

Block: 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
First bar: 1	9	17	25	33	41	49	57	65	73	81	89	97	105	113	121	129	137	145
Measures rep.									6	6							8	

Block: 20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38
First bar: 153	161	169	177	185	193	201	209	217	225	233	241	249	257	265	273	281	289	297
Measures rep.	5	5	4	4		5	7			8			6	8	6	6	8	8

EXAMPLE 1. 8-bar BLOCKS in *Coptic Light* with repeated sections shaded.

Having an avid interest in all varieties of arcane weaving of the Middle East I recently viewed the stunning examples of early Coptic textiles on permanent display at the Louvre.

What struck me about these fragments of coloured cloth was how they conveyed an essential atmosphere of their civilization. Transferring this thought to another realm, I asked myself what aspects of the music since Monteverdi might determine its atmosphere, if heard 2000 years from now. For me the analogy would be one of the instrumental imagery of Western music.

These were some of the metaphors that occupied my thoughts while composing *Coptic Light*.

An important technical aspect of the composition was prompted by Sibelius's observation that the orchestra differed mainly from the piano in that it has no pedal. With this in mind, I set to work to create an orchestral pedal, continually varying in nuance. This "chiaroscuro" is both the compositional and the instrumental focus of *Coptic Light*.

EXAMPLE 2: Morton Feldman's program note for *Coptic Light* with key sections **in bold**.

← For Powerpoint slides and a PDF of this handout

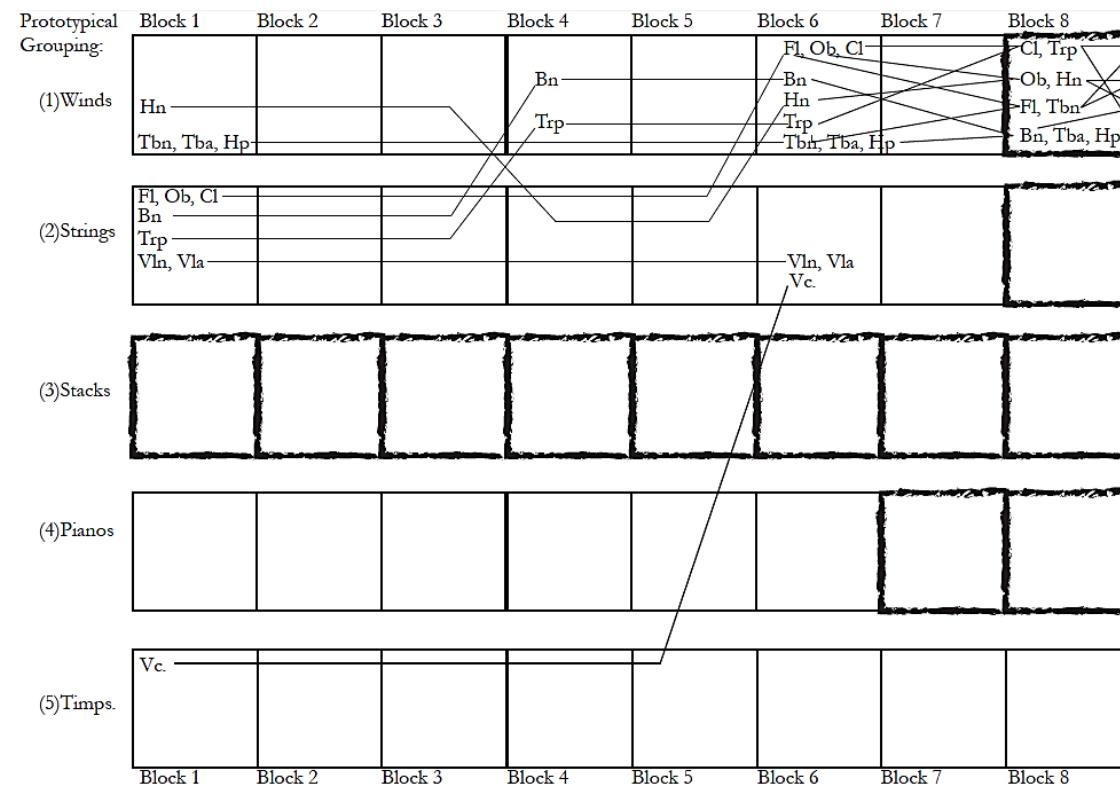


(1) Winds+Harps	(2) Strings	(3) "Stacks"	(4) Pianos	(5) Timpani
4 Flutes	18 Vln. 1	4 Vib./Marimba		
4 Oboes	16 Vln. 2	10 CB		
4 Bb Clarinets	12 Vla			
4 Bassoons	12 VC			
4 F Horns				
4 Trumpets				
4 Trombones				
Tuba				
2 Harps				

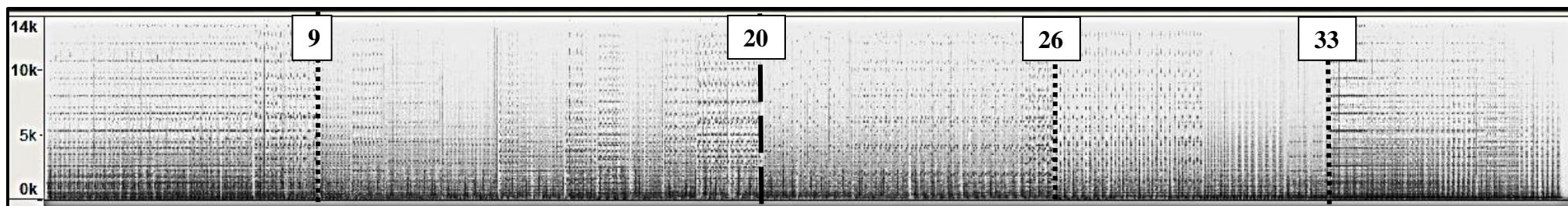
EXAMPLE 3: (Above) Prototypical instrumental GROUPINGS in *Coptic Light*.
(Below) Exemplary idiomatic gestures, from left to right: Winds: BLOCK 15, Strings: BLOCK 6, and Stacks: BLOCK 13.



EXAMPLE 4: Flutes move from “strings” GROUPING (BLOCK 2, left) towards their prototypical “winds+harps” GROUPING (BLOCK 3, right).



EXAMPLE 5. The “paths” taken by instruments in the search for their prototypical GROUPING during the opening of *Coptic Light*.
Each box represents a BLOCK and the bolded boxes represent occurrences of a “normative” GROUPING.



EXAMPLE 6. Spectrograms of *Coptic Light* with notable formal sections noted. The piece roughly divides in half at BLOCK 20, with A' beginning in BLOCK 33.

FIRST HALF		SECOND HALF AND RECAPITULATORY CODA	
BLOCK(s)	Key Events	BLOCK(s)	Key Events
1-9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prototypical instrumental GROUPINGS emerge. 	20-25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strings approach stacks/winds GROUPINGS. • Section transitions out with anticipation of high strings motive, denser onsets of most GROUPINGS
9-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Mostly) Symmetric Wind GROUPINGS (ground), (Mostly) high strings (figure) • Winds, stacks, and pianos converge on similar sustained patterns, blurring GROUPINGS 	26-32	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wind dyads become slightly offset, creating <i>arpeggios</i>. • High strings with harmonics emphasizing IC1 and IC2. Begin pizzicato. • Creates more and more <i>regular</i> patterns of durations. • Time signature transitions from $8/8 \rightarrow 6/8 \rightarrow 5/8 \rightarrow 4/8 \rightarrow 7/16$.
13-18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strings: Abundance of IC 5, dramatized consonances, leave high register in 16. • Vibes leave CB and begin more active triplet patterns. (15) 	33-end	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climax! Rhetorical gestures of arrival throughout. • More rhythmically “active” texture. • Shift from vibraphones to marimbas • High strings pulse opening E-A dyad. Clear connection to beginning.
19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear repetition, highest register of strings. • Horns have ONLY dynamic marking of whole piece (decrescendos) • Approaches stasis, seems to get stuck 		

EXAMPLE 7. General description of key sections and events in the narrative trajectory of *Coptic Light*.