

0:04	Oh! Nicht eilen, bitte	The first soprano shouts a falling “Oh,” with the instruction to sound “bewildered.” The audience might feel the same way. At the same time, the first tenor (“detached”) asks the orchestra, in German, not to rush, as strings take up the Schoenberg.
0:06	Les Jeux de Vagues	The soprano “tenderly” says, in French, “The Games of the Waves,” which is the title of a section of Debussy’s <i>La mer</i> , at the same time as the strings and winds are quoting from it. This is the first of many references to water in this movement.
0:07	recht gemä...	The first bass tries to say (in German) “very leisurely,” but he says it so leisurely that he can’t finish it before it is interrupted. Eventually the first tenor says, “not very leisurely” (in German), correcting him.
0:09	quatrième symphonie deuxième symphonie	Second soprano says, “fourth symphony” (in French), tensely, at the same time as the second alto says, “second symphony.” At this moment, the winds and some of the strings begin playing the second symphony of Mahler, while the fragment of the fourth that was already playing ends.
0:09		With the entry of percussion, the meter and tempo become clear. Triple meter, approximately 160 beats per minute (just below 54 measures per minute), a tempo which, though it may be obscured, is present through the rest of our excerpt. The key of C minor is also established.
0:14	sol mi do re mi fa	For the first of many times, the singers (in this case the sopranos and altos) “stage whisper” the solfège (the do-re-mi note designation scheme described in Section I) of an instrumental part, in this case, the violins, who are playing the main melody of Mahler’s “Scherzo.”
0:18	Where now?	The first in a series of existential questions asked throughout.
0:20	Keep going!	Encouragement is given throughout.
0:23		An outburst from the orchestra, and laughter from the vocalists.
0:26	Ahh . . . Nothing more restful than chamber music.	An ironic comment from second tenor (Ward Swingle himself).
0:28	Than flute . . . Than two flutes	As tenor 1 and soprano 2 expand on tenor 2’s comment, the flutes, appropriately, play the flute duet portion of Mahler’s “Scherzo.”
0:32		The solo violin responds by taking up a passage from Paul Hindemith’s “Kammermusik No. 4” (German for chamber music). At the same time, flute and oboe play another fragment from Debussy’s <i>La mer</i> . Instead of whispering the solfège, the vocalists are now singing the actual pitches to keep the Mahler background going when instruments drop out.
0:41		The violinist continues the virtuosic passage from Hindemith’s chamber music. Vocalists solfège longer notes until gradually all vocalists are singing. At the same time, the winds sustain long chord clusters with fluctuating dynamics. Trumpets quietly hint at other famous pieces like Stravinsky’s <i>Rite of Spring</i> .
0:50	No time for chamber music. You are nothing but an academic exercise.	The bass interrupts the violinist, in a “scolding” manner, while the tenor insults Hindemith’s composition “condescendingly.” The soprano uses an unusual vocal technique similar to ululation .



3:27	Keep going!	A slight pause in the “Dance of the Earth” causes the second tenor to shout aggressively. The orchestra acquiesces, briefly.
3:30	it is as if we were rooted, that’s bonds if you like—the earth would have to quake	As the orchestral texture thins, the tenor responds with some of Beckett’s text about being bound to the earth. The orchestra starts to return to Mahler.
3:41	maybe a kind of competition on the stage, with just eight female dancers and words falling	As the words fall, a mixture of Beckett and Berio, the composer introduces a quote from Stravinsky’s ballet, <i>Agon</i> , at a spot where the choreographer had eight female dancers on stage.
3:53	But now I say my old lesson, if I can remember it.	Hints of <i>La mer</i> creep in. Mahler is almost completely gone. A castanet rhythm plays for five measures.
4:05		The voices stop. With an instruction of “Vorwärts,” Mahler’s equivalent of “keep going,” Berio has the orchestra play a huge multi-measure cluster chord (for four measures) before anyone but percussion moves again, and motion is only gradually added into the other instruments over the next dozen or so measures, with fluctuating dynamics.
4:11		Horns call out a fanfare over the dense texture.
4:18		We have reached the densest and most dissonant portion of the piece so far. We lose all sense of key and tempo.
4:19		Tambourine shows us the tempo and is joined by the winds and strings.
4:25		For a second it sounds like the rising orchestral crescendo of The Beatles’ “A Day in the Life,” since both pieces were influenced by earlier avant-garde music.
4:28		A tiny pause allows the orchestra to play a pickup to a very loud chord that diminishes in intensity, and then crossfades to restore the tempo and bring the voices back in. They have been silent for almost half a minute.
4:37	I suppose the audience, well well, so there is an audience	The tenor, starting a long monologue, reminds us that there is an audience, and we go back in time, returning to tonality.
4:40		The strange 1960s-sounding electronic harpsichord makes Mahler’s “Scherzo” sound almost Baroque.
4:52		Another pickup into a large chord that obscures the tempo and forces the vocalists to stop.
5:01		Six snare drum notes, aided by the strings, attempt to restore the tempo, as our excerpt comes to an end.

Berio’s *Sinfonia*, with its homage to Martin Luther King Jr. in the second movement, and its summary of twentieth-century music in the third, is one of the most significant classical compositions in the 1960s, if not in the entire second half of the century.



WHO KILLED THE KENNEDYS?

When incumbent President Lyndon Johnson declared his intention not to pursue re-election, this left a vacancy for a new leader in the Democratic Party. With the memory of the late John F. Kennedy fresh in voters' minds, it was not a surprise that Robert Kennedy was soon at the top of the list to become President during the 1968 presidential campaign. Many Americans imagined a new Camelot, a rebirth of the hope that had been associated with the presidency of Robert's older brother. It was not to be. On June 5, 1968, a Palestinian immigrant from Jordan named Sirhan Sirhan, upset by Kennedy's stance on Israel, assassinated the candidate.⁵⁸⁴ America was once again plunged into sorrow and self-doubt by an assassin's bullet.

Musicians responded with increasing political engagement. The Rascals, whose previous hits had been love songs, had a number one hit with "People Got to Be Free," their response to the King and Kennedy assassinations.⁵⁸⁵ Dion, probably best known for his 1961 hit, "Runaround Sue," sang "Abraham, Martin, and John."⁵⁸⁶ At first the song sounds like it is about Abraham Lincoln, John F. Kennedy, and Martin Luther King Jr., but a fourth verse asks "Has anybody here seen my old friend Bobby? Can you tell me where he's gone? I thought I saw him walkin', Up over the hill, With Abraham, Martin, and John."

Although it can hardly be called a tribute, the Rolling Stones mention the assassinations of the Kennedys in their 1968 recording, "Sympathy for the Devil."⁵⁸⁷ With some of the most intellectual lyrics used by the Stones, "Sympathy for the Devil" tells the story of the Devil in first person.⁵⁸⁸ The Devil tells about all the havoc he has wreaked, from the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, to the Russian Revolution, World War II, and shouts "Who killed the Kennedys?" He answers his own question, explaining that, "after all, it was you and me." "Sympathy for the Devil" was a timely song for troubled, turbulent times.

RIOTS IN THE STREETS: THE 1968 DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION

The 1968 presidential campaign was itself turbulent. Richard Nixon, the candidate who had lost to John F. Kennedy in 1960, was representing the Republicans.⁵⁸⁹ Former Alabama Governor George Wallace was running as an independent candidate, with his appeal based largely on his racist opposition to an integrated society.⁵⁹⁰ The Democratic National Convention was sure to be dramatic. The early front-runner, incumbent President Lyndon Johnson, had withdrawn from the race. In June, the new frontrunner, Robert Kennedy, was assassinated.

The convention seemed destined to be a free-for-all. The Vietnam War had become the major issue, and protestors converged on Chicago to let their views be known. Chicago mayor Richard J. Daley's violent suppression of the rioters and the press attempting to cover the riots added one more layer of turmoil to 1968.⁵⁹¹

I'D LOVE TO TURN YOU ON—DRUGS AND ROCK

The music scene was turbulent in 1968. The Rolling Stones' "Sympathy for the Devil" was controversial enough, but "Street Fighting Man," from the same album, hit too close to home in the era of race riots and violent clashes at the Democratic National Convention. It was banned in many radio markets for fear that it would incite further rioting.⁵⁹² The Stones were also at the forefront of the burgeoning drug culture among rock and roll musicians, with numerous arrests and fines, and several other high-profile musicians likewise struggled with drugs and alcohol and had run-ins with law enforcement due to their drug use.⁵⁹³

HELTER SKELTER AND CHARLES MANSON

The turmoil of 1968 bled over into 1969. A would-be rock musician and ex-convict named Charles Manson had formed a rock band and tried to get signed on with the Byrds' producer Terry Melcher.⁵⁹⁴ Manipulating his followers, Manson brainwashed "the Family" to accept him as their leader.⁵⁹⁵ They lived, for a short time, in the home of Dennis Wilson, drummer of the Beach Boys.⁵⁹⁶ The Beach Boys even recorded one of Manson's compositions (after editing it).⁵⁹⁷ Manson claimed to have heard messages in rock music, particularly in the music of The Beatles' "White Album."⁵⁹⁸ Manson imagined a race war that he called "Helter Skelter" after The Beatles' song. When the war didn't happen on its



Charles Manson, photographed while in custody in 1970.

Photograph: CSU Archives Everett Collection.

