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# Chapter 12

## Partch's Vision of "Integrated Corporeal Theater" and "Latter-Day Rituals"

### Corporeal Ritual

More than any other figure considered here, Harry Partch consistently and rigorously explored the possibilities of a genuine Gesamtkunstwerk. Moreover, his entire musical and theatrical outlook was profoundly influenced by both ancient Greek and East Asian models, and by primitivist and Orientalist fantasies. Finally, his ritualistic works were intended to have a direct spiritual effect on their audiences and to render social change. Despite Partch's warning that it "is not only difficult to define my theater concepts as a whole-it is impossible,"[1] I will venture to provide a sketch of these concepts, relying heavily on his own attempts to describe them, for Partch's writings and correspondence provide a rich source of information documenting an evolving vision of totally integrated theater.[2]

The fundamental impulse that animated Partch's desire to create a new form of music theater was his belief that the modern age was one of sterile specialization in which the various performing arts were ruthlessly segregated. He felt that an ideal of "purity" was rampant and that this ideal was an especially limiting factor in the contemporary performing arts.[3] "The age of specialization has given us an art of sound that denies sound, and a science of sound that denies art. The age of specialization has given us a music drama that denies drama, and a drama that-contrary to the practices of all other peoples of the world-denies music."[4] In another context Partch wrote: "This specialized trend toward a specialized product involving specialized talents is, in my opinion, a form of unconscious starvation. The theater is starved for music and doesn't know it. The opera is starved for drama, even though drama is right in front of them. And ballet all too often is starved for both, not because both are not present, but because they must be subordinated to incidental roles."[5] To counter the narrow, limited approach of mainstream theater

and opera, Partch called upon performers to transcend their conventional, specialized roles and to sing, speak, dance, and play instruments. "My musical concepts are invariably involved with theater, or with dramatic ideas dramatically presented, and many years have been given to provoking musicians into becoming actors, and singers into making occasional ugly and frightening (but dramatic) sounds, appealing to them through heavy layers of Puritan inhibitions and academic intimidations."[6] By integrating the visual, aural, and verbal dimensions of theater, Partch hoped to reach performers and audience members alike as whole persons.

At the heart of this theatrical conception lay Partch's vision of ritual theater and his philosophy of corporeal music. "I use the word ritual, and I also use the word corporeal, to describe music that is neither on the concert stage nor relegated to a pit. In ritual the musicians are seen; their meaningful movements are part of the act, and collaboration is automatic with everything else that goes on."[7] Although Partch's music theater was modeled primarily on the theater of Japan and ancient Greece, his image of ritual performance also derived from African music and from his primitivist imaginings:

> The direction in which I have been going the last forty-four years has much in common with the activities and actions of primitive man as I imagine him. Primitive man found magical sounds in the materials around him-in a reed, a piece of bamboo, a particular piece of wood held in a certain way, or a skin stretched over a gourd or tortoise shell (some resonating body). He then proceeded to make the object, the vehicle, the instrument, as visually beautiful as he could. His last step was almost automatic: the metamorphosis of the magical sounds and visual beauty into something spiritual. They become fused with his everyday words and experiences-his ritual, drama, religion-thus lending greater meaning to his life. These acts of primitive man become the trinity of this work: magical sounds, visual form and beauty, experience-ritual. [8]

Partch admired the ritual functions of music and theater in African cultures and hoped that his own music theater could serve a vital reformative function for modern society. A basic compositional aim for Partch was to create works relevant to the present age.[9] Referring to his dance-drama The Bewitched as "a latter-day ritual designed to castrate the machine age,"[10] he proclaimed the power of integrated theater and celebrated art's "incalculable influence on the direction of our civilization. . .. Its influence may be minute, or it may carry a force beyond that

of armies."[11] Rather than sitting passively and clapping politely to t,he well-worn warhorses, the audience was to be engaged in the performance and changed by it. Although Partch's music theater may be understood as ritual performance for the performers and as spiritual transformation for the audience, he never attempted to achieve the radical inclusiveness of the African rituals that he admired; he transformed the role of the individual performer but maintained the distinction between performer and audience.

For Partch, "corporeality" entailed the fundamental belief that music and life should be experienced physically; it demanded an inclusive approach to life and, by extension, to performance. Ben Johnston has written: "Corporealism was a theory that Partch lived. It is a vehement protest against what he considered the negation of the body and the bodily in our society. It resulted specifically in an attack on abstraction."[12] In his broadest use of the term, Partch referred to the lack of corporeal engagement with life and the natural world in modern society. He decried the "labor-saver, the miracle button" and felt that "labor is saved, and a value is lost in the process."[13] In terms of musical aesthetics, he described corporeal music as "emotionally 'tactile.' It does not grow from the root of 'pure form.' It cannot be characterized as either mental or spiritual."[14] Each element of Partch's music theater formed part of his multifaceted corporeal ideal.

Partch's earliest corporeal objective concerned the fundamental organization of sound in his music. He argued that a corporeal music must be based on natural acoustical properties and therefore developed a system of microtonal just intonation and designed original instruments tuned in this system. These instruments produce an immense range of sounds, often including "fuzzy" sounds-extra noise that, as in many African musical cultures, was valued by Partch rather than disguised or refined away. His instruments were constructed from natural materials and incorporated found objects, further celebrating the inherent musical possibilities of the physical world.[15] Each instrument was handcrafted in order to achieve a sculptural beauty and was to be visible on the stage as a primary or often sole form of set and scenery. These instruments are predominantly percussive and attest to Partch's primitivist notion that "on the theater stage, as in primitive ritual, percussion becomes part of the 'act.' "[16] In contrast to an earlier "machine age" conception of percussion music-evident in the music of the Futurists,

George Antheil, and Edgard Varèse, Partch believed that percussion was a fundamental expression of humanity and of biological impulses. "Percussion as a human art goes back, at least-one would imagine-to the Old Stone Age. So well ensconced is it in the genes of some races that it might well antedate fire."[17] Partch envisioned a form of music theater that would be experienced bodily, by both audience and performer. His conception of corporeal instrumental performance called for an athlete approach to playing his instruments. In addition to the energetic movement required for playing, the instrumentalists are frequently called upon to perform simple dance steps both while performing and during tacit section As an ultimate form of corporeality, each of Partch's major works of music theater includes a significant amount of choreographed dancing.

To Partch, an inclusive approach to the integration of the performing art in which no form of performance is excluded, proved fundamental. He wrote "There is at least one factor which my various theater concepts have in common; they tend to include, not exclude, and therefore to encompass a fair wide latitude of human experience. They do not exclude-for example-bad material, simply because it is thought to be 'bad.'"[18] This "bad material" could include juggling, hobo characters, commonplace tunes, tonal harmonies, and slang text. In a 1952 article entitled "No Barriers," Partch called for works that would "not exclude any area of response-visual, aural, verbal in any combination, in order to engage the whole person, either as perform or as observer."[19] The exclusion of certain forms of performance, he argue' was a self-impoverishment that limited the work's potential for reaching i audience. "If [the creative person] wants a whole-experience reaction fro his audience, he employs or stipulates every possible stimulus at his command, singly or simultaneously; including music of any imaginable bastard dance and drama in any historical or antihistorical form; noise, light, shadow, substance, or perhaps only the semblance of substance; and sounds from th mouth that communicate only as emotion."[20] Partch turned to exotic traditions of music theater for models of such thoroughly integrated performance.

**Back to Ancient Greece via Japan**

Partch's vision of a corporeal, ritualistic music theater reflects his understanding of Japanese, Chinese, and ancient Greek theater. Ancient Greece provided an initial framework for his basic

aesthetic and theoretical conceptions of music. His system of just intonation was inspired, in part, I readings in Greek music theory. In addition, Greek drama and mythology provided source material throughout his career, and he frequently cited Greek theater as an archetype of integrated corporeal performance.[21] In 1955 letter, Partch wrote: "The Greek - and Roman - idea of music as an agent to ennoble, to maintain dignity and stature, and for transport into the realm of magic, was abandoned, and the consequences could haw been predicted. . . "[22] Partch acknowledged that our understanding of ancient Greek theatrical performance is limited, especially in its musical dimension, but he believed that something like an ancient corporeal approach to theater had survived in modern East Asia.

In *Genesis of a Music*, Partch argued that some suggestion of the ancient values of Greek theater was still to be found in modern Cantonese opera as heard in San Francisco and New York. 23 Although Partch had greater direct contact with Chinese theater and music, he often cited Japanese theater as a more perfect model. He asserted that "music occupied approximately the same place among the Japanese of this period as it had in ancient Greece two thousand years before. It was the expression of a fundamentally similar concept of musical values. "24 It is not certain whether Partch ever saw a performance of Japanese Noh or Kabuki. His knowledge of Japanese theater appears to have been based on the writings of Frank Lombard, Arthur Waley, and William MaIm; he constructed an image of Noh and Kabuki performance styles from books and recordings and by extrapolating from his experience of Chinese opera. Thus, his encounter with Noh may not have been entirely different from that of early American Orientalists such as Griffes.

In *Genesis of a Music*, Partch cited Lombard's *An Outline History of the Japanese Orama*[25] and noted Lombard's discussion of Noh as an amalgam and refinement of several performance forms. Partch stated that the music of Noh created" an emotional tension quite unlike anything ever produced by Western music."[26] Of Noh and Kabuki, the latter was actually closer to his theatrical aesthetic. He admired Kabuki as a more inclusive form of theatrical performance and referred to it in several contexts. On Kabuki's relation to ancient Greek theater, Partch wrote:

> There was a time in the history of so-called Western man when music was so vital a part of ritual and ceremony as to have no pure and separate function. The integration of music with every important ceremonial in ancient Greece was so complete that, for example, the sounds of spoken words used in ceremonies were a basis for creating the sounds of music. But we do not have to theorize about ancient Greece. We can see contemporary cultures of our own world where the same kind of integration is taken for granted. The kabuki theater of Japan is an example. And here we have fact-not merely theory.[27]

One of the clearest and most provocative of Partch's presentations of his music theater ideal is found in a statement of proposed activity for a Fulbright grant application:

> I am drawn to the Oriental attitudes because, in the Orient, there has never been any great separation of the theater-music arts, therefore no need to conceive of integration. I am also drawn because of my studies into, and my appropriation of, the ancient Greek musical philosophies. Despite our direct inheritance of Greek culture, despite the prevalence of Greek roots in our music-theater technical terms, the ancient spirit of integration has long since disappeared in the West. Through many centuries of Western specialization the forms of "theater" and "concert" have become separate and divorced entities. Probing beyond what I consider superficial differences, I see the ancient spirit, in virtually unadulterated form, in the Orient.[28]

Partch concluded this application by positioning his work in terms of a modern Western realization of the Asian theatrical spirit: "I should like to demonstrate to Orientals, . . . that at least one Occidental has been thinking and producing *in their terms* throughout the better part of his life." As a son of Whitman and an American, Partch felt fully capable of uniting East and West in his works. Of course, given his limited knowledge of his exotic models, it is no coincidence that "their terms" proved to be his own.

**Back to Ancient Greece via the "Older Ears" of Yeats**

In his earliest references to "corporeality," Partch was often concerned wid issues of text setting. A corporeal setting of text is one that remains close to the natural inflections of speech and that supports a clear conveyance of ver. bal meaning. In this use of the term, "corporeal" was reserved for "the essentially vocal and verbal music of the individual-a Monophonic concept."[29]

Partch found little evidence of corporeal vocal music and integrated theater in the recent history of Western music. As should be expected, he rejected most nineteenth-century opera for its nonintegration of the performing art and for its treatment of text: "As auditors [of opera] we pretend to be listen ing to drama in words and music and by implication that we hear understandable words."[30] Partch felt that this pretense, this hypocritical neglect of the words, occurred whether opera was sung in English or in the original language. (Presumably, the literal separation between singer and presentation of verbal meaning made explicit by the recent use of supertitles would have seemed to Partch the ultimate act of cowardice.) For Partch Wagner's professed intentions of creating "music-drama" and a form of *Gesamtkunstwerk* were laudable. However, he felt that the intentions of Wagner the theatrical theorist were never realized by Wagner the symphonist. Partch quipped: "In the wrestling match between Wagner's music drama and his symphony orchestra, Wagner's symphony orchestra (wit yeoman help from his arias) gets both shoulders of Wagner's music dram on the floor within five minutes after the curtain rises and for the following two or three hours jumps up and down on the unconscious form."[31]

A few figures had approximated Partch's music theater ideals: "On the theater stage, with Bertolt Brecht, and occasionally with others, there is something like a ritualistic approach-a corporeal approach to music as an integrated part of theater."[32] In another context, Partch noted that "there have been breakthroughs away from specialization. I feel that Carl Orff with *Carmina Burana*, for example, was a breakthrough away from specialization. My own theater work was also. . . . I feel that the recent musical *Hair* was a breakthrough."[33] The one figure with whom he felt most in accord was W. B. Yeats. In his short history of text setting presented in *Genesis of a Music*, Partch presents Yeats as the "Voice in the Wilderness" – a voice plaintively calling for a musical realization of a corporeal theatrical vision. Partch introduced Yeats as "a poet who had great respect for the inherent musical beauty of spoken words"[34] and included a lengthy quotation from Yeats's discussion of drama's requirements from music. Yeats had called for a musical setting in which, as had been the case in "ancient times," "no word shall have an intonation or accentuation it could not have in passionate speech."[35] The poet claimed to "hear with older ears than the musician."[36] Partch conceived of his own music as a direct answer to Yeats's musical quest, and felt that they both thought in the same "terms." In setting Yeats's *King Oedipus*, Partch

followed the poet's dictums for text setting and in doing so hoped to recreate the imagined music heard by the poet's older ears.[37]

Partch became interested in setting Yeats's version of Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* in 1933.[38] During a 1934 research trip to England, he took a rough musical plan for the work to Yeats and demonstrated his musical style with pieces for intoning voice and adapted viola.[39] In writing about his encounters with the poet, Partch reported that Yeats was very enthusiastic and that his permission to set *King Oedipus* was easily won.[40] This encounter is also documented in collections of Yeats's correspondence.[41] In a 17 November 1934 letter, Yeats mentions that a "Californian composer" would be visiting him the next day. At this point, Yeats felt that Partch's ideas were immature and that the composer was "young, and very simple." After meeting Partch, Yeats wrote in a more approving tone and expressed the opinion that Partch's vocal style approximated that of ancient ballads. Yeats sent Partch to meet Edmund Dulac, the composer and designer of At the Hawk's Well. Partch met with Yeats several times in his approximately ten-day stay in Dublin, and at some point, Yeats intoned the chorus sections of *King Oedipus* while Partch made diagrams of the poet's vocal inflections.[42] This trip to Dublin was of mythical importance to Partch. In several articles, he quoted the last words Yeats spoke to him: "You are one of those young men with ideas, the development of which it is impossible to foretell, just as I was thirty years ago."[43] This blessing from Yeats, however, did not bring good fortune. He was not able to compose music for *King Oedipus* for some seventeen years. A first version, completed in 1951, set Yeats's text and was first performed at Mills College in 1952. However, Partch was denied permission by Yeats's literary agents to release a recording of the work after the poet's death. He therefore revised the work as *Oedipus* in 1952, employing his own text adapted from several translations. This version was produced twice in 1954 and a recording was then released.[44]

In addition to realizing Yeats's ideal for text setting in *Oedipus*, Partch was participating in the time-honored attempt to revive the theatrical experience of ancient Greece, to achieve its legendary power and ritual purpose. In "The Ancient Magic," Partch wrote: "In my version of Sophocles' *Oedipus the King*, I tried to rediscover some of the stature that the Western theater has lost in its long divorce from integrated music."[45] His purpose in composing *Oedipus* was to

"bring together more of the elements that belong to theater with the purpose of increasing its power-its power of communication, its power to give meaning to our existence."[46] At this point in his career, Partch was particularly concerned with creating a form of text setting approximating that of the ancient Greeks. "For the Greeks the noblest purpose of music was to enhance the drama. Dramatists were frequently the composers of the music for their words. This music took the form of recitative in some of the dialogue, accompanied note for note by aulos or kithara or both. In this economy of accompaniment the words were perfectly understood by the audience."[47] Partch accepted as "a historical fact that the Greeks used some kind of 'tone declamation' in their dramatic works, and that it was common practice among them to present language, music, and dance as a dramatic unity. "In this conception of *King Oedipus*, I am striving for such a synthesis, not because it might lead me to the 'Greek spirit,' but because I believe in it."[48] Partch, like Duncan and Craig before him, exhibited some anxiety lest the reader assume that he had hoped simply to recreate authentic Greek theatrical practice, rather than create a new form of music theater for the modern world. "I have not consciously linked the ancient Greek of Sophocles and this conception of his drama twentyfour hundred years later. The work is presented as a human value, necessarily pinned to a time and place, necessarily involving the oracular gods and Greek proper and place-names, but, nevertheless, not necessarily Greek."[49] In several such statements Partch attempted to distance his work from its exotic model.

In contrast to Partch's subsequent works of music theater, *Oedipus* was somewhat constrained, rather than liberated, by its exotic model and by his theatrical theories. The work represents either the most perfect realization of Partch's text-setting ideal or the most academic demonstration it. Though not as arid as Orff's *Oedipus der Tyrann*, Partch's *Oedipus* has long stretches of minimally accompanied or unaccompanied speech. *Oedipus* was composed according to Partch's conception of a corporeal, "natural" vocal style - an intoning rather than singing style - and has far more text, treated more reverently, than any of his later works of music theater. Partch described his intent as to "present the drama expressed by language, not to obscure it, either by operatic aria or symphonic instrumentation. Hence, in critical dialogue, music enters almost insidiously, as tensions enter. The words of the players continue as before, spoken, not sung, but are a *harmonic part* of the music. In these settings the inflected words are little or no different from ordinary speech, except as emotional tensions make them different.

Assertive words and assertive music do not collide. Tone of spoken word and tone of instrument are intended to combine in a compact emotional or dramatic expression, each providing its singular ingredient."[50] The following guidelines were provided for the intoned dialogue: "The written notes are not to be adhered to religiously. They are not sung, and generally speaking only accents need to be intoned accurately, order to integrate the voices with prevailing harmony and rhythm. . . . in performance it is better to hit any tone than to wait until the right tone asserts itself in the brain, since any delay arrests the dramatic continuity."[51] *Oedipus* was Partch's first music theater composition and marked a basic lift in his career from monophonic, bardic musical performance to an integrated theatrical idea1.[52] Although Partch's other works of music theater differ greatly from this early example, two aspects of *Oedipus* indicate the direction his music theater would take. Oedipus's tragic exit scene is set as a "dance-pantomime." This decision to allow dance and pantomime, rather than dialogue, to express the drama of this final scene anticipates a major feature of Partch's later works. Second, in accordance with his monophonic ideal, Partch assigned the lines the chorus to a male character - the Spokesman - accompanied by a female chorus singing nonsense text. The use of nonsense vocal sounds as a 'primary musical device predominates in his subsequent theatrical pieces. Both mimetic dance and nonsense vocalisms are prominent components of Partch' s final work, *Delusion of the Fury: A Ritual of Dream and Delusion* - a work based more on that other (alleged) descendent of ancient Greek theater, Japanese Noh, than on the dramas of Yeats.

**"On a Japanese Theme"**

Partch cited Japanese Noh as important for his conception of music theater in writings from the early 1940s onward, but it was not until *Delusion of the Fury* (1966) that the influence of Noh became directly apparent in his composition. This work was produced at the University of California, Los Angeles, in 1969 and was submitted by Partch to satisfy an honorary commission from the Koussevitzky Foundation in 1974. *Delusion* was the culmination of Partch's theatrical career. It includes the largest array of his own instruments, several of which were created specifically for it, and calls for an integrated approach to performance. The instrumentalists "become actors and dancers, moving from instruments to acting areas as the impetus of the drama requires."[53] A variety of small hand-instruments allows this chorus also to perform simultaneously as instrumentalists and dancers. Partch reluctantly recognized that the demands

placed upon the soloists in *Delusion* outstripped the practical possibilities of contemporary production: "Ideally, the singers would be skilled also in the arts of dancing, acting, miming, as they are in Noh and Kabuki. But in our specialist culture, singers are generally only singers, actors only actors, and dancers only dancers. Just one solution seems possible: put the singers in the pit, while the actor-dancers on stage mouth the words, the gibberish, or whatever."[54] In his introductory remarks to the score, Partch reasserted his music theater ideal: "The concept of this work inheres in the presence of the instruments on stage, the movements of musicians and chorus, the sounds they produce, the actuality of actors, of singers, of mimes, of lights; in fine, the actuality of truly integrated theater. "[55]

*Delusion* consists of two acts with an extended instrumental introduction, the Exordium, and a connecting instrumental interlude entitled "Sanctus" – titles suggestive of ritual music. The Exordium is described as "an overture, an invocation, the beginning of a ritualistic web."[56] Act I, "On a Japanese Theme," is based on Arthur Waley's translations of two Noh plays: *Atsumori* by Zeami, the central writer and theoretician of Noh, and *Ikuta* by Zembo Motoyasu. Both plays are concerned with the legend of Atsumori, a prince killed in a famous battle by a young warrior. After many years, the young warrior, now a religious pilgrim, seeks forgiveness from the spirit of Atsumori. Act I of *Delusion* opens "with a pilgrim in search of a particular shrine, where he may do penance for murder. The murdered man appears as a ghost, sees first the assassin, then his young son, looking for a vision of his father's face. Spurred to resentment by his son's presence, he lives again through the ordeal of death, but at the end – with the supplication, "Pray for me" – he finds reconciliation."[57] Partch merged elements from *Atsumori* and *Ikuta* in this act. For instance, the son is not present in the *Atsumori* version of the tale but is the central figure in *Ikuta*. Act II of *Delusion* is based on an Ethiopian story entitled "Justice," taken from an anthology of African writing.[58] While act I is "intensely serious," act II is farcical: a young Hobo prepares his meal over a simple fire. An Old Goat Woman enters and asks the Hobo if he has seen her lost goat. He is deaf and seeks to be rid of her by gesturing for her to go away. She exits in the direction of his gesture, finds the goat, and tries to thank the Hobo for his help. The Hobo assumes that she is accusing him of a wrong and a fight ensues. The Villagers arrive and force the couple to appear before the Justice of the Peace, who is himself deaf and nearsighted and misunderstands the situation entirely. He delivers a ridiculous verdict under the assumption that

the Hobo and Goat Woman are married, the goat being their child, and that a domestic quarrel has occurred. The Chorus of Villagers ironically celebrates the importance of justice.

As noted above, Partch was careful to disavow any attempt at imitating ancient Greek theater in *Oedipus*. He exhibited a similar anxiety when discussing *Delusion* and its exotic models: "In Act I, I am not trying to write a Noh play. Noh is already a fine art, one of the most sophisticated that the world has known, and it would be senseless for me to follow a path of superficial duplication. The instrumental sounds (excepting my koto) are not Japanese, the scales I use are not Japanese, the voice usage is different, costumes are different. Act I is actually a development of my own style in dramatic music, particularly as evidenced in *Oedipus* and *Revelation*. If for no other reason than the music, its daimon is American."[59] Without disputing Partch's account of his intentions, nor attempting to create a detailed catalogue of exotic influence, it is possible to explore the relationship between Delusion and Japanese Noh (in particular) beyond his declarations of distance.

"On a Japanese Theme" is not a setting of the two Noh plays but is instead a transformation that results in a new work in the spirit of Noh performance. Whereas in *Curlew River*, Britten and Plomer transferred the Buddhist tale and the Japanese setting to a medieval Christian play set in England, Partch created a work without cultural reference or location.[60] Most of the text was jettisoned and replaced with vocal sounds rather than with words. Noh is a distilled form of drama, but Partch simplified the form even further, to the point that there is little suggestion of the original plot-only a basic emotional situation is evident. Partch extracted the essential elements of an archetypal tale from these Japanese plays. The only indications of the original story appear in programmatic headings printed in the scenario for each section of the act. Partch was interested in the underlying tensions of the basic dramatic situation rather than in specific elements of the his toricallegend. These dramatic tensions are suggested on stage through stylized movement, costume, and makeup and through the emotive quality of the vocal utterances and instrumental music.

Elements of Noh performance style are found throughout *Delusion* and in Partch's general aesthetic of music theater. The decision to place his instruments on stage without attempting to

hide the players stems in part from his readings on Noh, as does his use of minimal sets and scenery. Partch's emphasis on the physicality of instrumental performance also has a parallel in Noh. (He is likely to have noted with approval William Maim's comment that" stage manners are equally important as playing technique in the study of noh drumming.")[61] Although Partch's conception of the role of the chorus derived primarily from ancient Greek theater, it included features that are particular to Noh. Arthur Waley had noted in 1921 that the Noh chorus often delivers "an actor's words for him when his dance movements prevent him from singing comfortably."[62] This polyvocal approach to the delivery of a single protagonist's lines occurs throughout *Delusion* and, less obviously, in Partch's other music theater works.[63] His settings of nonsense text occasionally resemble the *kakegoe* calls of Noh drummers; in both cases, instrumentalists are producing vocal sounds.

Some detailed musical correspondence with Noh is also evident in this work. The Exordium section of *Delusion* is performed in darkness and functions similarly to the introductory piece performed backstage before every Noh performance. The unexpected drum strokes, particularly in the first section of act I, and the use of the Bolivian flute create an aural approximation of *nohgaku*. Partch's use of exotic instruments, however, is rather more Orientalist than "Oriental." Partch's orchestration employs a melange that includes an imitation Zulu ugumbo, his Greek-inspired kitharas, a Boliviar double flute, an mbira from Zimbabwe, a Fijian "rhythm boat," several ex. otic hand drums, and an imitation koto (a Japanese instrument not employed in Noh). Although Partch seems to have reached a bit recklessly into the world music grab bag for *Delusion*, the following statement does indicate an appreciation for each instrument's cultural context: "The Japanese koto and the Chinese kin represent unspoken philosophies in the cultures it which they grew, and in the headlong plunge of the Orient to 'catch up' with the West, these old instruments and the values behind them are being threatened."[64] When Partch employed an exotic instrument for this "Ritual of Dream and Delusion," he hoped to incorporate not only its timbral value but its spiritual power as well.

Partch provided se'veral indications for the dancing in act I and appear to have had the general styles of Noh and Kabuki in mind. The Pilgrim enters "slowly, solemnly" and at the end of his scene becomes a statuesque dark silhouette, remaining immobile for some ten minutes. His

motionless period allows for the insertion of the *Ikuta* narrative, the entrance of the son, into the basic *Atsumori* plot. A Noh play normally has one climactic dance. Having combined two Noh plays in *Delusion*, Partch includes two climactic dances: a poignant dance between the Ghost and his Son, and a reenactment of the battle between the Pilgrim and the Ghost. Partch describes the Father-Son dance as follows: "It is slow, tender, even though the tempo of the music is very fast. They must never touch. Their bodies must be inviolate."[65] In his introduction to *The Bewitched*, Partch had listed features of "Oriental dancing" that he most admired, one of which was the avoidance of contact: "In a serious love duet or a fight duet, a dancer never touches another dancer, in a gesture of endearment or anger. I noted, long before I ever saw oriental dancing, how tension was likely to drop the moment two such characters became physically embroiled. . .. In dance aesthetics, the human body has a sacred, mysterious identity which can be easily and shockingly damaged, and the body's preserved sacredness tends to illumine the terrible fact of every person's aloneness."[66]

Partch's insistence that the Ghost and Son never touch in their dance is not a direct realization of the dramatic action as described in Waley's translation of *Ikuta*. The chorus in *Ikuta* says that the child "plucked at the warrior's sleeve" and that, before preparing to return to the realm of the dead, Atsumori "dropped the child's hand."[67] Partch's setting of this parent-child dance at the boundary between life and death is similar to Britten's in *Curlew River*. In *Delusion* the living son is searching for the spirit of his father, while in *Curlew River* the Madwoman is searching for her son. In discussing the Madwoman's encounter with the spirit of her son, I noted that Britten departed from the stage directions in the Noh play translation by not having the mother chase after her son in the attempt to hold him in the world of the living. Instead, Britten called for the spirit of the boy to circle his mother slowly while she remained transfixed and still. Clearly, these staged encounters between a man and an adolescent boy were particularly charged and sensitive moments for these two homosexual composers. (We will discover below that Bernstein's *Mass* also ends with the union of a boy and a man to the accompaniment of a flute.) Partch's Father-Son dance ends as the Pilgrim slowly rises. The Pilgrim takes thirty-six beats to stand up and, doing so, brings back the *Atsumori* narrative and prepares for its climactic dance-the reenactment of the battle (see Fig. 10). This final dance ends with Kabuki-like poses (*mei*) as the Pilgrim drops his stick and holds his hands up in a plea for forgiveness, while the Ghost maintains his

own pose of attack. (The mimetic, comic dance style of act II, "On an African Theme," has more in common with Japanese folk dancing than with either Noh or Kabuki.)

In his study of Partch's exoticism in *Delusion*, Will Salmon argues that the most significant indication of Japanese influence is found in the dramatic structure of the work. Salmon writes: "The influence of Noh goes beyond just the story; Partch weaves the Noh art form into his works by a unique combination of scholarship and intuition."[68] Salmon deduces that Partch relied upon William Malm's outline of the Noh form for his merging of the two Noh plays in act I. He also argues that the work as a whole fits a specific type of Noh form: the *mugen-no*. In *mugen-no*, the principal characters discuss a story from the past in the first half of the play and then return to reenact that very story in the second half. Salmon's reading of Delusion as a *mugen-no* depends on the notion that act II is a retelling of act I - that the same figures return in different guise to relive the story - and that both acts are motivated by the delusions of the principal characters. In this interpretation, the Pilgrim returns as the Hobo, the Son as the Goat Woman, and the Ghost as the Justice of the Peace. Partch made these pairings explicit by calling for the same performer to perform each of the paired roles. In addition, his discussions of the work emphasized the complementary relationship between the two acts. For example, act I was intended to represent a reconciliation with death, while act II involved a reconciliation with life. The acts are connected musically by the "Sanctus" section and textually by the repetition of the final line of act I, "Pray for me again," heard from an offstage voice at the end of act II.

Salmon compares the structures of *Delusion* and *mugen-no* in detail, suggesting that Partch arrived at an approximation of the larger *mugen-no* form by first following Malm's outline of Noh for act I, and then by adapting the Ethiopian tale to fit the same mold for act II. Salmon rightly notes how carefully Partch structured Delusion as a coherent whole. However, to argue that Partch intuitively arrived at the larger form, Salmon must dismiss the "Time of Fun Together" section in act II, in which the Villagers sing and dance in a celebratory call and response, as being outside the structure and of less importance. The section is significant in that it makes clear Partch's interest in African ritual. Concerning act II, Partch wrote: "There is probably no art form in Ethiopia comparable to Noh in Japan, but – generally – I am not trying to depict African ritual, although African ritual, as I have heard it on records, has obviously

influenced my writing, in this and several other works. . .. Despite the use of much percussion, the tone is American. The furious irony is deeply and certainly American."[69] By subsuming the Ethiopian act within a larger Japanese dramatic form, Salmon disregards Partch's interest in African ritual and neglects the substantial act II communal section. As is often the case in modernist music theater, multiple exotic models are at play in *Delusion*.

One final suggestion of exotic inspiration should be noted here. Although Partch cites only *Atsumori* and *Ikuta* as models for act I of *Delusion*, his work may also have been shaped by a third Noh play. A translation of *Tsunemasa* by Zeami immediately follows *Atsumori* and *Ikuta* in Waley's book, and it is based on the same primary legend. *Tsunemasa* deals with the death of Atsumori's brother at the same famous battle of Ichi-no-Tani. No specific character or element of plot from this play is evident in *Delusion*. Instead, Partch may have been intrigued by the theme of music's incantatory power in *Tsunemasa*. The ghost of Tsunemasa, a talented musician to whom the Emperor had given a special lute, is especially susceptible to music's power. In this play the priests perform on flutes and strings to benefit Tsunemasa's spirit and to dedicate the lute to his memory. The power of their performance summons his ghost: "while they played the dead man stole up behind them. Though he could not be seen by the light of the candle, they felt him pluck the lute-strings. . . "[70] The recognition of music's incantatory power is present to a lesser degree in *Atsumori*, whose hero was also musical: he had a bamboo-flute with him when he died in battle. *Atsumori* begins with a Young Reaper, who will be revealed as the ghost of Atsumori, playing a flute. Partch, a musician who had experienced the life of a transient worker, must have been drawn to the following passage:

> Priest: Was it one of you who was playing on the flute just now?
>
> Young Reaper: Yes, it was we who were playing.
>
> Priest: It was a pleasant sound, and all the pleasanter because one does not look for such music from men of your condition.
>
> Young Reaper: Unlooked for from men of our condition, you say! /

Have you not read:-"Do not envy what is above you / Nor despise what is below you"? / Moreover the songs of woodmen and the flute-playing of herdsmen, / Flute playing even of reapers and songs of wood-fellers / Through poets' verses are known to all the world. / Wonder not to hear among us / The sound of a bamboo flute.

Priest: You are right. Indeed it is as you have told me.[71]

After the Young Reaper vanishes, the Priest, Atsumori's slayer, begins a vigil for the dead man's soul. The chant and gong-playing of the Priest calls forth Atsumori's spirit. As the spirit retells his tragic story, the memory of Atsumori's flute heard on the eve of the tragic battle deeply moves the attentive Priest.[72]

Several sections of *Delusion* suggest that Partch attempted to realize this theme of music's power in his composition. The Exordium and the Chorus of the Shadows, the first section of act I, seem musically to invoke the old story. As noted above, the drum strokes and flute line in the Chorus of the Shadows suggest *nohgaku*.[73] In addition, the sustained chords of the chromelodeon (Partch's adapted reed organ) sound somewhat like the *sho*, a Japanese mouth organ used in *gagaku* but not in Noh. This music succeeds in calling forth the Pilgrim and then the Ghost as if both were departed spirits and as if the power of Japanese Noh-its drama and music-were being retrieved from the past. In addition to a lifelong interest in the legendary influence of ancient Greek music over its audience, Partch must also have been intrigued by the power accorded to music in these stories from Japan.

**"Extraverbal Magic"**

There are few words in *Delusion*. Not counting repetitions, there are ten words in act I and forty-four in act II. Instead of words, the chorus and principals produce a variety of nonverbal vocalisms throughout the work. As Partch noted in the scenario, "Dialogue as such is never present. I feel that the mysterious, perverse qualities of these story ideas can be conveyed through music, mime, lights, with more sureness of impact than with spoken or sung lines, and spoken and sung lines in reply."[74] This rejection of the spoken word appears to reverse Partch's

early views of text setting. In *Oedipus*, Partch was devoted to articulating the spoken word. His "monophonic" conception required that one voice deliver the text at a time in order to ensure clarity. In *Genesis of a Music*, he noted "An important distinction, then, as regards the Corporeal and the Abstract, is between an individual's vocalized words, intended to convey meaning, and musicalized words that convey no meaning."[75] As discussed above, Partch was working within a Yeatsian aesthetic of words and music in his composition of *Oedipus* and his vocal idiom in this period was very close to speech. In "Bitter Music," a prose-music journal predating *Oedipus*, Partch indicated that the passages of notated music should be read at the piano and that the "words should be spoken quickly, on the tones indicated. They should never be sung."[76] In stating that "words are music. Spoken words," he implied that words did not require much musical setting, but could stand on their own in a simple recitation style.[77] *Oedipus*, as noted, can be seen as a culmination of Partch's early style of text setting. However, *Oedipus* and few earlier works also included a radically different type of vocal production that had nothing to do with enunciating English texts.

Partch's preoccupation with the spoken word transmuted into a broad interest in human vocal sounds. An early indication of this alternative approach to vocal music appears in U. S. Highball, particularly in the distort and stretched pronunciation of city names. In *Oedipus*, the wordless chorus vocalized on "ohs," "ahs," and various other sounds. In his article "No Barriers," written the year of the revised version of *Oedipus*, Partch refers to these vocalisms as "sounds from the mouth that communicate only emotion."[78] *The Bewitched* (1955) has no words at all; instead an astonishing range of vocalisms are heard from the chorus and the Witch, the principal vocalist. Significantly, Partch often asserted that the "nonsense text in his music theater works was intended to convey meaning, and that no verbal vocalisms were more effective in doing so than words. Of course, the notion of the transcendent expressivity of musical sounds has long Romantic roots. However, in the twentieth century, composers such as Partch acted on this concept in a literal fashion by employing extreme nonverbal vocalisms. In his introduction to *Delusion*, Partch described the sung text consisting of "sounds from the throat, meaningless in English verbal communication but not meaningless in this music."[79] Partch's use of nonverbal vocalisms at first seems to conflict with the Yeatsian ideal, but it had Yeats's approval. In a letter dated 23 October 1934, Yeats noted his own us of nonsense words in the poem "Crazy Jane

Reproved" and suggested that the old ballads were sung to a melody in the same manner that "Partch the Californian musician I told you of sings his 'meaningless words.' He use them to break the monotony of monotone."[80] In his works of music theater following *Oedipus*, Partch found multiple uses for "meaningless words".

The masking of semantic meaning in the treatment of text by Stravinsky, Thomson, and Glass was mentioned in chapter 4, as were the stylize vocal effects in ritual music theater as a form of musical masking. Partch's use of nonsense syllables differs from these approaches in that his "meaningless words" were intended to carry definite and powerful meanings. As one might expect, Partch was attempting to tap into a more ancient conception of the power of vocal sounds - the belief that the sound of a word or vocalism infused it with power and energy. This belief is expressed in many cultures, even in those that forbid music and singing and that insist upon the primary or the divine spoken word. Officially, Qur'anic recitation is not considered a form of singing, and the text is emphatically verbal. However, the style in which it is delivered, Tajwid, "is believed to be the codification of the sound of the revelation as it was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad, and as he subsequently rehearsed it with the Angel Gabriel. Thus, the sound itself has a divine source and significance, and, according to Muslim tradition, is significant to the meaning."[81] In other cultures, ancient and contemporary, nonsense syllables and the sound of certain phrases are believed to contain magical power. In Hindu cosmology, one such powerful syllable, am, is associated with the creation of the universe. In Japanese Noh, a ritualistic sound environment is generated by the explosive *kakegoe* calls of the drummers and through the intense singing style of both chorus and soloist, which employ an ancient pronunciation not understood by modern audiences. Concerning the incomprehensible text delivery in Noh, William Malm notes that "what is lost in the immediacy of comprehension is gained in the transcendental euphony of words as sound."[82] In other ritual vocal music traditions, such as some Sufi *dhikr* ceremonies, words are broken down into syllables and fragmented to such an extent that the resultant sound resembles the chanting of nonsense syllables. Some forms of religious recitation, perhaps the recitation of the Catholic rosary, become so repetitive as to transcend meaning and to create a generalized spiritual sound. It is at the point when words are no longer heard for their meaning, but only for their hypnotic sound patterns, that the moment of most intense devotion

and of highest religious vocal expression is reached.[83] In his post-*Oedipus* music theater, Partch moved beyond the semantic limitations of words to the expressive meanings of vocal sounds.

The idea that extraverbal vocal sounds contain specific expressive significance involves a peculiar form of onomatopoeia. The vocal sounds must somehow signal their general expressive meanings. In some cases, Partch took this view a step further toward explicit meaning. In act II of *Delusion*, and throughout *The Bewitched*, Partch" translated" his vocalisms into specific verbal phrases in his scores and scenarios. In the second act of *Delusion* several lines of text for the principals are not intended to be spoken or sung aloud, even though they are occasionally marked with such stage directions as "speaking plaintively." Instead, their meaning is conveyed through mime, by the nonsense vocalisms of the principal or of the chorus singing for the principal, or by the semantic text intoned by the chorus in its role of delivering lines for the principal characters. This complex method of text delivery is further complicated by the Hobo's deafness. When the Old Goat Woman reenters with her goat at the beginning of "The Misunderstanding" section, we do hear her happy vocalisms: "Mi O-ma mi-ah! O mi O ma mi-," etc. However, when she turns to thank the Hobo we see h mouth move but hear no sound, whether from her mouth or from the Chorus. We are instead (not) hearing through the deaf-ears of the Hobo. The "misunderstanding" itself is set with silent movements of the mouth I the two principals, who literally do not hear each other's meaning. For the "Trial" section, Partch notes in the score that "unlike preceding scenes, the is no imitation of speech here. The 'dialogue' - the testimony, the Justice questions, the ejaculations of the Villagers-is accomplished through mi sic, miming, singing. "[84] The sung component consists of vocalizing on such syllables as: "Ee-oh!," "O-wee-o," and "Ee yah."

A similar use of vocalisms is found in Partch's *The Bewitched*, compose some five years after *Oedipus* and ten years prior to *Delusion*. In *The Bewitched*, Partch frequently translates the nonsense syllables emanating from the Chorus of Lost Musicians and from the Witch into specific words in hi scenarios and in the score. These vocal sounds are not only conceived as meaningful but are intended to express meaning in a manner more forceful that words. In reference to one of the Witch's vocalisms, Partch relates that "because she communicates so eloquently without words her meaning is abundantly clear."[85] For instance, he "translates" the

Witch's "Ee-Yow-oo wuh!" as "You shallow idiots!" Partch's notes and textual clarifications for *The Bewitched* are so detailed that they turn the work into a micromanaged pantomime. The dancers' movements are described by Partch as though they were another form of text delivery; equivalent to the vocalisms. By rejecting verbal text, Partch was aiming for a more mystical form of communication suitable for his rituals of music theater. Partch felt that in a performance of *The Bewitched* "the possessed dancers would speak with their bodies."[86] In another context, he wrote: "Communication, if it functions at all, comes in many disguises: in plain words, or in artfully inflected words, or perhaps no words at all, perhaps telepathically or, according to some, as the result of transmigratory souls recognizing each other from former lives. In any case, there is such a thing as extraverbal magic. And extraverbal magic is something I now wish to invoke."[87] In The Bewitched, the magical powers of the extraverbal were employed by Partch for the "unwitching" of modern society.

**The Bewitched: A Satiric Ritual "Designed to Castrate the Machine Age"**

After completing work in the high tragic mode of *Oedipus*, Partch expressed a desire to compose a work of comedy: "I understood the attitude of the ancient Greeks in producing a satyr play after a presentation of tragedy."[88] Immediately following *Oedipus*, Partch composed a comic work entitled plectra and Percussion Dances. His next major theater work was a "dancesatire," *The Bewitched* (1955). In a letter concerning casting for the first production of *The Bewitched*, Partch noted that Martha Graham would be an ideal choice for the Witch. However, Partch wrote that "I'm inclined to think that she only likes me in my *Oedipus* moods. *The Bewitched* is what I want to do, and it is no *Oedipus*."[89] Partch was interested in balancing the tragic and the comic throughout his career. (Act II of *Delusion*, as we have seen, releases tension and balances the serious first act in the manner of a Japanese *Kyogen* or a Greek satyr play.) He believed that satire was a powerful mode of theatrical expression, writing that theater "need be no less effective or significant. . . if its vehicle is satire rather than tragedy,"[90] and stressed the importance of a society's ability to laugh at itself intelligently: "One might be justified in saying that, in such a time as this, satire is in fact exactly what the doctor ordered."[91] Each of Partch's music theater works after Oedipus has a significant comic and satiric component. *The Bewitched*

and *Water! Water!* are farcical burlesques. The shape of his career as a whole suggests that he may have been drawn more strongly to satire and parody than to tragic drama.

*The Bewitched* consists of a prologue, ten scenes, and an epilogue. It is not based on a specific plot but is instead a string of stylized scenes or situations parodying modern life. The instrumentalists function as a chorus, realizing Partch's ideal for multiple-role performers. The main figure is the Witch, who "belongs to the ancient, pre-Christian school. . " is an omniscient soul, all-perceptive, with that wonderful power to make other people see also, when she feels so inclined. . . [ she] is a different Greek oracle, and the Chorus - like the choruses of ancient tragedy - is her instrument, always under the oracular power of suggestion."[92] The "Bewitched" are the individual dancers, who represent stereotypes from modern American society. In each scene, one or more of these characters enter and, through dance, display their particular form of bewitchedness, their prejudices and general ignorance.

Although *The Bewitched* contains no verbal text, Partch described each scene in versions of the printed scenario and provided detailed directions for the choreography in the score. Scene I, entitled "Three Undergrads Become Transfigured in a Hong Kong Music Hall," can serve as an example of his programmatic ideas for this work. In this scene, the bewitched consist of three undergraduates, represented by three dancers, whose particular form of bewitchedness consists of a confirmed xenophobia, a distaste for anything strange and exotic, such as the music of the Cantonese theater The undergraduates are" charming and exuberant children, with plump bodies, shining teeth and eyes-exuding from a thousand pores a soap-scrubbed pinkish gleam."[93] They dance in mocking imitation of Chinese theater. The Witch slowly rises over thirty-five beats and, upon reaching her full height employs a wild vocalism to unwitch the undergraduates. The Chorus emphatically stamps - perhaps in imitation of Noh foot stamps. The lesson learnt by these undergraduates and presented for the audience is that "the exotic - East or West - does not hold more mystery than it ought."[94]

*The Bewitched* relies on choreography rather than on verbal expression for its satire. The premiere was marred by a controversy between Partch and Alwin Nikolais, the choreographer, concerning Partch's detailed notes in the score. Nikolais and Partch had fundamentally different

opinions or the role of dance and on the appropriate style for this work. Nikolais rejected Partch's satiric program and created choreography that was far more abstract than Partch had envisioned. As Bob Gilmore suggests of Partch in his study of the controversy, "having prepared such an imaginative and detailed scenario, all he really needed was someone to translate his rather clear ideas into choreographic reality."[95] Nikolais was not willing to realize Partch's integrated vision but instead approached the project as he would any other music. Partch's fear that his ideas were being undermined was well founded. It is clear from letters between Nikolais and Ben Johnston (and others involved in organizing the production) that Nikolais never intended to follow Partch's scenario and had little regard for Partch's mimetic approach to dance. Johnston was impressed by Nikolais's fame and wanted to allow him free reign. He wrote to Nikolais that Partch should not be involved in the theatrical and choreographic side of the work. (In later articles and interviews, Johnston consistently criticized Partch's abilities as a choreographer and librettist.) Partch would bitterly recall how he had conceived *The Bewitched* as an integrated whole "and then in the course of getting it performed. . . my conception simply didn't get across. No matter how hard I tried, the idea of purity was overwhelming in the minds of the persons that I employed."[96]

In a letter to the choreographer Eleanor King, Partch delineated those aspects of Nikolais' s choreography that had disappointed him: "Do you hate satire? Do you hate humor? Do you reject – automatically – the idea of telling a story in dance? Do you oppose all situations that are recognizable as human in dance? Do you reject the idea of American situations, commonplace' enough but unusual simply because they are not used, as dance themes? Well, Alwin Nikolais does all these things."[97] Partch wrote that he had conceived *The Bewitched* "as a kind of American Kabuki, telling a series of satirical stories throughout, all with a common motivation, which is the burden of the Prologue. I had hoped-no, expected-to find a choreographer who would extend the satiric idea in dance. The freedom and latitude for choreographic creativity is tremendous within that framework."[98] Several of Partch's statements concerning The Bewitched indicate that Japanese Kabuki and its dance had occupied his thoughts during this period:

> The value that we have lost-temporarily, I hope-is evident when we see a performance of the Japanese kabuki. It is not to be explained merely as a difference between widely separated cultures. The Japanese theater, which at the time of its revolutionary advent included all the skills

> of popular entertainment, such as juggling and tumbling, represents a quality in an integrated art, and however we may use music in conjunction with drama and dance, our value lies in 'purity.' . . . Yet it is a fact that we do respond, and magnificently-as in the case of kabuki-when we are somehow exposed to an ancient art that takes integration for granted. In ancient Greece, and to some extent in medieval Europe, the value was taken for granted.[99]

Partch's ideas for the dancing in *The Bewitched* were based on various exotic styles. The Witch was to dance in "Kabuki style" throughout. Stage directions for one scene refer to "Near East" dance; "East Indian" dance and tumbling are designated for another. As usual, Partch made a clear distinction between the influence of exotic styles and the attempt to imitate them. "Where oriental styles are stated, the dancing would only suggest. The result would not be oriental, of course, any more than my music is oriental, even though most Americans hearing it for the first time say so."[100]

Nikolais did not share Partch's interest in using exotic styles any more than he was willing to create imitations of modern "American situations." Most importantly, Nikolais did not share Partch's peculiar sense of humor. For Partch, the value of *The Bewitched*, its fundamental purpose, resided in its satiric program and its social criticism of contemporary America. In praise of theatrical satire, Partch wrote: "Satire need not be heavy-handed. It can descend lightly and with love, and imbue the listener and the viewer with a shaft of momentary recognition and delight. It can bring reevaluation and self-perception, because it precipitates momentary people and momentary scenes in a fresh-angle vision. And without seeming labor, finally, it can bring a spontaneous feeling for humanity through art, a feeling that lies within our bones and is precedent to all recorded history, and invokes the oldest of traditions."[101] During the first production of *The Bewitched*, Partch's collaborators clearly considered the composer's satire a bit heavy-handed. Un deterred, he would again employ satire for purposes of social criticism in *Revelation in the Courthouse Park* (1960) and *Water! Water!* (1961).

Despite their eccentricity, Partch's works fit within a larger trend in twentieth-century American music and prefigure works composed in subsequent decades. American music theater has often functioned as a form of staged social criticism and has thrived on stylistic eclecticism. This is evident in pieces from the period of the Great Depression, such as Becker's "Polytechnic Drama"

*A Marriage with Space* (1935), as well as in numerous works from the Vietnam era. It is to the latter, American works embodying the con junction of ritualized performance and religious subject matter for music theater of political protest in the turbulent 1960s and early '70s, that we now direct our attention.