



**CITY UNIVERSITY
LONDON**

Research Studies Examiners' Joint Report - Research Degrees Candidature

Name of candidate	Clare Hammond	
Student ID Number		
Degree Title (as to appear on degree certificate)	Doctor of Musical Arts (DMA)	
Institute/School	Music	
Title of thesis/publications	Title as submitted: Reinstating the Sinister: Ravel, <i>Concerto pour la main gauche</i> and Britten, <i>Diversions</i>	
Date of Examination	14 Sept. 2011 (recital); 15 Sept. 2011 (viva)	
Name of supervisor(s)	Professor Rhian Samuel	Supervisor present: YES

Upon completion of this report, please forward to the Chair/Research Degrees Administrator within the School/Department so that arrangements may be made for the candidate to be awarded subject to the recommendations of the examiners within 14 days of the viva voce.

Examiners are required to prepare a full list of issues that the student should address and the University will provide student with the examiners' recommendation.

Examiners are asked to supply the reports to the University within 14 days of the examination/re-examination. In making a detailed report on the thesis, comments and suggestions should be full enough to enable the University to gauge the quality of the thesis.

Guidance for any revision or textual correction referred to in your summary recommendation should be included. When you have recommended that the candidate be allowed to revise the resubmit thesis, it is particularly important to give sufficiently specific indication of the nature of the required revisions.

Examiners are asked to delete the lines, sections and words under sections 1 and 2, which are not applicable. The wording of this report form is not intended to constrain examiners, who are free to make additional comments as appropriate.

Before examining a candidate please ensure that you are familiar with the University's regulations and ordinances governing the examination of Doctoral Programmes and/or a Masters Degree by Research. Please ensure too that you refer to the Guidance on the conduct of oral examination - research degrees.

Section 1

We have examined the candidate orally on the thesis/publications and on the subjects relevant thereto. We are satisfied that the thesis/publications are genuinely the work of the candidate.

Section 2

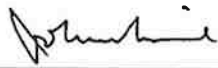
We further report that:

from the University to the candidate after the examiners have submitted their written report and all other requirements have been satisfied.


Examiners' declarations:

We individually declare that we do not have any connection with the candidate, the supervisors, the research described in the work submitted or (*external examiner only*) with the University, which might impair our ability to make a fair and impartial assessment of the candidate's work.

External examiner

Signature	Print name	Date
	Professor John Rink	9/10/11

Internal examiner

Signature	Print name	Date
	PROF STEPHEN COTTRELL	9/10/11

Second internal/external examiner, if appointed (*please delete as appropriate*)

Signature	Print name	Date

Clare Hammond – Reinstating the Sinister: Ravel, *Concerto pour la main gauche* and Britten, *Diversions*.

Joint examiners' report

This is an engaging and thoughtfully prepared study which is elegant in conception and clear in expression. The topic has considerable potential to add to the field of performance studies research and to shed valuable light on issues to do with disability and music, 'artistic identity and performance persona', the 'importance of physical gesture and of visual perception of the performer by an audience', and the 'musical and social meanings' conveyed by musical works both within and outside the realm of performance.

The dissertation component begins by setting out some fundamental issues and then conducting a survey of literature on performance, on the subject of left- or one-hand piano music, on disability and the body, on left-handedness in music, on movement in performance and musical motion more generally, and on the composers and repertoire dealt with in Chapters 1 to 3. Reference is also made to studies of soloist/orchestra interaction in the concerto, Paul Wittgenstein, virtuosity, and so on. The introduction ends by considering the left-hand piano repertoire and a number of different performance considerations relevant to it.

Chapter 1 focuses on Godowsky's transcriptions of Chopin's Etudes Opp. 10 & 25 and the former's attempt to 'transcend limitation' (30) by extending the 'mechanical, technical and musical possibilities of pianoforte playing' (31) in the context of music for the left hand. Nine 'key musical features' serve as the basis of a 'lexicon of compositional concerns' (32) in these transcriptions; they include melodic use of the thumb, span, balance of multi-layered textures, *style brisé*, key, fingering and the sustaining pedal, contrary motion, fugal textures, and aural effect. Each of these is addressed in turn, leading to the conclusion that 'the most compelling attribute of the transcriptions lies neither in their technical merit, nor in the compositional possibilities [that] they unveil, but in their effect. ... To hear [or see?] a left-handed pianist dashing across the keyboard in the transcriptions with as much flair as a two-handed pianist, while handling additional melodic material, creates quite an impression.' (59) The visual perceptions of listeners are critical in this respect: 'the disjunction between aural illusion and visual actuality posits the body as a central expressive element[,] and it is this aspect which proves most illuminating and intriguing in subsequent composers' approaches to the left-hand piano concerto'. (59)

Having thus set up the studies of Ravel's *Concerto pour la main gauche* and Britten's *Diversions*, Ms Hammond proceeds in Chapters 2 & 3 respectively to examine the works 'in relation to the lexicon of left-hand techniques gleaned from Godowsky's transcriptions of Chopin's *Etudes* in the previous chapter.' (60) This involves consideration of the ways in which 'each work is "one-" or "two-handed" and how variations in texture and register enable one to experiment with notions of "left-" or "right-handedness".' (60) Both physical gesture and 'visual perception of the performer in concert' are to be addressed. (60) It is noted that Ravel set out to solve a particular 'problem', i.e. to 'maintain interest in a work of extended scope while utilising such limited means' as those available to a left-handed pianist. In short, 'he is attempting to compensate for the performer's handicap and to "normalise" the situation.' (60) Although 'one-handed textures' are used (though, it seems, 'ironically'), the result is one of 'concealing disability', if indeed the notion of disability needs to be invoked at all. (The notion is far more important than the discussion here acknowledges but at the same time less essential to some of the conclusions than is suggested.) Britten, in contrast, 'was keen not to conceal the performer's one-handedness and composed the work using a "single line approach", in marked contrast to Ravel.' (92) His approach is one of 'celebration', in a work that uses 'a number of different styles in turn', thereby creating 'a lexicon of left-hand piano techniques to an even more explicit degree than does Godowsky in his transcriptions'. (93)

The direct influence of Godowsky's transcriptions on Britten's *Diversions* cannot be proven (although he was 'aware' that they existed, 'it is impossible to say whether he used them as a model to any great extent' (93)); in contrast, a claim is made that 'Ravel studied Godowsky's transcriptions of the Chopin *Etudes*' (61) although there is no ironclad evidence that this was the case. Ironically, although Ms Hammond writes that 'these transcriptions were so well regarded by Wittgenstein that he recommended them as a model to a number of the composers from whom he commissioned concertos' (28), there is very little discussion of Godowsky in Chapter 4, apart from the claim that 'at the height of his career, Wittgenstein had a consummate grasp of the left-hand techniques developed by Godowsky in the transcriptions and deployed to expressive effect in both Ravel[s] and Britten's concertos' (160). More could have been made of the connection in this respect and indeed across all of the works under scrutiny here, especially if, as is suggested, a particular 'lexicon of techniques' was defined and then employed by the successive composers.

Perhaps the most significant issue needing attention is in relation to the thesis underlying the research. While the introduction does indeed introduce the subject, the research aims and objectives are not clearly articulated, and so it is not clear what the candidate is endeavouring to show us (or how this relates to the final performance). This then leads to concern about the structure of the dissertation overall. There is nothing designated as a conclusion, and while some of the material at the end of chapters 3 and 4 feels as though it might form the basis of a conclusion, the dispersion of this material through the dissertation reinforces a sense of not quite knowing what the candidate sees or wishes to project as the real focus of the research. The title of the final section is – revealingly – 'afterword', again suggesting that the candidate is not sure what the outcomes of the overall research actually are, nor how those outcomes may be articulated by way of a conclusion. Moreover, little is asserted about the research content of the recital, which ends up having only the most implicit connection to the dissertation – a connection which is alluded to rather than fully developed on the last two pages of the latter.

There are a number of 'mechanical' errors throughout the dissertation, e.g. unwonted repetition of text (cf. pp. 26 and 32), misplaced or missing punctuation, incorrect use of italics, and typographical errors. The transcriptions of Wittgenstein's annotations are inconsistent (for example, some contain the fingering whereas others do not) and sometimes inaccurate (see e.g. pp. 124 and 126); pencilled emendations in the examiners' copies of the dissertation have already been passed on to the candidate.

The examiners have no concerns in relation to the overall performance standards offered by the candidate: the recital was both accomplished and of a level commensurate with the award of a DMA. While Ms Hammond appeared somewhat constrained during the Szymanowski and the Saxton, she grew in confidence as the programme unfolded, and the Prokofiev in particular was gratifyingly relaxed and expansive.

At this stage the examiners agree that more work must be done on the dissertation before they can recommend the award of the degree, particularly in relation to the overall aims of the research, the structure of the dissertation, and its relationship with the final performance.

Specific recommendations:

In addition to typographic corrections already advised, the examiners would like the candidate to address the following points, all of which were thoroughly explored during the *viva voce* examination:

- The 'preface' (or better: 'introduction'?) and conclusions section (currently 'Afterword') should be expanded in order to explicitly identify and discuss the performance-related elements of the dissertation and (whether directly or indirectly) the research basis or content of the recital. The relationship between the dissertation and the recital in terms of research questions, aims,

processes and outcomes, as well as content (e.g. left-handed versus two-handed repertoire, and the musical implications respectively arising from them) should be made much clearer. An actual 'thesis' should be developed, with designated research questions/issues being addressed throughout the study with a robust set of conclusions reflecting the stated questions/issues.

- The title should be revised: its relevance and appropriateness are not evident at present.
- The dissertation currently focuses on musical *texts* as opposed to musical *processes* in performance; this should be reconsidered given the nature of the degree.
- Thought should be given to the status of the 'lexicon of techniques' set out in the chapter on Godowsky's transcriptions and then applied in the analyses of the works by Ravel and Britten. Is it correct to call this a 'lexicon'?
- The references to 'the audience' found throughout the dissertation are not sufficiently precise. An earlier discussion of what is meant by this term would bring some clarity.
- More attention could be paid to issues surrounding how the physical appearance of the left-handed pianist potentially affects the listener's experience of the music, versus the experience of listening to audio recordings of the same music without an associated visual element.
- With regard to the respective aims and compositional aesthetics of the three composers (Godowsky, Ravel and Britten), the claims that 'left-handedness' can be approached 'on its own terms' are not convincing.
- Issues surrounding 'disability', which is identified as a major theme in the study, and the degree to which this impacts on other aspects of the study, require more extensive discussion.
- Structural outlines of the music in question should be provided *before* rather than after the extended discussions of 'left-handed issues'.
- More explicit discussion of the degree and nature of Wittgenstein's exposure to the Godowsky transcriptions and his 'consummate grasp of the left-hand techniques' developed therein is needed.
- At present, some of the observations and conclusions that are presented seem to result from assertion rather than evidence-based argument; this should be borne in mind when revising the dissertation. The notion of scholarly distance, and the occasional tendency in the text to make subjective and occasionally hyperbolic assertions, needs also to be attended to.

Professor John Rink
3 October 2011

Professor Stephen Cottrell

