

# Timothy McCormack KARST



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 (MUTE C  
 BLOW 21  
 WINDMILL  
 DP W  
 M CONTINUE  
 21

→ CHROMATIC DOWN  
 +90° GETS LESS FREQUENT  
 (NOT EVERY TIME)

PPF

THEN END W/ RISE ANGLE  
 W/ ARM PRESSING ME

SLOWLY ADD  
 AMPLITUDE  
 CONSTRUCTION W/  
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SHEET DOWN FIRMLY  
 (W = 25° RE BEEP  
 (W = 1° 30', 15° I BEAT)

WHEN STARTS THE DFB  
 BEGINS LOWER IN PITCH, MA  
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 SB, AT HIGH PT THE OF  
 SOUND ON SB



Timothy McCormack



## Timothy McCormack: KARST

- |    |   |       |
|----|---|-------|
| 1. | <b>karst survey</b> (2016)<br>for chamber orchestra and electronics<br>Klangforum Wien                          | 18:03 |
| 2. | <b>you actually are evaporating</b> (2011–2014)<br>for violin and cello<br>Christopher Otto and Kevin McFarland | 23:44 |
| 3. | <b>KARST</b> (2015–2016)<br>for large ensemble<br>Ensemblekollektiv Berlin                                      | 36:48 |

**Total length:**

**78:52**

Deutsche Fassung ab S. 36

## KARST

6

Erosion is the action of external forces (the movement of wind, the flow of water) on a surface, removing soil, rock or other dissolved material and depositing it in a new location. A common form of erosion comes from the effect of acidic water on soluble rock such as limestone or dolomite. As the water seeps between small cracks in the bedrock, it enlarges them, creating underground drainage systems (caves) and overground holes, depressions and fissures. A landscape marked by such features is known as a karst, after the *Karst* (or *Cras*) region between Italy and Slovenia, known for its massive limestone caves. Eroded, perforated, evacuated, karst landscapes are fascinating and treacherous. Sinkholes abound; land subsides without warning; caves collapse; water fills the space. Perhaps most extraordinarily, rivers disappear into the ground, re-emerging as springs further down the hillside. (The Ljubljana river in Slovenia does so six times in all.) Everything happens downward, through the slow action of water, and continuously. Change is compulsive and takes place over long periods of time.

Inexorable movement; unpredictable but compelling spaces: this is also the music of Timothy McCormack. McCormack, who was a recipient of the Ernst von Siemens Music Foundation Composers Prize in 2018, writes music that is intensely physical. Drawing on inspirations as diverse as geology, ceramics, dance and painting, he considers sounds as tactile, sculptable matter – things to be pressed into one another and that react to each other's presence, the product of forces both elemental and human.

'A mountain', wrote the Scottish novelist and naturalist Nan Shepherd (1893–1981), 'has an inside'. Like Shepherd's 'living mountain', McCormack's music also has an inside. To be in a landscape is to be part of it, to participate in its creation, evolution and destruction. We do not observe, we do not consume, we do not utilise, we do not inhabit or farm or pollute landscapes passively. They enter us as we enter them. For *karst survey*, McCormack told the flautist Zach Sheets, 'I really wanted to put the listener on the ground walking through it and not understanding the connections between its features. ... I wanted to put the listener really in the middle of this landscape, and you're only seeing what you're able to see – you don't see how the whole thing connects until you've walked through it all.'

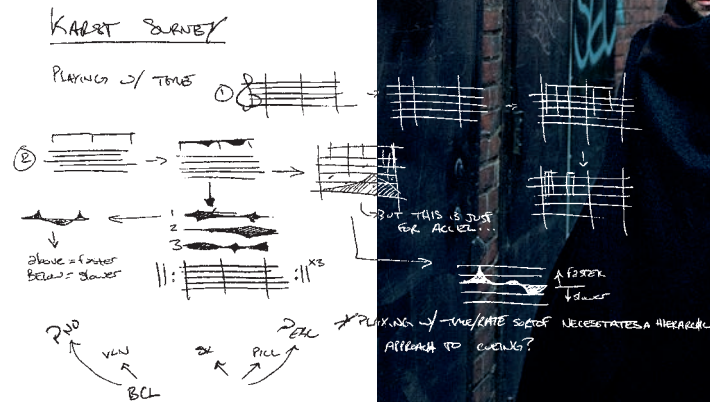
7

④ HIGH SPLITS

⑤ NEEDLE POINT

⑥ "MECHANICAL + 0 + 0" -  $\rightarrow$  CARDED OF FRACTURE MUTE  
LOCK-IN  
↳ SPLITS + FULL VALUE  
↳ GRANULAR +  $\frac{1}{2}$  VALVE, 2x AS LOW  
↳ HARD CUT FACE SPLIT TO GRAN  
⑦ SEQUENCE A  $\rightarrow$  RECORDING 3  
~ 30 MIN - 38 MIN

McCormack developed this concept of embodiment during his eight years at Harvard University, where he studied with Chaya Czernowin and Hans Tutschku. In his earlier music – exemplified by pieces such as *Disfix* (2008) and *Mirror Stratum* (2011), both written for the ELISION Ensemble, with whom he frequently collaborates – McCormack’s enduring fascination with physicality was enacted, through music that was highly gestural, performative, and dramatic. Those gestures were made up of simultaneous, often conflicting physical forces upon the player’s instrument: criss-crossing lines of action through bow, breath and fingers. McCormack has spoken often about how he conceives of sound as a physical mass, and in these early works the musicians performed that physicality, observed by a passive audience, as it were.



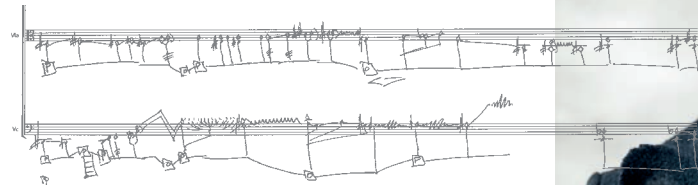


Sketch of KARST (2015–2016)



In time, however, McCormack came to reject the demonstrative elements of these pieces (as well as the hyper-masculine language that surrounded them) and sought a more immersive, experiential approach in which physicality became *embodied* rather than enacted. Between approximately 2011 and 2016, McCormack deliberately expanded the durations of his works and, Morton Feldman-like, made scale a structural and aesthetic feature. This process has so far culminated in the 60-minute string quartet *your body is a volume* (2017–19) and the 70-minute trombone duo *WORLDEATER* (2016). Yet unlike Feldman, who created scale through addition and extension, McCormack moves inside, deeper into the sounds and their production so that they come to occupy the complete perceptual field. His goal in these works – which include *KARST* (2015–16) and *karst survey* (2016) – is to create a saturated musical space that alters the listener’s sense of elemental forces like time and gravity. ‘In other words’, McCormack says, ‘establishing a world *outside* of the world and *inside* of the sound.’ By slowing his gestural language down to an almost geological timescale – while retaining its concentration on the mechanisms of performance rather than their realisation as defined pitches or rhythms – McCormack has been able to change the point of focus from gestures to touch. His performers’ attention is turned inward, towards an almost meditative concentration on what they are doing. This intensity and precision of action is barely visible but completely audible.

Haptic sensation is recreated as sound. In this way, McCormack was also able to remove the divide between performer and listener: no longer actor and observer, they become participants in a shared experience. The sensation he seeks to create is that of feeling located within the ecology of the piece, ‘like a patch of turbulence within the large mechanism ... like an element within the body of sound’.



That process of transformation through slowing and elongation is traced in the violin and cello duo *you actually are evaporating* (2011–14). One of the first pieces McCormack wrote while at Harvard, he revised it for another two years, in the process finding the shape that his future music was to take – as though he himself was a block of limestone being slowly and inexorably shaped. The piece’s origins in fact lie in dance rather than music (or even geology). At Harvard, McCormack took classes with the dancer Jill Johnson, a close collaborator of the choreographer William Forsythe; the title of his piece comes from a phrase of Forsythe’s: ‘Movement is a factor of the fact that you actually are evaporating.’ The work begins with the performed gestures characteristic of McCormack’s early music: a mixed staff and tablature notation shows pitches (heavily disguised behind noise-making bow positions and pressures) colliding with gestural instructions – movements of hand and bow independent of pitch function. Soon the gestures become sparse, but the space within the music fuels tension rather than dissipates it. After four minutes that tension is released for several pages of intensely gestural music, but it is not enough: the music becomes trapped in a loop, like a mechanism that has finally broken down. The only way out is to reboot and rebuild. The cello detunes its bottom string to an almost uselessly slack low E $\flat$ , and the tentative spaces of the first half become the music’s foreground. No longer the emptiness within the vessel, they are the air that fills it. The music is almost impossibly quiet, but

no less full as surface sounds are replaced by a sonic interior of hairs – almost individually brushing against strings, of tiny creaks of rosin and bow.

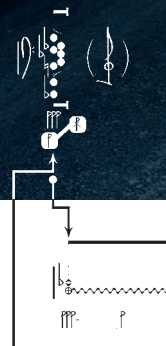
McCormack describes *you actually are evaporating* as ‘an ecology of openings’, and a distinctive feature of a karst landscape is its voids: the negative spaces of caves, sinkholes, depressions and ravines are just as characteristic as its rocky cliffs, pavements and escarpments. They are landscapes you enter rather than pass across. In enclosed spaces things grow closer. Faces turn away from the wall and towards each other. The 22 musicians of *KARST* are divided into four sub-ensembles – a string quartet, a brass quartet, a chamber ensemble and a quartet of piccolo/bass flute, bass clarinet, piano and harp – arranged on stage so that they can all visually cue each other while still being seen by the audience. There is no conductor: all the rhythms and cues of the piece are coordinated between the players as they perform. This requires excellent communication, as well as an unusually high degree of knowledge about each others’ parts. In other words, a particular *closeness* between the players that is created socially rather than through typical (and artificial) ensemble hierarchies. The musicians are attending closely not only to their own sounds, sinking their bodies into their production, but also to their colleagues’. We, as listeners, cannot help but be drawn in too.



*KARST*, written for Ensemblekollektiv Berlin, was composed with the idea of describing a path analogous to that of moving through a karst landscape. The sound is massive, almost impassible, but occasionally broken up, as though one is finding voids and small pockets within a monolithic block; perhaps the cues between musicians are like runnels of water between the cracks. *karst survey*, written for the smaller forces of the [Switch~ Ensemble], takes this image further, rather like returning to the same landscape thousands of years later (a possibility suggested by the passing quotation, marked 'swallowhole' in *karst survey*, between the two scores). Spaces are opened up greatly into systems of caves and underground waterways (other score markings include 'sump', 'spring' and 'sinkhole'). Near the beginning, our path is reduced down to a single, creaking violin. Towards the end, almost the complete opposite. In a world inundated with surfaces and simulations, McCormack's music reminds us of the importance of experience, and of our need for closeness and attentiveness. 'To know ... with the knowledge that is a process of living', as Shepherd wrote of her beloved Cairngorm mountains. 'This is not done easily nor in an hour.'

*Tim Rutherford-Johnson*

Tim Rutherford-Johnson is author of *Music after the Fall: Modern Composition and Culture since 1989* (University of California Press).



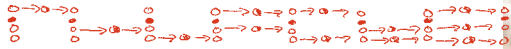
EUPH Duo - 1/2 VALUE STATES



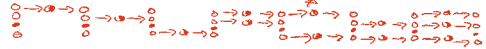
1ST VALUE DOWN



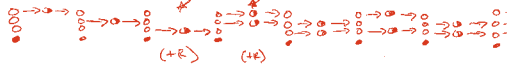
2ND VALUE DOWN



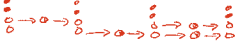
3RD VALUE DOWN



4TH VALUE DOWN



1+2 DOWN



1+3



## Timothy McCormack

Timothy McCormack (1984) writes haptic, viscous music which makes audible the tactile, physical relationship between a performer and their instrument. Sometimes ecstatic, sometimes hermetic, his music embeds pitch within dense walls of noise to create strangely affecting sonic ecologies which alter one's perception of time.

He has been commissioned by ensembles and organisations such as the ELISION Ensemble, Ensemblekollektiv Berlin, Klangforum Wien, the JACK Quartet, musikFabrik, Curious Chamber Players, the [Switch~ Ensemble], the Wittener Tage für neue Kammermusik, the impuls Festival, and ON – Neue Musik Köln. His music has also been performed by Ensemble Recherche, Ensemble Dal Niente, the Talea Ensemble, Ensemble Nickel, and ensemble mosaik, and programmed at the Eclat, Wien Modern, Darmstadt, Huddersfield, Maerzmusik, and TRANSIT festivals. Recordings of his music have been released on the KAIROS and Huddersfield Contemporary Records labels.

McCormack is the recipient of the Ernst von Siemens Music Foundation Composers' Prize (2018). He won the Impuls International Composition Competition (2019) which resulted in a new work for Klangforum Wien. He was also awarded the George Arthur Knight Prize (2014) for his piece *you actually are evaporating*, as well as the John Green Fellowship (2017) for his "demonstrated talent and promise as a composer," both from Harvard University.



McCormack currently teaches at Boston Conservatory at Berklee where he is an Assistant Professor of Composition. He received his PhD from Harvard University (2019), where he studied with Chaya Czernowin and Hans Tutschku. He also studied at the University of Huddersfield with Aaron Cassidy and Liza Lim, as well as at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music with Lewis Nielson and Randolph Coleman. He has participated in the Schloss Solitude Sommerakademie (2009) and the Tzllil Meudcan Summer Courses (2012). From 2014–17 he was the director of the Harvard Group for New Music at the Harvard University organizing concerts and residencies with ensembles such as Ensemble Dal Niente, the JACK Quartet, Ensemble Recherche, musikFabrik, the ELISION Ensemble, and many others. In addition to music, McCormack has also studied contemporary dance with Jill Johnson and has worked in masterclass or choreographic settings with William Forsythe, John Jasperse, Christopher Roman and Riley Watts.

*timothy-mccormack.com*

## Klangforum Wien

24 musicians from ten different countries represent an artistic idea and a personal approach that aims to restore to their art something that seems to have been lost – gradually, almost inadvertently – during the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which gives their music a place in the present and in the midst of the community for which it was written and for whom it is crying out to be heard.

Ever since its first concert, which the ensemble played under its erstwhile name “Société de l’Art Acoustique” under the baton of its founder Beat Furrer at the Palais Liechtenstein, Klangforum Wien has written musical history. The ensemble has premiered roughly 500 new pieces by composers from three continents, giving a voice to the notes for the first time. It could – if given to introspection – look back on a discography of over 70 CDs, a series of honours and prizes and around 2000 appearances in the premier concert houses and opera venues of Europe, the Americas and Japan of renowned festivals as well as youthful and idealistic initiatives.

Over the years, strong artistic and personal links have developed with outstanding composers, conductors, soloists, directors and dedicated programmers. These have been influential in forming Klangforum’s profile, just as the ensemble has played an important part in forming and supporting the shape of their endeavours.



During the last few years, individual members and the ensemble as a whole have made increasing efforts to pass on 117 special techniques and forms of musical expression to a new generation of instrumentalists and composers. And from 2009, owing to a teaching assignment at the University of Performing Arts Graz, Klangforum Wien as a whole can style itself "professor".

All of this would remain purely superficial, if it didn't have its base in the monthly meetings of all the ensemble's musicians and the constantly redefined artistic will of a collective for which music is nothing less than an expression of their ethos and awareness of their own share of responsibility for the present and future. And just as in their art, Klangforum Wien itself is nothing but a force, barely disguised by its metier, to improve the world. The moment they step onto the podium, the musicians know that only one thing counts: everything. Eros and the absoluteness of this conviction are at the root of the inimitable quality of their concerts.

The members of Klangforum Wien come from Australia, Bulgaria, Germany, Finland, France, Greece, Italy, Austria, Sweden and Switzerland. Sylvain Cambreling, Friedrich Cerha and Beat Furrer are three outstanding musicians who have been awarded an honorary membership of Klangforum Wien through an unanimous decision by the ensemble. Sylvain Cambreling is the first guest conductor of Klangforum Wien since 1997.

Klangforum Wien is kindly supported by Erste Bank.

*klangforum.at*

## Christopher Otto

Christopher Otto is a violinist and composer living in the Bronx, New York. As a founding member of the JACK Quartet, he has performed contemporary music throughout the world and premiered works from composers such as Chaya Czernowin, Georg Friedrich Haas, Tyshawn Sorey, Philip Glass, Simon Steen-Andersen, and John Zorn. JACK's recordings include the complete quartets of Iannis Xenakis and Helmut Lachenmann as well as albums of the music of John Luther Adams, Jason Eckardt, Amy Williams, and Marc Sabat.

He studied composition at the Eastman School of Music and mathematics at the University of Rochester. He has written works in just intonation for strings and for instruments made by Carleen Hutchins and Harry Partch. His violin duo was recorded by Erik Carlson, and is available on soundcloud along with his violin octet. An article on his violin octet appeared in *Arcana VII*, an anthology edited by John Zorn.





## Kevin McFarland

Kevin McFarland ended a run of eleven years as founding cellist of the world-renowned JACK Quartet in the fall of 2016. After incredible experiences traveling across five continents, premiering hundreds of works by a diverse array of composers, and performing up to seventy concerts a year with this critically regarded and seemingly indefatigable string quartet, he decided it was time for a change of pace. In friendship he parted with his peers and relocated from New York City to Denver, Colorado, where he now lives with his longtime partner and two dogs. His current musical focus gravitates around composition, electronic music, and solo performance.

Guest performances include appearances with the International Contemporary Ensemble, Alarm Will Sound, Ensemble Signal, Talea Ensemble, and Wordless Music Orchestra. Kevin's compositions have been premiered by vocalist Abigail Fischer, Hutchins Consort East, the Deviant Septet, as well as performed by JACK. Recent solo performances include the New Orleans Museum of Art and a residence with the Harvard Group for New Music.

Kevin graduated from the Eastman School of Music where he studied cello with Steven Doane, and composition with Robert Morris, David Liptak, Ricardo Zohn-Muldoon, and Steven Stucky. His essay *Second Generation Interpretation and Xenakis' String Quartets* appears in *Performing Xenakis* from Pendragon Press.

## Ensemblekollektiv Berlin

Four internationally renowned Berlin ensembles – Ensemble Adapter, ensemble mosaik, Sonar Quartet and Ensemble Apparat – cooperate as a collaborative orchestra under the name Ensemblekollektiv Berlin. The participating ensembles are characterized by their extensive experience, highest quality renditions and clear profiles. Through collaboration, these formations complement each other to create new musical possibilities. This unusual constellation, which is based on chamber music structures, is not only a novelty for Berlin's cultural scene. The relationship of the individual ensembles to the collective as well as its chamber music structure and working methods as a basis for collective work are the focus of musical exploration.

ENSEMBLEKOLLEKTIV BERLIN made their first public appearances under the direction of conductors Titus Engel, Enno Poppe and Manuel Nawri at MaerzMusik 2014 and at Musikfest Berlin 2014 as well as at Deutschlandfunk Culture and Culture Radio rbb's Ultraschall Festival in 2015.

The German-Islandic ENSEMBLE ADAPTER has been active since 2004. As a regular guest at festivals and concert series both at home and abroad, the ensemble is dedicated to an individual international repertoire. Some of their projects require a working style that crosses the borders of different genres. Since 2006, the SONAR QUARTET has been working intensively with composers. The string quartet has become a fixture of various concert



series in the Berlin scene and guest performs at various international festivals. ENSEMBLE APPARAT – the youngest group of the cooperative – is formed of five brass instrumentalists who have become outstanding solo performers in their own right as well as having gained experience as guests of several well-known ensembles. In 2012, they decided to found their own brass ensemble for contemporary music in Berlin. ENSEMBLE MOSAIK has been involved in the researching and developing of current music since its founding in 1997. In close collaboration with all involved parties, the core of their artistic work focusses on the acoustic space in which they perform – its instrumental and digital dimensions – as well as on experimentation with new forms of communication.

*ensemblekollektiv-berlin.de*





Steven Daverson



Hèctor Parra



Hans Thomalla



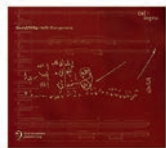
Luke Bedford



Zeynep Gedizlioğlu



Ulrich A. Kreppein



David Philip Hefti



Samy Moussa

### Portrait-CD-series of the Ernst von Siemens Music Foundation

Portrait CDs of the following composers are available:  
 Steven Daverson, Hèctor Parra, Hans Thomalla, Luke Bedford,  
 Zeynep Gedizlioğlu, Ulrich A. Kreppein, David Philip Hefti, Samy Moussa,  
 Marko Nikodijevic, Simone Movio, Brigitta Muntendorf, Luis Codera Puzo,  
 Mark Barden, Birke J. Bertelsmeier, Christian Mason, Milica Djordjević,  
 David Hudry, Gordon Kampe, Lisa Streich, and Michael Pelzel.

For further information, please visit: [evs-musikstiftung.ch](http://evs-musikstiftung.ch)



Marko Nikodijevic



Simone Movio



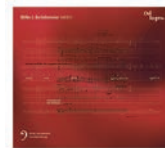
Brigitta Muntendorf



Luis Codera Puzo



Mark Barden



Birke J. Bertelsmeier



Christian Mason



Milica Djordjević



David Hudry



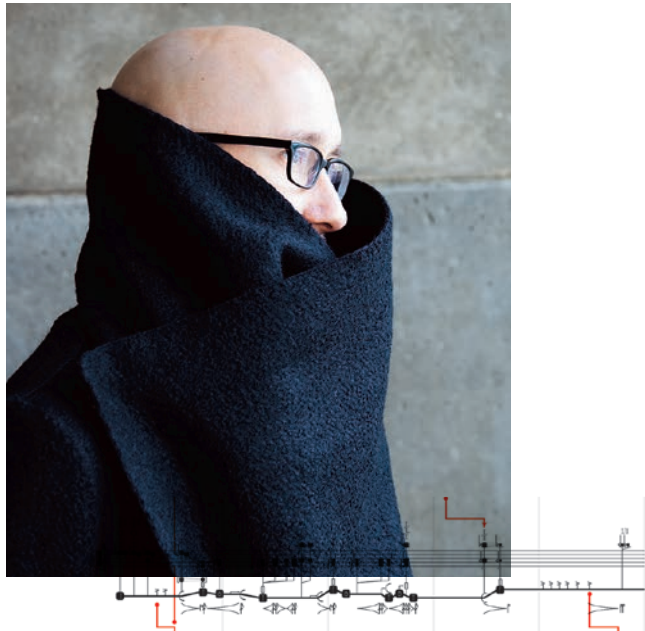
Gordon Kampe



Lisa Streich



Michael Pelzel



**Timothy McCormack: KARST**

1. **karst survey** (2016) 18:03  
für Kammerorchester und Elektronik  
Klangforum Wien
2. **you actually are evaporating** (2011–2014) 23:44  
für Violine und Violoncello  
Christopher Otto und Kevin McFarland
3. **KARST** (2015–2016) 36:48  
für großes Ensemble  
Ensemblekollektiv Berlin

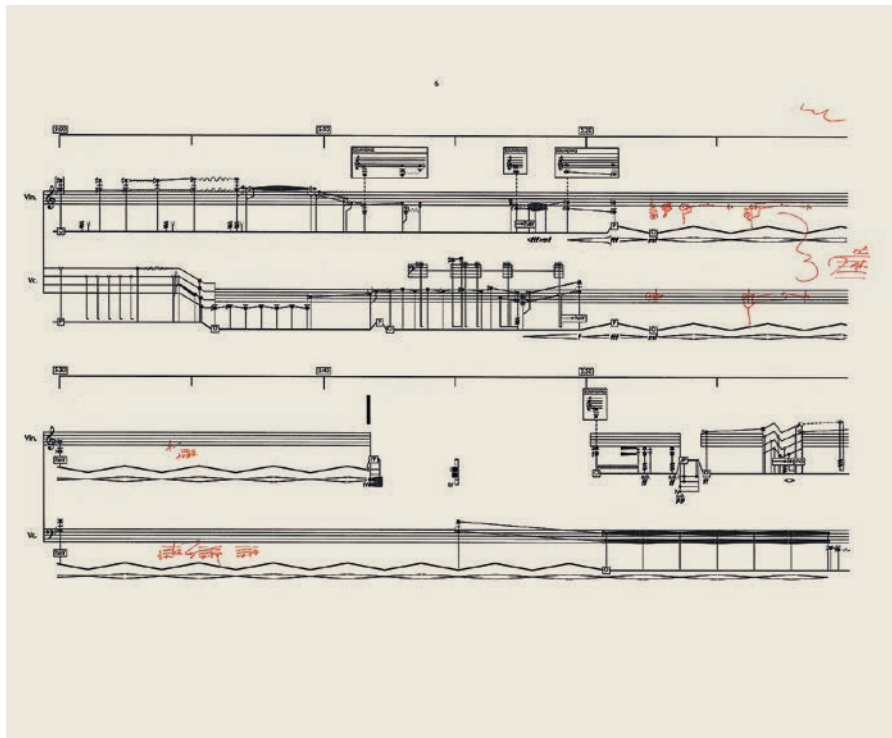
**Gesamtspieldauer: 78:52**

Erosion ist das Einwirken äußerer Kräfte (die Bewegung des Windes, die Fließbewegung des Wassers) auf eine Oberfläche, wobei Boden, Gestein oder anderes gelöstes Material abgetragen und an einem anderen Ort abgelagert werden. Eine weitverbreitete Form der Erosion entsteht durch die Einwirkung von saurem Wasser auf lösliches Gestein wie Kalkstein oder Dolomit. Das Wasser versickert in kleinen Spalten im Felsuntergrund, vergrößert sie dabei und erzeugt unterirdisch Entwässerungssysteme (Höhlen) und oberirdisch Senken, Löcher, Vertiefungen und Risse. Ein Gebiet, das diese Merkmale aufweist, wird als Karst bezeichnet, nach der slowenischen Landschaft Karst (oder Kras), die für ihre massiven Kalksteinhöhlen bekannt ist. Erodierte, durchlöchernte, entleerte karstige Landschaften sind faszinierend und tückisch. Sie sind voller Dolinen; der Boden sackt ohne Vorwarnung ab; Höhlen stürzen ein; Wasser füllt den Raum. Besonders beeindruckend ist vielleicht, dass Flüsse im Boden verschwinden und weiter unten am Berghang wieder als Quellen auftauchen. (Der slowenische Fluss Ljubljanica tut dies insgesamt sechsmal.) Alles spielt sich flussabwärts ab, ununterbrochen durch die langsame Einwirkung des Wassers. Die Umgestaltung ist unaufhaltsam und vollzieht sich über lange Zeiträume hinweg.

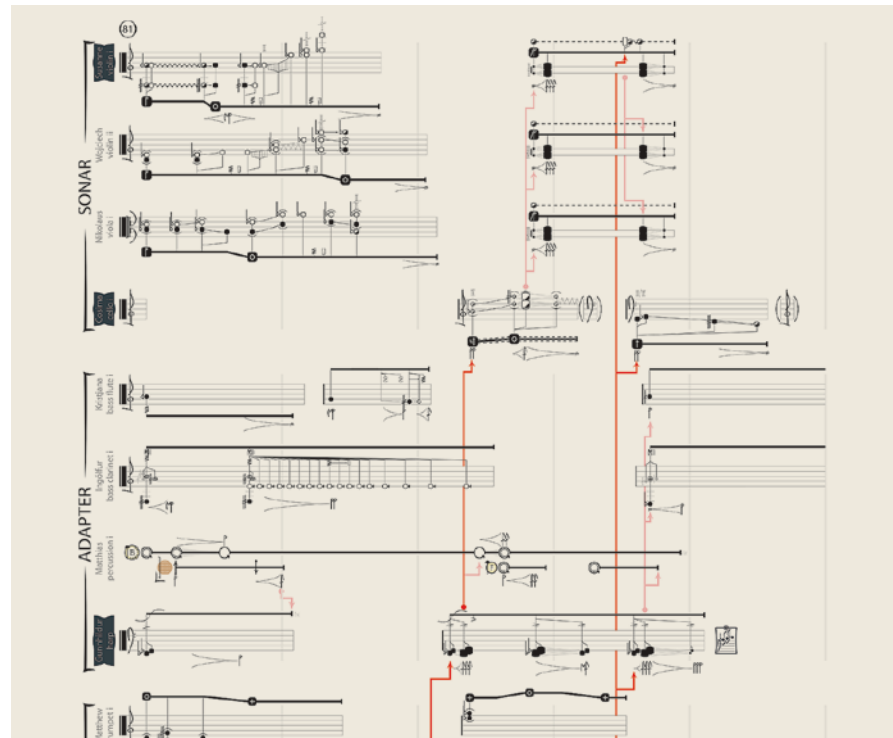
Unerbittliche Bewegung; unberechenbare, aber verlockende Räume: Genauso ist die Musik von Timothy McCormack. McCormack, der 2018 mit dem Komponisten-Förderpreis der Ernst von Siemens Musikstiftung

ausgezeichnet wurde, schreibt ungemein körperliche Musik. Indem er aus so unterschiedlichen Inspirationsquellen schöpft wie Geologie, Töpferei, Tanz und Malerei, betrachtet er Klänge als taktile, bildhauerisch gestaltbare Materie – Dinge, die sich ineinander pressen lassen und die untereinander auf die Anwesenheit der anderen reagieren, Gebilde elementarer, aber auch menschlicher Kräfte.

„Ein Berg“, schrieb die schottische Schriftstellerin und Naturforscherin Nan Shepherd (1893–1981), „hat ein Innenleben“. Wie Shepherds „lebender Berg“ hat auch McCormacks Musik ein Innenleben. Wer in einer Landschaft ist, ist ein Teil der Landschaft, nimmt teil an ihrem Entstehen, ihrer Entwicklung und ihrem Verfall. Wir sind nicht passiv, wenn wir Landschaften beobachten, konsumieren, nutzen, wenn wir sie bewohnen oder bewirtschaften oder verschmutzen. Sie dringen in uns ein, so wie wir in sie eindringen. Über *karst survey* sagte McCormack dem Flötisten Zach Sheets: „Ich wollte den Zuhörer regelrecht auf den Boden stellen, er sollte hindurchgehen, ohne zu verstehen, wie die einzelnen Bestandteile miteinander verbunden sind ... Ich wollte den Zuhörer wirklich mitten in diese Landschaft stellen. Dass man nur das sieht, was man sehen kann – man sieht nicht, wie sich das Ganze miteinander verbindet, bis man ganz hindurchgegangen ist.“



Skizze zu *you actually are evaporating* (2011–2014)



Partiturausschnitt *KARST*

McCormack entwickelte dieses Konzept der Darstellung in den acht Jahren, in denen er an der Harvard University bei Chaya Czernowin und Hans Tutschku studierte. In seinen früheren Musikstücken – beispielsweise *Disfix* (2008) und *Mirror Stratum* (2011), beide für das ELISION Ensemble geschrieben, mit dem er häufig zusammenarbeitet – wurde McCormacks anhaltende Faszination für Körperlichkeit durch hochgradig gestische, performative und dramatische Musik „inszeniert“. Die Gesten bestanden aus der Einwirkung simultaner, oft miteinander im Widerstreit liegender physikalischer Kräfte auf das Instrument des Spielers: kreuz und quer verlaufende Aktionslinien durch Bogen, Atem und Finger. McCormack spricht oft darüber, wie er Klang im physikalischen Sinn als Masse versteht, und in seinen frühen Werken gestalteten die Musiker diese Körperlichkeit, beobachtet von einem gewissermaßen passiven Publikum.



Mit der Zeit verwarf McCormack jedoch die demonstrativen Elemente dieser Stücke (wie auch die hypermaskuline Sprache, in der sie verpackt waren) und strebte eine mehr immersive, empirische Herangehensweise an, in der die Körperlichkeit sich mehr manifestierte und weniger inszeniert wurde. Etwa in der Zeit von 2011 bis 2016 verlängerte McCormack gezielt die Dauer seiner Werke und machte, ganz wie Morton Feldman, Umfang zu einem strukturellen und ästhetischen Merkmal. Dieser Prozess gipfelte vorläufig in dem 60-minütigen Streichquartett *your body is a volume* (2017–19) und in dem 70-minütigen Posaunenduo *WORLDEATER* (2016). Doch anders als Feldman, der durch Hinzufügung und Erweiterung Umfang schuf, geht McCormack nach innen, tiefer in die Klänge und deren Produktion hinein, bis sie schließlich das gesamte Wahrnehmungsfeld einnehmen. Er verfolgt mit diesen Werken – unter anderem *KARST* (2015–16) und *karst survey* (2016) – die Erschaffung eines gesättigten musikalischen Raumes, der das Gefühl des Hörers für elementare Kräfte wie Zeit und Schwerkraft verändert. „Anders ausgedrückt“, so McCormack, „die Erschaffung einer Welt *außerhalb der Welt* und *innerhalb* des Klangs“. Indem McCormack seine gestische Sprache auf ein beinahe schon geologisches Zeitmaß verlangsamte – gleichzeitig aber an ihrer Konzentration auf die Mechanismen der Darstellung festhält, anstatt sie in definierte Tonhöhen oder Rhythmen umzusetzen –, konnte er ihren Fokus von den Gesten auf die Berührung verlagern.

Die Aufmerksamkeit seiner Interpreten richtet sich nach innen, hin zu einer beinahe meditativen Konzentration auf das, was sie gerade tun. Die Intensität und Präzision des Geschehens sind kaum sichtbar, doch durchaus hörbar. Haptische Empfindung wird als Klang nachgebildet. Auf diese Weise gelang es McCormack auch, die Kluft zwischen Interpreten und Zuhörern zu überbrücken: Nicht länger Darsteller und Beobachter, werden sie nun zu Teilnehmern an einem gemeinsamen Erlebnis. Er versucht die Empfindung zu erzeugen, sich innerhalb der Ökologie des Stückes verortet zu fühlen, „wie eine turbulente Stelle im großen Mechanismus ... wie ein Element im Klangkörper“.

Der Transformationsprozess durch Entschleunigung und Dehnung wird in dem Geigen- und Cello-Duo *you actually are evaporating* (2011–14) ausgelotet. Eins der ersten Stücke, die McCormack während seines Aufenthalts in Harvard schrieb, überarbeitete er zwei weitere Jahre lang. In diesem Prozess fand er die Form, die seine zukünftige Musik annehmen sollte – als wäre er selbst ein Kalksteinblock, der langsam und unerbittlich geformt wird. Der Ursprung des Stücks liegt eigentlich eher im Tanz als in der Musik (oder gar in der Geologie). In Harvard nahm McCormack Unterricht bei der Tänzerin Jill Johnson, einer engen Mitarbeiterin des Choreographen William Forsythe. Der Titel des Stücks geht dann auch auf ein Zitat von Forsythe zurück: „Bewegung ist ein Faktor der Tatsache, dass man sich faktisch verflüchtigt.“

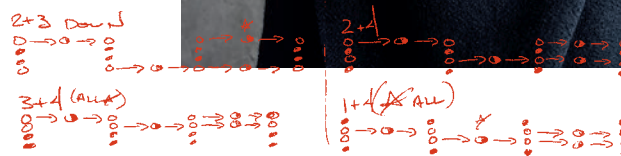
Das Werk beginnt mit der Darstellung von Gesten, die für McCormacks Frühwerk charakteristisch sind: Die uneinheitliche Aufzeichnung von Notenlinien und Tabulatur signalisiert Tonhöhen (stark getarnt hinter Lärm erzeugenden Varianten von Bogenposition und Bogendruck), die mit gestischen Anweisungen kollidieren – von der Tonhöhenregulierung unabhängige Hand- und Bogenbewegungen. Bald werden die Gesten spärlich, doch der Raum in der Musik erhöht die Spannung, anstatt sie zu zerstreuen. Nach vier Minuten löst sich diese Spannung über mehrere Seiten intensiv gestischer Musik, aber das ist noch nicht genug: Die Musik verfängt sich in einer Schleife, wie ein Mechanismus, der endlich zusammengebrochen ist. Neu starten und wieder aufbauen ist der einzige Ausweg. Das Cello verstimmt seine tiefste Saite zu einem nahezu nutzlos schlaffen tiefen  $E_b$ , und die tastenden Räume der ersten Hälfte werden zum Vordergrund der Musik. Nicht länger die Leere im Gefäß, jetzt sind sie die Luft, die das Gefäß füllt. Die Musik ist fast unmöglich leise, aber nicht weniger voll, denn die Oberflächengeräusche werden abgelöst durch einen Klanginnenraum aus Haaren, die fast einzeln nacheinander gegen Saiten streifen, aus winzigen Knarzgeräuschen von Kolophonium und Bogen.

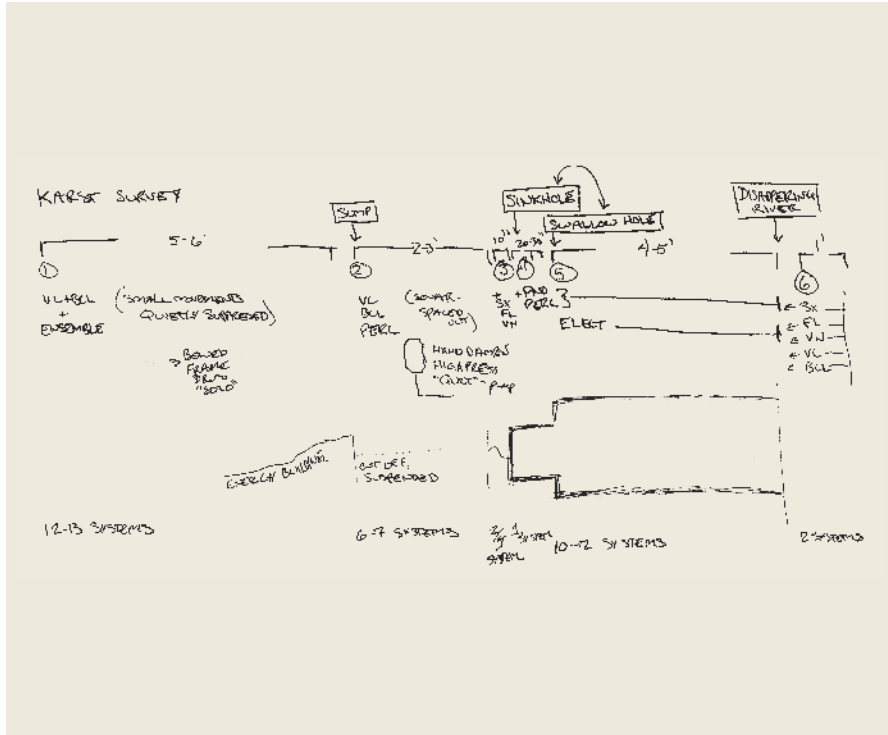
The image shows a handwritten musical score on aged paper, consisting of two systems of staves. Each system has a Violin (Vn.) staff on top and a Cello (Vc.) staff on the bottom. The notation includes standard musical notes, rests, and tablature. The score is heavily annotated with red ink, including arrows, brackets, and handwritten notes. In the first system, there are red annotations on the right side of the Cello staff, including the word 'Lärm' and some illegible characters. In the second system, there are red annotations on the right side of the Cello staff, including the word 'Lärm' and some illegible characters. The score is a sketch for the piece 'you actually are evaporating' (2011–2014).

Skizze zu *you actually are evaporating* (2011–2014)



McCormack bezeichnet *you actually are evaporating* als „eine Ökologie der Öffnungen“, und eine Besonderheit der Karstlandschaft sind ihre Hohlräume: Die negativen Räume von Höhlen, Dolinen, Senken und Schluchten sind genauso charakteristisch für sie wie ihre felsigen Klippen, Kalksteinpflaster und Bruchkanten. Es sind Landschaften, die man betritt, aber kaum durchqueren wird. In eingehegten Räumen rücken die Dinge zusammen. Die Gesichter wenden sich von der Wand ab und einander zu. Die 22 Musiker von *KARST* sind in vier Sub-Ensembles unterteilt – ein Streichquartett, ein Blechbläserquartett, ein Ensemble und ein Quartett aus Bass-Piccolo, Bassklarinette, Klavier und Harfe –, die auf der Bühne so gruppiert sind, dass sie sich visuell untereinander abstimmen können und trotzdem noch vom Publikum gesehen werden. Es gibt keinen Dirigenten: Alle Rhythmen und Einsätze im Stück werden während des Auftritts gemeinsam von den Spielern koordiniert. Das erfordert eine vortrefflich funktionierende Kommunikation und ein ungewöhnlich hohes Maß an Kenntnis über die Partituren der anderen. Eine ganz eigene Nähe zwischen den Musikern also, die eher im Umgang miteinander entsteht als durch typische (und künstliche) Hierarchien im Ensemble. Die Musiker widmen sich nicht nur eingehend den eigenen Klängen, sondern auch denen ihrer Kollegen. Wir als Zuhörer werden unweigerlich mit hineingezogen.





Skizze zu karst survey (2016)

KARST wurde für das Ensemblekollektiv Berlin geschrieben. Dahinter stand die Idee, einen Weg zu beschreiben, der mit der Begehung einer Karstlandschaft vergleichbar ist. Der Klang ist massiv, beinahe gefühllos, wird aber gelegentlich aufgebrochen, als fände man Hohlräume und kleine Einschlüsse in einem monolithischen Block; vielleicht gleicht die Verständigung zwischen Musikern dem Rinnsal zwischen den Ritzen. *karst survey*, das für die kleinere Besetzung des [Switch~ Ensemble]s geschrieben wurde, verfolgt dieses Bild weiter, fast als würde man nach Tausenden von Jahren in die gleiche Landschaft zurückkehren (eine Möglichkeit, auf die flüchtig angespielt wird, wenn zwischen den zwei Partituren in *karst survey* „swallowhole“ („Schluckloch“) vermerkt ist. Räume weiten sich zu Höhlensystemen und unterirdischen Wasserwegen aus (weitere Einträge in den Partituren sind „Sumpf“, „Quelle“ und „Doline“). Bald nach dem Anfang reduziert sich unser Weg auf eine einzige knarrende Geige. Gegen Ende fast das komplette Gegenteil. In einer Welt, die von Oberflächen und Simulationen überschwemmt wird, erinnert uns McCormacks Musik an die Bedeutung der Erfahrung und an unser Bedürfnis nach Nähe und Achtsamkeit. „Zu wissen... mit dem Wissen, das ein Lebensprozess ist“, wie Shepherd über ihre geliebten Cairngorm-Berge schrieb. „Das ist weder leicht noch in einer Stunde getan.“

Tim Rutherford-Johnson ist der Autor von *Music after the Fall: Modern Composition and Culture since 1989* (University of California Press).  
Übersetzung ins Deutsche: Gudrun Brug

## Impressum

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Herausgeber: Ernst von Siemens Musikstiftung  
Kuratorium: Thomas von Angyan, Nikolaus Brass, Winrich Hopp,  
Ulrich Mosch, Isabel Mundry, Enno Poppe, Wolfgang Rihm,  
Ilona Schmiel, Carolin Widmann, Andrea Zietzschmann

Sekretär  
des Kuratoriums: Michael Roßnagl  
Projektleitung: Imke List

Die CD-Reihe der Ernst von Siemens Musikstiftung  
entsteht in Kooperation mit paladino media, Wien

[www.evs-musikstiftung.ch](http://www.evs-musikstiftung.ch)  
[www.kairos.com](http://www.kairos.com)

© + ® 2020 paladino media gmbh, Vienna  
© 2018 Deutschlandradio  
© 2018 ORF

CD-Master:

Karola Parry, PARRY AUDIO Hamburg

Redaktion:

Imke List

Textnachweis:

Der englische Text von Tim Rutherford-Johnson  
ist ein Originalbeitrag für dieses Booklet.

Übersetzung

ins Deutsche:

Gudrun Brug

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Gestaltung:

jäger & jäger, [www.jaegerundjaeger.de](http://www.jaegerundjaeger.de)

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Wien: Tina Herzl | Christopher Otto: Beowulf Sheehan |  
Kevin McFarland: Henrik Olund | Ensemblekollektiv: Andy Rumball

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**karst survey** (2016)  
für Kammerorchester und Elektronik

54

Kompositionsauftrag: [Switch~ Ensemble]  
Uraufführung: 13. Juli 2016, VIPA Festival, Valencia, Spanien,  
[Switch~ Ensemble]

Aufnahme: Eine Produktion des Österreichischen Rundfunks (ORF)  
26.–28. Mai 2018,  
Studio 3 Wiener Funkhaus (ORF RadioKulturhaus Wien)

Ensemble: Klangforum Wien  
Besetzung: Eva Furrer (Piccolo), Bernhard Zachhuber  
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Aufnahmeleitung: Erich Hofmann (ORF)  
Tontechnik: Martin Leitner  
Cutterin: Katharina Ahammer (ORF)

<https://oe1.orf.at>

**you actually are evaporating** (2011–2014)  
für Violine und Violoncello

55

Uraufführung: 7. April 2012, Harvard University, Cambridge,  
MA, Callithumpian Consort

Aufnahme: 13. Oktober 2018, Oktaven Audio, New York, NY  
Interpreten: Christopher Otto (Violine)  
und Kevin McFarland (Violoncello)

Tonmeister: Ryan Streber

**KARST** (2015–2016)  
für großes Ensemble

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Kompositionsauftrag: Ensemblekollektiv Berlin, gefördert vom  
Hauptstadtkulturfonds Berlin und der  
Ernst von Siemens Musikstiftung

Uraufführung: 17. März 2016, MaerzMusik, Haus der Berliner  
Festspiele, Ensemblekollektiv Berlin

Aufnahme: Eine Co-Produktion mit Deutschlandfunk Kultur  
11. September 2018, Haus des Rundfunks Berlin,  
Saal 3

Ensemble: Ensemblekollektiv Berlin

Einstudierung: Enno Poppe

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Simon Strasser (Oboe), Christian Vogel (Bassklarinette),  
Martin Losert (Saxophon), Ernst Surberg (Klavier),  
Roland Neffe (Schlagzeug), Chatschatur Kanajan  
(Violine), Karen Lorenz (Viola), Mathis Mayr (Violoncello)

Ensemble Adapter: Kristjana Helgadóttir (Flöte),  
Ingólfur Vilhjálmsson (Bassklarinette), Gunnhildur  
Einarsdóttir (Harfe), Matthias Engler (Schlagzeug)

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Cosima Gerhardt (Violoncello)

Produzent: Rainer Pöllmann  
Tonmeisterin: Karola Parry  
Toningenieur: Ekkehard Stoffregen  
Tontechnik: Sebastian Sanchez

Handwritten musical notation and annotations:

- Top staff: Treble clef, notes with a bracket above labeled "P Rio".
- Second staff: Treble clef, notes with "3rd part M3" written to the left.
- Third staff: Treble clef, notes with "C ←" written to the left.
- Annotations include "Zacharost M6" with a double underline, "C# - 1st (5th part)", and "Ethy { Dd → -3rd (1st part) / A# → -4th (1st part) }".
- Other notes include "D (1st...)", "Bb (-5th)", and "A#".
- A small staff at the bottom right shows notes with "A# - 1st", "Bb - 2nd", and "C# - 3rd" written above.



