

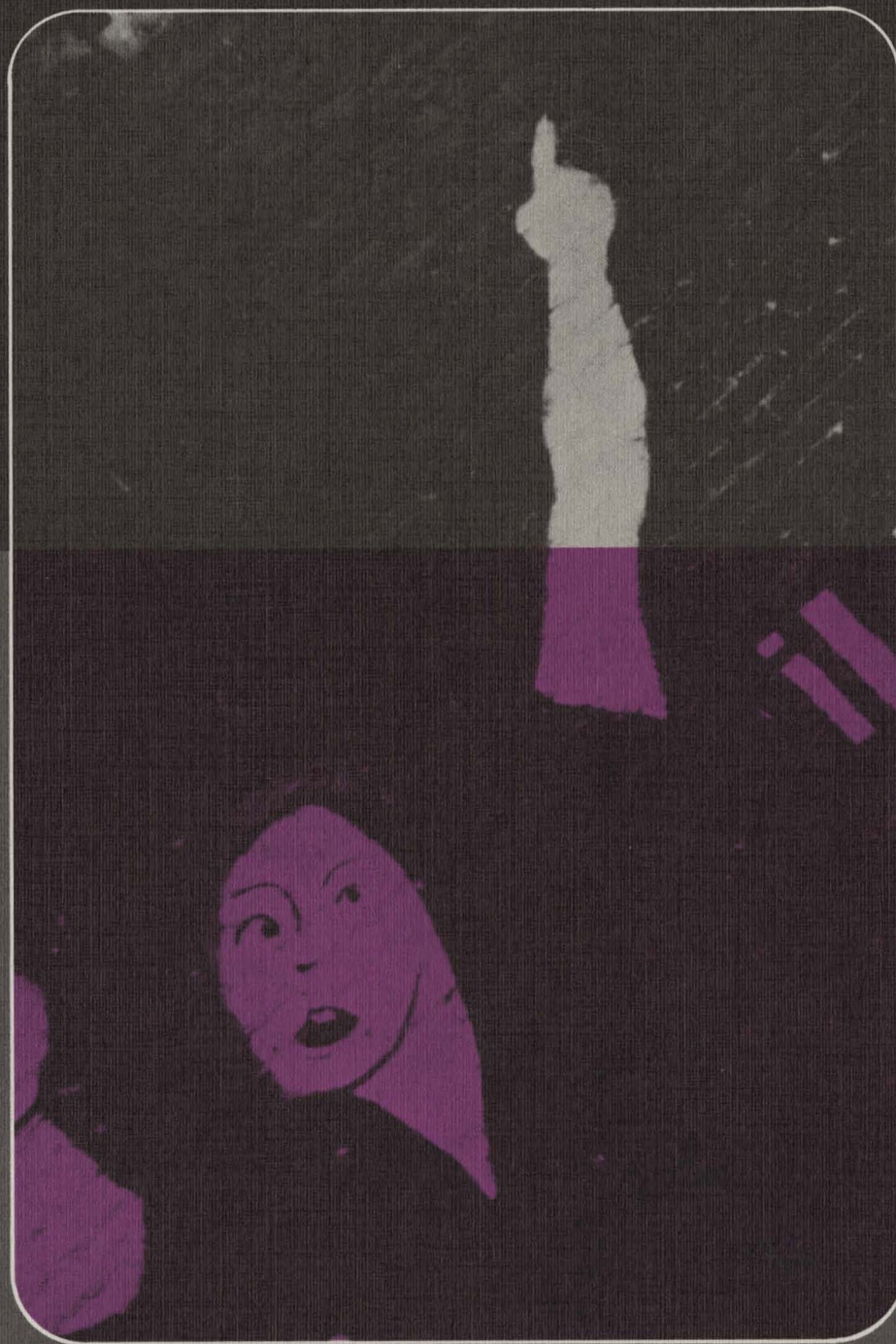
STEREO

FOLKWAYS RECORDS FTS 33441

tract

A composition of Agitprop Music for electromagnetic tape by

ILHAN MIMAROGLU



Featuring the singing and speaking voice of

TULY SAND

tract

A COMPOSITION OF AGITPROP MUSIC
FOR ELECTRONIC TAPE BY

ILHAN MIMAROGLU

FEATURING THE SINGING AND
SPEAKING VOICE OF

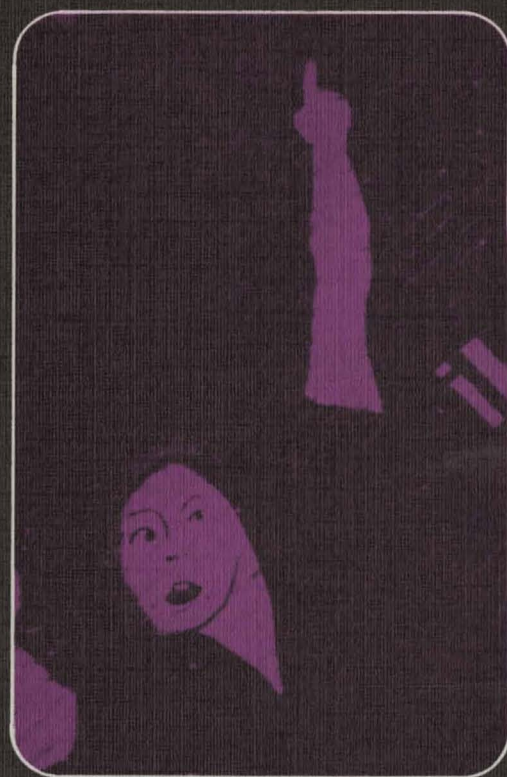
TULY SAND

With the Participation of the Pop Group
Topsy Turvy Moon

Auxiliary speaking voices: Ilhan Mimaroglu
and Erdem Buri

Text by Ilhan Mimaroglu, based on direct and
paraphrased quotations from Alexander
Bakunin, Peter Kropotkin, Mahir Cayan,
Nazim Hikmet, Jean-Baptiste Clement,
Bertolt Brecht, Karl Marx, Eugene Pottier,
Mao Tse-tung.

Composed and realized in the studios of
American Center for Students and Artists,
Paris, France, and Columbia-Princeton
Electronic Music Center, New York, N.Y.
(1972-74).



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FOLKWAYS RECORDS FTS 33441

STEREO

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43 W. 61st St., NYC, USA

TRACT

STEREO

A Composition of Agitprop Music for Electro-magnetic Tape

By İLHAN MIMAROĞLU

Featuring the singing and speaking voice of
TULY SAND

With the participation of the pop group
Topay Turvy Moon

And the auxiliary speaking voices of
Erdes Buri and İlhan Mimaroglu

Text by İlhan Mimaroglu;
based on direct and paraphrased quotations
from: Alexander Bakunin, Bertolt Brecht,
Jean-Baptiste Clément, Mahir Çayan, Nâzım
Hikmet, Peter Kropotkin, Mao Tse-tung, Karl
Marx, Eugène Pottier

The voice of Nâzım Hikmet and fragment from
Groupe 17's recording of *L'Internationale*,
courtesy of Le Chant du Monde, Paris, France.

Composed and realized in the studios of American
Center for Students and Artists, Paris,
France, and Columbia-Princeton Electronic
Music Center, New York, N.Y. (1972-74)

Published by Seesaw Music, ASCAP

Cover and insert art: fragment from a wall
painting of a building occupied by the
Puerto Rican squatters, on Amsterdam Avenue,
between 111th and 112th Streets, New York,
N.Y.

"For music is a non-signifying art ...
How then can this mute evoke for man
his destiny?" -- Jean-Paul Sartre

Tract, defines the dictionary, is a distributed
paper or pamphlet containing a declaration or ap-
peal, especially one put out by a religious or po-
litical group. This definition corresponds quite
well to what this piece of music is all about. It
certainly is not a paper or pamphlet just as Schu-
mann's Novelettes are not short novels. On purely
musical grounds, however, the literary allusions
are made in the same manner. But, what is a pure-
ly musical ground? To pose the question in a spe-
cific way, to what extent does the spoken word
(not to speak of the sung word) separate itself
from the musical ground? The answer is plain and
simple: it does not. Spoken word is sound and
sound is the very substance of music. As words,
among other things they do in music, can signify
too (a fact which is all too often forgotten), the
literary reference of the title goes far beyond

that of (to use our example again) Schumann's No-
velettes. Indeed, what could be the contents of
a political pamphlet are the contents of this
piece. To be sure, it is not put out by a group;
it is put out by myself as an individual, although
what it says may very much agree with what certain
groups say.

REASONS OF THE HEART

The text relies mostly on slogans and aphorisms.
It consists of poetry and prose fragments either
written by myself or "borrowed" as direct or pa-
raphrased quotations which are put together like
a collection of graffiti, sequenced according to
a definite literary (socio-political) and musical
purpose. The rhetoric of the piece is reflected
in the way it is described: agitprop music (agit-
prop = agitation and propaganda). Its appeal is
designed to be predominantly emotional, as opposed
to rational. But its content is such that the
reasons of the heart are not alien to reason. It
is the dissatisfied rationality of its overtly
rational statements that makes it emotional. To
provide one supporting argument for this I would
say that one is more bound to vouch for violence
by emotion than reason. But it is because the ra-
tionality of peaceable solutions has failed that
an appeal to violence has to be made. If we shift
the gears of our rationality from one premise to
the other, the emotional becomes the rational, and
vice versa.

A QUESTION OF STYLE

If it is prescribed that the style of a political
piece of music should reflect the views of the
related political movement on art, then the style
to adopt ought to have been predetermined -- the
sympathies involved here being clearly New Left,
but with strong anarchist tendencies. But is there
a style in art, are there techniques and methods,
endorsed by the said political movements? The pre-
valent, if vague and rather sentimental, inclination
in such quarters is for a folk style. Tract has
most certainly nothing to do with the folk style and
its dissociation reaches the point of aversion, be-
cause the folk style reflects the depressed economic
conditions of the social environment it stems from,
and these conditions are the ones created by the op-
pressive ruling classes. Adopting, therefore, a
reflexive style whose essence is determined by pov-
erty would amount at reducing the cultural objectives
of revolution to a most modest scale and also at
playing into the hands of the oppressors.

Tract eschews socialist realism too, except in a
very broad sense. This is not because viable works
of art are not possible in socialist realism (so
far there have not been many, but that does not
prove much in terms of possibilities); it is only
because socialist realism is readily associated with
Soviet Russia and Stalinism to which Tract is an-
tagonistic in no uncertain terms.

If anarchism is our ideological objective, then
"freedom" is the key word. I have said elsewhere
that "the eclectic approach provides the essential
condition for creative freedom." That much, I think,
would be sufficient to summarize the stylistic char-
acter of Tract. What remains to clarify is that
"eclectic" does not signify the outdated and deriva-
tive approach as the current usage may suggest, but
choosing the best from various systems, sources and
styles -- "best" meaning what is suitable for the
purpose.

PERFORMED, BUT NOT PERFORMABLE

As any other electronic composition, Tract is
made to be heard through a sound reproduction
chain. It is made for recordings, for tape-music
concerts, for broadcasts. What sets it apart
from "conventional" electronic music is that it
contains predominant elements of vocal and ins-
trumental performance. It is not as a substitute
to live performance, however, that the piece is
heard on a recording. Indeed, it is not composed
for repeatable performance, but repeated hearings
by way of a recording. The performance happened
as a compositional process and will not occur
again. In this sense, like several of my other
electronic compositions, it is akin to cinema as
live performance is to theater. By virtue of
this parallel, the composer functions as the
counterpart of the film director -- one who uses
his own script. That of Tract consists of a li-
terary text as well as a musical score, constitu-
ting a detailed chart of operations on the "set,"
a plan according to which the composer works with
his performer(s) in a recording studio to collect
the basic material with and around which the fi-
nal composition is to be built subsequently in a
studio equipped for electronic music. It follows
that Tract is not a composition written for the
female voice, but for Tuly Sand. Same goes, of
course, for all the auxiliary performing forces.

A PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST

In composing this piece, whose technical and pro-
cedural complexities must be apparent even at a
first hearing, an entire range of elaborate studio
techniques have been employed. I have not resor-
ted, however, to electronic manipulations to alter
the sound of the performing elements whenever they
were designed to appear as their true selves. I
must emphasize this particularly for Tuly Sand,
because on a few concert and broadcast performances
of this piece I have been asked whether her voice
had been electronically altered, and even whether
some of the sounds she produced were electronic
sounds. Tuly Sand, who started her career in Tur-
key as Tülay German (her birth name) and pursues
it in France, is yet practically unknown to larger
audiences elsewhere as one of the most talented
and versatile voice artists in the field. Aside
from a few sequences where she performs more than
one part by means of overdub techniques (and these
must be very evident), her voice has not been e-
lectronically treated. The objective was, of course,
to keep her exceptional compass, her impeccable
sense of pitch, as well as her expressive range in
their natural conditions.

The central character of the piece is not only a
woman who passes through the various stages of gain-
ing revolutionary consciousness, but, as the piece
was written for Tuly Sand, it is also the artist
herself. In certain ways, if not in a systematic
way, it is a fantasized summary of her career as a
pop singer. This is particularly made evident in
one of the lengthier sections of the piece (a sub-
section of Part I), one of a hallucinatory, even
nightmare-like character, in which a recording ses-
sion is evoked. From the structural standpoint it
is a recording within a recording -- or, since we
established a parallel with cinema, a film within
a film. The section consists of several layers of
components: one of them originating from an actual
recording session she had at the time I was working

on this piece; another is the composed re-enactment of a session; still another consists of fragments of her earlier recordings; one more layer depicts the outside world as it pertains to her chosen field of activity; and further layers consisting of purely musical material (synthesized and processed linear, meaning melodic, layers, including vocal ostinati) tying all the other components together and also serving to further define the climate. It is one in which an inability to collect experience and establish relationships is recognized. The primary concern is survival in a hostile, oppressive, misleading and alienating economic and cultural environment. Even though at one point, just where the session sequence ends, there is a sign of determination (where she says, in French, "I am ready when you are"), there is a retreat later on in a dreamy, quasi-religious meditation, in a state unesthetic to the pains of the outside world, until a voice calls her to come to her senses.

THE CIRCUMSTANCES

I began composing *Tract* in Paris, where I was spending a year on a Guggenheim Fellowship. It was the spring of 1972 when I was asked by Jorge Arriagada, director of American Center for Students and Artists' electronic music studio (now closed), to write a piece for the Montparnasse Festival. For a long time I wanted to work with Tuly Sand and that was the occasion. It was a period of intense repression and counterrevolutionary terror in Turkey. News of several revolutionary patriots murdered by the government forces were reaching us -- which determined the content of the work in progress. I began to grow more and more ambitious musically and textually. The concert in which the work was to be premiered was only a few weeks away, and eventually the piece met its deadline in an unfinished form. Fortunately, I had composed and recorded all the material for Tuly Sand as well as the auxiliary elements to enable myself to complete the piece upon my return to New York. In its finalized form, *Tract* received its premiere in a concert organized and presented by the New York Turkish Student Association, at McMillin Theater, Columbia University, on April 26, 1974. The broadcast premiere was given a few months later over WBAI, New York.

PROGRAM MUSIC -- WITH A DIFFERENCE

Tract is, unmistakably, a piece of program music -- although one with a difference. While, in a conventional sense, a piece of program music is one that communicates its verbally explicable significance in the form of program notes, here the program notes are built right into the music -- indeed, they are an integral part of the music. Is this whole set of notes, then, explaining what the piece is all about, superfluous, as the work's meaning is meant to be clearly understood?

Understood, yes, but only by those who know the language. *Tract's* audience is necessarily limited by the chosen languages. Basically, it is a dual language composition: English and French. Musical considerations permitting, what is said in one language is occasionally repeated in the other (at least in concise meaning interpretations), not unlike the subtitles of a foreign film. A third language, Turkish, is also used; but it remains additional and its use is dictated by the fact that Nâzım Hikmet's poem lent

itself much better in the original Turkish to the shaping of the final song's melodic line. These being so, the significance of *Tract* may remain undisclosed to audiences not understanding English and/or French (not to speak of the Turkish). To them a hint of the message may come across by means of the abstract formal and emotional properties of music -- including, of course, word-music.

If, therefore, I have to do a certain amount of explaining now, and this will be for the benefit of the English speaking audiences, it is to clarify the meaning of some untranslated French and Turkish sections of the work.

IN OTHER WORDS

The first substantial sequence in French is the recitation of a few lines from a poem by Jean-Baptiste Clément, a poet of the Paris Commune. This takes place about halfway, Part I: Except for gendarmes and informers, one can see no one on the roads but old people, sad and tearful, and widows and orphans. Follows a song on a Clément poem: People who drag out in poverty are soft like sheep; they are folded on this earth and herded like flock; and all this is singing and all this is dancing, to give one's self some hope.

Part II starts with a Latin text, but words that are very much part of both the English and the French terminology -- the names of certain narcotics which are set to a mock sacred melody. The connotation is obvious and needs no comment. In this sequence Tuly Sand, via overdub, sings both voices of the "antiphon." I was asked by several people whether the low voice there was a male voice. It is not, and that alone should suffice to illustrate her vocal capabilities.

About one third of the way in Part II there is a section in French only, consisting of the words of the *Internationale* set to melodic fragments from various national anthems: If these cannibals insist on making heroes out of us ... set to the Star-Spangled Banner; They will know soon that our bullets are for our generals ... to the Turkish national anthem; But if these crows, these vultures, one fine morning would disappear ... to the Anthem of the Soviet Union; The state enchains and the law cheats ... to the German national anthem (Deutschlandlied); Neither God nor Caesar, neither God nor tribune ... to the Italians; after which the Internationale is sung in its original melody -- Arise, you wretched of the earth ...

A connecting section to the Finale remains untranslated. The words are taken from a poem by Clément: Cherries of love, all dressed alike ...

The words of the final song (poem by Nâzım Hikmet) are partly translated. Only this world, this pirate ship, will sink ... is repeated in French and in English. What is left untranslated can be said as ... and we'll build a world like your face, my beloved; free, cheerful, hopeful. The reason I did not translate this part is because I wanted to end the work on a note of equivocal pessimism -- or equivocal optimism, depending on what the listener thinks will happen when this world, this pirate ship, will sink.

A parenthetical note at this point on the journalistic aspect of *Tract*: references to specific events and persons of the days in which the composition was in progress should not, in the listener's mind, confine relevance to topicalities. For the forces of darkness it is, as always, business as usual.

DEDICATION

I am not in the habit of dedicating my compositions. I was asked to dedicate this one to Nâzım Hikmet whom I regard as the greatest poet of the revolutionary struggles. He died in his Moscow exile, in 1963, after spending a good part of his life in the Turkish prisons. The piece could also have been dedicated to women whose names are evoked in the beginning by a series of associations. After all, this is a woman's piece. Also to the Turkish activists executed by the government: Deniz Gezmiş (1947-1972), Yusuf Aslan (1947-1972), Hüseyin İnan (1949-1972), and their counterparts all over the world, in all courses of history, who met the same or a similar end. To Hatice Alankuş who was killed in a Turkish dungeon where she was imprisoned for harboring a revolutionary, in 1972, on her 26th summer. But I think a dedication to Nâzım Hikmet would cover them all. So, if a dedication means anything, I dedicate *Tract*, in Nâzım Hikmet's name, to all these people, living or dead, illustrious or unsung, who did or are doing much more than compose a piece of music.



İlhan Mimaroglu, born in Turkey (1926), where he was active primarily as a music critic, has been residing in New York since 1959. A recipient of Rockefeller and Guggenheim fellowships, he studied composition, electronic music, musicology and music education at Columbia University. His instrumental and vocal music includes *Parodie Sérieuse* for string quartet (1947), *Metropolis* for orchestra (1955), *Pièces sentimentales* for piano (1957), *Epicedium* for voice and chamber ensemble (1961), *September Moon* for orchestra (1967), *Cristal de Bohême* (1971). Beginning in the early sixties he was associated with Columbia-Princeton Electronic Music Center where he composed the majority of his tape-music pieces, several of which are commercially recorded, i.e. *Le Tombeau d'Edgar Poe* (1964), *Intermezzo* (1964), *Anacoluthe* (1965), *Visual Studies* (1964-66), *Preludes* (1966-67), *Wings of the Delirious Demon* (1969), *Music for Jean Dubuffet's Coucou Bazar* (1973). As of 1972, he has been doing a series of programs on electronic music for the New York radio station WBAI with the purpose of placing the arts in a political perspective. He displayed a growing political consciousness in his choice of texts and programmatic content in such works as *Sing Me a Song of Songmy* (1971), *Tract* (1972-74) and *To Kill a Sunrise* (1974), conveying messages of New Left persuasion.