

# Unitas Multiplex : Background to the Piece

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Brief notes for a listener who is not familiar with the Integral Model.

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*“Every human being longs for that wisdom—longs to be touched by that mystery. A good example is music. We can’t grasp music. Nobody can grasp music. But, we can understand music. How do we understand music? When it grasps us—when it does something to us. Then we understand. That is a big, pretty accurate image for what it means to be in touch with what I call mystery.”*

*“...silence is the opportunity to let yourself down into mystery—to let yourself be touched by mystery. That is like the joy of music, but only a thousand times deeper and greater.”*

- Brother David Steindl-Rast, Sounds True “Insights At The Edge” interview with Tami Simon, April, 2016



## Unitas Multiplex : An 'Integral Oratorio'

Unitas Multiplex is an 'Integral Oratorio'. It follows in the long line of settings of sacred texts for choir, solo singers and orchestra, from the early days of the mass sung in church, through the likes of Monteverdi's Vespers, Handel's Messiah, and the many settings of the 'Requiem' mass by composers over the centuries, including Mozart, Fauré, Verdi and Karl Jenkins. I have so far written five moments, 40 minutes, of a piece which will probably end up between 1 – 1.5 hours in total.

But Unitas Multiplex is also a radical departure from that tradition, in that it embodies and expresses an entirely new understanding of spirituality, the Integral Approach, or Integral Model, developed by American mystic and writer Ken Wilber since the 1970s. It is not easy to convey a satisfactory account of the Integral Model briefly, but I will do my best. (If you are interested in finding out more, Wilber's book "The Integral Vision" (Shambhala, 2007) gives a concise summary.)

Wilber's Integral Model is an understanding of spirituality which transcends and includes all religions; it is accessible to those of any faith, or none. It is the first approach to spirituality in history which is about the highest potential of us all, as *human beings*. Wilber has been referred to as the first 'world philosopher' because he has integrated the best of the great Eastern religions (sometimes referred to as the 'Perennial Philosophy') with the modern discoveries of the West in science and developmental psychology. The working title of the piece is *Unitas Multiplex*, ('Unity in Diversity'), which is one way of summarising Wilber's Integral approach; it integrates many understandings of spirituality, in the sense that it identifies a unity that underlies them all. (A metaphor Wilber uses is the Electromagnetic Spectrum: until James Maxwell came along in the 1860's, visible light, and non-visible radiation, such as infrared and ultraviolet, were thought to be completely different things. But Maxwell showed that, though they have different properties, they are all types of electromagnetic waves, with differing wavelengths: different phenomena, but sharing an underlying unity.)

The Integral model shows how human development is completely tied in with evolution. Indeed, human development is evolution in action. It reconnects us, apparently separate individual human beings, with our cosmic 'home'. The world (particularly the western world) has been suffering for too long from a sense of alienation and fragmentation. The Integral Model returns us to the big picture of a fundamental unity to the kosmos, which has been at the heart of every spiritual tradition, but now embracing the best of both the ancient and modern worlds, firmly grounded in a rational-empirical world view. The Integral Model invites each of us to express our own unique 'greatness', to contribute our own particular 'genius' to our community and to the world, which is drawn out through the combination of knowing ourselves deeply as individuals, and, at the same time, feeling our fundamental, deep connection to the whole: unity-in-diversity, *unitas multiplex*.

Integral Spirituality is not just the latest spiritual 'fad'; far from it. Wilber's work is based on rigorous research, cross-referencing the work of many, many writers from around the world. His 22 books have been translated into more than 25 languages. Many serious academics and thought leaders in many disciplines, including spirituality and psychology, have heralded his work as paving the way for a new era in our understanding of humanity and our place in the kosmos. There are academic journals and major conferences publishing and discussing the Integral approach, and applying it in practice across many disciplines.

My intention is that Unitas Multiplex conveys to the listener something of the depth and richness, and sense of connectedness and wonder that seeing ourselves, and our place in the kosmos, through the Integral lens can bring. The Integral Model opens up the spiritual realm in a completely new way: a contemporary understanding of spirituality which can make sense to anyone who is rooted in a rational world view. Music is a great medium for expressing Integral forms and experiences (more on this below). I have been a professional musician for most of my working life, and have experienced the beauty and power of the great classical choral works mentioned above. I hope to continue that tradition of inspiring listeners, with this new evolution of sacred music.

## Notes on the recordings

All of the movements are written for choir, orchestra and soloists. For these recordings, the orchestra is reproduced synthetically by the Sibelius software that I am using for writing the music. Sibelius cannot render words in the vocal parts, only “Ahhh...”. For **Blue Pearl**, **Be Still**, and **Evolution 5**, I have recorded the vocal parts, so you can hear the words. But please bear in mind, much better singers than I will be singing them if, and when, the piece is performed. For **Holons**, I have recorded vocals for the beginning, to give an indication of how the vocal parts build up; then they stop abruptly (but please imagine them carrying on!). I have also recorded one of the vocal parts for the last section (“kosmos”), so you can hear the words there. For **Anamnesis**, I have recorded large sections of the bass vocal. The purpose of the vocal parts I have recorded is just to enable you to follow the words while listening to the music. Note particularly, in the “Rational” section, there is a fugue, where the four choir parts sing separate vocal lines, each starting “The fortress of science...”. I have recorded only the bass part, which enters last.

Please do your best to imagine the piece sung by a large choir, with a large orchestra, in a magnificent auditorium!!

On the same webpage there is a PDF file with all the lyrics. So you can follow that as you listen.

There are also vocal scores of all of the movements written to date. You might find those helpful in following the vocal parts. If you are a singer, you can even print them off, and have a go at singing along! (If you do, please drop me a line to tell me how you get on!).

## ‘Integral’ music

If I hope for anything for this piece, it is that it should be ‘Integral’. There is clearly a lot that could be said about Integral music, and also about the styles of music in the piece (so far) in the context of contemporary classical music in general, but here are some *very* brief introductory comments.

I suggest an initial, broad categorisation, of Integral music into *implicitly integral* music, and *explicitly integral* music (of course, there are many more different categories one could describe). *Implicitly integral* music is any music written by an integrally informed person, the idea being that their integral consciousness cannot help but enter into their music. *Explicitly integral* music is music also written by an integrally informed person, but the music is deliberately expressing integral ideas, integral experiences, integral forms. *Unitas Multiplex* is, in that sense, clearly intended as an *explicitly integral* work, and it succeeds to the extent that this intention is manifest in the work *per se*, and in people’s experience of it (at least, for listeners who are *open* to experience it, which will, of course, not be everyone). It is intended to:

- convey ‘Integral’ through the medium of music;
- draw the individual listener into here-and-now Integral experiences (upper left quadrant), for example, having an inner experience of at least a taste of the ‘spectrum of consciousness’, and of the unity-in-diversity of the earth, and of humanity;
- draw the performers and audience as a whole into Integral experiences (lower left quadrant);
- inspire all involved to move in the direction of Integral Life Practise in their lives;
- inspire all involved to find and express their unique greatness, their highest potentials, in their lives.

## Notes on the musical style and structures: ‘Unitas Multiplex’, Unity-In-Diversity

One thing that is apparent when you listen to these movements is that the musical style varies a lot. Throughout the piece, the style of music is always intended to help convey the subject matter, through Integral forms, with a palpable, if subtle, sense of unity underlying these diverse styles of music: unity-in-diversity. The aim is that the piece as a whole unites the diverse styles, in just the same way that Integral theory unites diverse ways of understanding humanity and the Kosmos. There are also specific musical structures that represent Integral perspectives, which are used repeatedly in the piece, giving that sense of a unity that transcends and includes the diversity. Looking back, having written most of the piece, I can see that these various musical structures arose intuitively in my mind as I abided, over a number of years, with the desire to convey Integral forms through the music. And with hindsight, I can see connections between them that I did not consciously intend at the time. But the fact of my having been absorbing and dwelling in the Integral vision for 20 or so years, emerged in the musical

structures in intuitive ways, driven by my overall sense (conscious and unconscious) of the whole Integral *gestalt*, rather than by more conscious intentions for specific parts. Parts and wholes in me... parts and wholes in the music.

### **Complexity, simplicity, simplicity-within-complexity, and silence... diversity, unity, unity-in-diversity, and Mind**

The music in Evolution 5 is intended to give the feeling of the 'winding up' of the kosmos through evolution, and so starts very simple (the Big Bang) and then increases in complexity throughout. The levels in Holons build up in to a complex welter of combined melodies, yet, with a simply underlying harmonic structure, and utterly unified at the end, with the view of the Kosmos by the Kosmos.

The music in Be Still is very simple, expressing the simplicity that is found in meditation and contemplation. The gong sounds by itself in a few movements: in the Causal section of Anamnesis; at the end of the Death movement; at the end of Let Go. It is a cypher for awakened Mind (as KW uses that capitalised word in The Spectrum Of Consciousness), or whatever you want to call it. The gong leads into short periods of silence, an invitation for the listener to be aware of their own state of mind; and hopefully to have a glimpse of Mind. At a number of points, the music leads in this way from complexity to simplicity to silence; an evocation of the spiritual path.

Form mirrors content: diversity is represented by diverse musical forms; unity is represented both by simplicity of form; unity-in-diversity is represented by musical structures where diverse forms are united.

### **Recurring melodic theme of the Earth as a unity**

The use of a recurring theme to convey a sense of overarching unity is found in a lot of classical music, and I have always been drawn to it. Wagner uses it in the Ring cycle. Another good example is the end of the last movement of Dvorak's New World symphony, where he combines all the main themes of the piece together.

Blue Pearl is based on a simple 'riff' – a short, simple melodic theme – of the kind found in some West African music, representing the heart-beat of Mother Earth, and the ancestral origin of all human beings in Africa. This theme occurs also in Evolution 5, Holons, and at the end of the Potter, which is the end of the whole oratorio. So this theme of the unity of the earth runs through the whole piece.

### **Changes of key representing evolution, holarchy and the impermanence of the world of form**

I intuitively used regular changes of key signature in very specific ways in four movements of the piece. It was only looking back, after writing the fourth of these (Death), that I saw the connections that I discuss below, that link the ways I had used this musical structure in the different movements.

The 'key signature' of a piece of music gives the listener that feeling of a 'home key': the place the music starts out from, and returns to: base camp, home, the place of repose. In classical music, the music then moves away from that 'home', goes on a (restless) journey to 'related' keys, and then always returns home; to repose, rest. So, in classical music, there is that sense of tension – in moving away from the home key – and release – the return. Unitas Multiplex uses changes of key in a different way. There is more detail about the individual movements below, but here is a summary.

In **Evolution 5**, the key changes upwards at an exponentially increasing rate. This sequence of key changes represent the ongoing change wrought by evolution, the universe 'winding up', as Wilber puts it; and also the exponential increase in the pace of this change. The repeating bass 'riff' superficially represents galaxies turning, but it also gives the feeling of the unity that underlies the extraordinary diversity that evolution has unfolded in its journey from matter to life to consciousness.

**Anamnesis** has great variation in musical style in its ten short sections. The different styles of music are used to express the different levels of consciousness, from the very primitive, pre-rational, through rational, to the trans-rational, or spiritual, domains. But here again I have used a sequence of key changes, reflected in a recurring melodic thematic, which give the music an overarching sense of unity. For each section, representing a new level of consciousness, the key moves up a by a third. In the 'Rational' section, these stacked thirds appear in the melodic theme. They are even more noticeable in the following 'Integral' theme. This is the point where consciousness begins to be aware of the process of development through the previous stages, that have led up to the current level

(what Wilber refers to, after Clare Graves, as ‘second tier’). In the ‘Causal’ and ‘Summary’ sections at the end, we hear the thirds stacked up harmonically over two octaves: a big stack! This has two effects: reminding us (probably subliminally, unless the listener has read this text!) of the sequence of rising thirds that has represented the unfolding of the spectrum of consciousness through the whole movement; and also conveying a sense of the ‘fullness’ that comes with being awake to all the those levels within us – the fullness (or inclusion), that is the compliment to the ‘emptiness’ (or transcendence) of the Causal level.

In **Holons**, the key changes every time a new level of the holarchy appear, going through what is known as a ‘cycle of fifths’. As with Evolution 5, this musical structure gives the sense of constant change as each new level transcends and includes the previous. It is as if the feeling of ‘home’ changes every few bars, until, perhaps, this feeling of the constant change of ‘home’ begins itself to feel like ‘home’ – being at home with change. And also, perhaps, on a deeper level, the sense that, within this constant change of evolution, the unceasing flux of life, we are never *not* at home. An amazing thing happened when I got to the end of the piece. The ‘cycle of fifths’ goes through 12 keys: one for every note in the western semi-tone scale (i.e. every note you can play on a piano within one octave). And there were exactly 12 levels in the holarchy I was representing, so the movement starts in C major, and ends in C major, having gone through every key possible in the meantime. So, to quote Paul Simon, “After changes upon changes, we are more or less the same”. Well, in this case, exactly the same. Or, to quote T S Elliot (from Little Gidding in the Four Quartets) “We shall not cease from exploration / And the end of all our exploring / Will be to arrive where we started / And know the place for the first time”. So the changing keys here represent the unending change of evolution; but also the sense that ‘home’ is everywhere at every moment.

In **Death**, the key changes down a tone every four bars. So, the same regular, unceasing change as in Holons, but here it is for ever down, down... Moreover, this pattern of descending keys is adding a third ‘level’ of descent to the melodic theme that underpins the piece, which already has two levels of repeating descent within it: the initial one bar theme is simply a descending five note scale. That whole descending five note pattern then descends a note each bar. And then comes the key change which takes that whole pattern of descent upon descent down another tone. So three levels of descent. This gives a sense of everything just sliding away, down, down... The opposite of the feeling of ‘home’: there is nothing to hold onto. This conveys the understanding that is key in the Buddha’s perception of reality, namely that of impermanence; which is itself, of course closely related to the suffering that comes when we cling to the world of form, where everything that is born must also, at some point, die. Death is surely the ultimate mystery of human existence. Wilber is clear that it is death, our terror of it, and our urge to avoid it, that is the fundamental driver of human psychology. (Not sex, as Freud suggested; though sex is clearly a big driver too). This descending musical structure conveys a sense of the inevitability of death, its inexorable onward march; and the sense of tragedy that we typically associate with death.

And then, after a big climax, everything goes very quiet, and we hear the simple melodic theme again, but now with two vital differences: the key doesn’t change; and the descending pattern is perfectly mirrored by an *ascending* pattern. Here we encounter the mystical understanding of death: that birth and death are opposites which the mystic transcends and includes, as she transcends all opposites.

### **Mirrored ascending and descending scales representing the transcendent unity of ‘ascending’ and ‘descending’ religions**

This musical structure of a perfect mirroring of concurrent ascending and descending scales also occurs in Sex, and so is a unifying theme between the Sex and Death movements (and I will quite likely use it in the movements I have yet to write). It conveys the unity of what Wilber refers to as the ‘ascending’ and ‘descending’ schools of religion. For the ‘transcenders’, Heaven is not of this earth. It is arrived at by transcending earthly things. For the ‘descenders’, Heaven, or ultimate reality IS the earth, and all earthly forms.

In the Integral understanding, ultimate reality does indeed transcend all forms, including earthly forms, AND it is immanent, present in all forms. In Buddhism, this is expressed in the famous Heart Sutra as ‘form is emptiness, and emptiness is form’. This unity is also central to all ‘non-dual’ religions, such as the Mahayana and Vajrayana schools of Buddhism.

The use of this musical form in these two movement – Sex and Death – invites us to see those two key ingredients of human life through this non-dual perspective.

## Engaging the audience as active participants

One aspect of the completed piece which will help the audience experience this underlying unity will be near the beginning, when one of the solo singers will address the audience directly, inviting the conscious awareness of each audience member, which is clearly present throughout (unless they fall asleep!) to be a unifying factor. The audience will be invited to be deliberately aware of their experience of the piece as it goes along; not to sit just as passive spectators. In this sense, the whole performance is intended as a meditative, or contemplative experience. There will also be three brief periods of silence in the piece, near the beginning, in the middle, and near the end. A brief section before the first silence will again address the audience directly, inviting them to consciously enter a meditative state during the silence. This explicit inclusion of these three silences as ‘pillars’, fundamental to the structure of the piece, will add to the sense of underlying unity.

## The individual movements so far

The ten movements completed so far in draft form are (in the order I suggest you listen to them in):

- Evolution 5
- Anamnesis
- Blue Pearl
- Holons
- Shadow
- Sex
- Death
- Let Go
- Be Still
- The Potter

There is a more detailed discussion of each movement below. The following is a brief summary. **Evolution 5**, **Holons**, and **Anamnesis** are closely related, in that they all portray essentially the same holarchy of evolution, from different perspectives: **Evolution 5** maps the entire 14 billion years of evolution, from a third-person perspective, in chronological time, onto five minutes of music; **Anamnesis** takes off where **Evolution 5** ends. It describes the stages of consciousness, from physical matter, through pre-rational human consciousness, to rationality, to trans-rational, as experienced from within (i.e. first person), based on the section of the same name in Ken Wilber’s book, *One Taste*. **Holons** represents the holarchy, currently present, that starts with quarks and atoms, and proceeds via the human body and the earth, ending at the entire Kosmos, as described by Ken Wilber in his *Full Spectrum Mindfulness* meditation.

**Blue Pearl** represents the Earth ‘speaking’ to human beings. It portrays, and invites, the listener to experience herself as the Earth. It has an spoken introduction which is a short, beautiful piece of prose by Apollo 14 lunar astronaut, Edgar Mitchell, founder of the Institute of Noetic Sciences, describing the awesome experience of ‘earthrise’, seeing the earth appear from behind the moon (as in the famous image taken from the Apollo 8 lunar on Christmas eve 1968 – the most reproduced image on earth). Mitchell apparently had a powerful *savikalpa samādhi* experience on the journey back to Earth. I was planning to send *Unitas Multiplex* to Edgar Mitchell, but he sadly passed away on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2016. RIP. The theme—or ‘riff’—from **Blue Pearl** also appears in **Holons** (where the whole earth appears in the holarchy) and in **Evolution 5** (when the earth forms in evolution). This use of the same theme in different movements underlines the central place of the ‘earth as a unity’ within *Unitas Multiplex* as a whole. It also helps to give the structure of the work as a whole the sense of ‘*unitas multiplex*’: a unity within the diverse movements.

**Be Still** is a setting of my paraphrase of a three-part summary of meditation that I heard from *Sogyal Rinpoche* at one of the first meditation weekends I ever attended, at *Rigpa* in London. It invites the listener into a meditative state. **Sex** presents an Integral view of the relationship between sexuality and spirituality, which has been, for the most part, a misunderstood and tortured one throughout most of history. **Shadow** give a brief presentation of the horrors that happen when sexuality is denied, when we attempt to transcend but not include the lower levels. **Death** represents the terrible pain of our experience of death and bereavement, and asks whether we will open our heart in the face of this seemingly unbearable suffering, or close it. The second part presents the non-dual view of death,

pointing towards that which transcends time. **Let Go** is a setting of a shortened version of a teaching by Thai Buddhist teacher Ajahn Chah. **The Potter** is a celebration of the mystery of human existence, and is a sort of prayer, that we may be all that we can be in this life.

The individual movements in more detail...

### Evolution 5

**Evolution 5** represents the 13.75 billion year evolution of the kosmos in 5 minutes of music, a linear mapping of chronological time (a simple endeavour...!). It is a translation into music of a 'cosmic walk'. I first heard of this brilliant idea many years ago. Someone who knows a bit about the history of the universe (that could be an astrophysicist, for example, but I believe deep ecologists also do a version of the cosmic walk; and, of course, ideally the guide would be an *integral* one, covering all four quadrants of evolution) sets out a one mile walk for participants to follow, somewhere in the countryside, where the distance corresponds to the time in evolution, starting at the Big Bang, ending at the present day. The 'guide' marks significant points, such as the formation of the first stars, the formation of earth, the time when life started on earth, first fish, and so on, up to the evolution of the early hominids, the first humans, very roughly a million years ago. When one mile corresponds to the 13.75 billion year age of the universe, that million years of humanity's entire existence corresponds to the last 5 inches of the 1 mile walk. If you prefer to work in metric, if the total walk was a kilometre, say, the evolution of humankind comes in the last 7 centimetres.

In **Evolution 5**, this 5 minute piece of music, the orchestra represents the unfolding of evolution through time: stars, galaxies, the earth, life on earth, plants, animals... The million years of humanity's existence years translates into the last two hundredths of a second, the last demi-semiquaver of the very last bar of the 100 bars of the piece. The choir finally sings, a very short "I", representing the entire existence of humanity. (I have actually doubled the note length, to a semi-quaver, to give the choir a fighting chance of getting their entry in time!). The choir's tiny, last gasp, contribution to the 5 minute piece is, hopefully, highly amusing, but more importantly, hopefully gives the listener a vivid feeling of the brevity of humanity's, and our own individual existence in kosmic terms, and also some feeling of *being* the kosmos, evolved, evolving.

The music is based on a simple bass riff, which repeats every four bars. This represents the turning of galaxies. The Milky Way turns once every 200,000 years, which should correspond to 1.5 bars, but that felt too short for the music to make sense, so four bars instead. This flexibility of the chronological mapping became a working principle within the piece as a whole: I have not been slavish in mapping the timings of events onto the 5 minutes of music. I have balanced accuracy of timing with the aesthetic necessities of the music (as I see them).

The music builds up, as new things evolve in the universe, transcending and including what has gone before. Here, in contrast to **Holons** (see below), time is represented in a linear way, which means that very little happens for a very long time, as the first stars come into existence and the first galaxies form (what a moment that must have been – the very first star in a universe of complete and utter darkness; a moment celebrated in a different way, of course, in many settings of religious texts – "Let there be light"). As in **Anamnesis**, and **Holons**, harmony is used to represent the evolving holarchy. In **Evolution 5**, the base of the harmony rises at an exponentially faster rate. So the time that elapses before the first semi-tone rise is 1 minute 50 seconds; between the first and second rise: 45 seconds. And so on. The intervals between the rises get shorter and shorter, and towards the end of the piece, the harmonic rises themselves also get bigger. New 'things' appear in the universe, and so in the piece, also at a faster and faster rate. So the combined effect is to convey the sense of the kosmos *winding up*, and this winding up is getting faster and faster as evolution progresses. Many people are aware of how physicists talk about 'entropy' increasing – that the universe is winding down (the second law of thermodynamics). But it is surely clear to anyone who believes in the evolutionary view represented in this piece (and this is Ken Wilber's view) that the kosmos is, in a different sense, *winding up*. More and more complex holons evolve; new, more complex wholes, built from the preceding holons, on and on.

In Integral terms, **Evolution 5** is presenting the lower right quadrant perspective of evolution. The music is representing objective, 'observable' occurrences. An intellectual understanding of this perspective can be extremely enlightening, and awe inspiring. But, of course, the listener is, willy-nilly, having an upper left quadrant, subjective, inner experience as she listens. And this is really the primary intention behind the piece: not an intellectual

understanding of evolution, but an *inner experience*, which I hope might have a number of dimensions. The listener might get a sense:

- of the vastness of cosmic time;
- of the cosmic context of humanity’s arrival, and even more, our individual arrival, on the scene, after this unimaginably long time that evolution was unfolding before we ever existed;
- of the *winding up* of the kosmos through evolution;
- that we humans therefore ‘contain’ all of the universe that evolved before us. This is one of the (many) great revelations that reading Wilber gave me: first, that the physiosphere and the biosphere are ‘in’ us, not the other way round. And, similarly, that the entirety of what evolved before we arrived is enfolded, wrapped up, within each human being. This is really the main thing that I hope a listener will ‘get’ from listening to **Evolution 5**.
- that human beings *are* the universe, evolved thus far. In this respect, **Evolution 5** is parallel to **Blue Pearl**: the latter is inviting the listener into an inner experience that they *are* the Earth; the former is inviting the listener to experience that she *is* the kosmos.

With these potential inner experiences in mind, the piece can also be listened to as a kind of meditation. As with **Unitas Multiplex** as a whole, a listener who deliberately sets herself in a meditative state as she listens, approaching the whole work as a meditation, might experience the sort of things described above on deeper levels.

Here are most of the events that are represented in the **Evolution 5**:

Years ago	Minutes in the music	Event / appearance
13,750,000,000	0.0	Big Bang
13,650,000,000	0.1	Cosmic dust, then first stars form, super novi
12,750,000,000	0.4	First galaxies form
4,500,000,000	3.4	Earth forms
4,000,000,000	3.5	Life begins (prokaryotes)
1,500,000,000	4.5	Eukaryotes
700,000,000	4.7	Multicellular organisms
530,000,000	4.8	Cambrian explosion in seas (fish, broadly speaking)
475,000,000	4.8	Land plants
400,000,000	4.9	Insects
220,000,000	4.9	Dinosaurs
200,000,000	4.9	Mammals
65,000,000	4.95	Meteorite that caused extinction of dinosaurs & 90% of all species
1,000,000	4.98	Early humans (the choir, right at the end, singing simply “I”)

**Anamnesis**

Anamnesis is a setting to music of excerpts of text from the section of the same name in *One Taste*. It is the longest of the five movements: 20 minutes, made up of eleven short sections. It starts where Evolution 5 ends: with the arrival of primitive human consciousness, and then goes through nine sections representing the holarchy of the spectrum of consciousness: animal, magic, mythic, rational, integral, psychic, subtle, causal, one taste. It ends with a summary (which appear in the *causal* section in *One Taste*).

The aim is to for the music to convey the ‘feeling’ of each of the stages (upper left), and to draw the listener into a ‘taste’ of that experience. The holarchical aspect – ‘transcend and include’ – of the evolving stages is represented in the music by ‘stacking up’ 3<sup>rd</sup>s in the harmony. The base harmony of each section is a third higher than the preceding one (apart from the second and third sections, which are only semi-tones higher; the first rise of a third comes with the advent of a clearly ‘human’ consciousness.) As well as the bass rising in thirds, the harmony of each

section adds a higher third, while including all the lower thirds preceding it; this is an explicit representation in harmonic structure the of holarchical nature of the evolution of the stages.

A high, quiet, E on the violins comes between each section and the next. On the one hand, this symbolises the ‘causal ground’ which is present throughout the entire process, the ‘ground of being’. On the other hand, it is intended as a cue for the audience to dis-identify with the preceding stage, which they hopefully will have *identified* with, before moving on to the next. The invitation to the audience to actively engage with the music in this way will be made explicit by the lyrics of the preceding movement (not written yet). This process of identifying with each stage, then dis-identifying, follows a similar process to the one Ken Wilber describes as ‘toggling’ in the *Full Spectrum Mindfulness* meditation.

The only exception to this violin E ‘cue’ is when we arrive at the ‘causal’ level, or emptiness, where a gong takes the place of the violin E. This represents the ineffability of this stage, and its particular characteristic of being the ‘ground’ of all stages. The hope is that this gong note, at this point in the movement, will help take the listener beyond words, beyond music, beyond symbols (although an advanced meditator listening would probably be beyond those things anyway, and ‘dis-identified’ all along).

The ‘causal’ section that continues after the gong attempts to portray both *emptiness*, and *fullness*. Fullness is represented by the thirds now being stacked up over two octaves, the top and bottom note both being E. All the stages are thus, in the symbolism of the music, enfolded in this, the ‘highest’ stage, which transcends and includes all preceding stages. This gives a very ‘full’ chord, the fullness permeating the harmony of this section. At the very end of the piece, this ‘fullness’ chord alternates with the high ‘E’ ‘emptiness’: the non-dual understanding, or experience, that the world of form, and the transcendent Self are not-two.

### Holons

This is a setting to music of a short section of text from Ken Wilber’s **Full Spectrum Mindfulness** webinar (from the online broadcast in November 2015), which a short addition (the section in Latin) at the end. There are 12 vocal parts, in the form of a ‘catch’, where each new voice that enters adds a new layer of melody to what has gone before, the individual parts combining at all times into a harmonious unity, which grows in complexity and beauty (i.e. transcending and including). **Holons** starts with quarks, atoms, molecules, and ends up at the earth, the solar system, and, finally, the entire kosmos.

The key changes for each new holon, going through a ‘cycle of fifths’, and ending back in the starting key, C major, which has no sharps or flats. This sequence of keys can be seen as representing the ‘outward’ and ‘inward’ arcs of evolution: the number of sharps in the key increases with each new holon, until human beings arrive, the ‘furthest out’ point of the arc – humanity’s sense of alienation, of being ‘fallen’, or far from ‘home’. At that point, sharps change (‘enharmonically’ is the technical term) to flats, and the number of flats starts to decrease, representing the ‘inward’ arc, humanity’s return, through the transpersonal realms, to the remembering of Self as Spirit.

I wrote this short piece over a period of just three days, in Goa, India. It was amazing feeling such a condensed representation of evolution. When the tune for the ‘humanity’ section emerged in my mind I broke suddenly and unexpectedly into waves of sobbing. It felt to me that this resulted from having such an abrupt view of self-awareness arising in the kosmos, as human beings, and feeling the pain that the kosmos feels through our human experience, the pain of (the illusion of) Its separation from Itself.

### Blue Pearl

I wrote Blue Pearl on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2003 during a week-long workshop, *Create and Sustain*, led by my good friend, storyteller and singer-songwriter Eric Maddern, and Peter Harper, of the Centre for Alternative Technology. The workshop was about how we might use the arts to communicate ideas about sustainability. It took place at Eric’s wonderful eco-encampment, *Caemabon*, in Snowdonia, Wales (which is still flourishing – see [www.caemabon.co.uk](http://www.caemabon.co.uk)).

I originally heard the phrase ‘Blue Pearl’ to describe the earth from a visionary song writer and friend, Olu Taiwo, who had written a wonderful rap with that title. ‘Blue Pearl’ is what the earth looks like from the moon. It signifies the Earth understood, perceived, *experienced*, as a whole. And human beings, seen from this perspective are *Earth beings*. We are the Earth, evolved, living, breathing, *aware*. The lyric of the song gives voice to the Earth, and the

Earth says, quite emphatically, that we humans and the Earth are one. The song also seems to say that it is in truly facing up to our mortality that this realisation is most likely to emerge. The song has been performed on two UK Christmas tours with Maddy Prior & the Carnival Band, and seems to have struck a chord with a lot of people.

### Be Still

This is a setting of a paraphrase of a beautiful three part summary of meditation I heard from Tibetan Buddhist teacher, Sogyam Rinpoche, at Rigpa, in London, in the 1990s. He had beautiful physical gestures too, that went with it. In the context of a performance, it is intended to draw the audience into a meditative, and open-hearted, state.

### Let Go

This is a setting of a shortened version of a teaching by Thai Buddhist teacher Ajahn Chah (1918 – 1992). The original version is:

*“Do everything with a mind that lets go.  
Don’t accept praise or gain or anything else.  
If you let go a little you will have a little peace;  
if you let go a lot you will have a lot of peace;  
if you let go completely you will have complete peace.”*

The structure of the music represents the understanding that the peace Ajahn Chah is referring to in this teaching is not something we *create*. Rather, it is there all the time, but we do not experience it, because in everyday consciousness, our busy, grasping minds (also referred to as ‘monkey mind’ in Buddhist teachings) are obscuring this underlying peace. What we do through meditation, or other contemplative practices, is uncover it; reveal what is there all along.

The movement is in four sections. The first section represents a chaotic mental-emotional condition. A roller coaster of emotion, ups and downs; a person who is blown about uncontrollably by emotional extremes. This would be an unhealthy person, psychologically speaking. Someone in the grip of addiction, or strong mental-emotional conditioning, whose life feels out of control. The full orchestra plays, but you hear mostly the brass and percussion, because they are playing loudest. The woodwind are playing, by quieter, so you don’t hear them well. The strings are playing, but very quietly, so all you can perceive is their bows moving – you can’t hear what they are playing.

The choir sings *“Let go a little, and you will experience a little peace.”* And the loud brass and percussion fade, revealing the woodwind, who continue playing the same music; but now you can hear them. The strings are still playing – very quietly; and so still not heard, except perhaps in glimpses. This is the second section. It represents a ‘normal’ adult human. A ‘healthy neurotic’, perhaps. Someone who, most of the time, feels in control of their emotions, in control of their life. They have ups and downs, but not extreme; and they are recognised as part of the human condition.

The choir sings *“Let go a lot, and you will experience a lot of peace.”* Now the woodwind fade away, revealing, at last, the strings, playing very quietly and serenely. Peace. We realise that this is what they have been playing all along, under the deafening brass, and the fairly loud woodwind. This is the third section. It represents the condition of someone who has done a lot of meditation or other contemplative practice. They are largely ‘unhooked’ from external conditions, from the ups and downs which inevitably follow when we seek happiness that depends on conditions which are temporary. They have found the fulfilment and equanimity which arises naturally from *within* when we stop looking *without* for happiness.

The solo soprano sings *“Let go completely, and you will experience...”*. The sentence from the original teaching is left hanging, incomplete... And the gong sounds alone. This is the fourth, and final, section. It represents an ‘awakened’ mind, or whatever term you prefer to describe liberation, realisation. The best way to understand what that means is to engage in a committed way in spiritual practice.

### Shadow

The complete current version of the Integral Model (it has evolved since the 1970s) is sometimes expressed as: Growing Up – the Levels of development in the Spectrum of Consciousness; Waking Up – States of consciousness;

Cleaning Up – making the Shadow conscious; Showing Up – being alive to the four Quadrants in all situations. This movement is a pithy representation of the third of those – Cleaning Up, or making the Shadow conscious.

Shadow in this context is the name Jung gave to those parts of our psyche that we have made unconscious through repression, because, at some point in our lives – usually in childhood – they were experienced as unacceptable, or dangerous. These repressed elements don't go away, though. They haunt us, and cause us dis-ease – mental, or physical, or both – through *symptoms*. We can harm ourselves, and we can others, by unconsciously 'acting out' our shadow.

Shadow can also be seen as a cultural phenomenon. An entire culture can repress what it perceives as unacceptable. This is where this movement relates to the 'Sex' movement. There has been a large scale pattern of repression of sexuality by the major institutional religions. It has been understood for centuries that is vital to repress sexuality in order to progress on the spiritual path. Put another way, the spiritual path has been understood as *transcending* bodily, carnal, desires – the frailty of flesh. We have to 'go beyond' the body, because the body is weak, it has these carnal desires, and it gets ill and dies. To realise eternity must mean to transcend the body.

The crucial development of this understanding that the Integral model brings is that spiritual development is a process of transcending, yes... *and including*. This understanding is not new with the Integral model. It was well developed in the 'Vajrayana' school of Buddhism, developed in Tibet in the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC, sometimes referred to as the 'third turning' of the dharma wheel (the first being 'Theravada', the second 'Mahayana'). It is also essentially present in any 'non-dual' spiritual approach; because 'non-dual' simply means that the Transcendent is present in everything that it transcends. But the Integral approach is a new level of understanding and integration, because it integrates the spiritual realm with the psychological realm, in a way that has never happened before. We have, with the Spectrum of Consciousness, an understanding of all these levels of our being as humans, from what we share with animals – including our sexual desires, through rationality and all that goes with it, right up to the Divine, or whatever you want to call those higher, spiritual levels. We need to embrace them *all* in order to be truly human.

And when we attempt to reject those lower, animalistic components of ourselves, they come back to haunt us. So, the ubiquitous presence of the horror of sexual abuse in those major religious institutions is a cultural shadow. Sexuality is repressed, because it is seen as 'evil', anathema to spiritual life. But sexuality does not go away. Instead, it emerges from the darkness of the cultural shadow in distorted, harmful, forms.

So this movement, Shadow, starts out with a representation of the purely transcendent school of spirituality – i.e. the one that does *not* 'include': pure, unsullied, untainted by carnal desires. All seems well, beautiful, heavenly, ethereal. Then, as the solo soprano starts singing, we hear the Shadow, represented in the bass instruments. Dark, menacing, sinister. The Shadow instruments 'infect' the ethereal purity with a gathering pace, until Shadow erupts to the surface, ugly, harmful, violent.

## Sex

Most traditional forms of spirituality see sexuality and the desires of the flesh in general as things to be overcome in pursuing the spiritual path. Sex is 'sin', and must be denied. Vows of celibacy are central to most monastic traditions. In Christianity, Jesus is apparently born of a virgin; sex is not involved in producing the one divine human being. The sexual abuse scandals in many institutional religions are testimony to this terrible unresolved conflict between sexuality and spirituality. Essentially, seen from the integral view, this is the attempt to transcend the lower levels of the spectrum of consciousness *without including them*.

The path of Integral spirituality is to transcend *and include*; a holarchy of development. As we develop through the levels of consciousness, we transcend each preceding level, in order to identify with ever higher levels; and we *include* each previous level as fundamental aspects of our being: body, mind, soul, spirit; or pre-personal, personal, transpersonal. There are, of course, spiritual paths that came into existence long before the integral model which recognised the need to include the body and sexuality. Essentially, any non-dual spiritual path takes this view. In Buddhist terms, emptiness and form are one. The transcendent realm does not exist somewhere apart from this world of desires, pleasures and woes. The transcendent is one with everything that exists in form.

This movement of the oratorio has three sections. The first section starts off in a somewhat humorous mode, asking what on earth is sex doing in a spiritual piece? It goes on to consciously celebrate sex, and to say that, in itself, sex is anything but 'evil'. The music is a joyous, sensuous, waltz; starting as a sort of three-time version of Zorba the Greek, and then melding into something like a Strauss waltz. This is the music of the dance; the ecstatic dance of life, of which sex is surely an utterly central part.

The second section is just the orchestra, playing a three-time, joyful version of the famous '*Dies Irae*' ('Day of Anger') from Verdi's Requiem. The *Dies Irae* is all about God's judgement of sinners found wanting. This waltz version continues the theme from above: that sex, in itself, is a good thing, not sinful.

The third section is the choir alone. This 'chorale' is in three sections, and it expresses the idea that sex can be experienced: on the physical level, as lust; on the heart level, as love; and on the spiritual level, as divine union. In other words, it views sex through the lens of the spectrum of consciousness: pre-personal – lust; personal – love; transpersonal – divine union. The atmosphere of the music of all three parts is sacred; but the second part is more sacred than the first; and the third part even more so. What would it be like if, as a culture, we treated sex as something sacred, even when we approach it as a purely physical act? If we taught children that sex was sacred?

### Death

Death is, of course, central to spirituality. All religions have some picture of death, and what, if anything, happens after it. Death is the most fundamental pain, suffering, that we all experience, when we are separated from the ones we love, and indeed from everything we love. This movement has two parts. The first part asks the question, whether I will open my heart in the face of the pain of death and bereavement, or close it. And it gives the answer: I will open my heart to the pain. The second section is very quiet, very still, and represents the mystical non-dual perspective of death. I have discussed this movement in more detail in the section about Integral music above.

### The Potter

The Potter is, at the time of writing, intended to be the last movement of the piece. It is a celebration of life, and a sort of prayer: a prayer that we may be all that we can be in this brief human existence; and that who we are as individuals may be of service to the greater whole, whether that be in small or big ways. From the view of we humans as holons – whole/parts, it is saying: may the whole that I am be as whole as it can be; whole... healed; and it adds the recognition that my wholeness may made more whole, to the extent that I value my '*partness*', value, and serve, the greater whole(s) of which I am part. Or to put it another way, this is the idea – the paradox, really – that we humans find greatest *individual* fulfilment when we look beyond our small *individual* self, and embrace, in love, greater Selves – be that our local community, humanity as a whole, the planet earth as a whole...

... or indeed the entire Kosmos, which is, according to the perennial philosophy, and according to the Integral view, our prior nature all along.

### Further movements to be added

I have a few remaining specific ideas for further short movements to add to these. I am envisaging that the final piece will be about an hour and twenty minutes long. There may eventually be 'full' (a full evening concert) and 'shorter' versions (e.g. half an evening concert). Many of the individual movements will be amenable to performance separately from the rest of the work.