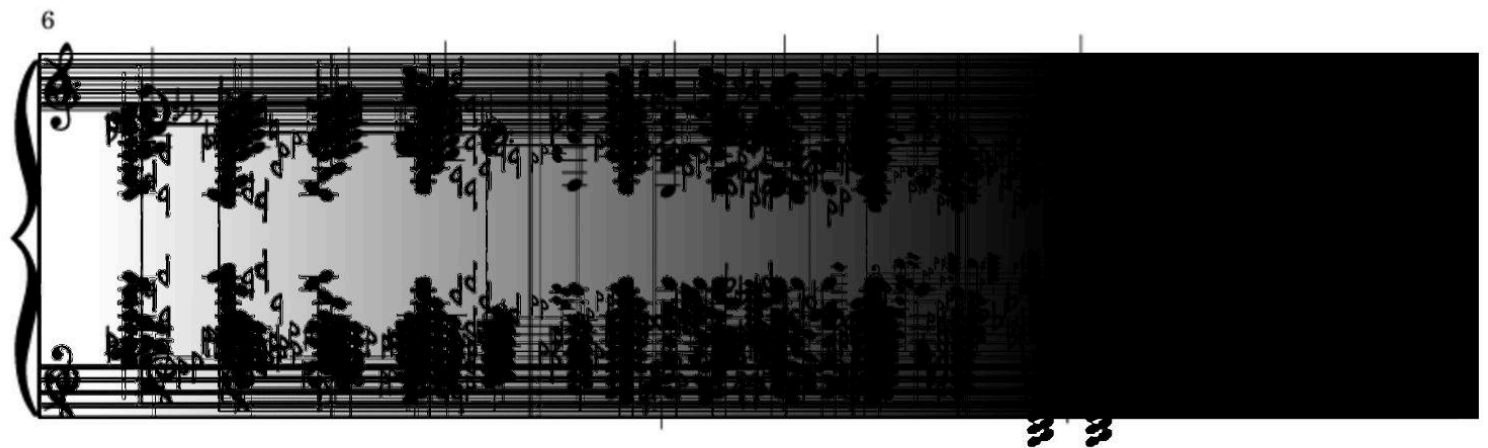
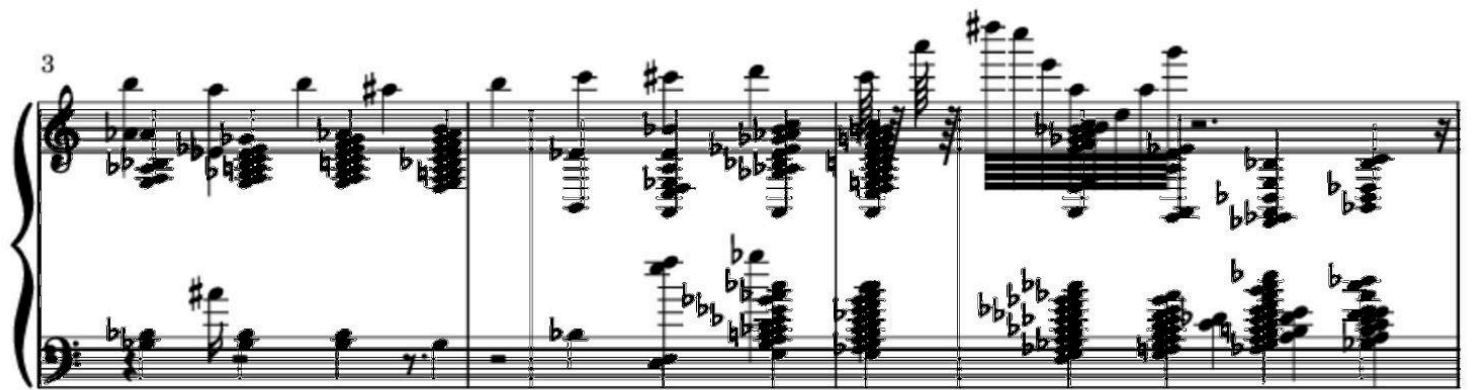


# Symphony in Z Sharp Minor



*A short story by*

Thomas and Howard  
Bobpop

# 8:15

The conductor:

It was a terrible start to a terrible night. The drum player downed a half gallon of beer before the concert of the Edinburgh Orchestra of Music and Music-Related Studies even began. Thus, I quickly had to find a replacement, which made the concert start twenty minutes late. Moreover, the replacement ended up being a farmhand who slaughtered chicken. He misinterpreted me when I said I wanted him to pick up his drumsticks. I had hoped for a younger, more forgiving audience, but the crowd seemed to mostly be old men sleeping in lawn chairs. Man, I'd already been counting down the seconds til the concert ended.

The audience:

We all were awaiting the greatest show of our lives. The tickets were eighty bucks a piece, but we would manage. Nothing could stop us from seeing the Edinburgh Orchestra of Music and Music-Related Studies. I remember- sorry, we remember our excited roars upon seeing the stage guys tune some instruments. It wasn't until 8:20 when we'd actually get to see them, but the hype still was rampant enough to justify the long waits. None of us minded. We'd been to an Elton John concert once where he took half an hour to get onstage, only to play our least favorite song of his, Bohemian Rhapsody in Blue. We were a patient, peaceful people.

# 8:30

The conductor:

“Uh oh” is all I have to say in regards to the second performance of ours that night, Bohemian Rhapsody in Blue in C Minor. I wondered if I had an actual professional orchestra, seeing as the first note from our lead trumpet player was a squeak. Nevertheless, the first piece turned out relatively okay, even though, as expected, the farmhand drummer could barely keep the beat. I could tell the audience wasn’t too pleased with our performance, but at this rate, we could last the night. Also, many of the players in my orchestra seemed to not pay attention to me. Particularly Tom Mendelssohn, which would be a problem in our harder pieces later in the concert.

The audience:

We could tell things had begun to go awry once the performers had begun. We received a slightly underwhelming opener, and one that gave us deja vu from the worst concert we’d ever been to. But we weren’t going to judge them yet. They had many beautiful works to choose from, so we’d probably just been a little unlucky. We’d memorized all 50 players’ likenesses and names, but didn’t quite seem to recognize who the drummer was, nor did we recognize his signature drumsticks. He appeared to be playing moderately out of time, which was evidently affecting the rest of the performers. If anything continued to go wrong, we would begin to lose our mercy.

# 8:45

The conductor:

*Man, I thought, this second piece is playing out like our first.* We performed a sample of Morton Feldman's string quartet no. 2. The audience had grown uneasy and were peeved at our terrible playing insomuch that I had to turn around to silence them. Of course, though, this only made the orchestra play much worse, getting to the point where the music was a jumble of noise in terrible time. Mendelssohn attempted to calm things down by playing a solo and standing up, but it turned out to be a disaster, with Tom playing in an entirely different key, as well as playing notes two octaves higher than his Violin could even handle. *I mean, at this point, I thought, I'll be surprised if I don't get beaten to death.*

The audience:

We'll admit, we had grown restless and upset at the awful playing we were subjected to. When the second piece, Feldman String Quartet No. 2, had begun, we were appreciative of the orchestra's choice to select an avant-garde modern classical composition, even though we were hoping for some Shostakovich. And I don't just mean Bill Shostakovich, the violinist. At that moment, the conductor, Zee Mozart, turned around to shut us up. The concert was noticeably beyond saving. With no conductor, there was no order, no salvation, and no rules.

# 9:00

The conductor:

During our third piece, I was almost shouting at the audience to settle down. After a horrible xylophone solo from Bob Rachmaninoff, somebody in the crowd got up to protest, although it wasn't because of the solo itself. This, in turn, made Cow Handel (the drummer) smash his drums in anger, which made the band lose everything they had in sanity, and sent my hands to my ears. Then, that poor fool Tom Mendelssohn got up and yelled at the audience to "shut up and stop whining," to which a member of the audience assassinated him. With Mendelssohn dead, the band became terrified and could barely squeak a note, let alone play the actual piece.

The audience:

We were unsettled by our behavior that night. We were growing to see ourselves as strangers. One of us had recognized that the drummer was using chicken body parts to play his percussion. One of us, and soon, all of us, had begun to chant, "Meat is murder!" The drummer, who after copious amounts of research, we discovered was named Cow Handel, destroyed his drums when he heard the news. Most of us weren't even vegan, funnily enough. We needed something to be mad about. We needed a reason to create destruction. And the destruction came when one of us shot a flaming porcupine at Tom Mendelssohn in the mouth.

## 9:15, the Intermission

The conductor:

If the concert was bad, the intermission was even worse. After Jimbo Mussorgsky began a rally to eject the audience and let the orchestra play alone, he was promptly shot by Bob Rachmaninoff, who had no tolerance for stupid questions. Then, of course, a quarter of the band outright started attacking the audience, who quickly slaughtered them all. So, terrified at the prospect of dying and even more terrified of the small fire that had started, another quarter of the orchestra ran away, abandoning their instruments and swimming across the river by the concert's outdoor stage, upon which we performed. Also, my stick snapped in two because of a small kid who ran up to me and snatched it from my hand, leading me to murder him, which didn't help the audience's spirit.

The audience:

It was the worst concert we'd ever seen, except for the aforementioned Elton John one. All of us, regardless of our smoking habits, began to light cigarettes, burying the crowd in a cloud of smoke. Then, little fires sprouted around the stage. It was a beautiful sight, honestly. All of us were so furious, fighting in unison, like a hivemind, at the eternal awfulness of the "concert" we paid eighty bucks for. Nothing at all could or would stop us. This was not their concert, this was ours.

# 9:30

The conductor:

I tried to start up the fourth piece of the concert, but neither the band nor the audience would have it. The remainder of the band left to play a new concert in a nearby field, while the audience trailed after them with pitchforks and torches. But almost half were after me, the star of this mess. Since the pavilion was burning, my only hope was to swim across the river. Thankfully, I made it by doggy-paddling across, but I could no longer be Zee Mozart. I flew all the way out to Laos to escape my troubled past. And it was at that point that I changed my name, changed my life, and had become Tom Mendelssohn.

The audience:

At that point, we were furious, mad, and even evil, you might say. Half of us chased the quitting orchestra, and the other hunted down The Coward, who was crawling on all fours to escape to the river. The spell had been irreversible, but even at full speed, he still left our view. He shrank into the distance, no matter how hard we ran, swam, and chanted "Burn the coward, spread the flame!" But to no avail, for we thought we would never see him again. We were proven wrong years later when we went to see the Vientiane Philharmonic Orchestra play, flying from Gabon, where our last concert was, all the way to Laos. We saw him lead a high brow crew of pianists, violinists, cellists, kazooists, khong vong-ists, stylophonists, khaenists, and bagpipers. And as we watched, there was one thing we knew. We would kill Tom Mendelssohn. Again.

The end.