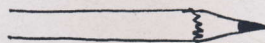


Sermon

(2010)

for narrating pianist

Andy Costello



Pencil and Eraser
Press

Program Notes

“*Sermon* is essentially a history lecture on the piano recital tradition, with piano accompaniment (or as I like to say, ‘A history lesson on wheels’). The musical content is comprised almost entirely of quotation, both from well-known excerpts from the piano literature, and lesser-known ones, of which perhaps only one or two (or three) people in the world would recognize. The text is newly written (aside from a few quotes), and it is entirely married to its musical accompaniment (please keep this mind if you decide to read the text before the piece’s audition). Although I generally have an inclination for verbosity in my program notes, I feel this is all there is to say, since I do so much damn talking in the piece itself.” -AC

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Andy Costello (b. yesterday) is a pianist, composer, and musicologist currently living in Montréal. As a pianist, he focuses on contemporary music. As a composer, he focuses on the piano. He is also interested in non-classical use of the voice, and humor. In musicology, Andy researches whatever he feels like. His website is [www.MyNameIsAndyCostello.com](http://www.MyNameIsAndyCostello.com).

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Andy Costello (né hier) est un pianiste, compositeur et musicologue habitant présentement à Montréal. Comme pianiste, il est passionné par la musique contemporaine. Comme compositeur, il se concentre sur le piano. Il s’intéresse aussi à l’utilisation de la voix hors d’un contexte classique, et à l’humour en musique. Ses activités de musicologue touchent à n’importe quel sujet qui l’intéresse. Présentement, Andy n’a ni femme, ni chien. Son site web est www.MyNameIsAndyCostello.com.

Text:

When we sit down for a piano recital, we want to hear... new... sounds. Or maybe, we want to hear old sounds in a new time and place. But unfortunately, we no longer live in the eighteenth century (or nineteenth for that matter!), and we find ourselves drowning our future in our past. So where do we go from here? No. No. Maybe. No. No. No. No. Okay!

Of course, at a piano recital, there are *plenty* of things one wishes *not* to hear. For example, we don't want to hear pedantry. Nor do we want to hear... Bloop... Blop... Bleep! But, my oh my how we *love* virtuosity! But there's a slight problem.

Sometimes, the taste of the performer is not in agreement with those of the listener. "We want to hear the waves of the ocean and sea..." I don't care about what you want, I only care about me! See... I want to win competitions! I want to make a career! All these composers try to tell me what to do. For example, "Gesamvoll mit innigster empfindung. Andante molto molto molto cantabile ed espressivo! Crescendo! Decrescendo... Grace notes! Crescendo... piano, piano, piano." But I for one have a mind of my own! For example, at this very moment, this composer is telling me to improvise! So/But enough about me, and you... Let's talk about history!

The piano recital tradition began abruptly. A guy named Liszt lovingly dreamt of a world where pianists, in order to play a recital, were required to memorize their music... There were many to follow in the footsteps of Liszt. One could even say, the Liszt goes on! Hoffman! Argerich! Friedmann! Moisewitch! Rosenthal, Thalberg, D'Albert, Cramer, Lupu, Van Cliburn, Herz! Ax, Pugno, Bülow, Joseffy, Jan Dussek, Giesecking, Rzewski! Ziloti, Clementi, Busoni, Pollini... Tausig, Bülow, Neuhaus, Bach! Gould, Gulda, Rice (Connie), Rislér. Zimmerman (Pierre Joseph Guillaume), Zimmerman (Christian)! Hess! Fischer! Gilels! Richter!

There were plenty more to follow this path. But let's leave it at that, I'd rather not do the math. To answer this question is not very fun, and the question is this: What's infinity plus one?!

To make a long story short, Liszt's life marked the beginning, as well as the end, of the piano recital. And we all follow drearily in his footsteps.

So if there is a lesson to learn from all of this, it is: "Don't stretch further than you can reach!" Or, if you are not a fan of practical discouragement, I will say this: Lend me a hand.

Sermon

Andy Costello

for narrating pianist

pianist's voice

(standing up)

poco accel

5ma

(sit down)

piano-forte

mf *mp* *mf* serenely... disruptive

[Bvb] Ped

When we sit down for a pi-a-no re-ci-tal, we want to hear... new... sounds...

mp

Ped

(as quickly as possible)

mf

staccatiss.

Ped

1

(♩ = ♩)

3

7 x 7 x x 7 .

7 x x x 7 . x

x 7 3

or may-be we want to hear old

mf

pp

(♩ = ♩)

7 x 7

x x 7

7 x 7 x

7 x 7 x 7

sounds in a new time and place.

P

mp

rit - - - - -

P

5:4 5 5 3

but un - for - tu - nate - ly, we no long - er live in the eigh - teen - th century (or nine - teen - th for that matter)

sfz *mp*

Ped ---> --- (ped) --->

3 3 3

and we find our - selves drown - ing our fu - ture in our past. so where do we go from here?

--- (Ped) ---> --- (Ped) --->

poco accel - - - - (think hard)

No. No. May - be. No. No. No. No. (sing) O - kay!
(say it as a cheerful compromise)

mp

3 * or, sing a downward interval in whatever pitch and register is comfortable.

Handwritten guitar notation on a single staff. It features several measures of chords with 'x' marks indicating muted strings. Above the staff, there are four instances of a bracketed '3' over a group of notes, indicating triplets. The notes are mostly eighth notes.

of course at a piano-cital there are plenty of things one not to hear. For example wishes

Handwritten musical notation for piano and guitar. The piano part is on a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The guitar part is on a single staff. Dynamics include *sffz* with a star symbol. Chord diagrams for piano are shown below the staff, including a triad in the bass clef and a more complex chord in the treble clef.

Handwritten musical notation with lyrics: "we dont want to hear...". The notation includes piano and guitar parts. Dynamics include *accel*, *A tempo*, *f*, *A tempo*, and *ff*. There are also notes like "pedan-try!" and "L8vbJ". A star symbol is present above a note in the piano part.

Handwritten musical notation with lyrics: "Nor do we want to hear". It includes a guitar part with a triplet and a piano part. A boxed section contains a collection of notes with the instruction "(improvise w/ this collection)". A star symbol is present above a note in the piano part.

* I = chromatic cluster
 * w/ refers to dynamics, speed, and thickness of texture.

Handwritten musical score for the first system. It features a piano accompaniment and a vocal line. The piano part consists of a series of chords with a wavy line above them, indicating a tremolo or rapid oscillation. The vocal line has three notes: "bloop!", "blop!", and "bleep!".

Annotations include: *poco a poco accel + cresc.*, *(LH)*, *(RH) #*, *(you may start adding any pitches you like)*, *mp*, and *ff*.

Handwritten musical score for the second system. It includes a piano accompaniment and a vocal line with lyrics. The piano part is marked *fast mf* and *sffz*. The vocal line has lyrics: "But... my oh *8va* my! how we love vir-tu-os-ity!".

Annotations include: *fast mf*, *mechanical, without feeling*, *sffz*, *mf*, *(LH)*, *#P*, and *(No ped) →*.

Handwritten musical score for the third system. It features a piano accompaniment with a melodic line in the right hand and chords in the left hand. The tempo is marked *rit*.

Annotations include: *rit*, *8va*, and *P*.

(p = ♩)

7. x x x x x x x x 7

(Bva) BUT there's a slight prob-lem

4543
pp

x x 7 } 7 x x x x x x x x 7 } 7 x x x x x x x x } 7 x

Some-times. the tastes* of the per-form-er are* not in a-gree-ment with
(or) (is)

r (turn to the audience)

(p = ♩)

with extreme vibrato

' x 7 x } 7 x x x x 7 } } } ♯

those of the list-en-er. (sing) We _____

* You have the option of saying "taste" (singular) instead of "tastes", and "is" instead of "are". If these choices are taken, you still must say "those".

(gg★) *molto vibrato!!!!*

want to he - ar the waves of the o - cean and sea

(talk)

I don't care a - bout what you want

Bva *mf*

I on - ly care a - bout me!

(sing) see

p *pp* *mp* *ff*

★ gg = gaudy glissando

☆ For this passage, become more and more careless with your hand positions, so that you play progressively less and less of what is written.

Handwritten musical score for the first system. The piano part (top staff) begins with a dynamic of *ff* and a tempo marking of *Allegro*. It features a series of chords and melodic lines with dynamics ranging from *ff* to *mf* and *f*. A *Bra* (brass) section is indicated with a dashed line and arrow. A *(chromatic cluster)* is noted in the piano part. The bass part (bottom staff) has a dynamic of *mf* and features a *Bra* section with a dashed line and arrow.

Handwritten musical score for the second system, including a vocal line. The vocal part (top staff) is marked *(Sing)* and *f*. The lyrics are "I want to win com-pe-ti-tions" and "I want to ma-ke a ca-". The piano accompaniment (bottom staff) has a dynamic of *mf* and features a *Bra* section with a dashed line and arrow. The piano part includes various chords and melodic lines.

Handwritten musical score for the third system. The piano part (top staff) includes a *-reer* marking and a *Bra* section with a dashed line and arrow. The tempo marking is *Prestissimo*. The piano part has dynamics of *pp*, *cresc.*, and *ff*. The bass part (bottom staff) has dynamics of *f* and *ff*. Performance instructions include *broadly*, *staccatiss.*, and *polo rit.*

much slower

all these com-po-sers

15ma

interruptive

(Lift LH up to the sky dramatically)

f *ff*

Very very slow

try to tell me what to do for ex-am-ple (soupy German accent) Ge-sang-voll mit

p *mezza voce*

in-nig-ster emp-fin-dung An-dan-te (soupy Italian accent) mol-to mol-to! mol-to!! can-ta-bi-le ed!

5 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

es-pre-ssi-vo cre-scen-do! (forcefully) de-cre-scen-do (tenderly) (cheery, flamboyant Italian accent) grace-notes! cre-scen-do!

mf sfz *p* (fast and gaudy) cresc...

molto rit. A tempo

MP P PP 6

(do) pi-a-no pi-a-no pi-a-no (whisper) But I for one have a mind (speak)

mp pp P

3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

of my own for ex-am-ple at this ve-ry mo-ment, + this com-po-ser

mp

(bring your eyes closer to the score)

faster

is telling me to im-pro-ise! (choose one)

(option one) but I'm not gonna!

(option two) (free improvisation)

(slower)

So e-nough-a-bout me and you

But★

Let's talk a-bout HIS-TO-RY!

mp

p

12 16

★ say "But" if you improvised, "So" if you did not.

(P = P.)
(ca. P. = 75)

P. = ♩

12
16

frambunctious

(LH secco)

7 7

4 (British accent)

The pi-a-no re-ci-tal tra-

sfz*

9
16

P. = ♩

A little slower

-di-tion be-gan a-brup-tly.

(Still British accent)

A guy named Liszt

lov-ing-ly dreamt

mf

delicately sway your hands as the melody switches from one hand to the other...

b 0

7 7

3

of a world where pi-a-nists (PEE-uh-nists)

in or-der to play a re-ci-tal,

3

b 0

12

* ♩ = cluster on white keys, # = cluster on black keys

were re-quired to memor-ize their mu-sic

look bewildered...

poco rit - - - - faster

mf mp

slower

There were ma-ny to fol-low in the foot-steps of Liszt one could e-ven say: The Liszt goes on!

A little faster than $P. = 75$

12
16

f rambunctious

(LH secco)

sfz

(1st repeat)

Hoff - man!

(2nd repeat)

Ar - ge - rich!

f

sfz

$P. = 75$

Fried - mann!

Moi - se - witch!

f

* \times = cluster on white keys, # = cluster on black keys

p cresc. --- accel. --- f

Ro - sen - thal Thal - berg Däl - bert cra - mer Lu - pu Van Cli - burn Herz!

p cresc. ---

poco rit. Atempo (whisper) p = p
(sing)

Ax Pu - gno Bü - low Jo - se - ffy Jan Du - ssek Gie - se - king Rzew - ski!

4 mp 4

5 8 mp 12 8

(sing)

Zi - lo - ti Cle - men - ti Bu -

p delicate

Like a cute little Italian aria

r15ma7

p = p (shout)

So - ni Po - lli - ni Lav - sig Bü - low Neu - haus Bach!

4 p f

poco rit. Atempo (sing) (whisper) $\text{P} = \text{P}$

4/4 x x x x x x x x | x x x

Ax Pu-gno Bü-low Jo-se-ffy Jan Du-ssek Gie-se-king Rzew-ski!

4/4 mp 5/8 mp 12/8

(sing)

Zi-lo-ti Cle-men-ti Bu-

12/8 p delicate Like a cute little Italian aria

15ma7 15ma7

(shout)

So-ni Po-lli-ni Tav-sig Bü-low Neu-haus Bach!

4/4 mf in the stalwart Germanic tradition ff mp f.

12/8

(♩ = ♩.)

(sing) (clear throat) Gould Er Gul-da

(talk) (sing) (P=P) (short) ♩ = 75

Rice (Connie) Ris-ler Zim-mer-man (Pierre Joseph Guil-lavme) Zim-mer-man (Chris-tian!)

1st repeat

2nd 3rd

2. HESSSSS! Fis-cher! Rich-ter!

3. Gi-lels!

(x3) sfz* ff

16

* [?] = play a cluster on whatever pitches and of whatever size you like. You may vary on each repeat if you want.

as fast as possible with clarity of text

(shout)

mf (talking forcefully) mp

(voice)

There were plenty more to follow this path but let's leave it at that I'd rather not do the math. To

answer this question is not very fun, and the question is this: What's infinity plus one!

(Piano)

(8vb) →

Handwritten musical score for piano accompaniment. The score is written on a grand staff with treble and bass clefs. It includes various musical notations such as chords, accidentals, and dynamics. Annotations include "with frustration" and "gliss" with arrows pointing to specific notes. Dynamics range from "fff" to "mp". There are also some markings like "15ma7" and "4".

Dreary and non-rhythmic (the passage of time is represented spatially)

To make a long story short, Liszt's life marked

build chord lazily

Ped ----->

the beginning as well as the end of the piano recital, and we all

(ped) ----->

rit - - - - -

follow drearily in his footsteps

(Ped) ----->

18

Slowly

Handwritten musical score for the first system. The top staff shows guitar notation with 'x' marks for fretted notes and triplets of eighth notes. The lyrics are: "So if there is a les-son to learn from all of this, it is:". The piano accompaniment is in the lower staves, with a dynamic marking of *mp*. Chords are labeled with "15ma7" and "15ma".

Animated

Slowly

Handwritten musical score for the second system. The top staff shows guitar notation with a dynamic marking of *mf*. The lyrics are: "Don't stretch fur-ther than you can reach!". The piano accompaniment includes a section labeled "(middle)" with a "Ped" (pedal) marking. A note is marked "ova" (overbend). A note in the piano part is marked "(stretch as far as you can reach)".

(say in any rhythm you like)

Or, if you are not a fan
 of practical discouragement,
 I will say this: I end me a hand.
 (turn to audience)

Handwritten musical score for the third system, featuring performance options. The lyrics are: "Or, if you are not a fan of practical discouragement, I will say this: I end me a hand. (turn to audience)". The score includes two options for the piano accompaniment: "Option One" with a "Standup" marking and "Option Two" with a "crack a smile" marking. A dynamic marking of *p* is present. Pedal markings "Ped" and "Ped" are used. A note is marked "ova".