

The Music of Eric Zann

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Dramatically
1 *mf* 50 6 6 6

I have ex - am - ined maps of the ci - ty with the great - est care,
3 yet have ne - ver a - gain found the Rue d'Au - seil. These maps have not been
6 5 3 3 6
mo - dern maps a - lone, for I know that names change. I have, on the con - trar - y, delved deep - ly in -
10 3
to all the an - tiq - ui - ties of the place, and have per - son - al - ly ex - plored e - very
13 6
re - gion, of what - e - ver name, which could pos - sib - ly an - swer to the street I knew as the
16 3
Rue d'Au - seil. But de - spite all I have done, it re - mains a hu - mil - i - at - ing fact that I can - not
20 5 3 3
find the house, the street, or e - ven the lo - cal - i - ty, where dur - ing the last months of my im - pov - erished
24 5
life as a stu - dent of met - a - phy - sics at the u - ni - ver - si - ty, I heard the
27 *mf* 3 5 5
mu - sic of E - ric Zann. The Rue d'Au - seil lay a - cross a dark ri - ver bor - dered by pre -
31 3 3
cip - i - tous brick blear - win - dowed ware - hou - ses and spanned by a pon - der - ous bridge of dark stone.
34 6
It was al - ways sha - do - wy a - long that ri - ver, as if the smoke of neigh - bour - ing fact - or - ies shut out the

37

sun per - pet - u - ally. The ri - ver was al - so o - dor - ous with e - vil sten - ches which

40

I have ne - ver smelled else - where, and which may some day help me to

42


find it, since I should rec - og - nize them at once. Be - yond the bridge were nar - row cob - bled streets with rails;

46

and then came the as - cent, at first grd - u - al, but in - cred - i - bly steep as the Rue d'Au -

49

seil was reached. I have ne - ver seen an - o - ther street as nar - row and steep as the Rue d'Au - seil. It was

53

al - most a cliff, closed to all ve - hi - cles, con - sis - ting in sev - eral pla - ces of flights of steps, and end - ing at the

56

top in a lof - ty i - vied wall. Its pav - ing was ir - reg - u - lar, some - times stone slabs, some - times

60

cob - ble - stones, and some - times bare earth with strug - gling green - ish - grey veg - e - ta - tion. The

63

hou - ses were tall, peaked - roofed, in - cred - i - bly old, and cra - zi - ly lean - ing back - ward, for - ward, and side - wise. Oc -

67

ca - sion - ally an op - po - site pair, both lean - ing for - ward, al - most met a - cross the

69

street like an arch; and cer - tain - ly they kept most of the light from the ground be - low.

71 There were a few o - ver - head brid - ges from house to house a - cross the

73 street. I do not know how I came to live on such a street. I had been

75 liv - ing in man - y poor pla - ces, al - ways e - vict - ed for want of mon - ey; un - til at

78 last I came up - on that tot - ter - ing house in the Rue d'Au - seil kept by the

80 par - a - ly - tic Blan - dot. It was the third house from the top of the street, and

82 by far the tall - est of them all. My room was on the fifth stor - ey; the

85 on - ly in - hab - i - ted room there, since the house was al - most emp - ty. On the night

88 I ar - rived I heard strange mu - sic from the peaked gar - ret o - ver - head, and the

91 next day asked old Blan - dot a - bout it. He told me it was an old Ger - man -

93 vi - ol - play - er, a strange dumb man who signed his name as E - ric Zann, and who played

96 e - venings in a cheap thea - tre or - ches - tra; ad - ding that Zann's de - sire to play in the night af - ter his re -

99
turn from the thea-tre was the rea-son he had cho-sen this lof-ty and i-so-la-ted gar-ret

102
room, whose sin-gle ga-ble win-dow was the on-ly point on the street from which one could look o-ver the

104
ter-min-a-ting wall at the de-cliv-i-ty and pan-or-am-a be-yond. I heard Zann eve-ry night. I was haunt-ed by the

107
weird-ness of his mu-sic. I was cer-tain that none of his har-mon-ies had an-y re-la-tion to

110
mu-sic I had heard be-fore; and con-clud-ed that he was a com-pos-er of high-ly o-ri-gin-al gen-ius. One

113
night I in-ter-cep-ted Zann in the hall-way and told him that I would like to know him and be with him

117
when he played. He was a small, lean, bent per-son, with shab-by clothes, blue eyes, gro-tesque, sat-yr-like

121
face, and near-ly bald head; and at my first words seemed both an-gered and fright-ened. My

124
ob-vi-ous friend-li-ness, how-ev-er, fin-ally mel-ted him; and he grudg-ing-ly mo-tioned me to fol-low him

127
up the dark, creak-ing and rick-et-y at-tic stairs. His room, its size, was ve-ry great, and seemed the great-er

131
be-cause of its ex-traor-din-ar-y bar-ren-ness and ne-glect. Sheets of mu-sic were piled in dis-

135
or-der a-bout the floor. E-vi-dent-ly E-ric Zann's world of beau-ty lay in some far cos-mos of the i-

139
mag-in-a-tion. Mo-tion-ing me to sit down, the dumb man closed the door, turned the large

142
wood-en bolt, and light-ed a cand-le to aug-ment the one he had brought with him. He now re-moved his

146
vi-ol from his moth-eat-en cover-ing, and tak-ing it, seat-ed him-self in the

149
least un-comfort-a-ble of the chairs. He did not em-ploy the mu-sic-rack, but

151
of-fer-ing no choice and play-ing from mem-or-y, en-chant-ed me for o-ver an hour with

154
strains I had ne-ver heard be-fore. They were not-a-ble for the ab-sence of an-y of the wierd notes

157
I had o-ver-heard from my room be-low on o-ther oc-cas-ions. Those haunt-ing notes I had of-ten

160
hummed in-ac-cur-at-ly to my-self. I asked him if he would ren-der some of them and

162
e-ven tried to a-wak-en my host's weird-er mood by whis-ling a

164
few of the strains to which I had list-ened the night be-fore. When the dumb mu-sic-ian

166 *6* *3* *3* *3*
re - cog - nized the whist - led air his sa - tyr - like face grew sud - den - ly dis - tor -

168 *3*
ted with an ex - pres - sion whol - ly be - yond an - al - y - sis, and his long, old.

171 *3*
bon - y right hand reached out to stop my mouth and si - lence the crude im - i - ta - tion. As he did this

175 *6* *6* *5* *p*
he glanced toward the lone cur - tained win - dow, as if fear - ful of some in - trud - er. In the sil - ence there came a

179 *cres.*
slight sound from the win - dow - the shut - ter must have rat - tled in the night wind, and for some

183 *3* *3* *f* *mf*
rea - son I star - ted al - most as vio - lent - ly as did E - ric Zann. I had a

186 *10* *3* *3*
cur - i - ous de - sire to look out of that win - dow, o - ver the wall and down the un - seen slope at the glit - ter - ing

189 *6* *3* *3* *3*
roofs and spires which must lie out - spread there. But Zann ner - vous - ly mo - tioned me a - way and

192 *3*
I de - part - ed. Once I went up to the gar - ret dur - ing thea - tre hours, when Zann was a - way, but the

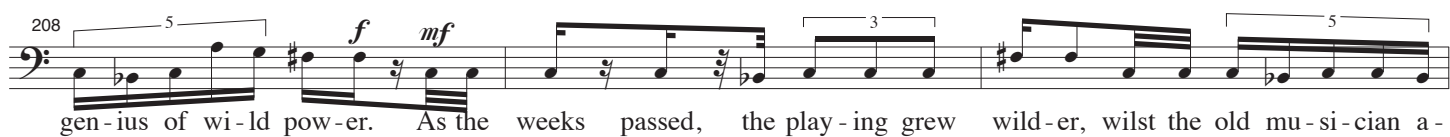
195
door was locked. There in the nar - row hall, out - side the bol - ted door with the

198 *6* *6* *6* *6* *6*
cov - ered key - hole, I of - ten heard sounds which filled me with an in - de - fin - a - ble dread -

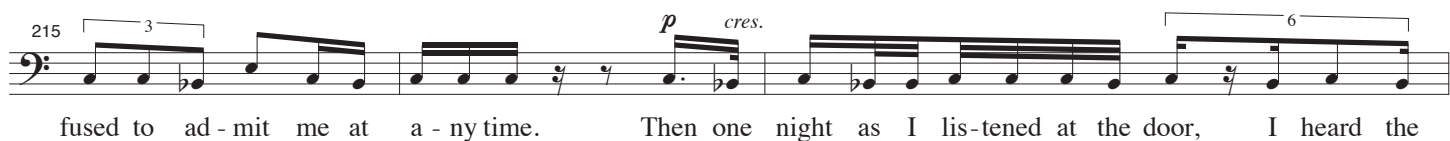
201  the dread of vague wonder and brooding mystery. It was

203  not that the sounds were hideous, for they were not; but that they held vi-


205  bra-tions suggesting nothing on this globe of earth. Certainly, Eric Zann was a

208  genius of wild power. *f* *mf* As the weeks passed, the playing grew wilder, wilst the old musician a-

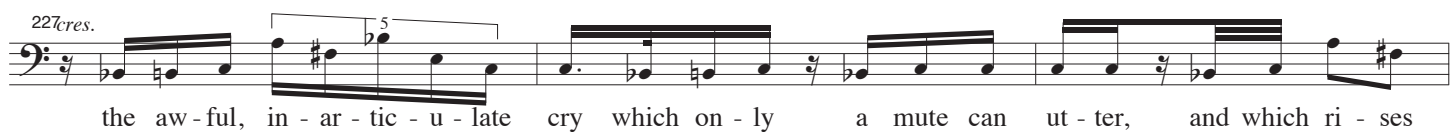
211  cquired an increasing haggardness and furtiveness pitiful to behold. He now re-

215  fused to admit me at any time. *p* *cres.* Then one night as I listened at the door, I heard the

218  shrieking viol swell into a chaotic babel of sound; a pandemonium

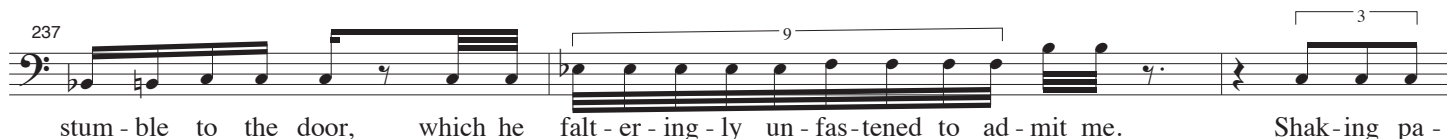
221  which would have led me to doubt my own shaking sanity had there not come

224  from behind that barred portal a pitiless proof that the horror was real -

227 *cres.*  the awful, inarticulate cry which only a mute can utter, and which rises

230  only in moments of the most terrible fear or anguish. *f* *mf* I knocked repeatedly at the

234  door. I heard Zann stum-ble to the win-dow and close both shut-ter and sash, then

237  stum-ble to the door, which he falt-er-ing-ly un-fas-tened to ad-mit me. Shak-ing pa-

240  thet-ic-ally, the old man forced me in-to a chair. He sank in-to an-oth-er, be-side which his vi-ol and

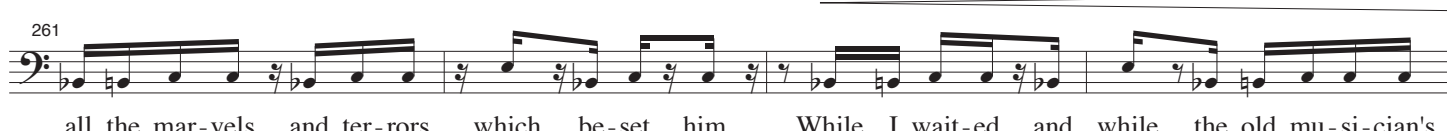
243  bow lay care-less-ly on the floor. He sat for some time in-act-ive, nod-ding od-dly, but hav-ing a

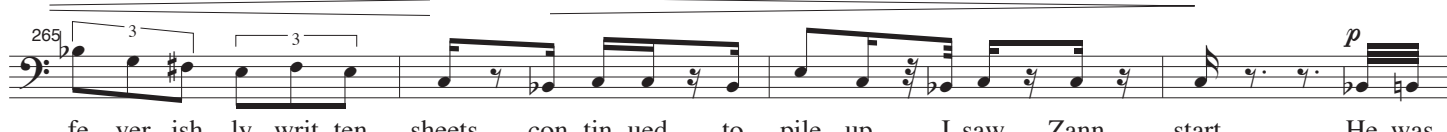
247  par-a-dox-i-cal sug-ges-tion of in-tense and fright-ened lis-ten-ing. He

250  wrote a brief note, hand-ed it to me, and re-turned to the ta-ble, where he be-gan to

255  write ra-pid-ly and in-ces-sant-ly. The note im-plored me in the name of mer-cy, and

258  for the sake of my own cur-i-os-i-ty, to wait where I was while he pre-pared a full ac-count of

261  all the mar-vels and ter-rors which be-set him. While I wait-ed and while the old mu-si-cian's

265  fe-ver-ish-ly writ-ten sheets con-tin-ued to pile up, I saw Zann start. He was

269  look-ing at the cur-tained win-dow and lis-ten-ing shud-der-ing-ly. I half

Musical notation for measures 271-273. The bass clef is used. Measure 271 starts with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. Measure 272 has a key signature change to two flats. Measure 273 has a key signature change to one flat. There are triplet markings over the last two notes of each measure.

fan-cied I heard a sound my - self; a shril-ler, stead-i - er note that was not from the vi - ol;

Musical notation for measures 274-276. The bass clef is used. Measure 274 has a key signature of one flat. Measure 275 has a key signature change to two flats. Measure 276 has a key signature change to one flat. There are sextuplet markings over the first six notes of measures 274 and 275. A *cres.* marking is above measure 276.

a calm de-lib - er - ate, pur-pose-ful, mock-ing note from far a - way in the West. Up - on Zann the

Musical notation for measures 277-279. The bass clef is used. Measure 277 has a key signature of one flat. Measure 278 has a key signature change to two flats. Measure 279 has a key signature change to one flat. There is a triplet marking over the last three notes of measure 278.

ef-fect was ter - ri - ble, for, drop-ping his pen - cil, he rose, seized his

Musical notation for measures 280-282. The bass clef is used. Measure 280 has a key signature of one flat. Measure 281 has a key signature change to two flats. Measure 282 has a key signature change to one flat.

vi - ol, and com-menced to rend the night with the wild-est play-ing I had e-ver heard from his

Musical notation for measures 283-285. The bass clef is used. Measure 283 has a key signature of one flat. Measure 284 has a key signature change to two flats. Measure 285 has a key signature change to one flat.

bow. It was more hor - ri - ble than an - y - thing I had e - ver o - ver-heard, be -

Musical notation for measures 286-288. The bass clef is used. Measure 286 has a key signature of one flat. Measure 287 has a key signature change to two flats. Measure 288 has a key signature change to one flat. There are *f* and *p* dynamic markings above measure 287.

cause I could now see the ex-pres-sion of his face; stark fear. He was try-ing to make a noise; to

Musical notation for measures 289-291. The bass clef is used. Measure 289 has a key signature of one flat. Measure 290 has a key signature change to two flats. Measure 291 has a key signature change to one flat. There is a *cres.* marking above measure 291 and a triplet marking over the last three notes.

ward some-thing off or drown some-thing out - what, I could not i-mag-ine. Loud - er and loud - er,

Musical notation for measures 292-294. The bass clef is used. Measure 292 has a key signature of one flat. Measure 293 has a key signature change to two flats. Measure 294 has a key signature change to one flat. There are triplet markings over the first three notes of each measure.

wild - er and wild - er, mount - ed the shriek - ing and whin-ing of that des-per - ate vi - ol. The

Musical notation for measures 295-297. The bass clef is used. Measure 295 has a key signature of one flat. Measure 296 has a key signature change to two flats. Measure 297 has a key signature change to one flat. There are triplet markings over the first three notes of each measure.

play - er was drip - ing with per-spir - a - tion and twist-ed like a mon-key, al - ways look - ing fran - tic -

Musical notation for measures 298-300. The bass clef is used. Measure 298 has a key signature of one flat. Measure 299 has a key signature change to two flats. Measure 300 has a key signature change to one flat. There are *f* and *p* dynamic markings above measure 299 and a triplet marking over the last three notes of measure 300.

ally at the cur-tained win - dow. In his frenz-ied strains I could al - most see sha - do - wy

Musical notation for measures 301-303. The bass clef is used. Measure 301 has a key signature of one flat. Measure 302 has a key signature change to two flats. Measure 303 has a key signature change to one flat. There is a *cres.* marking above measure 302 and triplet markings over the first three notes of each measure.

sat - yrs and bac-chan - als danc - ing and whirl - ing in - sane - ly through the

305 *f* *p* *cres.*
seeth-ing a-byss-es of clouds, smoke and light-en-ing. The shut-ter be-gan to rat-tle in a howl-ing night wind

308
which had sprung up out-side as if in an-swer to the mad play-ing with-in. Zann's scream-ing vi-ol

311
now out-did it-self, e-mit-ting sounds I had ne-ver thought a vi-ol could e-mit. The

314 *f*
shut-ter rat-tled more loud-ly, un-fast-ened, and com-menced slam-ming a-gainst the win-dow.

316 *p*
The glass broke, and the chill wind rushed in, mak-ing the can-dles sput-ter. I

319 *cres.*
looked at Zann. His blue eyes were bulg-ing, glass-y, sight-less, and the fran-tic


322
play-ing had be-come a blind, mech-an-i-cal un-rec-og-

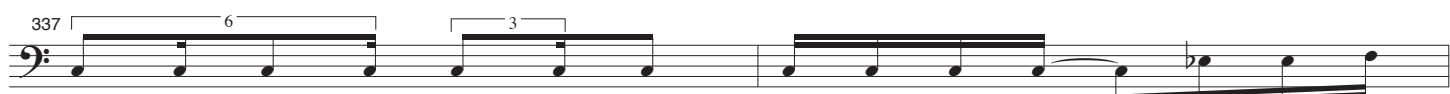
325 *f* *p*
niz-a-ble or-gy that no pen could e-ven sug-gest. A

328
sud-den gust, strong-er than the o-thers, caught up the man-u-script and bore it toward the


330
win-dow. I fol-lowed the fly-ing sheets in des-per-a-tion, but they were

332 *p*
gone be-fore I reached the de-mol-ish-ed panes. Then I re-mem-bered my

334  old wish to gaze from this win-dow, the on-ly win-dow in the Rue d'Au-seil from which one might

337  see the slope be - yond the wall, and the ci - ty out - spread be -

339  neath. It was ve - ry dark, but the ci - ty's lights al - ways burned, and I ex - pec - ted

341  to see them there a-midst the rain and wind. Yet when I looked from that high - est of all

344  gab - le win-dows, looked while the cand - les sput - tered and the in - sane vi - ol howled with the

347  night wind, I saw no ci - ty spread be - low, and no friend - ly lights gleamed

349  from re-mem-bered streets, but on-ly the black-ness of space il-lim-it-a-ble; un-i-mag-ined space a-

352  live with mo-tion and mu-sic, and hav-ing no sem-blence of a-ny-thing on earth. As I

355  stood there look-ing in ter-ror, the wind blew out both the cand-les in that an-cient gar-ret,

358  leav-ing me in a sa-vage and im-pen-e-tra-ble dark - ness with cha-os and pan-de-mon-i-um

361  be - fore me, and the de - mon mad-ness of that night-bay - ing vi - ol be -

364 *f* *p*

hind me. I stag-gered back in the dark, with-out the means of strik-ing a light,

367

crash-ing a- gainst the tab- le, o- ver- turn-ing a chair, and fin- ally grop-ing my way

370

to the place where the black- ness screamed with chock-ing mu- sic.

372

To save my-self and E-ric Zann I could at least try, what-e- ver the pow-ers op-posed to me.

376

Sud- den- ly out of the black-ness the mad- ly saw-ing bow struck me, and I knew I was

379

close to the play-er. I felt a-head, touched the back of Zann's chair, and then found

382

and shook his should-er in an ef-ort to bring him to his sen-ses.

385

He did not re-pond, and still the vi- ol shrieked on with- out slack- en- ing.

389

I moved my hand to his head, whose me- chan- i- cal nod- ding I was un-

391

ab- le to stop, and shout- ed in his ear that we must both flee from the un- known

395

things of the night. But he nei- ther an- swered me nor a- bat- ed the fren-zy

398 *f* *p* *f* *p*
of his mu-sic, while all through the gar-ret strange cur-rents of wind seemed to dance in the dark - ness.

402 *cres.*
When my hand touched his ear I shud-dered, though I knew not why - knew not till I felt the

406
still face; the ice - cold, stif-fened, un-breath-ing face whose glas - sy eyes bulged

409 *f* *mf* *cres.*
use - less - ly in - to the void. And then, by some mir - a - cle, find - ing

411
the door and the large wood-en bolt, I plunged wild - ly a - way from that glas - sy-eyed

414
thing in the dark, and from the ghoul-ish how-ling of that ac - curs-ed vi-ol whose fur - y in-

418
creased e - ven as I plunged. Leap-ing, float-ing, fly - ing down those end - less stairs

421 *f* *decrs.*
through the dark house; rac-ing mind-less-ly out in-to the nar-row, steep, anc-ient street of steps and tot-ter-ing

425
hous - es; clat-ter-ing down steps and o-ver cob-bles to the low - er streets and the pu-trid

428
can - yon-walled ri - ver; pant - ing ac - cross the great dark bridge to the broad - er,

431
health - i - er streets and boul - e - vards we know; all these are ter - ri - ble im -

433
pres-sions that lin - ger with me. And I re - call that there was no wind,

435
and that the moon was out, and that all the lights of the ci - ty twink - led.

438
De - spite my most care - ful sear - ches and in - ves - ti - ga - tions, I have

440
ne - ver since been a - ble to find the Rue d'Aus-eil. But I am not whol - ly

443
sor - ry; eith - er for this or for the loss in un - dream - a - ble a - byss - es of the close - ly - writ - ten

446
sheets which a - lone could have ex - plained the mu - sic of E - ric Zann.