 as the dates the piece was written (Woodstra, Brennan, and Schrott, *All Music Guide to Classical Music*, 324). Gilbert Chase, in *America's Music from the Pilgrims to the Present*, relays that Cowell believed *Tides* was performed in a concert on March 10, 1912, but fifty years later, an individual who had searched the San Francisco newspapers for information about concerts given on that date, suggested to Cowell that the date was incorrect (Chase, *America's Music*, 457).

²⁴ Hicks, *Cowell's Clusters*, 433.

²⁵ Sachs, *Henry Cowell: A Man Made of Music*, 5.

The Tides of Manaunaun uses the technique Cowell coined “tone clusters,” which he developed as he experimented with the piano. Michael Hicks, author of *Cowell’s Clusters* and *Henry Cowell: Bohemian*, has suggested that Cowell might have first experimented with chord clusters as a child because of the violent muscle movements of his Sydenham’s chorea.²⁶ Cowell, however, claimed to have heard the clusters in his head before reproducing them on the piano.²⁷ Tone clusters were used to some degree by other composers such as Charles Ives in the *Concord Sonata* and Leo Ornstein in *Piano Concerto with Selected Orchestra*, but Cowell explored both diatonic and chromatic clusters and developed a method of notation for them.²⁸ Cowell is often credited with the invention of tone clusters, and composer Béla Bartók, who met Cowell in December of 1923, asked Cowell’s permission to use tone clusters in his own compositions.²⁹ Cowell wrote tone clusters in a piece called *Adventures in Harmony* (HC 59) written in 1913, but *The Tides of Manaunaun* was his first published piece, issued as sheet music in 1922 by Breitkopf & Härtel.³⁰ *Tides* is published in a set called *Three Irish Legends* for solo piano, which consists of *The Tides of Manaunaun*, *Hero Sun*, and *The Voice of Lir*. All three pieces contain tone clusters, although *Tides* is the most well-known of the three. In 1940, while Cowell was imprisoned on a morals charge, he orchestrated *The Tides of Manaunaun* in a set named *Four Irish Tales*.³¹ This orchestration was at the request of conductor Leopold Stokowski.

Cowell explained a tone cluster in an essay written in 1921:

The tone-cluster is simply a group of two or more minor seconds; that is, it is a cluster of three or more tones, each a half step from its neighbor, sounded simultaneously. If we drop a book flat on the

²⁶ Hicks, “Cowell’s Clusters,” 431–32.

²⁷ Hicks, *Henry Cowell: Bohemian*, 47–48.

²⁸ Davies, “Instrument Modifications.”

²⁹ Nicholls, “Cowell, Henry.”

³⁰ Woodstra, Brennan, and Schrott, *All Music Guide*, 324; Cowell, *Piano Music*, Smithsonian/Folkways, from the introductory essay in the liner notes by Sorrel Hays.

³¹ Lichtenwanger, *Music of Henry Cowell*, 181–92.

piano keys we achieve a tone-cluster, although, not forming part of a musical structure, the result will be nothing but noise.³²

Rather than “nothing but noise,” Cowell’s chord clusters are notated specifically to produce exact pitch combinations. He began writing tone clusters for piano only, but later wrote them for chamber and orchestral works in the 1940s and 1950s.³³ He wrote in *New Musical Resources* that:

There is less possible variety on the piano than with orchestra, where clusters are at their best; nevertheless, there is more variety than would appear at first, made possible by changing the length of the clusters, as well as by their innumerable relationships to chords in other systems.³⁴

Innovation and Notation

Cowell’s tone clusters were well conceived and certainly not random. He spent much time in his writings explaining the theory and performance of them. Tone clusters have two main functions: to add color to a piece such as decorating a simple melody or as the main sound that is used in the piece.³⁵ As Madeline Goss points out in *Modern Music-Makers: Contemporary American Composers*, “although at times the tone-clusters give an impression of extreme dissonance—as in the piano pieces *Tiger*, *Antinomy*, *Advertisement*,—where they are used softly as an accompaniment to a leading melody, the effect is enriching rather than dissonant.”³⁶ Cowell writes a melody, somewhat reminiscent of Irish folk music, in the right hand of *Tides* and colors it with non-dissonant sounding tone clusters in the left hand.

In *New Musical Resources*, Cowell writes that “On the piano smaller clusters of any sort are playable, but larger ones are more easily played if they are either chromatic, including all the

³² Cowell, *Essential Cowell*, 283.

³³ Nicholls, “Cowell, Henry”; Lichtenwanger, *Music of Henry Cowell*, 15.

³⁴ Cowell, *New Musical Resources*, 120.

³⁵ Nicholls, “Cowell, Henry.”

³⁶ Goss, *Modern Music-Makers*, 271.

keys between specific outer limits, or all on black keys, or all on white keys.”³⁷ In *Tides*, Cowell primarily uses chromatic clusters but includes some black-key or white-key clusters at the climax of the piece.³⁸ The left-hand tone clusters in *The Tides of Manaunaun* provide the underlying motion of the piece, increasing in dynamic level and size (from one-octave through two-octave spans to two-octave plus a third or a fourth) to a climax in measures twenty-four and twenty-five before fading to the end. The right hand amplifies the opening ostinato in measures three through six³⁹ (see Figure 2.1) but through the rest of the work presents a B-flat minor diatonic melody, primarily in octaves with some chords filled. The right hand follows the dynamic plan of the ostinato pattern and fades to single pitches in measure twenty-nine through the end of the piece. See Table 2.1.

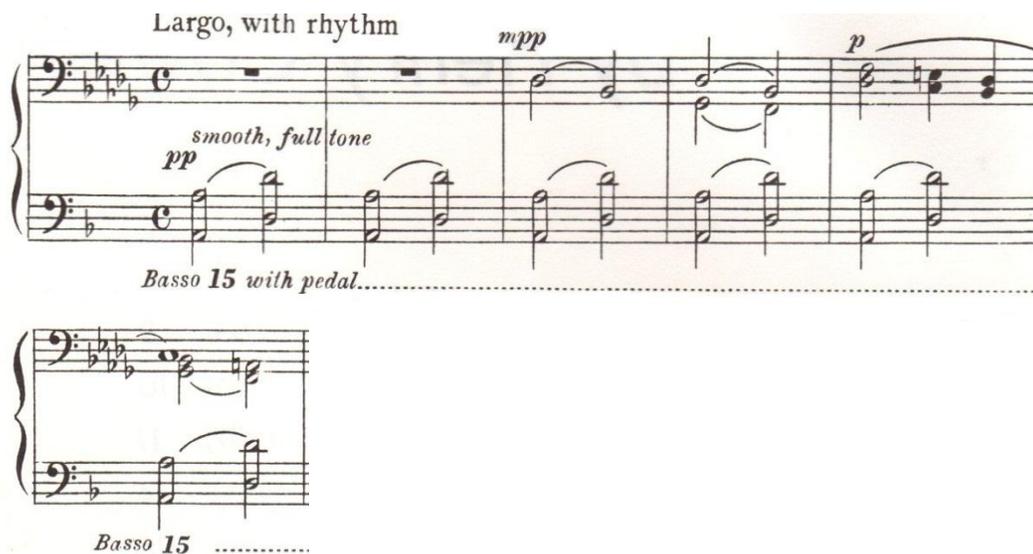


Figure 2.1: Measures 1-6

THE TIDES OF MANAUNAUN

By Henry Cowell

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³⁷ Cowell, *New Musical Resources*, 119-120.

³⁸ Nicholls, *American Experimental Music*, 156.

³⁹ Godwin, “Music of Henry Cowell,” 26

Measures	1–11	12–21	22–23	24–25 Climax	26–36
Tone Clusters	A-D ostinato One-octave chromatic tone clusters; RH joins ostinato until melody starts in mm 7	A-D ostinato Two-octave clusters	Two-octave clusters with top note creating counter- melody	Two-octave clusters plus a third or fourth arpeggiated	A-D ostinato One-octave clusters
Dynamics	<i>pp-mf</i>	<i>f-ff</i>	<i>fff</i>	<i>ffff</i>	<i>f-ppp</i>

Table 2.1: Development of Tone Clusters in *Tides*

The piece is marked “Largo, with rhythm,” and there are many interpretations for how slowly the piece should be played, as can be seen later in Table 2.3. The time signature is common time (4/4), although it changes to *alla breve* (4/2) for four measures starting in measure twenty-two. The tempo does not change, but there is a greater sense of motion during the four measures of the *alla breve*. The left hand climbs chromatically in measures twenty-two and twenty-three and contains the large arpeggiated tone cluster chords in measures twenty-four and twenty-five during the climax of the piece. See Figure 2.2.

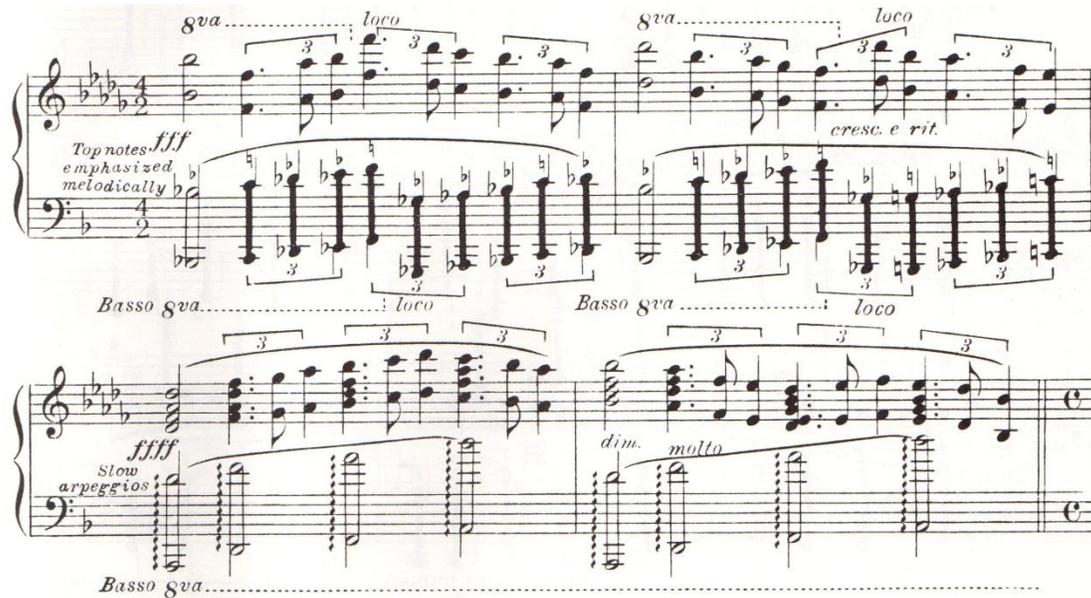


Figure 2.2: Measures 22-25

THE TIDES OF MANAUNAUN

By Henry Cowell

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Cowell developed a notation for playing tone clusters so that each note would not have to be written out individually each time. He developed some notation for “primitive tone-clusters” in his earlier piece *Adventures in Harmony*.⁴⁰ In that piece, Cowell “began writing [each tone cluster] out, note for note, but by p17 he was merely indicating the outside notes and adding ‘arm chord,’ then ‘arm.’”⁴¹ The tone clusters in *The Tides of Manaunaun* are much more mature. They are notated with standard note heads specifying the outer notes of the cluster with a vertical bar connecting them indicating that the performer should play every note between the outer two notes. On open head notes such as half notes and whole notes the bar is open in the middle to

⁴⁰ Nicholls, *American Experimental Music*, 134.

⁴¹ Lichtenwanger, *Music of Henry Cowell*, 15.

match the note heads, but on solid notes such as quarter notes and eighth notes, the vertical connecting bar is filled in.⁴² Examples of these can be seen in Figures 2.3 and 2.4.

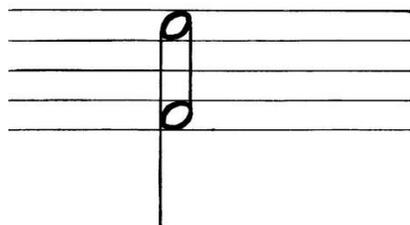


Figure 2.3: Half Note Tone Cluster.

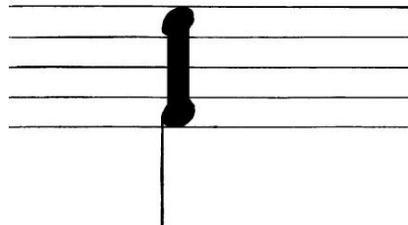


Figure 2.4: Quarter Note Tone Cluster.

On the back page of the score by Associated Music Publishers, Oliver Daniel (1911-1990) includes a page of playing instructions for Cowell's symbols. His instructions declare that when a sharp or flat is placed above or below the chord cluster symbol, only the black notes between the outer notes should be played. See Figures 2.5 and 2.6.

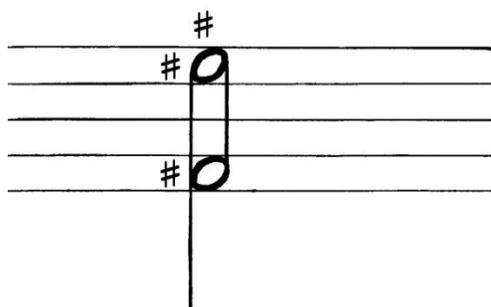


Figure 2.5: Tone Cluster with Sharps.

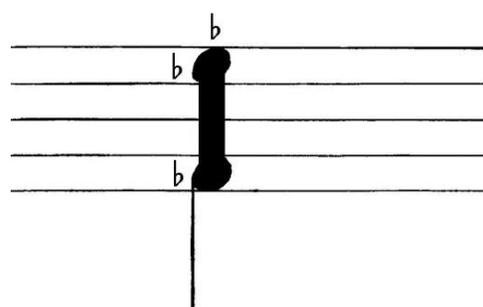


Figure 2.6: Tone Cluster with Flats.

A natural sign above or below the tone cluster symbol indicates that only white keys should be played between the outer notes. As in many of the tone clusters in *Tides*, if the cluster does not contain a sharp, flat, or natural, all of the black and white notes between the two outer notes are to be played. The instructions are very particular:

⁴² *The Tides of Manaunaun* contains whole notes, half notes, and quarter notes. Some other pieces, such as *Tiger*, contain eighth notes.

The tone clusters indicated by these symbols are to be played with the forearm, with the flat of the hand, or with the fist, depending upon the length of the cluster. All the tones should be played exactly together and the pianist must see to it that the outer limits of the clusters are absolutely precise, as written, and that each tone between the outer limits is actually sounded.⁴³

Cowell wrote the tone clusters with exact notes in mind, making sure to write the outer notes as consonant intervals. In a 1921 essay, he wrote:

Experiment shows that clusters of which the outside limits form a consonant interval are more pleasing than those which form a dissonant interval. A cluster of twelve semi-tones, the outside notes of which are an octave apart, seems less dissonant than one of two semitones, the outside notes of which are a major [second] apart; and the ear seems readily to recognize consonance in clusters formed by filling in the fourth, third, and other very consonant intervals.⁴⁴

Performance Guide

With the care that Cowell takes in choosing his outer notes, playing them accurately is essential. Taking care to play the exact outer notes could be a problem due to variations in hand and arm lengths between performers. Cowell indicates the use of the flat of the hand or the forearm. However, where one performer might find the octave an easy reach with the flat hand, others may find that their hands are too long. In such cases, those performers would need to tilt the hand so that the hand comes at the keys at an angle and only presses the notes within the octave. A similar problem arises with forearm clusters. However, the explanation of symbols and playing instructions in the score suggests a remedy: “The arm should be held in a straight line along the keys, but if the arm of the pianist is too long, it must be partly dropped off the keys at

⁴³ Cowell, *Piano Music*, inside of back cover.

⁴⁴ Cowell, *Essential Cowell*, 284.

an angle to give the proper length.”⁴⁵ It takes practice to gain precision since the pianist will need to lean to the left and play the notes with part of the arm, avoiding striking extra keys, while playing the melody in the right hand.

To play the single octave chromatic clusters, the pianist can either place his hand with all the fingers facing the fallboard and stretch out the hand, making sure to play all of the black and white notes or turn the hand so that the thumb is facing the fallboard and the fifth finger is on the outside. All of the black and white notes between the outside notes should be played, taking care to position the hand so that the edge of the black keys are near the middle of the palm, allowing the hand to press all of the keys between the octave. When playing the double-octave tone clusters, the pianist should use the forearm and, depending on arm length, either open the palm of the hand or vary the hand position. The arm might be angled, but not so much as to miss notes, making sure all black and white notes within the two octaves are sounding evenly.

Musically, the pianist must keep the left hand ostinato “smooth” and with “full tone” as the directions indicate. To produce the smooth, full tone, “the forearm should not be stiff, but relaxed; in most cases, its weight is enough to produce the tones without the need for adding muscular effort.”⁴⁶ The directions specify that, “in legato passages, the keys should be pressed down rather than struck, in order to obtain a smooth tone quality and a unified sound.”⁴⁷

When preparing for performance, several decisions face the pianist. One of these decisions is how to interpret Cowell’s “Largo, with rhythm” marking. It is important to think of the Irish mythology upon which this piece was based before determining the tempo. Manaunaun was a very powerful Irish god. He created tides so large that they swept through the entire universe and moved substances that later made the worlds, and the tempo must be slow enough

⁴⁵ Cowell, *Piano Music, Vol. 1*, inside of back cover.

⁴⁶ Cowell, *Piano Music, Vol. 1*, inside of back cover.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

to portray this image. Additionally, the tempo must be slow enough to allow the deep sounds from the steel and copper strings from the lowest notes on the piano to resonate and begin to clear before adding the twelve or more tones of the next tone cluster on top of the deep sounds already produced. On the other hand, the tempo must not be so slow that it drags or remains static. Largo, between forty and fifty-six beats per minute, is quite a broad range, so the performer must decide the exact tempo, considering the performance hall's acoustics and the size of the piano, both of which will affect how soon the chords begin to dissipate. Cowell himself performed the piece faster than the largo marking at approximately sixty-three beats per quarter note, leaving the pianist to decide whether to follow Cowell's example or his written instructions.

After determining the tempo, the performer must map out the full range of dynamics for the complete piece, which includes starting softly and not increasing volume too quickly, reserving the swell in dynamics for the *ffff* climax beginning in measure twenty-four. The reverse is true after the climax; the pianist must avoid fading away too quickly without pacing the *decrescendo* until the end. One consideration is that the right-hand entry in measure three begins with only single or double notes at a marking of *mpp*, but when it increases to *mf* at measure seven, it is playing a four-note chord two octaves higher. The unusual marking *mpp* most likely means louder than *pp* but softer than the *p* marking in measure five. There will be no need to increase the weight on the keys as the sheer number of notes and playing in the middle register of the keyboard will naturally increase the dynamic level, thus saving room to increase the dynamics later. The same is true in measure twelve when the left hand goes from playing one-octave to two-octave tone clusters, in measure thirteen when the right hand begins again after a measure of rest (thus naturally decreasing the dynamic level so that it can give the appearance of

a continual climb), and in measure eighteen when the right hand has a four-note chord an octave higher over two-octave tone clusters in the bass.

To begin the piece with greater control, the performer might wish to start the first two measures marked *pp* with both hands instead of just using the left hand, thus dividing the left hand part into two hands. The left hand would then take over in measure three when the right hand joins the left. Measures twenty-two and twenty-three require an important mechanical consideration where the top notes in the left hand have the counter-melody. Cowell writes in the score that the “top notes [should be] emphasized melodically.” He advises that the “melody tones may be brought out with the knuckles of the little finger in the playing of clusters.”⁴⁸ The pianist must ensure that the top notes of the left hand are brought out, while not overpowering the melody flowing through the right hand. Also, when bringing out the top notes of the left hand, careful practice will allow the other notes to be played evenly and specific notes to be neither omitted nor over emphasized. Cowell reiterates the importance of playing specific notes in his comments on the 1963 recording: “It should be obvious that these chords are exact and that one practices diligently in order to play them with the desired tone quality and to have them absolutely precise in nature.”⁴⁹

The arpeggiated chords in measures twenty-four and twenty-five will be played either as Cowell played them on his recordings, on the beat with the right hand chord and finishing after the beat, or else starting before the beat and ending the arpeggio at the same time the right hand chord is struck. Performing artists differ in their interpretations of these measures, and Cowell gives no indication of his preference. The performer must practice the arpeggiated chord on the same piano that will be used in the performance since each piano responds uniquely. The

⁴⁸ Cowell, *Piano Music, Vol. 1*, inside of back cover.

⁴⁹ Cowell, *Piano Music*, Smithsonian/Folkways, Track 20. Transcribed by author.

arpeggiated tone clusters should be rolled slowly, and to avoid a clump of notes at the bottom and then at the top (sounding like two chords instead of one long arpeggio), the arm should be lifted prior to striking. The movement leading into the arpeggio should be started prior to the arm's meeting the keys by raising the elbow, followed in a wave-like motion by the wrist and before the forearm drops to the keys. This movement can be done with artistic flair to embellish the visual interest of the performance.

The performer must also decide the frequency of each pedal change when preparing *The Tides of Manaunaun*. Cowell's instructions simply say, "with pedal." Choosing to sustain the pedal longer requires a tempo that is slow enough for the chords to begin to dissipate so that the sound does not become muddy, but the tempo must still be fast enough that it does not drag.

Comparison of Recordings

The Tides of Manaunaun was recorded on piano roll by Margaret Nikoloric in 1922.⁵⁰ Cowell recorded a number of his own pieces, including *Tides of Manaunaun*, but his first recording of the work was released on LP with Composers Recordings, Inc. (CRI) in 1956.⁵¹ A second recording of this work was released by Folkways Records on LP in 1963.⁵² Several other artists have recorded his pieces since Cowell's own recordings. Table 2.2 lists the recordings of *Tides* evaluated in this document:

⁵⁰ A MIDI file of this recording is available through the International Association of Mechanical Music Preservationists.

⁵¹ This recording was reissued on CD by New World Records in 2010.

⁵² Folkways Records was acquired by the Smithsonian Institution in 1987. Cowell's 1963 recording as Folkways 3349 on LP was reissued on CD in 1993 by Smithsonian/Folkways Records 40801 with an introduction by Sorrel Doris Hays.

Performer	Album Name	Recording Date⁵³
Henry Cowell	Music of Cowell, Pinkham and Hovhaness	1956
Henry Cowell	Henry Cowell Piano Music	1963
Sorrel Doris Hays	The Piano Music of Henry Cowell	1977
Steffen Schleiermacher	The Bad Boys! (Antheil, Cowell & Ornstein)	1994
Susanne Kessel	Californian Concert	2006
Richard Zimdars	American Piano Music: 1900-1930	2009
Daniele Lombardi	Musica futurista, Vol. 7	2010

Table 2.2: Recordings Used in the Discussion of *The Tides of Manaunaun*

Each recording contains differences as each artist displays a unique interpretation of *Tides*. Cowell also varies his performance between his two recordings, thereby setting the stage for other pianists to take some liberty in the piece. The total performance times in Table 2.3 and Figure 2.7 show at a glance the variety in tempi. The table is listed in chronological order according to the first release of each recording.

Performer	Length of Performance
Henry Cowell (1956)	2:19
Henry Cowell (1963)	2:26
Sorrel Doris Hays (1977)	3:10
Steffen Schleiermacher (1994)	3:50
Susanne Kessel (2006)	4:49
Richard Zimdars (2009)	4:01
Daniele Lombardi (2010)	3:11

Table 2.3: List of Performance Lengths for *The Tides of Manaunaun*

⁵³ Recording date if known or first release date.

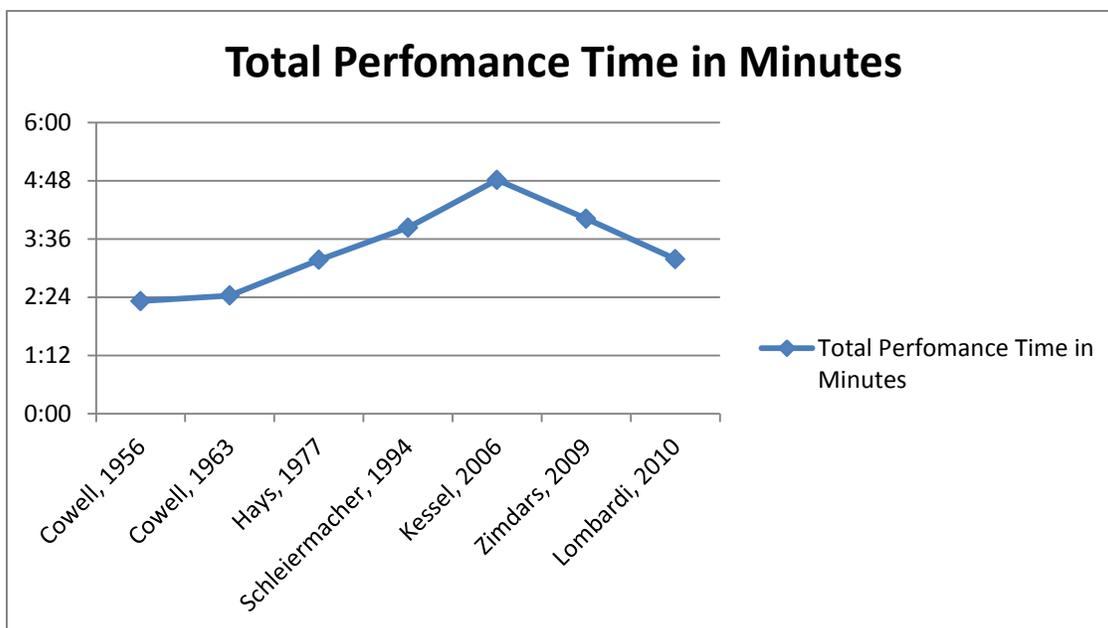


Figure 2.7: Total Performance Lengths in Minutes for *The Tides of Manaunaun*

Each artist varies the tempo throughout the piece to some extent, but the average metronome markings for each recording can be seen in Table 2.4.

Performer	Quarter note = (approximately)
Henry Cowell (1956)	63
Henry Cowell (1963)	63
Sorrel Doris Hays	52
Steffen Schleiermacher	44
Susanne Kessel	30
Richard Zimdars	44
Daniele Lombardi	52+

Table 2.4: Metronome Markings

Cowell's 1956 recording is the shortest of all. His average tempo is approximately quarter note = 63, but he increases the tempo significantly over the course of the piece. Additionally, finding his exact tempo marking is difficult because he clips the ends of beats, especially half notes, moving on to the next chord instead of holding the chords for the full two

beats. The right hand is choppy even though it is marked legato, which could be due to lifting the pedal while lifting the hands instead of clearing the pedal after the next note is played, causing a rough transition between chords. At times, when he changes the pedal, there is an audible hiccup in the sound, such as between measures five and six and between measures eight and nine. In addition to lifting the hands when changing the pedal, Cowell also seems to change the pedal very frequently, starting every first and third beat at the beginning and becoming more frequent later. Though not always consistent, he appears to change the pedal on every note starting on the right-hand quarter-note triplets in measure seven. Other times, he changes the pedal on the first and last quarter-note triplets. In measure twenty-two, he changes the pedal on every left-hand chord.

Cowell has very little dynamic variation within the piece. The beginning is slightly softer than the rest but sounds more like *mf* than *pp* within his overall dynamic scheme. He brings out the melody notes throughout the piece, and in measures twenty-two and twenty-three, the counter melody in the left hand can be clearly heard in the top notes of the left hand, although the rest of the chord in the left-hand is a bit hard to decipher because it is so soft. His arpeggiated chords in measures twenty-four and twenty-five start on the beat with the top note coming after the beat. He slows down on each *ritardando* but only slightly. The right-hand arpeggiated chord in measure twenty-eight is played so rapidly that it sounds as though the pitches are played simultaneously.

Cowell's 1963 recording is not as strict as his 1956 recording. His tempo is nearly the same as his first recording at about quarter note = 63, but he observes the *ritardando* markings more and also takes time in other areas, such as measures twenty-two through twenty-five. The arpeggiated chords are struck on the beat with the last note coming after the beat as in the first

recording, but the top notes are not as clean and precise. Instead of emphasizing only the highest note and playing it cleanly, he plays some extra notes at the top of the arpeggio. He plays the rhythm in seventeen differently than written, playing two quarter notes instead of two half notes as it is written in the score. Overall, however, this later recording is better as it does not feel as rushed as the first one.

Sorrel Doris Hays's⁵⁴ rendition brilliantly portrays a picture of the Irish god through her tempo, dynamic scheme, and smooth sound between tone clusters. She has become well-known for her performances of and advocacy of new music. She won first place in 1971 in the International Competition for Interpreters of New Music and premiered Cowell's Piano Concerto in 1978. In 1993, she wrote the introduction for the liner notes in the reissue of Cowell's 1963 recording. In her 1977 recording of *Tides*, the tempo is roughly quarter = 52, slower than both of Cowell's recordings. Her dynamics are well mapped out, taking the listener on a continuous journey from start to finish as the dynamics gradually rise to the climax in measures twenty-four and twenty-five and then diminish again. She begins the *ritardando* in measure twenty-seven at the beginning of the measure instead of the third beat and then takes the *ritardando* very seriously, giving the impression that the piece is coming to a close as she draws out the arpeggiated chord in the right hand. As the sound dies away, she matches the dynamic level at the beginning of the coda and finishes out the piece.

Hays's pedal changes are less frequent than Cowell's. She seems to change roughly twice per measure until the climax, where she changes more frequently, and she makes a much more legato sound than Cowell. In the chromatic tone clusters in measures twenty-two and twenty-three, she brings out the top note of each chord, but all the notes can be heard much more clearly

⁵⁴ Sorrel Doris Hays (b. 1941 as Doris Ernestine Hays) was born in Memphis, Tennessee.

than in Cowell's recordings. The arpeggiated chords starting in measure twenty-four are played on the beat with the right hand and finished after the beat, as in Cowell's recordings.

Steffen Schleiermacher's⁵⁵ performance tempo is approximately quarter note = 44. He rarely changes the pedal. Because his tempo is so much slower than the tempi chosen by Cowell or Hays, he is able to allow each chord to resonate and begin to clear before moving to the next; he can avoid a pedal change or use only a partial change. Unlike the Cowell and Hays recordings, Schleiermacher starts the arpeggiated chords in measures twenty-four and twenty-five ahead of the beat instead of on the beat and finishes them on the beat, striking the last note with the right-hand chord. Schleiermacher begins very softly, and with each written dynamic change, he abruptly rises to that dynamic level. In measure twelve, he noticeably increases the dynamic level to *f* followed by another immediate rise to *ff* in the next measure. He rolls the chord in measure twenty-seven slowly but not quite as slowly and drawn out as Hays does. Overall, his performance is very steady and precise.

Susanne Kessel⁵⁶ gives the slowest performance of all the recordings at about quarter note = 30 (eighth note = 60) and her total time is the longest of all the recordings. At this tempo the piece sounds dark and foreboding, but it seems to drag and loses the overall sense of direction. Since the piece is already very slow, the places marked *ritardando* become extremely slow. The dynamics are well mapped out throughout the piece, rising to the climax and falling again to almost nothing. Unlike Cowell's recording, the arpeggiated chords starting in measure twenty-four are played before the beat and end on the beat with the right hand, yet they are played very quickly, so quickly that they almost sound like they are being struck on the beat.

⁵⁵ Steffen Shleiermach, (b. 1960) is a German pianist who exclusively performs twentieth-century music.

⁵⁶ Susanne Kessel (b. 1970) is a German concert pianist.

Richard Zimdars's⁵⁷ recording is nearly the same tempo as Schleiermacher's recording at about quarter note = 44. However, he takes more liberty with the tempo throughout the piece making his total recording time almost a minute and a half longer than Cowell's second recording. His pedaling is infrequent and allows the strings to resonate as in Schleiermacher's recording. In measures twenty-four and twenty-five, the tone clusters in the left hand are all allowed to resonate equally. As a result, the counter melody in the top notes is not heard distinctly. The arpeggiated chords in measures twenty-four and twenty-five are played very quickly and are begun before the beat, ending with the right-hand chord on the beat as Schleiermacher does.

Daniele Lombardi⁵⁸ begins with a tempo similar to Sorrel Hay's tempo at about quarter = 54. However, the tempo does not remain consistent. By measure twenty-four he is playing at about quarter note = 76. His pedaling is infrequent, allowing the chords to resonate. Like Schleiermacher and Zimdars, Lombardi performs the arpeggiated chords in measures twenty-four and twenty-five before the beat, ending on the beat with the right hand chords. The sound in measures twenty-two through twenty-four is uneven and messy because Lombardi does not bring out the top notes consistently and strikes other notes that are not written in the score. His dynamics rise to the climax and wane afterwards, but the overall dynamic range is not as wide or dramatic as in some of the other recordings.

From the recordings discussed in this chapter, all of the pianists who have recorded *The Tides of Manaunaun* since Cowell's recordings clearly have played the piece with a slower overall pulse and have taken more time throughout the piece. Partly due to choosing slower

⁵⁷ Richard Zimdars (b. 1947) is currently Despy Karlas Professor of Piano at Hodgson School of Music at the University of Georgia.

⁵⁸ Daniele Lombardi (b. 1946) is an Italian pianist who focuses on avant-garde and twentieth-century piano works. He has directed the New Italian Music and New Music International in Rome. He currently teaches piano at the Milan Conservatory.

tempi, the recordings later than Cowell seem to have less frequent and smoother pedal changes and to employ a larger dynamic range. The arpeggiated chords are played two different ways, with the three earliest recordings each playing the arpeggiated chord starting on the beat and with the right hand and ending after the beat, while the last four recordings begin the arpeggiated chord before the beat and end on the beat.

Through the writing of *The Tides of Manaunaun*, Cowell opened the door to further creativity in making music using the piano. Finding a way to notate his tone clusters paved the way for other composers to experiment and notate non-traditional music. John Cage, one of his students who wrote pieces for prepared piano, said, “I think that when one thought of Henry there was the tendency to smile rather than to look sad. His openness of mind was cheering, and yet it was almost inherent in him and from a very early age. I don’t know how old he was when he began playing the piano with his arms and with his fists, but it needed a very open-minded person to do that. And he did it.”⁵⁹

⁵⁹ Perlis and Van Cleve, *Composers' Voices*, 179.

3. TIGER

Cowell used tone clusters in a number of works for piano including *Tiger* (HC 463/2):

Tiger was suggested originally by William Blake's poem on "Tiger, Tiger, Burning Bright." Perhaps one might add to this that in some of these pieces there are the use of tone clusters—tone clusters being on the piano whole scales of tones used as chords, or at least three contiguous tones along a scale being used as a chord. And at times, if these chords exceed the number of tones that you have fingers on your hand, it may be necessary to play these either with the flat of the hand or sometimes with the full forearm. This is not done from the standpoint of trying to devise a new piano technique, although it actually amounts to that, but rather because this is the only practicable method of playing such large chords. It should be obvious that these chords are exact and that one practices diligently in order to play them with the desired tone quality and to have them absolutely precise in nature.⁶⁰

Background

Though Cowell states that *Tiger* was inspired by Blake's poem (see Appendix A), it developed from a reworking and expansion of an incomplete sketch from 1922 with the working title *Conservative Estimate*.⁶¹ A 1926 version of the piece was entitled *Dash! Tiger*,⁶² and Cowell continued to revise the work until circa May 1929. The final name, *Tiger*, was applied as early as October 18, 1927, when Cowell first performed a version of the work in a lecture recital in San

⁶⁰ Cowell, *Piano Music*, Smithsonian/Folkways, Track 20. Transcribed by author.

⁶¹ Lichtenwanger, *Music of Henry Cowell*, 86–87.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 126.

Joaquin, California. An article in the *San Joaquin Daily Evening Journal* reviewed Cowell's performance of the piece as "a great deal of 'well-governed NOISE.'"⁶³

Cowell was the first American composer to be invited to the Soviet Union. As a result of that trip, *Tiger* was first published in Moscow as the second of a set entitled *Two Pieces*; the first was *Lilt of the Reel*.⁶⁴ Reports of the year of publication vary. Oliver Daniel, in the score published by Associated Music Publishers, gives 1928 as the Moscow publication date,⁶⁵ but William Lichtenwanger claims it was published in 1930. Lichtenwanger's date coincides with a publication shortly following the time that Cowell was in the Soviet Union in the spring of 1929.⁶⁶ Associated Music Publishers later published a reproduction of the Russian score, but split up the two pieces. *Tiger* was published in 1960 in *Piano Music by Henry Cowell*, and *Lilt of the Reel* was published in 1982 in the second volume of *The Piano Music of Henry Cowell*.⁶⁷

Cowell's visit to the Soviet Union was not all glory as he experienced firsthand some of the harsh realities of life under the Soviet communist regime. He had trouble obtaining a tourist visa because the United States had not yet recognized the Soviet Union, he had trouble securing a hotel room and so slept on a park bench while protecting his passport from theft, he was so cold on the train that he slept on the wooden train bed in third class and used the mattress as a blanket, and he was forced to pay enormous prices for basic food.⁶⁸

His compositions met with varied responses in the USSR. One of his concerts, scheduled for May 2 by the All-Soviet Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries (VOKS), was cancelled after Cowell played his pieces for the VOKS committee as his compositions were

⁶³ Ibid., 126–27.

⁶⁴ Cowell, *Piano Music, Vol. 1*, inside of front cover; Lichtenwanger, *Music of Henry Cowell*, 127. The Associated Music Publishers edition claims that *Tiger* was published by the Russian State Edition. Lichtenwanger claims that *Tiger* was published by the Soviet State Publishing House.

⁶⁵ Cowell, *Piano Music, Vol. 1*, inside of front cover.

⁶⁶ Lichtenwanger, *Music of Henry Cowell*, 127.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Sachs, *Henry Cowell: A Man Made of Music*, 164–165.

considered “far too radical for Soviet citizens.”⁶⁹ This concert was later rescheduled for May 27 (which VOKS covered by saying that it had only been postponed instead of cancelled), but the All-Soviet Society made many attempts to sabotage the concert by refusing to give out programs, announcing pieces during applause, scheduling the concert during dinnertime, and delaying the start of the concert for an hour.⁷⁰ At other concerts while in Russia, his compositions piqued so much interest that he had to repeat works, sometimes as many as seven times.⁷¹ Conflicting governmental policies opposing individualistic expression and emphasizing uniformity in music, along with the impossibility of importing foreign scores due to the inability to convert the ruble to foreign currencies, left Soviet students with an insatiable desire for new music. They wanted to hear the pieces repeated in order to gain a better understanding of the music rather than out of simple enjoyment of the works. Some students heard Cowell’s pieces so many times they were able to write them down from memory.⁷²

For granting permission to publish his music, Cowell was paid royalties in advance by the Soviet publishing company. When Cowell learned that the publishing company based its pay on the number of quarter notes that were written, he joked that he should not have written so many tone clusters since each cluster was only worth one quarter note even though each cluster contains many notes; instead he should have written them all out individually.⁷³

Innovation and Notation

The tone clusters in *Tiger* are more aggressive than those in *The Tides of Manaunaun*: faster, louder, and often spanning greater intervals. *Tiger* also uses more cluster variations, from

⁶⁹ Ibid., 163, 165.

⁷⁰ Sachs, *Henry Cowell*, 169.

⁷¹ Hicks, *Henry Cowell, Bohemian*, 118.

⁷² Sachs, *Henry Cowell*, 168.

⁷³ Ibid.

tone clusters as small as two notes to over fifty notes. Cowell notated some of the tone clusters to be played with one forearm, some with both forearms, some with the hand, and some with the fist. The large tone clusters contain too many notes for each to be written into the score, so they are notated as in *The Tides of Manaunau* with standard note heads specifying the outer notes of the clusters and a vertical bar connecting them and indicating that the performer should play every note between the outer two notes. Most of the clusters in *Tiger* are eighth notes with a filled in vertical bar connecting the note heads, but on the few open note heads in the piece, such as half notes and whole notes, the bar is open in the middle. Some of the smaller tone clusters are to be played with the fist. These clusters are marked with a plus symbol.⁷⁴ The instructional notes on the score are all written in Russian, English, and German. The dynamics in the piece range from *ppp* to *ffff*. At times, triangle-shaped note heads are written to indicate the keys of the piano to be pressed down without sounding. See Figure 3.1.



Figure 3.1: Silent Cluster

TIGER

By Henry Cowell

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⁷⁴ In the Associated Music Publishers edition, the fist clusters in *Tiger* are marked with “+” but in another piece, *Advertisement*, they are marked with “x.”

The silent-cluster lifts the dampers but does not allow the hammers to strike the strings. Certain tones from the last chord that was played can be retained without striking another note. The silent-clusters are often played just prior to a single-note melody in the right hand. As Reiko Ishii points out in her treatise, “The Development of Extended Piano Techniques in Twentieth-Century American Music,” “The melody of single tones following the [silent] chord is the reinforcement of overtones generated by the chord.”⁷⁵ Later in the piece, the silent tone clusters are played just prior to staccato tone clusters played with the right forearm. See Figure 3.2.

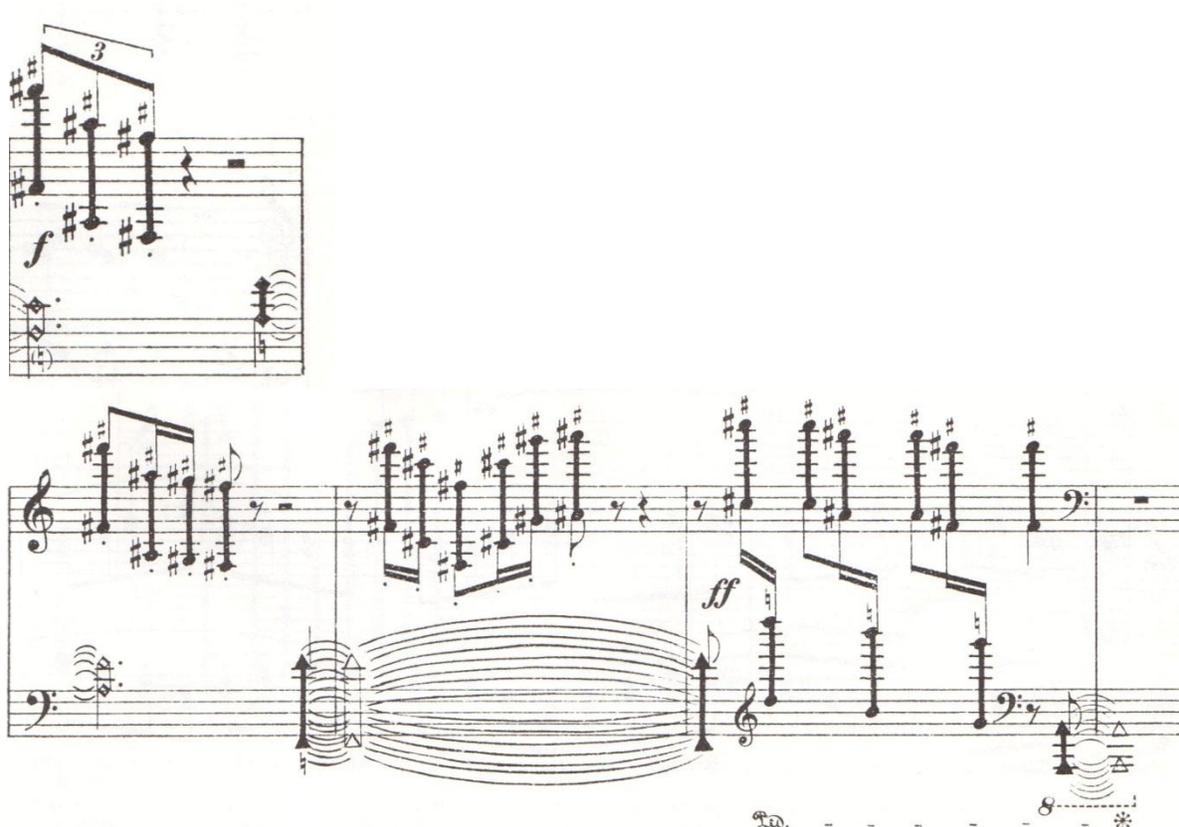


Figure 3.2: Right-hand Staccato Tone Clusters

TIGER

By Henry Cowell

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⁷⁵ Ishii, “Extended Piano Techniques,” 26.

The extremely loud dynamic levels are produced by using great force and playing large tone clusters (spanning even fifty or more notes) that are repeatedly struck while the pedal is held down. Eighth notes are almost constant in both hands throughout the piece. The range between the dynamic levels is astounding. Pianist Sorrel Doris Hays describes her experience of playing tone clusters by saying, “Playing cluster music, as the resonances accumulate in a kind of roiling sonic mud and cleanse themselves as the sediment settles, I feel a power to the piano that is like the mightiness of an organ, but organically profiled by percussive attack and natural tone decay.”

The piece begins in common time (4/4), but the meter changes occur twenty-two times throughout the piece. Aside from common time, Cowell uses time signatures of 2/4, 3/2, 3/4, 5/4, 7/8, 9/8, and 6/8. Younger and less-experienced pianists may find the five-against-four in measure nine difficult.

The tempo marking is “Tempestuously” in Cowell’s draft written in pencil but appears as *Allegro feroce* in the score.⁷⁶ Both markings communicate the furious aggression that is necessary when playing the piece. The *allegro* tempo marking is more concrete than the markings in some of Cowell’s other pieces. *Tiger* remains at a steady tempo throughout the piece, except for a *ritardando* in measure eighteen, until changing to *poco accelerando* in measure seventy-eight. In measure eighty-one, *Più mosso* is indicated before increasing to *Presto* in measure ninety.

Cowell uses several textures to make up the piece, creating a mosaic-like structure with smaller pieces laid out in no readily apparent pattern coming together to give an overall impression. The textures used in *Tiger* include large repeating chords, (mm 1–3), hand clusters with one hand while the opposing hand plays single notes (mm 19–26), chords in one hand with

⁷⁶ Lichtenwanger, *Music of Henry Cowell*, 127.

arm clusters in the opposite hand (mm 31–33), fist clusters (mm 37–41), silent chords (mm 6), arm clusters using both arms (mm 86–93), and single-note melodies either alone (mm 7–8) or with harmony (mm 17–18). The dynamic scheme begins at *ff*, decreases to *ppp* in measure twenty-one, and ebbs and flows a bit throughout the piece until it grows to *ffff* with a *sf* and double arm clusters in measure eighty-eight. The heightened dynamic level and large tone clusters of the climax continues for four additional measures until Cowell writes softer dynamics and smaller fist clusters and written chords in the last seven measures (from mm 93–99).

Performance Guide

Of the four pieces selected for this document, *Tiger* has the highest level of difficulty for the performer. As the score is detailed and specific concerning pitches, octaves, dynamics, and tempo, the pianist has little leeway in those areas of the performance.

The tone clusters that are to be played with the fist require a different technique than the ones played with the hand or forearm. The playing instructions on the back cover of *Piano Music by Henry Cowell, Volume One* describe, “When playing in this manner [with the fist], the wrist should be relaxed, with the fist half-opened, not clenched tightly. The tone quality produced by the fists is different from that produced by the fingers.”⁷⁷ The pianist must not hit the piano but should press the keys quickly with the bottom part of the fist (the thumb side up and the fifth finger side down). The closed hand enables a smaller amount of notes to be played at a fast rate of speed. Measures fifty-six through fifty-eight contain very difficult fist tone clusters. Both hands play fist clusters on every eighth-note pulse in each measure. Each measure contains clusters that are played in contrary motion between the right and left hand. This takes much practice and hand-eye control to play cleanly while emphasizing the top notes of each cluster.

⁷⁷ Cowell, *Piano Music, Vol. 1*, inside of back cover.

Measures thirty-four through thirty-six are also difficult. See Figure 3.3. The right hand plays fist clusters similar to the ones played in measures fifty-six through fifty-eight, but the left hand plays two-octave forearm clusters concurrently. The pianist will need to lean to the left to reach the bass chords, which will distort the vision for the right-hand fist clusters. Since the right-hand clusters move step-wise, they are easier to navigate than the fist clusters in the later measures.

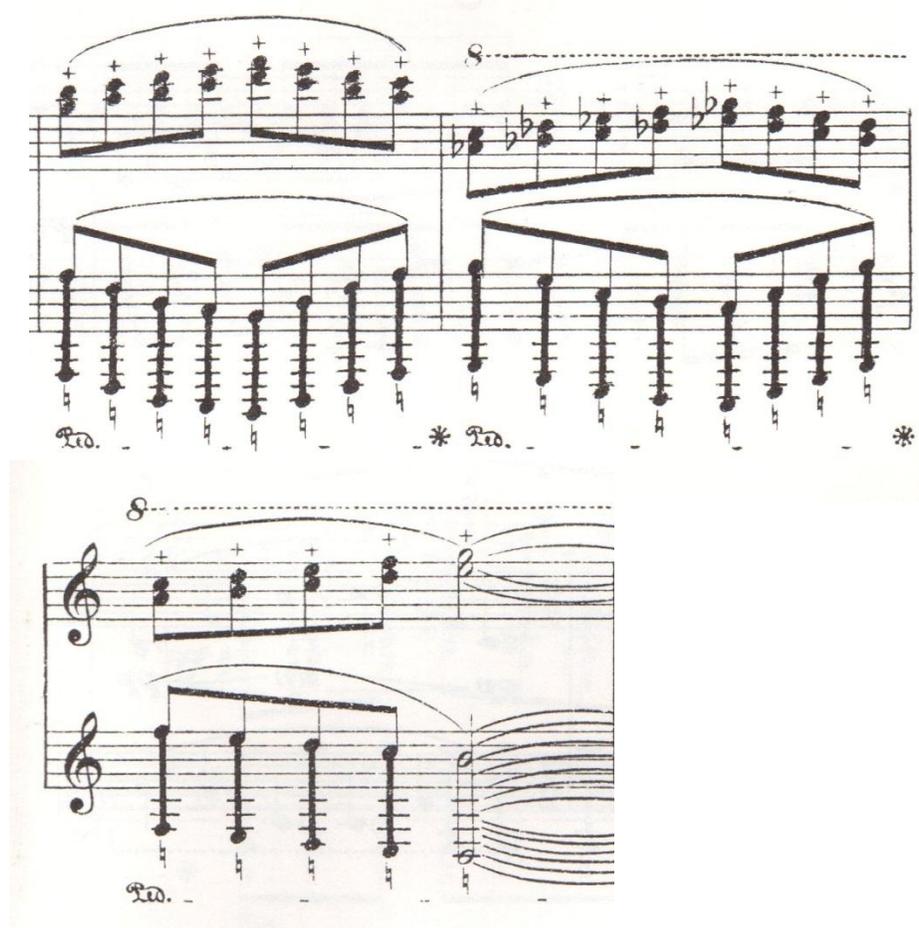


Figure 3.3: Measures 34-36

TIGER

By Henry Cowell

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The first clusters beginning in measure thirty-seven and then at the end of the piece are easier because one hand plays only black notes while the other hand plays white notes and because each chord repeats multiple times. The pianist should quickly move to the next position as soon as the last note of the previous position is played. Positioning early will allow the pianist to play more accurately and quickly as well as making the performance easier.

Measures fifty-nine and sixty-two are notated with three tone clusters. See measure fifty-nine in Figure 3.4. The bass-clef cluster is played with the left hand, and the remaining two clusters are played with the right hand. The pianist's forearm must be angled so that the wrist and hand are playing the indicated black notes and the upper part of the forearm is playing the indicated white notes. The middle of the forearm should play both the black and white notes in the overlapping sections between the two treble-clef clusters.

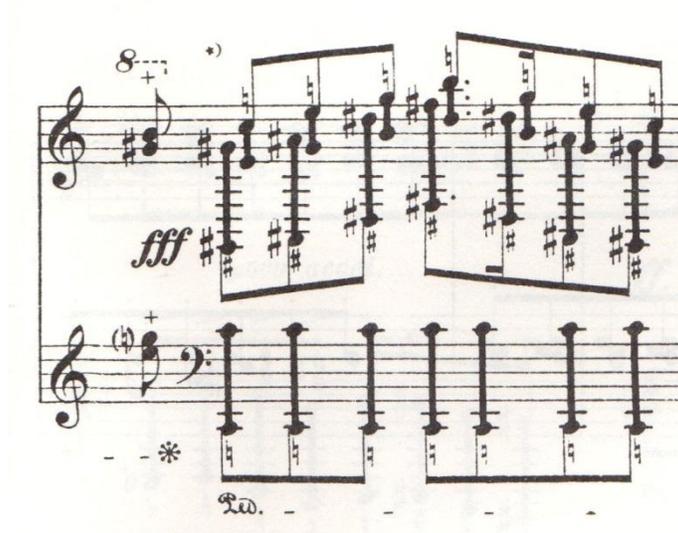


Figure 3.4: Measure 59

TIGER

By Henry Cowell

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Cowell is very clear about indicating which notes should be emphasized. These notes are marked with either *tenuto* markings or accents. When the melody shifts from the right hand to the left hand, the notes are marked with accents such as in measure twenty-one where the left hand takes over the melody which was previously in the right hand.

Comparison of Recordings

Cowell performed *Tiger* many times and recorded the piece in 1963 with Folkways Records. Unlike *Tides*, *Aeolian Harp*, and *Banshee*, however, he did not record *Tiger* on the 1956 recording. Additionally, while there are some variations between other pianist's recordings and his own, the differences between recordings are fewer in *Tiger* than in the other works studied in this document. This increased uniformity is due, in part, to a more measurable tempo marking with little flexibility and to a more conventional approach to playing the piano. While *Tiger* uses extended techniques including the various tone clusters and silent clusters, the piece is played completely on the keyboard with much of the work written in standard notation.

The pianists who have recorded *Tiger* and are discussed in this chapter are listed in Table 3.1.

Performer	Album Name	Recording Date⁷⁸
Henry Cowell	Henry Cowell Piano Music	1963
Sorrel Doris Hays	The Piano Music of Henry Cowell	1977
Joel Sachs	Cowell: Instrumental, Chamber and Vocal Music, Vol. 1	1990
Steffen Schleiermacher	The Bad Boys! (Antheil, Cowell & Ornstein)	1994
Anthony de Mare	Wizards & Wildmen	2007
Daniele Lombardi	Musica futurista, Vol. 7	2010

Table 3.1: Recordings Used in the Discussion of *Tiger*

⁷⁸ Recording date if known or first release date.

The total times for the length of performance for each of the recordings range from nearly three minutes to just under three and a half minutes and are much closer than the other recordings discussed in this document. See Table 3.2.

Performer	Length of Performance
Henry Cowell (1963)	3:28
Sorrel Doris Hays	3:20
Joel Sachs	3:01
Steffen Schleiermacher	2:50
Anthony de Mare	3:05
Daniele Lombardi	3:25

Table 3.2: List of Performance Lengths for *Tiger*

The largest difference is between Cowell’s recording with the most time and Steffen Schleiermacher in 1994 with the shortest total time. See Figure 3.5.

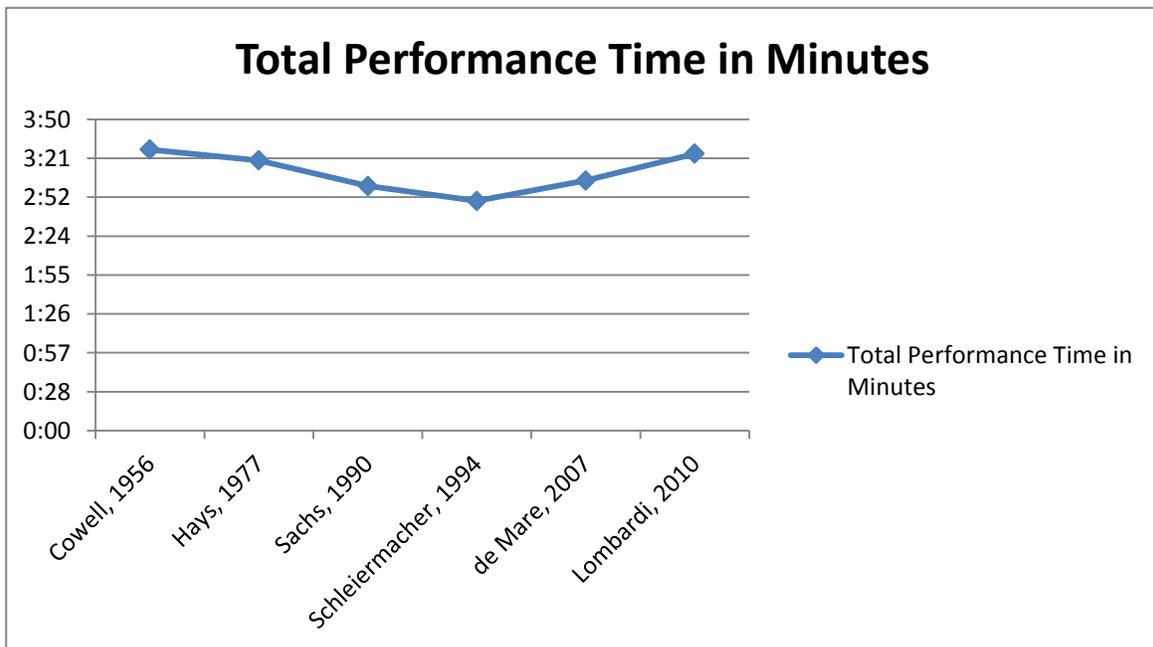


Figure 3.5: Total Performance Lengths in Minutes for *Tiger*

Cowell increases and decreases the tempo throughout the piece on his recording. He pauses on each *tenuto* marking on the first beat of measures three and four and pauses on other notes throughout the piece as well. He slows the tempo almost in half in some measures, such as measures thirty-one and seventy-three when the left forearm has two-octave clusters, and then proceeds to accelerate in the following six measures. He takes time in other measures, such as measure forty-five, as he plays the motif with the right forearm and in measure fifty-one just before starting measure fifty-two. When the melody shifts from right hand to left hand or vice versa, the melody is brought out and very clearly distinguished. His dynamic range tends to be louder than softer, without much variety.

Sorrel Doris Hays's recording is very similar to Cowell's recording but is more controlled. She starts out slightly slower than Cowell but does not take as many pauses. The total recording times are very close, with Hays's time being slightly shorter. Her performance is steady while still taking a bit of liberty with the tempo, especially at the beginning and ends of phrases. She has more dynamic contrast than Cowell.

Joel Sachs's⁷⁹ recording has the greatest range of dynamics from barely audible, like a sneaky tiger, to extremely loud and frantic. The contrast is intensified by the way Sachs begins very softly and slowly increases the sound and then brings the dynamic level down with gradual *diminuendos*. Like Cowell, Sachs takes time between phrases and speeds up in other sections, but Sachs does this more than Cowell, making the piece sound like it consists of many different sections. After a long pause, Sachs often begins a section slowly and then accelerates within each section. He pauses at the end of measure fifty before beginning with a soft, sneaky start in fifty-one and accelerating as he makes a *crescendo*. He does the same thing in measures fifty-three

⁷⁹ Joel Sachs is Professor of Music History, Chamber Music, and New Music Performance at the Julliard School. He has written a biography, *Henry Cowell: A Man Made of Music*, published by Oxford University Press.

and sixty-seven. At the end of the piece, he holds the pedal in measures ninety-six and ninety-seven unlike Cowell or Hays.

Steffen Schleiermacher starts the piece more slowly than Cowell and keeps a very steady rhythm throughout it. He increases the tempo immediately in measures eighty-one and ninety where new tempo markings are written but keeps the tempo steady each time it is changed. He does not take any pauses for *tenuto* markings, large tone clusters, or difficult rhythms or sections. His playing sounds almost computerized because it is so strict and exact. His dynamic range is similar to Cowell's range, but Schleiermacher's dynamics are more convincing in the way he maps them throughout the piece, similar to the way Sachs does.

Anthony de Mare plays the piece more slowly than Cowell but not as slowly as Lombardi. De Mare's performance is steady and plodding. He does not bring out the melody notes like Cowell does but instead plays all the notes equally. His soft sections are gentle and pleasant, and he takes time within these measures, such as measures sixteen through twenty-six and measure fifty, but the other sections, ranging from from *mf* to *ffff*, are played with great force and little variance within the dynamic levels. In measure fifty-two, he plays the two groups of six eighth notes as two groups separated by a pause, instead of one large group of twelve notes as Cowell does.

Daniele Lombardi's tempo is slower at the beginning than all the other recordings of this piece, but his tempo is not consistent. As in de Mare's performance, the melody or accented notes are not emphasized. Lombardi is not as precise and careful with the exact notes as Cowell and even plays wrong notes in measure sixty-four. His performance is less distinct than the other recordings, but his dynamic range is similar to Cowell's.

Unlike *The Tides of Manaunaun*, the overall total times for the recordings of *Tiger* are all shorter than Cowell's total time, although they are all very close to each other. Many of the pianists follow Cowell's example of including several pauses, slowing down in sections, and speeding up in others. The recordings after Cowell's show more dynamic contrast, with many of the artists using more gradual or dramatic *crescendos* and *diminuendos* throughout the piece. On the one hand, Scheiermacher plays the piece strictly with little variation, adding a bit more dynamic variation than Cowell but taking less freedom with pauses. On the other hand, Sachs varies the tempi and dynamics and even adds an unwritten pedal hold at the end, thereby going beyond Cowell's example and taking even more liberties with the piece.

Cowell gives the pianist enough information to present an accurate performance of *Tiger* that will engage listeners as they envision the fierce yet sneaky tiger. While the performer must decide the exact tempo to be played and has a little bit of flexibility with phrasing choices, most of the decisions are clear-cut. The pianist's main job in this piece is to practice and present a vibrant and engaging performance.

4. AEOLIAN HARP

On his 1963 Folkways recording, Cowell says of *Aeolian Harp* (HC 370):

When I wanted to compose a piece around the idea of an Aeolian harp, which is a tiny wind harp to be hung in a window so that the wind will produce sound from the silk strings, the tones of the piano seemed a little bit too crass. So it suggested itself to me that if one could only play the harmonies on the strings of the piano directly, that you could have those gusty differences between loud and extreme soft that you might get on a real Aeolian harp. And so a method of playing the chords on the strings was worked out.⁸⁰

Background

The Aeolian harp is an ancient instrument that may date back as far as Old Testament times.⁸¹ However, in 1650, Athanasius Kircher, a German Jesuit monk living in Rome, made the earliest documented Aeolian harp.⁸² The harp, whose name derives from Aeolus, the god of wind in Greek mythology,⁸³ is sometimes known as a wind harp because it is played by the wind. Aeolian harps were most popular from the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century until late in the nineteenth century⁸⁴ and were used during the Romantic era in European homes as well as sometimes being hung in “grottos, gardens, summer-houses or inhabited châteaux, or

⁸⁰ Cowell, *Piano Music*, Smithsonian/Folkways, Track 20. Transcribed by author.

⁸¹ Montagu, “Aeolian Harp”; Engel, “Aeolian Music (Concluded),” 481. The Bible passage is in Psalm 137.

⁸² Engel, “Aeolian Music (Concluded),” 480.

⁸³ Encyclopædia Britannica Online, “Aeolian Harp.”

⁸⁴ Oxford Dictionary of Music, “Aeolian Harp.”

uninhabited châteaux or even strung between the spires of two churches.”⁸⁵ Some artisans still craft Aeolian harps today.

The Aeolian harp is similar to a zither in form, but models range widely in size and shape. Though often made of wood, wind harps can be constructed from several different types of materials and typically have between four and twelve strings (sometimes even as many as twenty-four or forty-eight) of varying thicknesses.⁸⁶ The strings on the harp were traditionally made of catgut, later of wire or covered in wire, and occasionally of other materials such as silk, as noted by Cowell in the quotation at the opening of this chapter.⁸⁷ The strings are usually all tuned to the same pitch, but a few may be tuned an octave lower.⁸⁸

When the Aeolian harp is hung from a tree or set in a window allowing the wind to move across it to create sounds, the various thicknesses of the strings create harmonics.⁸⁹ Carl Engle writes, “According to the swell of the air, the tones—running through the harmonics of the fundamental tone, in a compass occasionally extending to six octaves—will increase and decrease in loudness and in rapidity of succession, with a variety of effects astonishing and charming.”⁹⁰ The sounds can range from soft and angelic to screaming and eerie. Depending on the speed and direction of the wind, a single string, several strings, or all of the strings might be heard either in unison or in different pitches.

Aeolian harps have also been used in China and Indonesia,⁹¹ and Cowell’s interest in world music may have introduced him to the sounds of this instrument. Cowell’s choice to recreate or approximate the sounds of the wind harp by direct manipulation of the piano strings

⁸⁵ Bonner, “Aeolian Harp.”

⁸⁶ Bonner, “Aeolian Harp.”

⁸⁷ Cowell, *Piano Music*, Smithsonian/Folkways, Track 20; Engle, “Aeolian Music (Concluded),” 479–80.

⁸⁸ Engle, “Aeolian Music (Concluded),” 479.

⁸⁹ Montagu, “Aeolian Harp.”

⁹⁰ Engle, “Aeolian Music (Concluded),” 480.

⁹¹ Encyclopædia Britannica Online, “Aeolian Harp.”

produced a new kind of playing which he treated as a different instrument. He referred to this instrument as the “stringpiano.”⁹² *Aeolian Harp* was the first solo piano work to be written that entails playing inside the piano.⁹³

Aeolian Harp was written around 1923 (although it may have been written prior to 1920 as he sometimes spoke of an earlier date, according to Sidney Cowell).⁹⁴ In 1923, Cowell gave a European tour, performing his own compositions, but not everyone enjoyed his new compositional style. In an article from the *Detroit News* on January 21, 1959 he recounts one of his concerts in Leipzig, Germany:

“I was engaged to play a recital of my own compositions,” Cowell recalled, “and I had been going about one minute when the trouble began. Some of those in the hall shouted for my immediate departure from the city. Others defended me. They said it was terrible music, but that I should be permitted to play the concert. The first attackers swarmed onto the stage by a stairway at the side. The others leaped across the footlights. They were brawling, and I was playing the piano, and it sure was a stageful. The police came and arrested 20 people. I went on playing, and every number was hissed. I wondered why they didn’t walk out on me if they disliked the music so much, but they all stayed and hissed all evening long. All but the 20 that were taken to the hoosegow, that is.” Cowell laughed heartily, and then suddenly became grave. “Very funny now, very funny indeed,” he mused, “but I can assure you it wasn’t funny that night. Did you ever try to play a concert while two opposing factions fought all around the piano?”⁹⁵

While some disapproved of Cowell’s new sounds, others were interested in these new ways of playing the piano. Cowell wrote other pieces using only the inside of the piano, including *Piece for Piano with Strings* and *The Banshee* and used *Aeolian Harp* as the basis for

⁹² Hicks, *Henry Cowell, Bohemian*, 110.

⁹³ Percy Grainger directs the pianist to “Strike the strings of the piano with medium-wound Marimba mallet” below the last three notes of the score in the third movement of his piece, *In a Nutshell* (1916). Although some pianists have performed inside the piano, *In a Nutshell* is the only work known to have been written for stringpiano prior to Cowell’s pieces.

⁹⁴ Lichtenwanger, *Music of Henry Cowell*, 94.

⁹⁵ Galvan, “Fleisher Collection,” 159, quoting Mossman, Joseph, “Composer’s Success Aid: A Sense of Humor,” *Detroit News*, 21 January 1959.

other pieces as well. In 1930 or 1931, Cowell used *Aeolian Harp* as a harmonic accompaniment to a vocal melody. The words to the song are from a free-verse poem, *How Old Is Song?*, written by his father (see Appendix B).⁹⁶ This piece was first performed by Judith Litante, accompanied by Cowell, at Town Hall in New York on March 9, 1931. Over a decade later, Cowell arranged the piece for violin and piano with violinist Joseph Szigetibut in mind. Szigetibut had the piece published as a surprise and support for Cowell, but in 1950 it was withdrawn due to a copyright issue.⁹⁷

Innovation and Notation

Aeolian Harp uses both the keyboard and the strings inside the piano. To indicate the string use, the piece is notated with standard notes, but a vertical wavy line that resembles an arpeggio symbol precedes each chord with either an up arrow or down arrow (see Figure 4.1). The arrows indicate whether the string should be strummed from high to low or from low to high.



Figure 4.1: Vertical Wavy Lines

AEOLIAN HARP

By Henry Cowell

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⁹⁶ Cowell set eight of his father's poems and seventeen of his mother's poems to music.

⁹⁷ Lichtenwanger, *Music of Henry Cowell*, 131–32.

The pianist sits on the bench or stands at the keyboard in front of the bench when playing the piece. To sound, the pianist silently presses the notated chords on the keyboard, releasing the dampers of the desired notes so that only those select strings will vibrate; the opposing hand then strums the strings inside the piano with one finger in the same register as the written notes. From measures one through five, the up and down arrows alternate. The remainder of the piece, however, contains all up arrows. From measure fourteen until measure sixteen, the instructions require the back of the thumb nail to sweep the strings. In all the other measures, the flesh of the finger is used. There are four chordal sections that each end with an arpeggio marked *pizzicato*. David Nicholls states in his book *American Experimental Music: 1890–1940*, “These two effects have structural significance, as the piece consists simply of four varied statements of a modal, chordal pattern, each of which ends with a plucked arpeggio.”⁹⁸ The alternating sections can be seen in Table 4.1.

Measure	1–5	6–7	8–12a	12b–13	14–18a	18b–19	20–24	25–26
Pattern	Chordal	<i>Pizzicato</i>	Chordal	<i>Pizzicato</i>	Chordal	<i>Pizzicato</i>	Chordal	<i>Pizzicato</i>

Table 4.1: Layout of *Aeolian Harp*

The piece contains a total of twenty-six measures. The first seven measures (five measures of chords plus two measures of an arpeggio) are restated faithfully at the end of the piece. (See measures one through seven in Figure 4.2).

⁹⁸ Nicholls, *American Experimental Music*, 164.

Henry Cowell
(1923)

Tempo Rubato

The image shows the first seven measures of the piece 'Aeolian Harp' by Henry Cowell. The music is written in a treble clef with a 2/2 time signature. The first five measures are marked 'inside' and 'p'. The sixth and seventh measures are marked 'pizz.' and 'outside'. A 'Ped.' line with a dashed line and an asterisk is shown below the staff.

Figure 4.2: Measures 1-7

AEOLIAN HARP

By Henry Cowell

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The first statement differs from the last in three ways. The first difference is that each chord in the final statement is strummed from the lowest note to the highest whereas the first statement of the chordal section alternates the direction of the strumming with each chord. The second difference is that the final statement requires slowing down at the end. Measure twenty-four contains a *ritardando* followed by an *a tempo* for the first two beats of measure twenty-five, and then a *ritardando* continues from the third beat of measure twenty-five until the end. The last difference is that the end of the piece is played on the inside (or center) of the string, whereas in the first statement, only the chordal section is played near the center of the string. The arpeggiated measures (measures six and seven) are to be played outside, near the tuning pegs. See Table 4.2.

First Statement: mm 1–7	Final Statement: mm 20–26
Strumming alternates in chordal section	Strings are all strummed from low to high
No <i>ritardando</i>	<i>Ritardando</i> in mm 25-26
Chordal section played inside/ <i>pizzicato</i> section played outside	Both chordal and <i>pizzicato</i> sections played inside

Table 4.2: Differences between First and Final Statements

The only pedal markings in the piece are notated underneath the arpeggio measures, starting during the chord immediately preceding each one. The printed instructions at the top of the score, however, include instructions that the pedal should be used on each chord as soon as the finger swipes the strings, while the keys are being pressed and then released before the next strum of the following chord.

Cowell provides dynamics in the score, but he does not indicate *crescendo* or *decrescendo* markings. The dynamics range from *p* to *ff*, but in light of his recorded comments of the piece where he espouses the “gusty differences between loud and extreme soft,”⁹⁹ it seems peculiar that he does not insert a *pp* marking anywhere in the piece. One rationale may be that because the piece is played inside the piano, very soft dynamic levels would not be able to be heard well in a concert setting.

Cowell’s manuscript designates the tempo marking as “Lento, in improvisatory style.”¹⁰⁰ In the published score, the tempo marking is “*tempo rubato*.” As with *The Tides of Manaunaun*, artists who have recorded *Aeolian Harp* since Cowell have chosen many different tempos. When performing *Aeolian Harp*, artists including Cowell himself occasionally select various tempos

⁹⁹ Cowell, *Piano Music*, Smithsonian/Folkways, Track 20. Transcribed by author.

¹⁰⁰ Lichtenwanger, *Music of Henry Cowell*, 94.

within the piece. His tempo markings, both in the manuscript and the printed score, allow ample provision for this flexibility within the piece and from one artist to another.

Performance Guide

The pianist performing *Aeolian Harp* must first understand the construction of the piano on which the piece will be performed in order to ensure that there is available access to all of the strings required to play the piece. According to Michael Hicks, author of *Henry Cowell, Bohemian, Aeolian Harp* was written to be played on an upright piano.¹⁰¹ Today, it is generally performed on a grand piano, and Cowell also seems to have used a grand piano if the photos in the liner notes of his 1963 recording are any indication. An upright piano would be very conducive to the performance of this piece due to its convenient layout. The pianist could remain seated yet reach the strings inside the piano without straining. All of the necessary strings are clear of any obstructions and can be strummed and plucked easily, as can be seen in Figures 4.3 and 4.4. The upright piano would be ideal in a home setting but might be too soft for a larger concert setting.

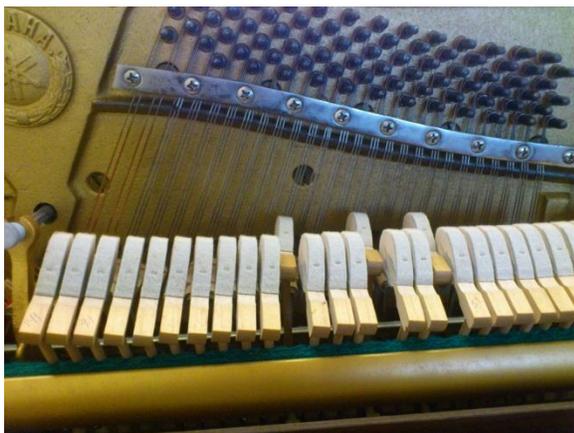


Figure 4.3: Strings of an Upright Piano



Figure 4.4: Strings of an Upright Piano, Wide

¹⁰¹ Hicks, *Henry Cowell, Bohemian*, 112.

A performer could not successfully play the *Aeolian Harp* on certain pianos, including a baby grand piano. In the baby grand design, the strings in the octave needed to be accessed cross under the lower strings leaving insufficient room for the finger to navigate the higher strings necessary to play the piece. This limitation can be seen in Figure 4.5.

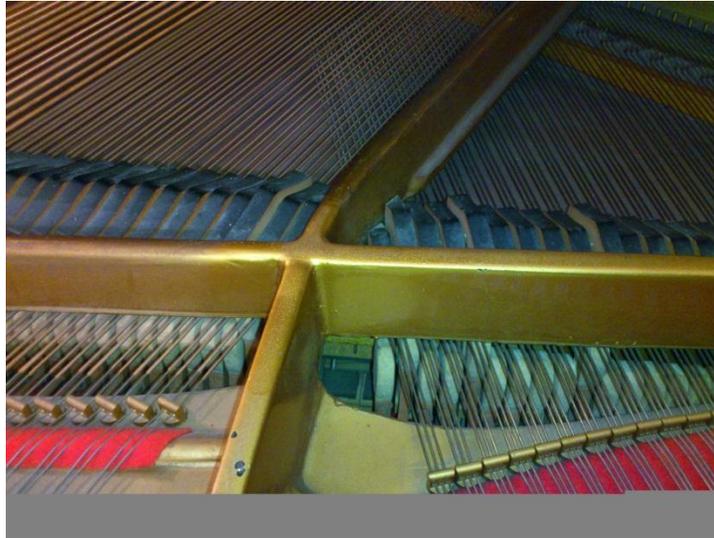


Figure 4.5: Strings of a Baby Grand Piano

The piano can be prepared ahead of time by marking the strings for the arpeggio sections. This can be done with a small label on the top of the damper. The strings in the chord sections do not need to be marked as they are played on the keyboard which lifts the dampers needed, giving visual cues of where to strum on the strings.

Professional piano technicians acknowledge that playing directly on the strings may not be good for the piano. Richard Bunker, author of *The Well-Prepared Piano*, writes, “The point is that there are countless way to damage a piano if one is careless or ignorant.”¹⁰² To protect the piano as much as possible, the pianist should maintain clean hands and wipe the strings with a

¹⁰² Bunker, *Well-Prepared Piano*, 1.

dry cloth after playing to remove body oils from the finger contact points as much as possible. Bunger adds, “Clean, dry hands will not corrode strings. On piano strings which have been recently polished, finger smudges may dull the luster slightly, but this will not affect the tone of the instrument. (If shiny strings are important to you, ask your piano tuner to rub them with Polita Steel Polish erasers).”¹⁰³

The performer must decide which hand should play the keyboard and which hand should play on the strings as the score does not indicate hand preferences. Although the piece is written in treble clef, it changes to bass clef for the first two to four notes of each of the plucked arpeggios before returning to treble clef. It would make sense to play the keyboard with the right hand since the chords are all written in treble clef and the first part of each of the plucked part is in the bass clef where the left hand could easily reach inside the piano. Yet in measure fourteen, the instructions specify that the pianist is to strum the chords with the back of the thumb nail. This could be done with either hand, but because the chords through those measures are to be swept from the lowest note to the highest, and since those three measures are marked *ff*, sweeping the strings with the right hand seems simplest. By leading with the elbow for leverage in pulling the hand to the right while sweeping the strings with the thumb fingernail, sufficient force could be used to produce the dynamic level required. These four measures contain the climax of the piece.

The liner notes of the 1963 Folkways recording include a picture of Cowell playing one of his pieces. Based on the hand position on the keyboard, he appears to be playing the beginning of *Aeolian Harp*. His left hand is positioned on the keyboard, and his right hand is inside the keyboard sweeping the strings. Cowell’s picture indicates that the right hand should play the strings. The right hand needs to reach across the body in order to play the beginning arpeggio

¹⁰³ Bunger, *Well-Prepared Piano*, 1.

notes in the bass strings but will have an easier time playing the thumb nail section starting in measure fourteen. Using the left hand to play the strings is consistent with the keyboard chords' being written in the treble clef and being played with the right hand. The left hand can easily reach the *pizzicato* notes in the bass and only rises to the middle of the piano. Whether to play the left-hand or the right-hand inside the piano is left up to the performer to determine.

Every piano produces unique sounds, so the piece should be practiced on the stage piano in order to determine the desired touch and timbre. The keys must be depressed silently, requiring an optimal rate of speed into the keys and weight of the hand. Because each piano has a unique keyboard resistance, this piece must be practiced on the performance piano to depress the keys as silently as possible.

The pianist must also consider whether to follow the written score or Cowell's example by taking some liberty within the piece. When deciding the tempo of the piece, the pianist has some freedom. With the given marking of "*tempo rubato*," the performer is encouraged to determine the speed. If following Cowell's example, the tempo will not be strict and will have two average tempi for the two alternating sections. The fact that *Aeolian Harp* was written to represent an instrument played by fluctuating gusts of wind implies that significant flexibility in performance technique is not only acceptable but perhaps even desirable.

Considering the range of sounds created by different sizes and shapes of Aeolian harps as well as the wind variation from a light summer breeze to a strong gust, one wonders whether there would be even broader diversity in sounds if Cowell hadn't recorded the piece himself. On the 1963 recording, when he speaks of the inspiration for the piece, he appears to suggest two separate ideas about how the piece should sound. On one hand, in reference to composing about a "tiny wind harp to be hung in a window so that the wind will produce sound from the silk

strings,”¹⁰⁴ he seems to have envisioned a piece based on the smallest wind harp with dainty strings, which would not produce quite as great a range of timbre or dynamics. Conversely, when he referred to it as creating “gusty differences between loud and extreme soft,”¹⁰⁵ he projects another image. It seems that there is abundant room for performance interpretation of the piece.

What is a reasonable level of personal interpretation? Perhaps Cowell’s own improvisational performances have set the stage for others to diverge from the score not only in tempo but in written notes as well. Since Cowell’s own recordings lack much dynamic contrast, it is unclear whether he would want his piece to be played by others with more color and variety than his own playing. Adding *diminuendos* and *crescendos* within the piece seems logical, as this would be the case with the wind playing the instrument which inspired the piece.

Comparison of Recordings

Along with *The Tides of Manaunaun* and *The Banshee*, *Aeolian Harp* has become one of Cowell’s most-performed pieces. Table 4.3 lists the recordings of *Aeolian Harp* that are discussed in this document.

Performer	Album Name	Recording Date¹⁰⁶
Henry Cowell	Music of Cowell, Pinkham and Hovhaness	1956
Henry Cowell	Henry Cowell Piano Music	1963
Robert Miller	Sound Forms for Piano	1976
Sorrel Doris Hays	The Piano Music of Henry Cowell	1977
Steffen Schleiermacher	The Bad Boys! (Antheil, Cowell & Ornstein)	1994
Anthony de Mare	Wizards & Wildmen	2007
Daniele Lombardi	Musica futurista, Vol. 7	2010

Table 4.3: Recordings Used in the Discussion of *Aeolian Harp*

¹⁰⁴ Cowell, *Piano Music*, Smithsonian/Folkways, Track 20. Transcribed by author.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Recording date if known or first release date.

Table 4.4 shows a list of the total performance lengths of the recordings of *Aeolian Harp*. Though the piece is short, differences in performance times are obvious. Both of Cowell's recordings have nearly the shortest total times (except for Robert Miller's total time). See Figure 4.6.

Performer	Length of Performance
Henry Cowell (1956)	1:36
Henry Cowell (1963)	1:35
Robert Miller (1976)	1:33
Sorrel Doris Hays (1977)	2:23
Steffen Schleiermacher (1994)	2:35
Anthony de Mare (2007)	2:24
Daniele Lombardi (2010)	2:05

Table 4.4: List of Performance Lengths for *Aeolian Harp*

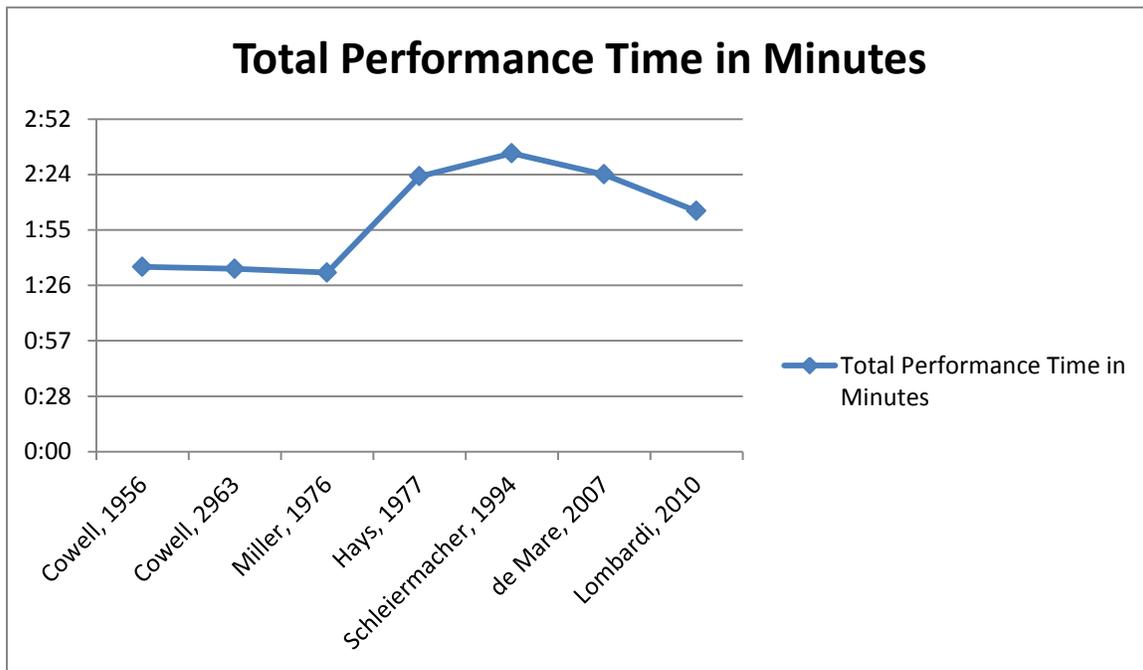


Figure 4.6: Total Performance Lengths in Minutes for *Aeolian Harp*

Cowell recorded the piece in 1956 and again in 1963, and his recordings are almost identical. They have some elasticity in tempo in different places, but the overall tempos are the

same. The dynamic scheme and tone quality are also the same. In both recordings, he deviates from the published score. In each *pizzicato* section, he adds one note between the first and second written notes. Instead of playing an octave as the first two notes, he plays a fifth, followed by a fourth (or the written octave note above the first note). In measure six he adds B-flat² between the first two notes of the measure, in measure twelve he adds E³ between the third and fourth beats, in measure eighteen he adds D³ between the third and fourth beat, and in measure twenty-five he adds B-flat² between the first two notes of the measure.¹⁰⁷ These extra notes give a nice full sound as they fill out the octave, but they diverge from what he originally wrote.

His tempo is also inconsistent throughout the piece. He begins slowly but increases the tempo by the third chord. The tempos within and between the *pizzicato* sections are also inconsistent, but Cowell generally plays each quarter note in those sections equivalent to the half-note chord section so that one quarter note equals one half note.

Each chord sweep is quick, but the louder the dynamic level, the faster Cowell's sweeps tends to be. Though it is not written in the music, Cowell slows down on the last three or four chords on all four chord segments before picking up the tempo again in the plucked segments. While slowing down, he also adds a *diminuendo* as he prepares for each plucked segment.

Robert Miller¹⁰⁸ recorded the piece in 1976.¹⁰⁹ He follows Cowell's example by including the extra notes that are not written in the score in the plucked sections. While he uses a tempo that is slightly faster than Cowell's overall tempo, Miller keeps his quite steady with little

¹⁰⁷ The pitch identification system used is the Acoustical Society of America system which identifies Middle C as C⁴, the octave below as C³, and the octave above as C⁵.

¹⁰⁸ Robert Miller (1930–1981) was a pianist and lawyer born in New York City. He specialized in performing contemporary music of American composers. One piece, *Synchronisms No. 6*, was written especially for him by Mario Davidovsky and won the Pulitzer Prize in 1971.

¹⁰⁹ This recording was issued on LP in 1976 and reissued on CD in 1995.

rubato. His sweeps on the strings of the piano are faster than Cowell's, giving a more aggressive sound even in the softer sections, and the dynamics change little throughout the piece.

Sorrel Doris Hays's recording is slower and more consistent than Cowell's. Her recording is similar to Cowell's in the speed of the string sweeps as well as her adding the unwritten notes in each of the plucked sections, taking some liberty with the tempo, and slowing down in each of the chord sections. The rate of speed with which she sweeps the strings is the same or nearly the same as Cowell's. She makes use of *rubato* as Cowell does, she but does not take as much liberty with the tempo as he does. Hays's total playing time is almost a minute longer than Cowell's total time because Hays plays the chords at a much slower tempo than Cowell does, and keeps the tempo more consistent. She slows down at times, such as at the end of each chordal section and at the end with a drawn out *ritardando*. She plays most of the plucked notes in the arpeggios as quarter notes as they are written rather than mirroring the variations found in Cowell's recorded performances, but she follows Cowell's performance example when she adds the second note of the arpeggios, playing a fifth above the starting note each time. Her dynamic scheme is also very close to the one Cowell uses on his recordings.

Steffen Schleiermacher's recording is closer to the written score than either of Cowell's. He does not add the unwritten notes that Cowell plays, choosing instead play exactly what was written and only slightly utilizes the *rubato* marking. He plays the chords at a tempo that is a bit slower than Hays's, but he shows more consistency in each section than she does.

Schleiermacher plays the *pizzicato* sections as written, with each plucked note equal to a quarter note, instead of as Cowell's recording, where each plucked note is equal to a half note. His most noticeable difference from Cowell's recording is his dynamic scheme. Schleiermacher grows

from nearly inaudible to extremely loud and then diminishes back to a soft ending that compels the hearer to listen attentively as it almost fades away.

Anthony de Mare¹¹⁰ does not add the extra notes in the plucked sections but plays the arpeggios as written, as Schleiermacher does. De Mare's tempo is slower than Cowell's, and he does not change his tempo throughout the piece except for the three *ritardando* markings in measures nineteen, twenty-four, and the last part of twenty-five through twenty-six. The only deviation from the score is that instead of playing the arpeggio measures as quarter notes, he plays them as half notes as Cowell does, but de Mare is much more strict and consistent. His sweeps are slower at the beginning of the piece, giving a gentler sound, and are quicker in the climax of the piece, increasing the intensity. His dynamic changes are sudden, and there is no *crescendo* or *decrescendo* leading up to them.

Daniele Lombardi's recording is very steady throughout the piece. He plays the arpeggios as written and does not follow Cowell's example of adding the unwritten notes. Lombardi's tempo starts out the same as Cowell's, but instead of speeding up as Cowell does, Lombardi stays at the same tempo continually except for a few times where he stretches the tempo a bit near the ends of phrases or at the *ritardando* markings. His rate of speed on the string sweeps is similar to Cowell's, but instead of becoming faster in the climax, Lombardi's sweeps remain at the same speed. The quarter notes in the *pizzicato* segments are played as half notes, modeling Cowell's recording. There is little dynamic contrast between the soft and very loud sections. Both dynamic levels have the same tone color and are almost at the same level.

Each pianist plays *Aeolian Harp* differently. Some of the artists, such as Miller and Hays, follow Cowell's example of adding notes that are not written in the score, while the other

¹¹⁰ Anthony de Mare (b. 1958) is from Rochester, NY. He is currently professor of piano at the Manhattan School of Music and New York University. He specializes in contemporary music.

pianists play the notes that are written in the score but follow Cowell's example in other ways, such as using fast sweeps on the strings, playing the *pizzicato* sections differently from the written rhythm, or choosing the same tempi. In each recording, the pianist varies the piece in some way, however, whether it is in tempi, taking time throughout the piece, the speed of sweeps, dynamic contrast, use of rubato, or written notes and rhythms.

Aeolian Harp is a rather simple yet interesting piece that allows opportunity for personalization, variety, and improvisation primarily because of Cowell's example. Each pianist can introduce the audience to the sounds of the wind harp (or stringpiano) while performing this historic and groundbreaking work.

5. THE BANSHEE

On the 1963 Folkways recording, Cowell explains the history of the Banshee (HC 405):

The Banshee is an Irish family ghost. “A woman of the inner world”, the word means. And she will be an ancestor of yours who is charged with the duty of taking your soul into the inner world when you die. So when you die, she has to come to the outer plane for this purpose. And she finds the outer plane very uncomfortable and unpleasant. So you will hear her wailing at the time of a death in your family while she’s there for the purpose of taking your soul back into the inner world—or whatever member of the family it might be.¹¹¹

Background

John Osborne Varian, Cowell’s contemporary and mentor who encouraged his exploration of Irish folklore and heavily influenced his composition of *The Tides of Manaunaun* (see Chapter 2), was actively inspirational in *The Banshee* as well, possibly in the choice of title for the piece and in its instrumentation. Varian occasionally wrote poems that he would send to Cowell with the hope of having them set to music. One of these was called “The Ban Shee.” Varian thought his poem should be scored for “A very high soprano or a very deep contralto but of course the very first necessity is a good interpretation[,] some one who can feel like a Ban Shee.”¹¹² Cowell considered but ultimately abandoned setting the text and instead used the title for a novel work to be performed on the piano.¹¹³

¹¹¹ Cowell, *Piano Music*, Smithsonian/Folkways, Track 20. Transcribed by author.

¹¹² From a letter from Varian to Cowell circa 1924 as quoted in Johnson, “Cowell, Varian, and Halcyon,” 12.

¹¹³ Hicks, *Henry Cowell, Bohemian*, 115.

At odds with this account, however, Cowell writes in a letter written to conductor Nicolas Slonimsky, “The name of *The Banshee* was added after the piece was written, to give the musical idea to people who do not have good enough ears to take interest in the music itself, without some exterior prop, such as a literary suggestion.”¹¹⁴ Regardless of whether the name was decided before or after the piece was written, the title and the concept of the ghostly creature correspond well. Seeger reports, as Cowell put it, “The musical style was then based upon the title (or vice versa) and the materials and title were meant to fit.”¹¹⁵

Varian also corresponded with Cowell about his inventions of new instruments. As Steven Johnson, in his article “Henry Cowell, John Varian, and Halcyon,” reports, one of these resembled a harp, although much larger and fitted with a keyboard and two sounding boards. Cowell and Varian communicated about this instrument very often in their letters. Although Varian patented the instrument in 1911, it was never completed. Johnson suggests that this harp-like instrument influenced Cowell’s “invention” of the instrument for which *The Banshee* and *Aeolian Harp* were scored, the “stringpiano.”¹¹⁶ Rather than inventing a completely new instrument to represent the mythological Banshee, Cowell used an old instrument but further developed the method of playing that he used with *Aeolian Harp* to produce unusual and haunting sounds. The following is from the program notes to Cowell’s concert on February 2, 1926, at the Aeolian Hall in New York City:

New tone qualities are difficult of achievement on old instruments. Therefore one turns to the idea of new instruments, for additional possibilities in the future. The production of newly invented instruments is costly, however, and usually only a few specimens of each are made, even where the inventor is fortunate enough to be able to build his product.

¹¹⁴ Brainard, “Henry Cowell’s Long Arm,” 29–30.

¹¹⁵ As told by Charles Seeger, quoted in Brainard, “Henry Cowell’s Long Arm,” 30.

¹¹⁶ Johnson, “Cowell, Varian, and Halcyon,” 10–12.

It is a great pleasure therefore, to find a new instrument capable of almost endless variety, which has the incalculable advantage of being already in nearly everyone's drawing-room. Such an instrument is the strings of the piano-forte, playing upon directly. Since the sounds, and the technique necessary to produce them, are entirely different from keyboard piano playing, I have no hesitation in calling the piano strings when played after this fashion, a separate instrument, which I term "stringpiano."¹¹⁷

The Banshee is the first piece for solo piano written to be played on the piano but totally free of keyboard use.¹¹⁸ Cowell explains the performance of the piece on the last track of his 1963 Folkways recording:

On *The Banshee*, the sounds are obtained by the player standing at the back of the piano with the pedal open and the coils on the lower bass strings are played on horizontally. If the piano is in tune, this will produce a very eerie sound roughly four octaves above the keyboard sound with a strange tone quality of its own, and with the possibility of wailing sounds which will be heard.¹¹⁹

Performance of this piece involves two individuals. Maria Cizmic, in her article "Embodied Experimentalism and Henry Cowell's *The Banshee*," reflects my own experience performing this piece with my then six-year-old brother.¹²⁰ The first person sits at the keyboard as one would expect the performer to do. However, this person never strikes a note on the piano but is simply the assistant who is responsible for depressing the damper pedal for the full duration of the piece.¹²¹ In my case, this assistant was my young brother dressed in his tuxedo with tails. The second individual goes to a position at the curve of the piano where a singer

¹¹⁷ Program notes from the Henry Cowell Collection, New York Public Library. Quoted in Cizmic, "Embodied Experimentalism," 438.

¹¹⁸ Cowell's first "stringpiano" piece, *The Sword of Oblivion* HC 367, was never published; Hicks, *Henry Cowell, Bohemian*, 113; Lichtenwanger, *Music of Henry Cowell*, 93.

¹¹⁹ Cowell, *Piano Music*, Smithsonian/Folkways, Track 20. Transcribed by author.

¹²⁰ Cizmic, "Embodied Experimentalism," 436.

¹²¹ *The Banshee* may be played with one performer and without an assistant. In such case, the piano bench may be used instead of the assistant by wedging the bench under the piano to hold down the pedal. Much care should be taken that the bench is wedged firmly so it will not slip off during the performance.

would stand. Rather than facing the audience, this performer turns around to face the piano with the back to the audience. The actual performer located at the piano curve then leans over into the piano and plays directly on the strings.

The Banshee may have been composed as early as 1923. In his book, *The Music of Henry Cowell: A Descriptive Catalog*, William Lichtenwanger speculates that *The Banshee* may have been included on a program of his own pieces Cowell performed to accompany dancer Yvonne Daunt (1899–1962) at the Salon D’Automne in Paris on December 16, 1923.¹²² The first documented mention of *The Banshee* appears in a letter written by Cowell to his father on February 3, 1925. The letter mentions having performed the piece in a concert where “*The Banshee* had to be repeated.”¹²³

On April 15, 1928, Cowell accompanied another modern dance program this time with dancer Doris Humphrey (1895–1958) at the John Golden Theater in New York (called the Theatre Masque at the time). In this program, when Cowell played *The Banshee*, Humphrey brought the creature to life through dance. From an article in *Dance Scope* magazine from the spring edition of 1966, Sidney Cowell is quoted as saying, “She came in on a wire, like Peter Pan. She had a piece of grey chiffon, and she ran with it over her face and with her mouth open. Henry liked that. He thought it was just what a banshee should look like.”¹²⁴ Also in 1928, having found success with the piece, Cowell arranged *The Banshee* for stringpiano and chamber orchestra. This arrangement became the first movement of his *Irish Suite*.

¹²² Lichtenwanger, *Music of Henry Cowell*, 106.

¹²³ Ibid. The recital location and exact date of the recital are not known.

¹²⁴ Ibid. Quoting *Dance Scope* 2:2 (Spring 1966), 8.

Innovation and Notation

The method of notation for playing inside the piano became an issue for the composer as well as the pianist. Out of necessity, Cowell developed his own notation system which the performer must learn to read. Producing the notation was not without struggle, as Cowell explains on his 1963 Folkways recording in the last track, entitled “Cowell’s Comments:”

There are of course many slight variations in the method of producing this [the sounds in *The Banshee*], all of which are given in the printed music which finally was accomplished triumphantly after a great many trials and errors in ways in which these curious sounds might be notated.¹²⁵

Cowell’s pencil draft was written on one bass clef staff with unmeasured measures.¹²⁶ The published score contains one bass clef staff but with a time signature of 2/2. Specific notes written in standard notation on the bass clef staff indicate which strings should be played. To designate how the strings should be played, Cowell gives a separate list of instructions labeled “Explanation of Symbols” on the preceding page. The symbols page instructs the pianist to play the entire piece, except for the plucked notes, an octave lower than written. The explanation of symbols lists letters A through L, which correspond to twelve playing-technique combinations. These combinations consist of three basic motions mixed with various parts of the hand to be used on the strings. The three motions are plucking the strings, sweeping across the strings like a glissando, and sweeping along the length of one string or multiple strings (see Table 5.1). The crosswise sweeping of strings in a chromatic fashion resembles playing a glissando on a harp, progressing either from a low note to a high note or from high to low, strumming every pitch between the outer notes. The lengthwise sweeping motion is accomplished either on one string at a time or on a group of strings together, starting up near the dampers and sweeping along the

¹²⁵ Cowell, *Piano Music*, (Smithsonian/Folkways) Track 20. Transcribed by Author.

¹²⁶ Lichtenwanger, *Music of Henry Cowell*, 106.

string or strings away from the dampers. These two sweeping motions will be referred to as crosswise or lengthwise sweeps. The plucking motion is indicated in the places marked *pizzicato* in the score. The score notates the sweeping motions with a wavy diagonal line for crosswise sweeps and a wavy horizontal line starting from the indicated note for lengthwise sweeps. See Figure 5.1. The wavy line is similar to a trill symbol.

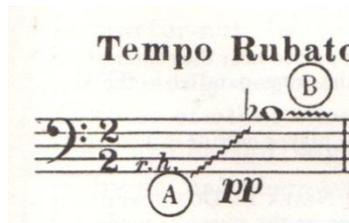


Figure 5.1: Symbols for crosswise and lengthwise sweeps

THE BANSHEE

By Henry Cowell

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The alphabet letters indicate which basic motion to use as well as whether to play on a single string or multiple strings and whether to use the flesh of the finger or group of fingers, the whole hand, or a fingernail or fingernails. The abbreviations *r.h.* or *l.h.* are written in the score to indicate which hand should be used. Table 5.1 shows the specified techniques used in the piece broken down into the three main categories. The bold letters *A* through *L* correspond to the twelve letters in the “Explanation of Symbols” instructions page in the score.¹²⁷

¹²⁷ Cowell, *Piano Music*, 8.

Sweep strings crosswise	Sweep strings lengthwise	Pluck specific strings
Sweep with flesh of finger from lowest to note given: A	Lengthwise on one string with flesh of finger: B	Pluck with flesh of finger (where written vs. 8vb): D
Sweep back and forth with flesh of finger: C	Lengthwise on three strings with flesh of finger: E	
Sweep with one finger on each hand in contrary motion: H	Lengthwise on one string with fingernail: F	
Sweep with flat hand instead of single finger: L	As B, with opposite hand, thus partly dampening sound: G	
	Lengthwise on five strings with flesh of finger: I	
	Lengthwise on five strings with fingernails: J	
	Lengthwise on cluster with nails of both hands: K	

Table 5.1: Explanation of Symbols

The tempo marking at the beginning of the piece is *Tempo Rubato*. In measure twenty-five the tempo is marked Faster for one measure and then *Presto* in measure twenty-six. There is a fermata in measure thirty-one followed by one measure with a crosswise chromatic glissando using a flat hand and then the tempo marking of “slow” from measure thirty-three to the end. See measures thirty-two and thirty-three in Figure 5.2. There are two *ritardando* markings which are

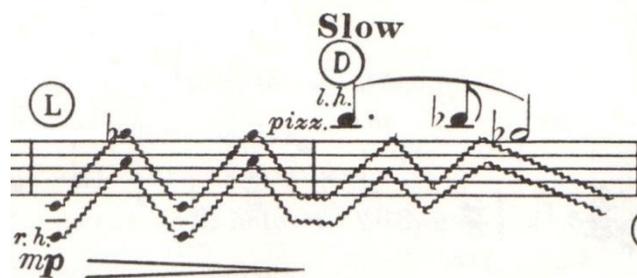


Figure 5.2: Measures 32-33

THE BANSHEE

By Henry Cowell

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found in measures five and twenty-nine. Curiously, there is an *a tempo* marking in measure thirteen without a tempo change or *ritardando* marking prior to this after the *a tempo* marking in measure six.

The dynamic scheme begins at *pp* but rises progressively to *ff* in measure twenty-five. Measures twenty-five and twenty-six are clearly the climax of the piece. See Figure 5.3. At this point, the number of notes being played has increased from one string to a cluster, the dynamics have risen from very soft to very loud, the sweeping of the strings has changed from the flesh of the finger to both hands together using the fingernails, and the tempo has increased from *tempo rubato* to *presto*. Following the climax, the dynamics, number of notes, and tempo all subside as the piece fades away.

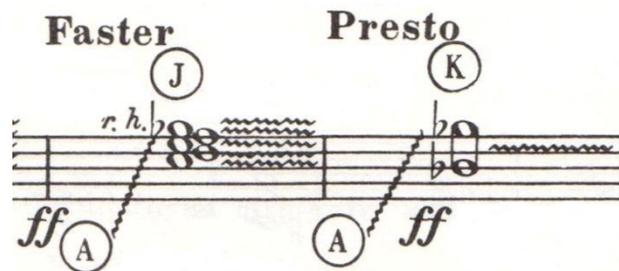


Figure 5.3: Measures 25-26

THE BANSHEE

By Henry Cowell

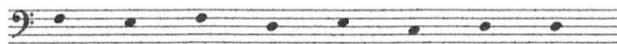
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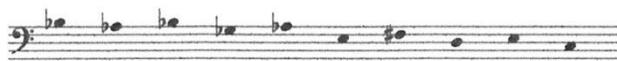
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Some authors have pointed out the apparent *Dies irae* structure within *The Banshee*.¹²⁸ The *Dies irae* (“Day of Wrath”) melody from Catholic liturgy is used in many other pieces by other composers to represent death. Cowell does not use the actual notes and intervals of the *Dies irae* but retains the overall shape. See Maria Cizmic’s illustration of the contour in Figure 5.4.¹²⁹

Example 1. The opening of the *Dies irae*, *Liber Usualis*, 1810



Example 2. Pitch contour of top notes in *The Banshee*, mm. 1–6



Each time, the way that the *Dies irae* motif is played intensifies until the final occurrence (see Table 5.2). The first time, in measures one through six, the motif is played using the flesh of one finger. The finger plays a crosswise glissando on the strings up to the melody note, which is then played lengthwise on the string away from the dampers. In the second instance, in measures fourteen through nineteen, the flesh of one finger is used to sweep crosswise on the strings up to the melody note, but the nail is used on the lengthwise sweep followed by the flesh of the opposing hand to partly dampen the strings. In the third occurrence, in measures twenty-six through thirty-one, the finger sweeps crosswise on the strings only up to the first melody note and then continues with only the melody notes played lengthwise on the strings. The fingernails are used in the motif during this third occurrence, and a cluster of notes are swept with the melody notes being the highest notes given in each cluster. The final statement of the *Dies irae* motif, in measures thirty-four through thirty-seven, uses the crosswise sweep on the strings only on the first note of the melody, the same as the third occurrence. The melody notes are played this final time with the flesh of the fingers lengthwise on the strings in chords of three strings with the melody notes being the highest notes given.

Measure	1–6	13–18	26–31 (Climax)	34–37
Part of finger	Flesh of finger	Fingernail on one hand/flesh on the other	Fingernails	Flesh of fingers
Number of finger/nails used	One	One on each hand	All fingers of both hands	Three
Dynamics	<i>pp</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>ff</i>	<i>p</i>

Table 5.2: *Dies Irae* Motifs in *The Banshee*

The “Explanation of Symbols” page included with the score directs the performer how to correctly play the various techniques required of the piece. However, there are still many decisions a performer must make in order to produce the desired effect. David Nicholls, in his book, *American Experimental Music: 1890–1940*, put it well when he wrote, “The performance instructions are relatively clear but the aural picture difficult to imagine.” He goes on to say, “We find a situation in which the traditional performer-interpreter becomes a performer-creator making fundamental decisions concerning the music’s public appearance.”¹³⁰ Cowell’s notation is new, but his explanations of his techniques are quite thorough. However, there is still insufficient direction concerning interpretation for such things as tempo, speed of sweep, and exact sounds which are meant to be produced.

Performance Guide

The performer wields considerable control over the sound that is produced, and *The Banshee* is written to offer a wide range of moods and effects. The *tempo rubato* marking gives the pianist leeway. There must be an underlying pulse, but the flexible tempo allows the performer enough time to execute the various nontraditional performing techniques. Additionally, the pianist can be creative with the specific dynamics, perhaps deciding whether to produce a sudden rush of sound or to allow the sound to grow out of nothing.

The crosswise glissando on the lowest bass strings gives a low resonating sound which adds to the ghostly ambiance. Some of the artists in the recordings, such as Hays, Bongelli, and Lombardi, maximized the low tones, while others played them very softly throughout, like Cowell, or swept them so quickly that they sounded as if they were struck instead of swept, resulting in a sound like a whip, as Seltzer and de Mare. As the performer determines how to

¹³⁰ Nicholls, *American Experimental Music*, 166.

play these glissandi, the performer must maintain the mental image to be communicated and use the sound that best conveys that picture to the audience. The pianist can vary the sound by changing the pressure on the strings or by changing which finger plays the glissando. When playing the glissandi with the whole hand, if the pianist is striving for a soft sound, the hand should be flat. If the hand is curved, the sound will be louder. When playing the glissandi more slowly, the sound will produce more individual pitches, while a faster sweep will combine the pitches. It is important that, whatever the case, the performer produces an even sound throughout each glissando.

When I was learning this piece, I experimented with the different sounds I could make on the strings. When teaching this piece, I have the student practice the crosswise glissando with different fingers to see which finger produces the best sound. Next, I have the student play the glissando at different points on the string: up near the dampers, down near the pins, and in the middle of the strings. To help the student determine the most appropriate sound for the piece, I encourage the student to begin the glissando slowly and then try accelerating mid-glissando and also to try starting with fast sweeps from the beginning of the glissandi. On the lengthwise glissandi, I instruct the student to begin with a slow glissando using the entire length of the string, which produces lower harmonic pitches and a completely different sound from the higher harmonic pitches of the faster sweeps. I also have the student experiment with faster glissandi as well, using both a small amount of string length and the whole string length. Lastly, I instruct the student to practice obtaining a smooth sound on the lengthwise glissando by using one continuous sweep that does not have any stops in the middle. However, if the student wishes to produce the vibrato effect at the end of the piece that Cowell displays, I direct the student to

shake the wrist side to side as the arm pulls the finger lengthwise down the string. The student could practice this wrist motion on a table before playing it on the string.

When applying the sweeping technique, one must be careful to avoid allowing the bass strings to buzz against each other. The lowest strings can strike against each other if they are played too aggressively. Since the response of the strings will differ with each piano, the tension on the strings, and the touch of the performer, it is very important to practice for weeks ahead of time on the same piano that will be used in the performance and to adjust accordingly.

When plucking individual strings, the pianist should experiment with different places along the string and with different fingers. The closer to the end of the string one plays, the thinner and tinnier the sound will be. The more centered the pluck, the fuller the sound will be. The actual sound will vary depending on the particular string, the speed and force used on each pluck, and whether the fingernail or the pad of the finger is used.

The Banshee requires the performer to play the instrument in an unfamiliar way and to learn, at least to some degree, how the piano works as an essential element of learning how to play on the strings. The training, technique, and muscle-memory that a pianist acquires for the keyboard will have no bearing on navigating the inside of the piano.

The performer should remove the music stand from the piano since it is not necessary for playing inside the piano. Removing it will provide more space for the performance, allow a bit more sound to come out of the piano, and ensure that the stand will not be pushed in the way to block strings or dampers that are needed to play the piece. Memorizing the piece will liberate the pianist to focus on performing the music instead of awkwardly trying to read the score inside the piano at the same time as playing and locating the correct strings. Memorization will also make more room for the pianist to move about inside the piano since there is not a convenient place

inside the piano for the score. If the score is necessary, it can be placed on the iron struts inside the piano.

The performer must become very familiar with the internal design of the concert piano, and must practice on that particular piano for weeks ahead of time. If the placement of the iron struts interferes with the playing of the piece, the performer must either choose another piano, if possible, or make an adjustment with the available piano, which can be done by shifting octaves within the piece, by playing lower on the strings away from the dampers, or by crossing over the struts on the glissandi, or changing the actual pitches as Cowell did in his recordings. To cross over the struts during a crosswise glissando, the glissando should be played using the left hand up to the strut and then completed with the right hand. A great deal of practice will be required to make a smooth transition between hands. In her dissertation, *Off Key: A Comprehensive Guide to Unconventional Piano Techniques*, Laurie Marie Hudicek suggests transposing the piece, keeping the same interval relationship, to stay within the same string section.¹³¹

If the piano contains a removable diagonal stress bar that interferes with the piece, that bar (or multiple bars) can be unscrewed and removed. The bar is included to give an “even amount of pressure throughout the iron-cast frame when moving the piano.”¹³² This bar must be replaced after practicing or performing. Figure 5.6 is a picture of a piano with stress bars inconvenient for playing *The Banshee*. The piano in the picture is a Steinway Model D (8’ 11¼” long concert grand) and contains a strut in the bass separating E₂ and F₂ as well as two horizontal stress bars.

¹³¹ Hudicek, “Off Key,” 199.

¹³² Proulx, “Pedagogical Guide,” 19.



Figure 5.6: Steinway Model D

Photo used by permission from David Yost. <http://yost.com/art/steinway/>

A popular open-frame piano found in many university practice rooms is the Steinway Model M. The open frame makes *The Banshee* easier to play as written. The Steinway Model M, however, is only 5' 7" and therefore not a concert grand. The shorter piano will produce a smaller sound. See Figures 5.7 and 5.8.



Figure 5.7: Steinway Model M

Photo used by permission from Silverio Mazzella, White Plains Piano Company. http://www.whiteplainspiano.com/s1917_2.JPG



Figure 5.8: Steinway Model M, Front View

Photo used by permission from Mike Ford, Ford Piano. <http://www.fordpiano.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/12/steinway-m.jpg>

A pianist is accustomed to seeing a set of notes and unconsciously opening the hand and finger span accordingly, but the strings of the piano are evenly spaced, unlike the black and white keys of the keyboard. This difference necessitates learning the new spacing in order to play directly on the strings, and this learning process can be aided by marking the necessary strings. Small labels or pieces of tape may be placed on the top of the dampers of each string to be marked. Gentle touch is required when labeling the dampers as they are very fragile. Hudicek recommends lifting the dampers while administering the tape so that the felt is not pushed onto the strings. She also suggests using a tape or label with removable adhesive and leaving one side overlapped off of the end of the damper for easy removal after playing the piece. She recommends using removable memo notes cut into small squares and folded up on the edge. Alternatively, she proposes a clothesline method where a string or yarn is stretched between the struts with labels attached and hung so that the labels line up with the respective strings. This method is not invasive for the piano and can be stored and reattached for later use.¹³³ Embroidery thread may substitute for string or yarn.

Not every string that is played should be marked ahead of time. A_0 does not need to be marked because it is the lowest string. This string is used in all but ten measures out of the forty total measures. $B\text{-flat}_1$ should be marked since the glissando from the bass stops on this note and several other chords use the B-flat as the top note. $A\text{-flat}_1$ would not need to be marked since the pianist could count down two strings from the $B\text{-flat}_1$ to that string. $G\text{-flat}_1$ should be marked, however, as another reference point. The pianist should mark as many strings as needed but avoid over-marking strings which may cause confusion and give the pianist too many visual cues while playing. As an alternative method, one also used by professional pianists such as Steffen

¹³³ Hudicek, "Off Key," 53, 56, 59–60.

Schleiermacher, Hudicek suggests labeling only the dampers of the corresponding black notes or else the corresponding white notes. Schleiermacher labels the strings of the corresponding white keys, labeling every C and G either green or red. He attaches the label to the frame instead of to the damper.¹³⁴

As instructed in Cowell’s *Aeolian Harp*, the pianist should take precautions to protect the strings inside the piano when playing *The Banshee* as well. He should wash his hands prior to playing and should wipe the strings with a dry cloth after playing. Wiping the strings will help to remove any excess oil or sweat coming from the fingers and prevent rusting or the deadening of the strings.

Comparison of Recordings

The broad variety of sounds and ambiance that may be produced when playing *The Banshee* can be clearly heard in the recordings of the piece. See Table 5.3 for a list of prominent recordings.

Performer	Album Name	Recording Date¹³⁵
Henry Cowell	Music of Cowell, Pinkham and Hovhaness	1956
Henry Cowell	Henry Cowell Piano Music	1963
Robert Miller	Sound Forms for Piano	1976
Sorrel Doris Hays	The Piano Music of Henry Cowell	1977
Cheryl Seltzer	Henry Cowell: Instrumental, Chamber and Vocal Music, Vol. 2	1984
Steffen Schleiermacher	The Bad Boys! (Anheil, Cowell & Ornstein)	1994
Chris Brown	New Music: Piano Compositions by Henry Cowell	1997
Fausto Bongelli	From the New World: Rassegna di Nuova Musica, I	2006
Anthony de Mare	Wizards & Wildmen	2007
Daniele Lombardi	Musica futurista, Vol. 7	2010

Table 5.3: Recordings Used in the Discussion of *The Banshee*

¹³⁴ Hudicek, “Off Key,” 54.

¹³⁵ Recording date if known or first release date.

There are perhaps as many different variations of the piece as there are performers, with varying levels of faithfulness to the score and a broad range of different sounds produced within the score. Obvious differences appear in the broad range of total times for the different recordings of the piece over the past fifty years. See Table 5.4 and Figure 5.9. *The Banshee* has the greatest variety of total times out of all of the pieces discussed in this document. Cowell's first recording has the shortest total time, and the longest recording, performed by Fausto Bongelli, is more than twice that of Cowell's.

Performer	Length of Performance
Henry Cowell (1956)	1:44
Henry Cowell (1963)	2:31 ¹³⁶
Robert Miller (1976)	2:23
Sorrel Doris Hays (1977)	3:25
Cheryl Seltzer (1984)	2:07
Steffen Schleiermacher (1994)	2:45
Chris Brown (1997)	3:24
Fausto Bongelli (2006)	4:40
Anthony de Mare (2007)	2:41
Daniele Lombardi (2010)	3:08

Table 5.4: List of Performance Lengths for *The Banshee*

¹³⁶ Time adjusted for Cowell's introduction of the piece.

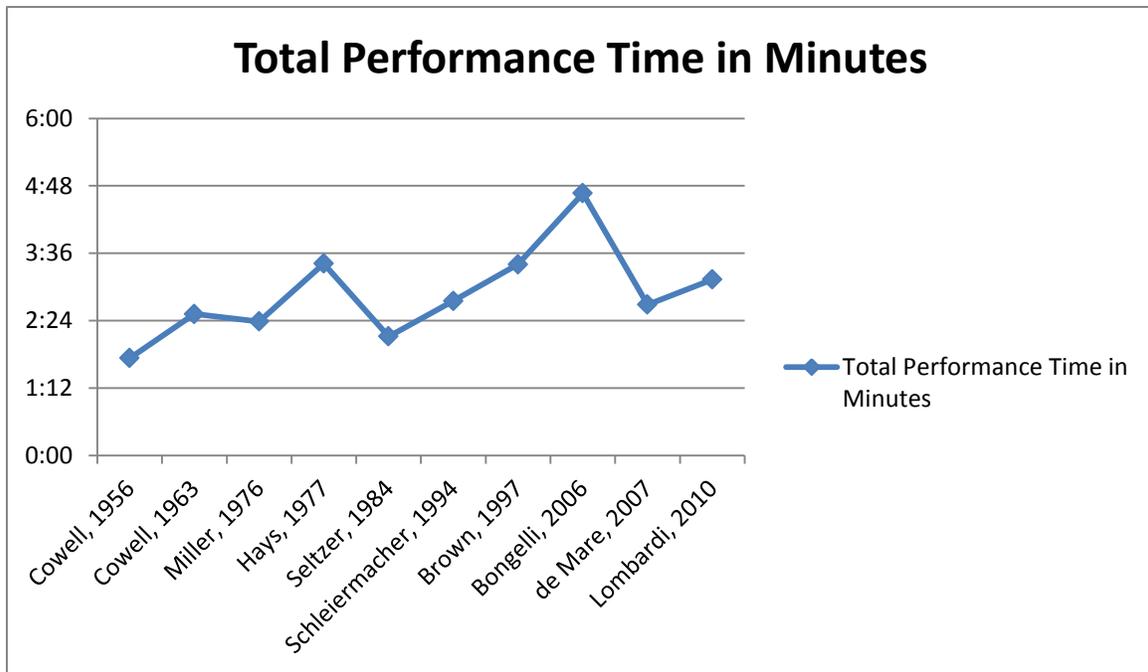


Figure 5.9: Total Performance Lengths in Minutes for *The Banshee*

Cowell recorded the piece in 1956 and again in 1963, and the two recordings are vastly dissimilar. In the 1956 recording, Cowell obtains a strong “screaming” effect by using fast sweeps on the strings. The crosswise sweeps starting on the lowest note up to the given note of the *Dies irae* theme can be heard more distinctly than in the 1963 version. The louder crosswise sweeps in the 1956 recording contribute significantly more rumble to as the low notes from the bass strings resonate beneath the lengthwise sweeps on higher-pitched strings.

Cowell deviates from the score in both recordings. In the 1956 recording, he omits measures nine through twelve and measures twenty-one through twenty-four. Though difficult to hear because of the rumble and the harmonic notes, it sounds as though his lengthwise sweeps are not always played on the strings designated in the written score. The plucked notes, however, are very clearly altered from the written score. Except for three measures, the entire piece is to be played an octave lower than written. This direction appears not in the score but on the preceding

instructions page. The three excluded measures are measures eight, twenty, and thirty-three, which contain a haunting motif played *pizzicato*. See Figure 5.10. The instructions for these three measures to be played as written instead of an octave lower is on the instruction page under letter *D*. In both recordings, he plucks different notes than the ones written in measures eight, twenty, and thirty-three. Though he retains the intervallic relationship, the altered pitches differ in the two recordings. Some performers have followed this example while others follow the written notes. See Table 5.5. The bold column headings list the written notes while the rows list the notes played by the performers.

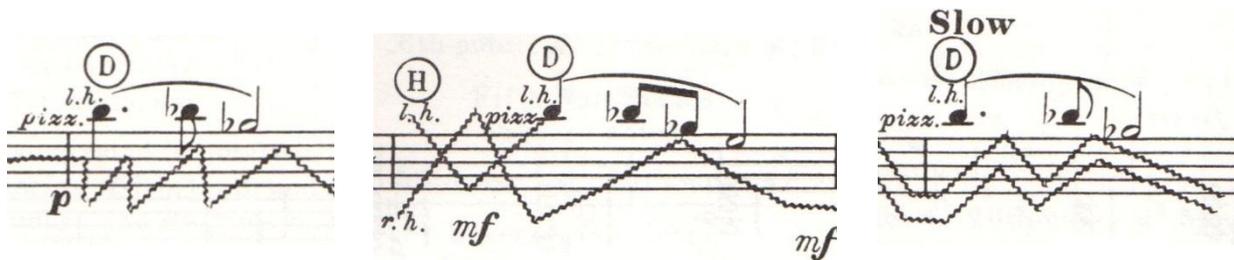


Figure 5.10: Measures 8, 20, and 33

THE BANSHEE
By Henry Cowell

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Performer	M. 8 – D₄, D^b₄, B^b₃	M. 20 - D₄, D^b₄, B^b₃, G₃	M. 33 – D₄, Db₄, Bb₃
Cowell (1956)	B ₃ , B ^b ₃ , G ₃	A ^b ₃ , G ₃ , E ₃ , D ^b ₃	A ^b ₃ , G ₃ , E ₃
Cowell (1963)	D ^b ₄ , C ₄ , A ₃	D ^b ₄ , C ₄ , A ₃ , G ^b ₃	B ₃ , B ^b ₃ , G ₃
Miller	D ₄ , D ^b ₄ , B ^b ₃	D ₄ , D ^b ₄ , B ^b ₃ , G ₃	D ₄ , Db ₄ , Bb ₃
Hays	D ₄ , D ^b ₄ , B ^b ₃	D ₄ , D ^b ₄ , B ^b ₃ , G ₃	D ₄ , Db ₄ , Bb ₃
Schleiermacher	A ^b ₃ , G ₃ , E ₃	A ^b ₃ , G ₃ , E ₃ , D ^b ₃	A ^b ₃ , G ₃ , E ₃
Seltzer	D ₄ , D ^b ₄ , B ^b ₃	D ₄ , D ^b ₄ , B ^b ₃ , G ₃	D ₄ , Db ₄ , Bb ₃
Brown	A ^b ₃ , G ₃ , E ₃	A ^b ₃ , G ₃ , E ₃ , D ^b ₃	A ^b ₃ , G ₃ , E ₃
Bongelli	A ^b ₂ , G ₂ , E ₂	A ^b ₂ , G ₂ , E ₂ , D ^b ₂	A ^b ₂ , G ₂ , E ₂
de Mare	A ^b ₃ , G ₃ , E ₃	A ^b ₃ , G ₃ , E ₃ , D ^b ₃	A ^b ₃ , G ₃ , E ₃
Lombardi	D ₄ , D ^b ₄ , B ^b ₃	D ₄ , D ^b ₄ , B ^b ₃ , G ₃	D ₄ , Db ₄ , Bb ₃

Table 5.5: Changed Pitches in *Pizzicato* Measures

Cowell may have taken the liberty of altering the pitches because of the variations in internal structures between pianos. Since the placement of the iron struts varies from one piano to another, the piano may contain bars which interfere with the playing of the piece. The struts divide the strings into different sections, and the number of struts dividing the strings into sections varies by model. If one of these struts or one set of strings overlapping another obstructs the strings that are needed to play the piece as written, the pianist is forced to play different pitches while keeping the same intervallic structure (as Cowell did), play the same notes in another octave, or find another piano without obstructions.

Cowell's earlier recording is faster not only in tempo choices and quicker sweeps but also between one section and another. While his second recording and some other performers have pauses between the different sections of the piece, Cowell's first recording quickly moves from one to the next. The fermata in measure thirty-one is almost nonexistent. He moves quickly from the fingernail cluster in measure thirty-one to the flat-hand chromatic sweep in measure thirty-two.

Cowell gives a very convincing performance on his 1963 recording. The broad variety of sounds that he produces is noticeably greater than on his 1956 recording. Although the rumble of the low strings resonating from the crosswise sweeps is less distinct on the sweeps at the beginning of the piece, the presence of the bass strings can still be heard. Measures thirty-one through thirty-five sound as if Cowell is digging his nails into the strings, which gives a new element to the piece.

Robert Miller's performance is similar to Cowell's 1963 recording except that he plays all the notes as written in the score instead of altering the pitches as Cowell does. Miller's tempo choices, variety of sounds, total time on the recording, and dynamics closely mimic Cowell's example. Yet Miller does not capture as much distinction in his sounds as Cowell, such as how Cowell digs his fingernails into the strings, producing a scraping sound.

Sorrel Doris Hays produces the most variety in her sounds, and her recording is more captivating and convincing than Cowell's own. Hays's performance begins softly with the deep resonating strings in the bass, followed by moaning single strings in the first six measures. She produces the moaning sounds by slowly dragging her fingers along the strings lengthwise rather than quickly sweeping them to produce more of a screaming or whipping sound. Cowell produces some moaning sounds, but his are much less dramatic than Hays's. Cowell's lengthwise sweeps are faster and use less pressure on the strings. Hays's total time on the recording is almost a minute longer than Cowell's 1963 recording. In measures nine through twelve, measures twenty-one through twenty-four, and again in measures thirty-four through thirty-seven, Hays brings out all of the strings in each of the chords. Her sound gives the impression that several inner-world spirits are vocalizing, which could be due to the pressure that she uses on the strings and the speed of the sweeps allowing higher overtones to sound or could

be due to the texture of the specific strings of the piano on which she recorded. Her fingernail chords in measures twenty-five through thirty-one are surprisingly loud and scraping. It appears that she uses her nails to dig into the strings and slowly sweeps them using the whole length of the string. The last three measures resemble Cowell's and are slow, almost sounding like vibrato produced as the fingers slightly move side to side as they sweep down the string. Overall, Hays takes Cowell's example and improves upon it.

Cheryl Seltzer¹³⁷ includes extra sounds that are not part of the score and that may arise from careless technique. Her total performance length is the shortest of all the recordings and her piece has the least variety of sounds. In measure twenty, as well as other measures, she hits the bass strings. Her hands can be heard hitting the strings on several occasions and she seems to be sweeping the strings in two different directions at times instead of all from the top of the string to the bottom. Instead of hearing moaning or screaming sounds, a whip-like sound is heard as the fingers quickly sweep the strings. In measures twenty-six through thirty-one her chords are fast and furious, but her fingernails digging into the strings cannot be heard as well as in some of the other performances. The fingernail-scraping technique can be heard better in measure thirty-one as she slows down for the fermata and digs into the strings instead of lightly sweeping the tops of the strings with her fingernails.

Steffen Schleiermacher plays the piece with less variety of sound than the first three recordings. Each lengthwise glissando is swept very fast, which makes it sound slippery, or like a whip instead of slowly producing more of the moaning sounds that the first three performances produce with slower sweeps. Schleiermacher produces moaning sounds only in the last three measures of the piece when he begins to fade away, and the sweeps become slower.

¹³⁷ Cheryl Seltzer studied at Mills College in Oakland, California, with composers Milhaud, Kirchner, and Moss. She is on faculty at the Lucy Moses School of Music and Dance in New York.

Chris Brown¹³⁸ gives a very even yet subdued performance in comparison to Cowell's and Hays's performances. His total time is the same as Hays's total time, but he does not produce the extremes of sound that Hays does. The chromatic sweeps are very soft and can hardly be heard aside from the first instance. The dynamic level rises from the *pp* at the beginning but only slightly. He bumps the bass strings in the measures between twenty-six and thirty-one, losing the impact that scraping the strings alone could have on the listener. The scraping itself sounds more like a whip or slipping along the strings instead of the loud and frightening scraping that Hays produces by slowly digging her fingernails deeply into the string.

Fausto Bongelli¹³⁹ takes more liberty than the artists in any of the other recordings. His performance time is over two minutes longer than Cowell's second recording and the longest of all the recordings. The longer total time is due to a slower tempo, dragging fingers and fingernails more slowly along the strings, making use of both of the *ritardando* markings, and taking time between sections, including pausing between each chord in the *Presto* section starting in measure twenty-six. Because his tempo is slower, he sweeps each chord in the last three measures instead of using one continuous sweep and keeping the ties as Cowell does and as it is written. (See the last three measure of the piece in Figure 5.11). His decision to use separate sweeps instead of one continuous sweep may be due to his slower tempo and his need to start at the top of the string at the beginning of each measure to avoid running out of string length. Bongelli not only uses different notes than are written in the plucked measures, but he also plays them in a lower octave, possibly due to the structure of the piano that he uses in the recording.

¹³⁸ Chris Brown (b. 1953) is an American composer, pianist, and electronic musician. He teaches Composition and Electronic Music at Mills College in Oakland, California.

¹³⁹ Fausto Bongelli is an Italian pianist. He has performed more than one hundred fifty premieres of works for composers including Nancarrow, Brown, Feldman, Harrison, and Mencherini. He has made several recordings for New Albion, Col legno, RCA, Wergo, Ricordi, Stadiovarius, Rai-Trade, Bongiovanni, and Edipan.



Figure 5.11: Measures 38-40

THE BANSHEE

By Henry Cowell

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Anthony de Mare's performance is similar to Schleiermacher's recording both in sounds and total recording time. His fast sweeps create whistling sounds in contrast to Cowell's moaning sounds. De Mare strikes his chromatic sweeps from the lowest notes very quickly, making them sound as if he is hitting the bass strings, a sound reminiscent of Cheryl Seltzer's recording. He elects to inject large pauses after measure six and measure nineteen before going into the up and down sweeps of the following measures. He waits for the sound to dissipate completely and treats these measures similar to the fermata marking in measure thirty-one.

Finally, although Daniele Lombardi does not produce quite the variety of different effects that Hays does, he obtains an overall feeling of spooky, ghost-like sounds that would capture an audience's attention. His strokes are slow enough to create the moaning sound required, but not to the extent that Cowell and Hays do. His dynamic contrast is similar to Hays' and greater than that in the other recordings.

While acknowledging Cowell's specific instructions regarding the techniques he developed for playing *The Banshee* and taking care to avoid damage to the instrument, the

performer will find Cowell has left ample room for artistic license in the interpretation of this piece. Because Cowell uses many different sounds and even diverges from the score, he leaves each performer to decide the best way to create the ghostly, creepy, moaning, and screaming inner-worldly sounds of the Banshee as she arrives to collect the dead soul. The performer of *The Banshee* has the pleasure of introducing the audience to the world inside the piano while astonishing them with the amazing diversity of sounds which the stringpiano can deliver.

Cowell performed *The Banshee* along with three of his other compositions (*Tides of Manaunaun*, *Sinister Resonance*, and *Advertisement*) in a concert at New York's Julliard Concert Hall in 1962. In a *New York Times* article entitled "Music: Concert Honors Henry Cowell," writer Harold Schonberg proclaimed of the performance, "It was, almost, as if Franz Liszt had walked out to play the *Galop chromatique*. For Mr. Cowell's piano pieces were in a way to the Nineteen Twenties what Liszt's earlier works were in shock value to the Eighteen Thirties."¹⁴⁰ Performances of *The Banshee* have shocked and continued to shock and awe audiences from its first performance in the 1920s through today.

¹⁴⁰ Galvan, "Fleisher Collection," 165; Shonberg, "Music: Concert Honors Henry Cowell."

6. CONCLUSION

Cowell's example of departing from his own scores on his recordings as well as varying the performances between recordings of the same piece has encouraged other performing artists to take liberties in his pieces as well. Cowell's reasons for performing his pieces with differences from the written scores are uncertain. Perhaps his basic character as a non-conformist expresses itself also when performing his own pieces. The changes he made in performing the music may have been due to his being less adept at playing than he was at composing. Whatever the case, although his recordings are not dictatorial, they may have influenced pianists who have played and recorded his music after him. Before playing Cowell's pieces, each pianist must have an awareness of the history and intent of the piece, an understanding of the notation for the nontraditional techniques, and a knowledge of the piano and of how to create the desired sounds on or inside the piano, but then the pianist is free to experiment with various sounds that can be produced to better convey each piece to the audience. As can be seen in this study, the pieces that contain more nontraditional techniques allow more personalization to be employed by the performer, demonstrated by Cowell and followed by other pianists. On the recordings, the broad range of dynamics, flexibility in tempi which changes the overall character of the piece, taking leeway with the written score, the various kinds of sounds produced, and the different ways in which the sounds may be produced all show a trend in performance practice of Cowell's works that offers more freedom.

The Tides of Manaunaun, Tiger, Aeolian Harp, and The Banshee are representative of Cowell's works and are used as examples in many anthologies of twentieth-century music. Each piece represents an important innovation in the development of nontraditional piano music. Cowell's new developments were significant to American music and his influence as a freethinking composer encouraged similar creativity in others. His influence is widespread and covers the contribution of his works as well as his student list, which includes George Gershwin (briefly), Alan Hovhaness, John Cage, Lou Harrison, Burt Bacharach, and Stuart Feder. Cowell was willing to think outside the box and to write music as he imagined it without conforming to any particular pre-existing style or genre and without conforming to the expectations placed on composers. As he said:

I have never deliberately concerned myself with developing a distinctive "personal" style, but only with the excitement and pleasure of writing music as beautifully, as warmly, and as interestingly as I can. If I am to develop the "personal" style that seems to be the aim of so many composers today, I've always felt the music itself must do this for me, and that my job is simply to go on making music.¹⁴¹

American composer Virgil Thomson well said of Henry Cowell in 1953:

Henry Cowell's music covers a wider range both in expression and technique than that of any other living composer. His experiments, begun three decades ago in rhythm, in harmony, and in instrumental sonorities, were considered by many to be wild. Today they are the Bible of the young and still, to the conservatives, "advanced . . ." No other composer of our time has produced a body of work so radical and so normal, so penetrating and so comprehensive.¹⁴²

¹⁴¹ Weisgall, *Music of Henry Cowell*, 498.

¹⁴² Henry Cowell, *Piano Music*, liner notes.

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APPENDIX A

The Tiger

By William Blake (1757–1827)

Tiger, tiger, burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
On what wings dare he aspire?
What the hand dare seize the fire?

And what shoulder and what art
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
And when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand and what dread feet?

What the hammer? What the chain?
In what furnace was thy brain?
What the anvil? What dread grasp
Dare its deadly terrors clasp?

When the stars threw down their spears,
And water'd heaven with their tears,
Did He smile his work to see?
Did He who made the lamb make thee?

Tiger, tiger, burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

APPENDIX B

How Old Is Song?

By Harry Cowell

Before a man had sung a note
Or a song bird warbled in its throat,
The winds were whispering through the trees
Wild prehistoric melodies
Prophetic of the days to come
When man would make him harps to strum
The halls of heaven with music rang
The morning stars together sang,
Prophetic of the voice of him
Who chants of choiring Seraphin
From chaos the orchestral seas
Were forming polyharmonies.
No song is new, Man sings and rings
Times changes in eternal things;
His voice prophetic of a long
Lone silence to succeed his song.¹⁴³

¹⁴³ Hart, "How Old is Song?" CD Liner Notes.

APPENDIX C

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February 28, 2013

Allison Clough
7741 John Pelham Trail
McCalla, AL 35111

RE: THE BANSHEE, by Henry Cowell
TIGER, by Henry Cowell
THE TIDES OF MANAUNAUN, by Henry Cowell
AEOLIAN HARP, by Henry Cowell

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