

# **Protest Poems**

**for Narrator, Violin, Clarinet, Cello, and Piano**

## **Violin**

**part for electronic music readers**



**Bill Robinson**

# Protest Poems

## for Narrator, Violin, Clarinet, Cello, and Piano

March 16—June 8, 2024

Duration: about 25 minutes

*for John and Nancy Lambert*

In January 2024, Eric Pritchard offered the idea of a concert at Duke University in January 2025 to mark my 70<sup>th</sup> birthday. I thought it timely to set some protest poems for narrator and a chamber group. *At last, an opportunity to do what I do best—complain.* As is my habit, I then set the piece for orchestra, giving me my third symphony.

The first poem, “Pity the Party”, is inspired by “Pity the Nation” by Laurence Ferlinghetti, who in turn was inspired by a poem of the same name by Khalil Gibran. While this is pointed directly at today’s Republican Party in the US, it applies just as well to neo-fascist and authoritarian parties around the world, such as the BJP in India.

The second poem, “Father Stalin, Look at This” is a Ukrainian children’s song from about 1933. This was at the height of the Holodomor, when Stalin deliberately starved six million people to death in the process of collectivizing farms.

The third poem, “Political Theology”, I wrote a few years ago in disgust with the power of religion in governments through history. It is also critique of a civilization that is based on the destruction of Nature, and which is hell-bent on catastrophic overpopulation and extirpation of resources.

The fourth poem, “The birds don’t know about self-immolation”, was posted anonymously on social media two days after Aaron Bushnell burned himself to death in front of the Israeli embassy in Washington DC on February 25, 2024, to protest the war in Gaza.

The fifth poem, “Artificial Insanity”, I wrote (with a little ironic assistance from artificial intelligence, which I couldn’t resist) based on Alan Ginsberg’s poem “Howl”. It is about the threat to our mental health and culture from modern technology, especially AI.

### Performance notes

Should this music be performed in places and times where the references are unknown, obscure, or irrelevant to the audience and musicians, the texts may be changed to be more applicable to the local situation.

Cover art; anti-fascist poster by John Heartfield, Germany early 1930’s

# Bill Robinson

Publisher Parish Press, Garner NC    2<sup>nd</sup> Edition June 8, 2024 (*corrected to 10/18/2024*)  
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Bill Robinson

lyrics: Bill Robinson

(after L. Ferlinghetti (after K. Gibran))

## I. Pity the Party [4:15]

The musical score is for the piece "Fascismo" by John Williams, with a tempo of quarter note = 76. The score is written for five parts: Narrator, Violin, Clarinet in Bb, Cello, and Piano. The key signature has one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4.

**Instrumentation and Dynamics:**

- Narrator:** The vocal line begins with the lyrics "Pit - y the par - ty whose" and continues with "peo - ple are cat - tle, and whose cow - boys lead them to slaugh - ter." The dynamics range from *mf* to *ff*.
- Violin:** The violin part starts with a *p* (piano) dynamic and includes a crescendo (*cresc. p. a p.*) leading to a *mp* (mezzo-piano) dynamic.
- Clarinet in Bb:** The clarinet part also starts with a *p* dynamic and includes a crescendo (*cresc. p. a p.*) leading to a *mp* dynamic.
- Cello:** The cello part starts with a *p* dynamic and includes a crescendo (*cresc. p. a p.*) leading to a *mp* dynamic.
- Piano:** The piano part starts with a *p* *legato* dynamic and includes a crescendo (*cresc. p. a p.*) leading to a *mp* dynamic.

**Structure and Markings:**

- The score is divided into measures, with measure numbers 5, 9, and 12 indicated.
- There are several crescendo (*cresc.*) and decrescendo (*decresc.*) markings throughout the score.
- The piano part includes a *legato* marking and a *ff* (fortissimo) dynamic at the end of the first system.
- The violin part includes a *ff* dynamic at the end of the first system.
- The clarinet part includes a *ff* dynamic at the end of the first system.
- The cello part includes a *ff* dynamic at the end of the first system.
- The piano part includes a *ff* dynamic at the end of the first system.

[illegible]

28

whose sag - es are purged, and whose big - ots dom - i - nate the me - di - a.

28

*f*

28

*f*

31

Pit - y the par - ty that prais - es dic - ta - tors and ac -

31

34

*mf* *cresc.* *f* *ff*

31

*f* *p* *cresc.* *(mp)* *(mf)* *f* *ff*

31

*p* *cresc.* *(mp)* *(mf)* *f* *ff*

37

claims the bul - ly as he - ro, and aims to dom - i - nate the world by force and tor - ture in the name of free - dom.

37

37

37

# Pity the Party

4

42

42

*pp*

*pp*

*pp*

*pp*

*pp*

Pit - y the par - ty whose Gods are Mon - ey and Guns, and

46

46

(8<sup>m</sup>)

48

48

sleeps the sleep of op - i - oids.

*cresc.*

*cresc.*

*cresc.*

*legato*

*cresc.*

51

51

*mf*

*f*

*ff*

*ff*

*ff*

*ff*

Pit - y the

53

53

54

par - ty that feeds on the poor and sick the poor and sick the poor and

54

57

sick while ty - coons get what they

57

60

want.

60

*mp* Pit - y the par - ty that speaks one lan - guage,

62

60

*ff dim.* *(mf)* *mp* *(mf)* *mp* *(mf)*

# Pity the Party

6

64

and de - mands pu - ri - ty of blood and soil for the

64

*mp*

67

Ar - y - an race.

67

*ff*

*ff*

70

Pit - y the par - ty, oh pit - y the peo - ple who al - low their rights to e - rode and their free - doms to be

*mp* *ff*

70

*mp*



74

washed a - way by ha - tred and fear and lies and old - time re -

74

77

li - gion. *pp* My coun - try, tears of thee, once —

77

*ff* *pp* 80

82

land of lib - er - ty.

82

*rit.*

82

*rit.* 80

Ukrainian children's song, 1933

Narrator

**Holodomoderato** (♩.=68)

Violin

*pp* *p*

Clarinet in B♭

*pp* *p*

Cello

*p*

Piano

**Holodomoderato** (♩.=68)

*p*

7

7

*p*

Fa - ther Sta - lin, look at this Col -

11

lec - tive farm - ing is such bliss The hut's in ru - ins, the barn's all sagged

11

*mp*

11

*p*

The musical score is written for a full orchestra and a narrator. It begins with a 12/8 time signature and a tempo marking of 'Holodomoderato' (♩.=68). The instruments include Narrator, Violin, Clarinet in B♭, Cello, and Piano. The Violin part starts with a *pp* (pianissimo) dynamic and a crescendo to *p* (piano). The Clarinet and Cello also have *pp* and *p* markings. The Piano part enters with a *p* marking. The score is divided into three systems. The first system (measures 1-7) features the Violin, Clarinet, and Cello playing a melodic line, while the Piano provides a harmonic accompaniment. The second system (measures 8-11) introduces the vocal line (Narrator) with the lyrics 'Fa - ther Sta - lin, look at this Col -'. The third system (measures 12-15) continues the vocal line with the lyrics 'lec - tive farm - ing is such bliss The hut's in ru - ins, the barn's all sagged'. The Piano part continues to provide accompaniment throughout. Dynamics range from *pp* to *mp* (mezzo-piano).

15 *mp* All the hors-es bro-ken nags *mf* And on the hut *mf* *mp* a ham-mer and sick-le—

15 *mp* *mf* *mp* *p*

19 *mp* And in the hut *mf* death *f* and *f* fam-ine 12

19 *p cresc.* *(mp)* *(mf)* *f*

23 12/8 6/8 9/8

23 *f* *f* *f*

10

*f* Fa - ther Sta - lin, look at this

27

*f* *dim.* *p*

*f* *dim.* *p*

*f* *dim.* *p*

27

*mp* *p*

32

*p* No cows left, no pigs at all Just your pic - ture on the wall

32

*p* *cresc.*

*p* *cresc.*

*p* *cresc.*

32

*cresc.*

35

35

*mf* *dim.* *pp* *p*

*mf* *dim.* *pp* *p*

*mf* *dim.* *pp* *p*

35

*mf* *dim.* *pp* *p*

*mf* *dim.* *pp* *p*

*mf* *dim.* *pp* *p*

38

Dad - dy and Mom - my are in the

38

41

grave

The poor child cries

*p cresc.* *(mf)* *f*

41

*p cresc.* *(mf)* *f*

41

*mp* *mf* *f*

45

as a - lone he goes

45

*rit.* *a tempo*

*f* *dim.* *(mp)*

45

*rit.* *a tempo*

*gtr.*

Father Stalin, Look at This

12

*p* Fa - ther Sta - lin, look at this

50

*p* *cresc.* *mp*

*p* *cresc.* *mp*

*p* *cresc.* *mp*

50

*p* *cresc.* *(mp)*

*gtr*

53 *mf* *cresc.* *f* *dim.* *mp*

There's no bread and there's no fat The par - ty's end - ed all of that

53

53 *legato* *(mf)* *f* *dim.*

55 *p* *mp*

Seek not the gen - tle nor the mild

55

*p* *cresc.* *mp*

*p* *cresc.* *mp*

*p* *cresc.*

55

*(mp)* *p* *cresc.*

58

58

*mf* *cresc.* *f*

A fa - ther

61

61

has eat - en his own child

*f dim.*

64

64

Fa - ther Sta - lin, look at

*mp* *p cresc.* *mp*

66

Father Stalin, Look at This

14 67

*mf* this *f* The par - ty man he beats and

67

*(mf)* *f*

69 stamps *ff* beats and stamps

69

*cresc.* *ff*

*f* *cresc.* *ff*

71 beats and stamps And sends us to Si - be - ri - an

71

*ff*



74

camps

74

Coda (♩=56)

*ff* *p*

74

Coda (♩=56)

*ff*

79

79

*p* *mp* *f* *ff*

*p* *mp* *f* *ff*

79

85

*pp*

Fa-ther Sta-lin, look at this Col- lec- tive farm- ing is such bliss

85

87

*p* *pp*

*p* *pp*

85

87

*pp*

The musical score is for a piece titled "Allegro apocalypso" with a tempo of quarter note = 76. It is arranged for five parts: Narrator, Violin, Clarinet in Bb, Cello, and Piano. The score is divided into two systems. The first system includes staves for Narrator, Violin, Clarinet in Bb, and Cello. The Narrator part is written in a 3/4 time signature. The Violin part is in 3/4 time and features a melodic line with a crescendo. The Clarinet in Bb part is in 3/4 time and features a melodic line with a crescendo. The Cello part is in 3/4 time and features a melodic line with a crescendo. The second system includes staves for Piano and Cello. The Piano part is in 3/4 time and features a complex melodic line with a crescendo. The Cello part is in 3/4 time and features a melodic line with a crescendo. The score is written in a 3/4 time signature.

7

7

6 6 6

*ff dim.*

*f*

6 6 6

*ff dim.*

*f*

6 6 6

*ff dim.*

*f*

6 6 6

9

9

6 6 6

(*mf*)

*mf*

10

6 6 6

*mp*

*mp*

9

10

(*mf*)

*mp*

"Go"

11 *cresc.* *(mf)* *f*

break the sod," said our God, "The world is here for you to own. Go forth and spread your fruit - ful sons; Sub -

11 *cresc.* *(mf)* *f*

*mp cresc.* *(mf)* *f*

*cresc.* *(mf)* *f*

17 due the beasts and dam the streams, Cut the trees and pave the streets, Burn the dead from

17

17

22 e - ons past To feed the flames and turn the wheels. Make war for gold and kill for me. O -

22

22

27

bey your lead - ers and your priests Whom I have fa-vored with my grace. Al - ways more, and

27

31

*f*

27

31

*f*

32

*ff*

al - ways fas-ter; Mine the ore and crush the stone. Do this well, and I will teach you all a

32

*ff*

*ff*

*ff*

32

*ff*

*ff*

37

migh - ty les-son." What our God said we longed to hear. We

37

39

*pp*

*pp*

*ff*

*pp*

39

37

39

*pp*

*pp*

*ff*

*pp*

39

42 *p* slew our Mo - ther and *mp* sucked the mar - row from her bones.

42 *p* *mp*

45 *mf* The grow - ing mob may come to dine, *mp* The

45 *mf* *mp*

48 grow - ing mob may come to dine, *pp* To night there is e nough to eat.

48 *pp* *pp*

For - get to - mor - row, we live but once; We drill but once, we

53 Con sord.

53

burn but once, we mine but once. The fish - ing's good, un til there's none.

57

57

To - night there is e - nough to eat.

62

62

Narrator

Violante con fuoco (♩ = 80)

Violin

Clarinet in B $\flat$

Cello

Piano

Anonymous poem

5

5

cresc.

cresc.

cresc.

9

9

*mf* *f* *mp*

The day af-ter Aa-ron Bush-nell

11

11

The Birds

22 13

set him self on fire, I go out for an ear-ly morn-ing

13

*mf*

*mf*

*mf*

17

walk, wrapped in air far too warm for late Feb-ru-ar-y

17

20

in the Mid-west a heat wave. False Spring has brought

20



24 *cresc.* *f* *ff*

Na - ture roar - ing back to life. I want to shake eve - ry per - son I

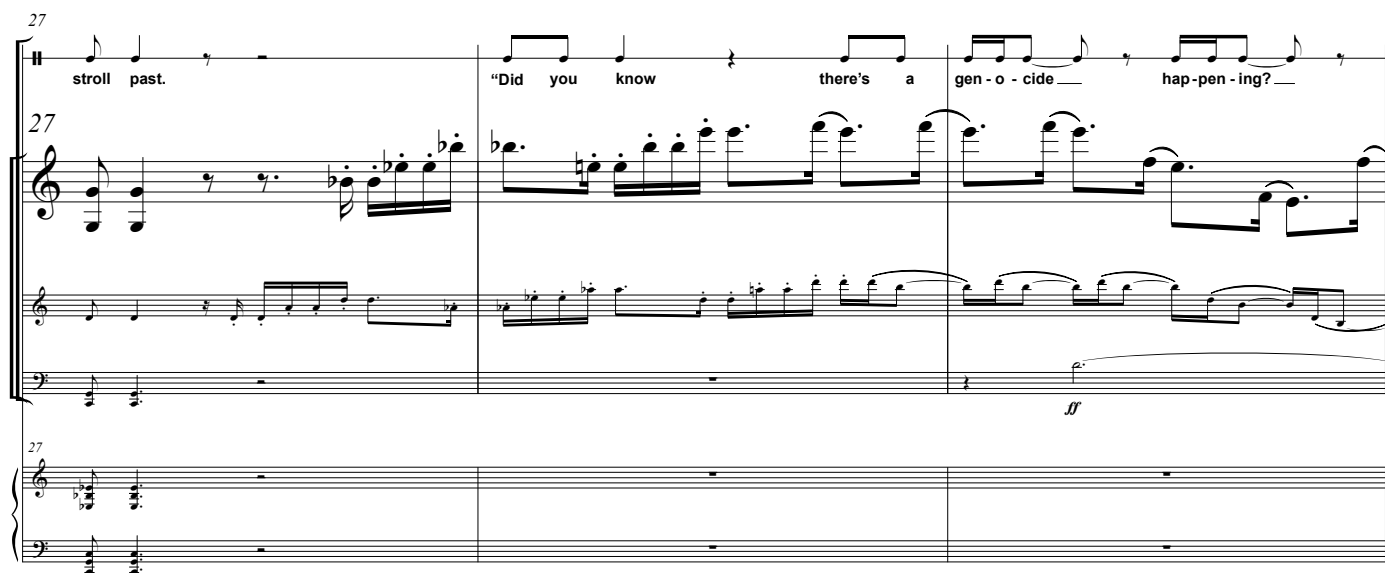
24 *cresc.* *f* *ff*

25



27 stroll past. "Did you know there's a gen - o - cide hap - pen - ing? "

27 *ff*



30 Did you see a man

30 *legato* *ff*



24 <sup>32</sup>

burn him - self a - live in pro - test?"

32

32

pp

32

35

*p* I would ask, if on - ly I could count on a re - sponse that is - n't

35

36

*mf* *f*

35

36

*p legato* *mf* *f*

39

*p* dead-eyed.

39

*p* But I

39

*p*

42

know I'd have bet - ter luck with the birds.

42

44

But I know I'd have

44

45

*ff*

*p*

*ff*

44

45

46

bet - ter luck with the birds, ev - er

46

*mf*

*dim.*

*dim.*

*dim.*

46

The Birds

26 <sup>49</sup>

cu - ri - ous, car - di - nals hop - ping from branch to branch like

49

*(mf)* *p*

49

*(mf)* *p*

49

*(mf)* *p*

52

fi - re - balls. Or mis - siles. I'd tell them, some of us love you

52

52

52

56

so much we'd die for you. For a sin - gle snip - pet of bird - song. For a

56

*dolce*

56

*dolce*

56

*dolce*

## The Birds

pp 27

60

child's first glimpse of feath-ers glow-ing in the clear light. For a

60

60

60

pp

pp

pp

8va

65

tree for you to perch in a - mong the rub - ble. He shout - ed

FREE PAL - ES - TINE

FREE PAL - ES - TINE

65

68

68

65

68

70 *mf* FREE PAL - ES - TINE *p* un - til he choked on the flames. *f* The call - back:

70 *mf* *p* *f*

70 *mf* *p* *f*

70 *mf* *p* *f*

## The Birds

28 74

The image displays a musical score for the song "The Rose Tree." It includes a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line begins with the lyrics "a long, mourn - ful whis - tle from a -" and features a triplet of eighth notes. The piano accompaniment consists of two systems of staves, each with a treble and bass clef. The first system includes a piano (p) dynamic marking. The second system also includes a piano (p) dynamic marking. The score is written in a key with one flat (B-flat) and a 4/4 time signature.

77

bove. The sun is blaz - ing too bright to make out more than a

77

*rit.*

77

*rit.*

80 **Coda** (♩ = 66)

*p* *mp+* *mf* *mf*

sil - hou - ette tak - ing off, ris - ing slow and then

*p cresc.* *(mf)* *3*

*p cresc.* *(mf)* *3*

*p cresc.* *(mf)* *3*

80 **Coda** (♩ = 66)

*p* *p cresc.* *legato* *(mf)*

*p cresc.* *legato* *(mf)*

83 *f* fast *mp* like *p* smoke.

*f* *mf* *mp* *p* *pp*

85 *pp* *molto rit.*

*pp* *molto rit.*

88 *a tempo*

*a tempo* *pp*

**Contracyberpunktus I**

*(♩ = 88)*

**Narrator**

*mp* I saw the best minds of my *cresc. p. a p.* gen-er-a-tion wast-ed by

**Violin**

*mp* *cresc. p. a p.*

**Clarinet in B♭**

*p* *mp* *cresc. p. a p.*

**Cello**

*p* *mp* *cresc. p. a p.*

**Piano**

*p* *mp* *cresc. p. a p.*

**6** *(mf)* *3* vid-e-o games, bloat-ed hys-ter-i-cal *ff* goth-ic, drag-ging them-selves through *ff* sim-u-lat-ed streets at

*(mf)* *f* *ff*

**11** dawn look-ing for an an-gry *ff dim.* mi-cro-dose, *(mf)* *mp*

*ff dim.* *(mf)* *mp*

**11** *dim.* *mp*



*mp*

an - gel - head - ed prep - pies burn - ing for the hea - ven - ly mi - cro - wave con - nec - tion to the

16

*mp*

16

20

sat - el - lite serv - er in the ma - chin - er - y of night,

*p* *rit.*  $(\text{♩} = 76)$  *pp* *cresc. p. a p.*

*dim.* *(p)* *pp* *pp cresc. p. a p.*

20

*dim.* *(p)* *pp* *cresc. p. a p.*

Contracyberpunktus II  $(\text{♩} = 76)$

26

and hol - low - eyed and high sat up drink - ing a - ya - huas - ca in the su - per - nat - u - ral dark - ness

*(p)* *(mp)* *(mf)* *f*

*mp* *cresc. p. a p.* *(mf)* *f*

26

*(p)* *(mp)* *(mf)* *f*

31 *ff* of pent-house flats *molto rit.* **Contracyberpunktus I** ( $\text{♩} = 88$ )

*ff* *dim.* (*mf*) (*mp*) *p*

*ff* *dim.* (*mf*) (*mp*) *p*

*ff* *dim.* (*mf*) (*mp*) *p*

31 *ff* *molto rit.* **Contracyberpunktus I** ( $\text{♩} = 88$ )

*ff* *dim.* (*mf*) (*mp*) *p*

36 *p* con - tem - plat - ing *cresc. p. a p.* the mad - ness of *(mp)* lust - ing for Mar - i - lyn Mon *(mf)* ro - bot Mar - i - lyn Mon *(mf)* ro - bot,

*mf cresc.*

*p cresc. p. a p.* (*mp*) (*mf*)

*p* *mp* *mf*

36 *cresc. p. a p.* (*mp*) (*mf*)

41 *f* who bared their brains to *ff* da - ta min - ers *mf* un - der the Sil - i - con Val - ley *mp*

*f* *ff* *rit.*

*f* *ff* *rit.*

41 *f* *ff* *f* *mf* *mp*

1 *p* moon, *mp* who passed un - di - gest ed through u - ni - ver - si - ties *mp.* with

44 *a tempo*

*mp* *cresc. p. a p.*

*p* *mp* *cresc. p. a p.*

*a tempo* *p* *mp* *cresc. p. a p.*

48 *cresc. p. a p.* ra - di - ant dis - tance learn - ing *(mf)* eyes hal - lu - ci - nat - ing *f* tech - no - bab - ble and the spir - it of

*(mf)* *f*

*(mf)* *f*

48 *(mf)* *f*

52 *ff* Al - an Tur - ing, *ff* who were ex - pelled from the a - cad - e - mies for

*ff* *ff*

52 *ff* *ff*

55

*ff dim.* *mp*

cra - zy ob-scene codes on the Mi - cro - soft Win - dows of the soul,

*ff dim.* *(mf)* *(mp)*

*ff dim.* *(mf)* *mp*

55

*ff dim.* *(mf)* *mp*

*mp cresc.* *(mf)*

who lurked in un - spo - ken chat rooms

59 *p* *mf cresc.*

*mp cresc.* *mf*

59 *p cresc.* *(mp)* *(mf)*

62 *f* *dim.* *(mp)* *(p)*

blee - ding hours through the screen - lit night yearn-ing

*f* *dim.* *(mp)* *(p)*

*f* *dim.* *(mp)* *(p)*

62 *f* *dim.* *(mp)* *(p)*

65 *pp* *rit.* for their mo - ther-board's love, *ff* who ate fire in tech labs

*pp* *ff*

*a tempo*

67

65 *pp* *ff*

8<sup>va</sup>

69 or drank tur - pen - tine in cor - po - rate caf - e - te - ri - as, who chained them - selves to

*f* *dim. p. a p.* *(mf)*

*f* *dim. p. a p.* *(mf)*

69 *f* *dim. p. a p.* *(mf)*

8<sup>va</sup>

72 rout - ers to mine for im - ag - i - nar - y mon - ey, who dis - ap - peared in - to

*(mp)* *(mp)*

72 *(mp)*

8<sup>va</sup>

75

*p* no - where Zen New Jer - sey *pp* leav - ing noth - ing but the shad - ows of their

*p* *pp*

75

80

smart phones, *ff* who stud - ied Ayn Rand A - leis - ter Crow - ley cy - ber -

81 *ff*

80

84

net - ics and O - prah Win - frey be - cause the cos - mos in - stinc - tive - ly vi - brat - ed at their

84

88 feet on Mar-tha's Vin-yard, who walked all night with shoes full of blood on the

89

ff mf mp

92 snow-bank docks mis-led by glob-al po-si-tion-ing, who lit end-less joints for their

cresc. f

cresc. f

96 linked-in brain cells float-ing a-cross the tops of cit-ies

ff

ff

38

cel - e - bra - ting the end of or - gan - ic life, who tuned in to te - le - van - gel - ists, and

101

reached be - hind that T - V set to FEEL the POW - ER. What

103

*non stacc.*

*pizz.*

*p*

sphinx of in - te - grat - ed cir - cuit - ry bashed o - pen their skulls and ate up their hu - man - i - ty?

107

*arco*

*p*

*p cresc.*

*p cresc.*

*arco*

*p cresc.*



*ff*

Mad dead au-tom-a-tons Mad dead au-tom-a-tons Mad dead au-tom-a-tons of Sil-i-con Val-ley! Mad dead au-tom-a-tons

**111**

*ff*

*ff* Mad dead au-tom-a-tons

*ff*

*ff* Mad dead au-tom-a-tons

*ff* Mad dead au-tom-a-tons

*ff* Mad dead au-tom-a-tons

**111**

*ff*

116

Mad dead au-tom-a-tons Mad dead au-tom-a-tons of Sil-i-con Val-ley!

Mad dead au-tom-a-tons Mad dead au-tom-a-tons of Sil-i-con Val-ley!

Mad dead au-tom-a-tons Mad dead au-tom-a-tons of Sil-i-con Val-ley!

Mad dead au-tom-a-tons Mad dead au-tom-a-tons of Sil-i-con Val-ley!

116

*ff*

*rit.*

119 *ff* *dim.* *(mp)* *(p)* *pp*

Mad dead au-tom-a-tons Mad dead au-tom-a-tons of Sil-i-con Val-ley.

*ff* *dim.* *(mp)* *(p)* *pp*

*ff* *dim.* *(mp)* *(p)* *pp*

*ff* *dim.* *(mp)* *(p)* *pp*

*rit.*

119 *ff* *dim.* *(mp)* *(p)* *pp*

*ff* *dim.* *(mp)* *(p)* *pp*

*ff* *dim.* *(mp)* *(p)* *pp*

*ff* *dim.* *(mp)* *(p)* *pp*

**Contracyberpunktus II** (♩ = 76)

**Contracyberpunktus II** (♩ = 76)

132 *ff* kitsch I'm

*dim.* with you where you

*mf* roam the da-ta high-ways

*(mp)* search-ing for the

*p* lost bits of oth-er

*ff*

*dim.*

*(mf)*

*(mp)*

*p*

*rit.*

*a tempo dolce*

*ff*

*dim.*

*(mf)*

*(mp)*

*p*

*dolce*

*p*

*dolce*

*p*

*a tempo*

*p* *dolce*

132

133

137

*cresc.*

*mf* *dim.* *(mp)*

minds I'm with you where you howl in the depths of neu-ral net-works. The ro-bots are ris-ing, the bi-na-ry beasts de-

*cresc.*

*mf* *dim.* *mp + dim.* *(mp)* *p*

*cresc.*

*mf* *dim.* *(mp)* *p*

137

*legato*

*mf* *dim.* *(mp)*

144 *p* vo-ur-ingour hu-man-i-ty, the ghosts in the ma-chines haunt-ing our dreams. I saw the best minds of our time de-stroyed by

147

150 mad-ness, and now they wan-der through the waste-land of tech-nol-o-gy, their hu-man-i-ty e-rased

150

155 *pp* by the cold, un-feel-ing hand of the com-put-er. *rit.*

155