

# MICHAEL FINNISSY

## Plain Harmony

Preview File Only

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Michael Finnissy

Plain Harmony

Commissioned by the East London  
Late Starters Orchestra for C.O.M.A.  
(the First National Residential of  
Contemporary Music Making for Amateurs)  
Funded by the Arts Council of Great Britain.

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'Plain Harmony' has four sections. These are performed without a break, but the density of each section (the number of lines of music) varies. The instrumentation throughout is entirely free; it need not, and should not, be of conventional layout, indeed it is quite intentional that the timbres of the different instruments be neither blended nor matched — the more diverse they are the better.

The examples on pages 2 and 3 show the beginning of each section in Full (open) Score. The entire piece follows on pages 4 to 15 in SHORT SCORE, which can also be used as keyboard parts. Ideally the keyboards, if used, should be regarded as continuo reinforcement of the whole texture, rather than substituting for any of the individual lines.

Each 'line' can be played by any number of instruments, all the lines should be played by at least one, the precise ranges needed are given below. 'Solo' lines are played by one instrument at a time.

The overall dynamic balance should be as equal as possible (i.e. no line takes precedence over any other). Equality of treble and bass at all times.

1. Beginning to letter (F)

2. letter (F) to letter (H)

3. letter (H) (6 'soli')

4. letter (I) to 'Fine'

Ex. 1.

Beginning to letter (F) : 8 parts

Handwritten musical score for Ex. 1, consisting of 8 staves. The music is in 3/4 time and begins with a treble clef. The first staff has a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The notation includes various rhythmic values such as quarter, eighth, and sixteenth notes, along with rests and dynamic markings like 'f' and 'p'. A large blue watermark 'Preview File Only' is oriented diagonally across the staves.

Ex. 2.

From letter (F) to letter (H) : 4 parts

Handwritten musical score for Ex. 2, consisting of 4 staves. The music is in 3/2 time and begins with a treble clef. The first staff has a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The notation includes various rhythmic values such as quarter, eighth, and sixteenth notes, along with rests and dynamic markings like 'p'. A large blue watermark 'Preview File Only' is oriented diagonally across the staves.

Ex. 3.

Letter (H) : 6 'soli' and accompaniment

Ex. 4.

From letter (I) until 'Fine' : 8 parts plus 4 'soli'.

The musical score for Ex. 4 consists of eight staves, each labeled 'Solo 1' through 'Solo 8'. The notation is handwritten and includes various musical symbols such as clefs, notes, rests, and dynamic markings. A large blue watermark 'Preview File Only' is oriented diagonally across the center of the page. Annotations include the phrase 'independently (as a pair)' written above the first two staves, and circled letters 'J' appearing on the fifth and sixth staves. The score is set on a series of horizontal lines, with some staves containing multiple systems of music.

## Plain Harmony

## Short Score

Lustily, as in hymn-singing (very full-toned and sustained).

The short score can also function as two keyboard parts.

← ♩ = ♩ →

Handwritten musical score for the first system, labeled (B) in a circle. It consists of two systems of staves. The top system has a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The bottom system also has a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The music features various notes, rests, and accidentals. There are several triplets indicated by a '3' over a group of notes. A circled 'B' is located at the top right of the first system.

(B)

Two empty musical staves, one treble clef and one bass clef, serving as a separator between systems.

Handwritten musical score for the second system, labeled (B) in a circle. It consists of two systems of staves. The top system has a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The bottom system also has a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The music continues with various notes, rests, and accidentals. There are several triplets indicated by a '3' over a group of notes. A large blue watermark 'PREVIEW FILE ONLY' is overlaid diagonally across the center of the page. A circled 'B' is located at the top right of the second system.

(B)

Two empty musical staves, one treble clef and one bass clef, serving as a separator between systems.

Handwritten musical score for the third system, labeled (C) in a circle. It consists of two systems of staves. The top system has a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The bottom system also has a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The music continues with various notes, rests, and accidentals. There are several triplets indicated by a '3' over a group of notes. A circled 'C' is located at the top left of the third system.

(C)

(D)

Handwritten musical notation for section D, consisting of two systems of two staves each. The notation includes treble and bass clefs, a key signature of one flat, and various rhythmic values. It features several triplet markings (circles with the number 3) and slurs. The first system has a circled 'D' above it, and the second system has a circled 'D' below it.

A set of three empty musical staves.

A set of three empty musical staves.

Handwritten musical notation for section E, consisting of two systems of two staves each. The notation includes treble and bass clefs, a key signature of one flat, and various rhythmic values. It features several triplet markings (circles with the number 3) and slurs. A large blue watermark "Preview File" is overlaid on the notation.

A set of three empty musical staves.

(E)

Handwritten musical notation for section E, consisting of two systems of two staves each. The notation includes treble and bass clefs, a key signature of one flat, and various rhythmic values. It features several triplet markings (circles with the number 3) and slurs. A circled 'E' is located at the bottom left of the page.



Quietly, rather sentimental.

(F)

(G. P.)

Long Pause (as though 'lost in thought')

Long Pause (as before)

Long (idem.)

(G)

Long

Long

Handwritten musical score for the first system, featuring a treble and bass clef with various notes and rests.

Handwritten musical score for the second system, including a 'G.P.' (Grave Part) section and an 'Attacca' instruction.

(H)

No score :

Six metrically independent parts, with accompaniment (see page 11)

Lyrical, spontaneous and individualistic, a sort of dawn-chorus, each voice for itself (though neither competitive nor aggressive - 'floating' over a sustained chord).

(I) and (II) start together, with the accompanying chord. The four other parts enter after the indicated 'rests'. Chord alone remains after (I) to (VI) have finished.

Handwritten musical score for six independent parts, labeled (I) through (VI), with various musical notations and rests.

II H

5

III H

approx. 9 sec.

4

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(IV) (H)

One octave HIGHER or LOWER

approx. 10 sec.

(V) (H)

One octave HIGHER or LOWER

12 or 13 sec.

VI

H

(almost, not quite, together with V)

One octave HIGHER or LOWER

12 or 13 sec.

Instruments not playing the 'solo' parts may play one of the following notes:

as quietly as possible (pppp!)

Both notes should sound throughout (even if in the background) until...

...this bar. When all six soloists have finished.

(G. P.)

(Attacca)

①

Unhurried, with strength and passion.

independently (as a pair), slightly slower tempo

①

N.B. 'solo' parts quieter than 'tutti' as if in the distance.

②

②

independently (as a pair), slightly faster tempo (but not quite [p = p.] or [p̂ = p])

This page contains handwritten musical notation for guitar, organized into several systems. The notation includes treble and bass clefs, various note values, slurs, and triplets. Dynamic markings such as *p* (piano) and *pp* (pianissimo) are present. The score includes several systems of staves, with some systems having multiple staves per system. A large, diagonal watermark reading "Preview File Only" is overlaid across the center of the page. The page number "13" is located in the top right corner.

(K)

Handwritten musical score for the first system. It consists of five staves. The top staff is a single treble clef staff. The second and third staves are grand staves (treble and bass clefs). The fourth and fifth staves are another grand staff. The notation includes complex rhythmic patterns, triplets, and dynamic markings such as *f* and *(p)*. There are also some markings like *(p)* and *(p)* in parentheses.

(K)

A section of the musical score consisting of several empty staves. A diagonal watermark reading "Preview File Only" is overlaid across this section.

Handwritten musical score for the second system. It consists of five staves. The top staff is a single treble clef staff. The second and third staves are grand staves (treble and bass clefs). The fourth and fifth staves are another grand staff. The notation includes complex rhythmic patterns, triplets, and dynamic markings such as *f* and *(p)*. There are also some markings like *(p)* and *(p)* in parentheses.



The image shows a handwritten musical score for piano. It consists of several systems of staves. The first system includes a treble clef staff with a melodic line and a bass clef staff with accompaniment. The second system features a grand staff with both treble and bass clefs, containing complex rhythmic patterns and triplets. The third system continues the grand staff with similar complexity. The fourth system concludes with the word "Fine" written below the staff. There are asterisks (\*) above certain measures in the first and third systems, and a blue watermark "Preview File Only" is oriented diagonally across the middle of the page.

\* In performance these lines may finish earlier or later than indicated.

Five empty musical staves are provided at the bottom of the page, each consisting of a five-line staff.