CONDUCTUS

super

Ex orientis venerunt magi

JACK PARTON
2013

Ex orientis venerunt magi
**Instrumentation:**

- Piccolo
- 2 Flutes
- 2 Oboes
- English Horn
- 2 Clarinets in B♭
- Bass Clarinet in B♭
- 2 Bassoons
- Contrabassoon
- 4 French Horns in F
- Piccolo Trumpet in B♭
- 2 Trumpets in B♭
- 3 Trombones
- Tuba
- Timpani
- 4 Percussionists*:
  - I: Bell plates (B♭, D♭', F', A♭', B', C'')*
  - II: Bell plates (C', D', E♭', G', B♭', D♭'')*
  - III: Xylophone
  - IV: Marimba & Large Tam-tam
- Piano
- Harp
- STRINGS, stand count of at least 7-6-5-5-4

* In the percussion part an ossia is provided for one player, playing tubular bells if bell plates prove impractical, to replace the two players playing bell plates as shown in the score. This would reduce the number of needed percussionists from four to three.

**Duration:** circa 12 minutes.

The plainchant is from a small page, presumably from a book of hours or some similar small personal devotional volume, framed and in the possession of one of my college ear-training professors. The full text would have been on the facing page, I would guess; the reverse of this page has a metric version in Latin of the *Reges Tharsis et insulae* text. I have been unable to locate the full text of this hymn; its odd ten-syllable metric has been a source of much curiosity. The E flat in the last line is obviously not true to the original tune; there is a flaw in the vellum or perhaps an ink bleed-through from the reverse of the page which always looked to me like a flat; when Dr. Merriman would have us solfege this tune from a photocopy I did enjoy specifically singing "may" instead of "mi" at that note, and this alteration being pleasing to both of us, it is always how I remember the tune.

The notational text of the chant here reproduced is reconstructed from memory; it is possible, even likely, that I do not have the actual notation perfectly represented.

The work was conceived as an impression of the progress to and arrival of the magi in Bethlehem, but I increasingly like an alternate program suggested by a colleague, that the three sections of the work relate to further episodes of the Epiphany story: firstly the advent of the wise men; secondly the adoration at the manger, furtive departure of the magi, and the flight into Egypt; and finally the fury of Herod and massacre of the innocents. "Conductus" is hence meant here more in the liturgical sense of a processional, although the kaliedoscpic nature of early polyphonic works of that type is not a distant influence on sections of this piece. Forming the work as a thematic metamorphosis of sorts reflects the episodic and narrative nature of such use; a more familiar procession might be the Stations of the Cross observed in Holy Week. Finally, certain Asiatic ("Oriental") impressions influence the work, Balinese gamelan Kebyar and Japanese Taiko percussion notably.
CONDUCTUS super Ex oriente iterum veniunt magi

Ex orientis venerunt magi

with mutes and shells
Ex orientis venerunt magi
CONDUCTUS super Ex oriente luxurant magi
CONDUCTUS super Ex oriente venerunt magi

Ex orientis venerunt magi

unis.

Cresc. poco a poco
CONDUCTUS super Ex oriente venerunt magi
CONDUCTUS super Ex orientis venirent magi
CONDUCTUS super Ex oriente venerunt magi

Ex orientis venerunt magi

ritard al lento

Lento — ca. 60

(For those few players with those wonderful 5-string basses with open B strings)
CONDUCTUS super Ex oriente lux venient magi

Ex orientis venerunt magi

(Tuba poco cresc.)
CONDUCTUS super Ex orientis venerunt magi
Ex orientis venerunt magi
Ex orientis venerunt magi
Allegro, \textit{a mit.} pizz. a pochino.

\textit{a = ca. 82}
CONDUCTUS super "Ex oriente lux orta est"

Ex orientis venerunt magi

...
CONDUCTUS super Ex oriente luxuriant augi

Ex orientis venerunt magi