2017

THE WIND MUSIC OF STEVE DANYEW: A DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS OF THREE SIGNIFICANT WIND COMPOSITIONS

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Digital Object Identifier: https://doi.org/10.13023/ETD.2017.388

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THE WIND MUSIC OF STEVE DANYEW: A DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS OF THREE SIGNIFICANT WIND COMPOSITIONS

Dissertation

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts in the College of Fine Arts at the University of Kentucky

By
Michael Cody Black
Franklin, Indiana

Director: Dr. John Cody Birdwell, Professor of Music

Lexington, Kentucky

2017

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

THE WIND MUSIC OF STEVE DANYEW: A DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS OF THREE SIGNIFICANT WIND COMPOSITIONS

Despite being active as a composer for a little less than a decade, Steve Danyew has established himself as a successful composer of wind music. Danyew has produced a surprisingly large amount of significant works for various music ensembles in a relatively short span of time. Danyew’s compositions for winds are some of his most frequently performed for any medium.

Three of Danyew’s compositions for winds stand out as artistically significant, namely Lauda, Alcott Songs, and Magnolia Star. One of his first compositions for wind band, Lauda, is an award-winning work that has been performed by noteworthy ensembles throughout the country. Lauda displays Danyew’s ability to manipulate and expand on simple musical ideas, as the entire piece is developed from a few basic themes. Alcott Songs adds some diversity to Danyew’s body of work as a song cycle for chamber winds and solo soprano. The text for these songs comes from poems written by Louisa May Alcott. Danyew shows a remarkable ability to connect text and music through descriptive wind parts and frequent text painting. Magnolia Star has become Danyew’s most performed composition for winds and is inspired by both the C blues scale and the American railroad. Because of the railroad’s important role in disseminating jazz from the American south to the north, Danyew uses train sounds as a major theme in Magnolia Star, which employs, almost exclusively, notes from the C blues scale.

This study provides background information and explores the inspirations and influences behind each of these three pieces. Following the introductory material, a melodic, harmonic, and formal analysis of each composition is presented, discussing the artistry and skill displayed by Danyew in each work. The author wishes to exhibit the
musical value of Danyew’s compositions, demonstrating the significance of Danyew’s music in the recent history of music for winds.

KEYWORDS: Steve Danyew, Wind Ensemble, Band, Chamber Winds

Michael C. Black

April 21, 2017

Date
THE WIND MUSIC OF STEVE DANYEW: A DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS OF THREE SIGNIFICANT WIND COMPOSITIONS

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I must first give thanks to my Father in Heaven. I have accomplished many things in this life that no one would have ever imagined I would be capable of accomplishing. I credit this success to a Heavenly Father that knows me more intimately than I know myself, and is providing a guiding and influencing light in my life. I have had many conversations with Him through prayer and know that he is real, and that knowledge has shaped my actions and my desires.

I cannot begin to express the amount of gratitude I have to my incredibly supportive wife, Caroline, and my son Cadence. I remember attending a class once in which an older fellow classmate asked what I did for a living. When I explained that I was a high school band director this classmate proceeded to tell me that her ex-husband was a band director and that she would be surprised if my marriage lasted. There was no question in my mind, then or now, that my companion would never leave my side, in this life or in the eternities. The hours I have spent working on this project have caused her, at times, to function as a single parent, but I have never heard a word of anything but encouragement. Cade has had a difficult time being separated from his father for extended periods, but every time I have finished working for the day he has greeted me with a smile, a hug, a kiss, and those immeasurably gratifying words, “I love you, Dada.”

A great amount of thanks and credit is due to my parents, Mike and Rosalee Black, for always loving and supporting me, teaching me how to be a man, teaching me
how to be a husband, teaching me how to be a father, and teaching me how I should act as a child of God. You both instilled in me a deep and abiding love for music, and had you not insisted that I try playing in band for at least one year I likely would not be writing this document or living out a career as a musician. I am forever indebted for your unconditional love, support, and encouragement.

My siblings, Sirena, Richard, and LeiLani, have always challenged me to be better. You have always inspired me to give my best effort in everything I do, and provided me with a great example of Christ-like love and service for others. I am thankful that I have been so blessed to have you all as my brother and sisters in this life.

I am also thankful for the wonderful family that I am lucky enough to have through marriage. The late Duane Thompson is one of the most inspirational men I have ever met, and I am so thankful for the time I got to spend with him. His wife, Joy, is a light to the world, the most caring and selfless person I have ever encountered, and a great example to me.

I can’t begin to express the gratitude I have for Mr. Bruce Thompson, Dr. Jeff Bright, Dr. Robert Bailey, Dr. Jason Dovel, Dr. Norm Wika, Dr. Jeffrey Renshaw, Dr. David Mills, Mr. Scott-Lee Atchison, Mr. George Boulden, and Dr. Cody Birdwell. These men have all challenged me and trained me to be the person and musician I am today. I know that each of them have spent time pondering and considering how to help me improve, and I am so thankful for their devotion and efforts.
I am thankful to my friends and colleagues in the music world that have worked alongside me over the years. Mr. Ward Eagleton, for his gentle kind heart, and encouraging words to a young high school band director. Amy Dauphinais, Justin McManus, and Andrew Janes for working alongside me at the University of Connecticut, and providing me with a kind and loving shoulder through difficult times in my life. From the University of Kentucky: Steve Seigel for his kind words and sense of humor, Jon Sweet for his quickly earned friendship, which I hope will last for a life time.

Thank you to my committee members, Dr. Cody Birdwell, Dr. Jason Dovel, Dr. Michael Baker, and Dr. Clair Hicks, for their hours of work helping to make sure this document is thorough and scholarly. Mostly, thank you for being great mentors and advocates for my career.

Lastly, thank you to Steve Danyew. Thank you for providing music that connects deeply with my soul. I have long felt a connection to your music which I cannot quantify or describe. Thank you for being willing to work together with me on this project, and for always being approachable and friendly through all of our interactions. May your music always continue to uplift and inspire.
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PART ONE
CHAPTER ONE: Introduction

One of the most important, but perhaps often overlooked, aspects of music-making is selecting repertoire. Sometimes this selection is subconscious, such as the involuntary humming of a popular melody. The consciousness and consequence of music selection can range from a self-enriching performance of a family folk song to the performance of a Mozart symphony for a vast audience. At times, the selection of music can be of the utmost consciousness and consequence so that the performer’s career could hang in the balance. This is the case when the conductor of a professional ensemble must decide which pieces to program for an upcoming performance. In this circumstance, the conductor must consider many factors before coming to a conclusion. The conductor must cogitate many different elements: the artistic level of the music, the difficulty of the music in relation to the performer’s abilities, whether or not the audience will enjoy the music, whether or not the performers will be enriched by the music, among others. All of these topics could have lasting implications on the career of the conductor. These same concerns are true of the wind band conductor. While there are many quality and historically significant compositions in the wind band repertoire, some believe its well of quality literature is much more shallow than for that of the string orchestra.

Because the modern American wind band did not begin to rise to prominence until late in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries with the rise of the Gilmore
Band and Sousa Band, relatively few composers chose to write music for the medium until after this time. Wind conductors often relied on orchestra transcriptions. As a result, the wind band has a constant demand for new and innovative music written uniquely for the ensemble. Because of the relative youth of the wind band, longevity is often an ineffective tool to measure the relevance of the musical selections. When Beethoven premiered his Symphony No. 5 at the Theater an der Wien in 1808, there was no indication that the primary theme from the first movement would be one of the most recognizable themes in all of music two hundred years later. Likewise, it is nearly impossible to determine what wind band compositions will be relevant one hundred years from now, and any attempt to make this determination is done out of sheer conjecture. The great suites for military band by Gustav Holst will almost certainly see no decline in performances, Arnold Schoenberg’s Theme and Variations, Op.43a will not lose its appeal, and it seems as if Joseph Schwantner’s ...and the mountains rising nowhere will continue to be considered a masterwork. These works are measured as landmarks in the history of the wind band, but still such conclusions are only speculation, even if the speculation is educated and well argued. This dilemma leaves the wind band conductors of today with difficulties when selecting repertoire, and leads conductors in a continuous search for new and interesting music.

With constant demand for new music comes a wide array of compositions, some beautiful and strongly artistic, others questionable in quality at best. It becomes the task of the conductor to filter through these new works and find those that are imaginative, brilliant, and worthy of performance. While frequency of performance is certainly
measurable factor in determining the value of a composition, this measurement still lacks the support of longevity. There are many examples of compositions that are performed by the top ensembles around the world with great frequency in a short period of time, and yet are hardly to be heard of ten years later. It is through this difficult and strongly subjective process of finding new compositions and judging their musical value that the recent works of Steve Danyew have ascended to recognition.

Steve Danyew was born in 1983 and, in a relatively short amount of time, has had a respectable amount of success in composing for winds. Danyew has risen rapidly to distinction as a composer, and has been especially successful since 2010. Danyew’s compositions continue to receive great support from internationally renowned wind band conductors and ensembles, including Mark Scatterday and the Eastman Wind Ensemble; Gary Green, emeritus conductor of the University of Miami Frost Wind Ensemble; and Jeffrey Renshaw and the University of Connecticut Wind Ensembles, to name a few.

His composition Magnolia Star had an explosion in performances in 2016, with performances in venues worldwide from the Sydney Opera House to the steps of the United States Capitol building, where it was performed by the United States Navy Band. Magnolia Star takes its name from a train that ran from New Orleans to Chicago in the middle of the twentieth century, and plays on the important role of the railroad system in the dissemination of jazz music from the south to the north during this time. It consists almost exclusively of notes from the concert C blues scale, and yet it uses this series of pitches in ways that are unique and fascinating.
In 2015 the Illinois State University Wind Symphony recorded Danyew’s *Lauda*, under the direction of Daniel Belongia, and it was released worldwide on the Naxos label album *Point Blank*. For *Lauda*, Danyew received Honorable Mention for the 2010 ASCAP/CBDNA Frederick Fennell Wind Ensemble Competition. *Lauda* (Latin for “praise”) is a captivating quasi-prelude and fugue piece that explores a combination of traditional contrapuntal devices and extended harmonies that weave together an intriguing aural experience.

Danyew has also had several successful performances of *Alcott Songs*, a song cycle for solo soprano and chamber winds. *Alcott Songs* was originally written for voice and piano, but has been arranged for chamber winds by the composer under a consortium which included Illinois State University, the Eastman School of Music, Texas Tech University, and the University of Miami. The work represents a light-hearted song cycle of six short songs with text from American poet Louisa May Alcott. Each movement takes its own unique approach to Alcott’s clever texts, leading to a highly artistic work that is full of idiosyncrasies and surprises.

In 2015, Danyew was commissioned by the Dardanelle High School Wind Ensemble in Dardanelle, Arkansas to write *Rivertown Jubilee*, a composition targeted for younger ensembles. This work saw an outburst of performances in the latter half of 2016, and has several performances scheduled for the first few months of 2017. In addition to these compositions, Danyew’s other works for wind band include *Flash Black* (2009) which the composer describes as synthesizing “almost all of my musical
influences, experiences, and inspirations;”¹ Goodnight, Goodnight (2010) written in a choral style, full of beautiful colors, and inspired by a poem written by Danyew’s wife, Ashley; Mountainscape (2012) a work inspired by a biblical passage in Isaiah; Journeys (2013) which reflects on the foundational experiences in life as well as “the influence of the people in our lives who have been a part of the journey thus far;”² This World Alive (2013) inspired by an Ansel Adams quote and written to be played along with a film by Cuyler Bryant; Adagietto (2014) based on a chorale tune and inspired by Percy Grainger’s Irish Tune from County Derry; Vermont State Fair (2015) a programmatic work, the inspiration for which is implied by the title, which is becoming increasingly popular; and an arrangement of The Star-Spangled Banner (2016).

In addition to these works for wind band, Danyew has also composed other works for wind instruments, including Lhotse (2005) for saxophone duo, Prelude and Dance (2009) for solo saxophone and piano, and Saxophone Quartet No. 2 (2008). His compositional output also includes music for choir, solo voice, orchestra, chamber strings, and handbells. From this diverse collection of compositions, those contributing to the wind repertoire, particularly Lauda, Magnolia Star, and Alcott Songs, stand out as some of the most popular.

METHODOLOGY AND ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

The second chapter of the study will consist of biographical information about the composer, Steve Danyew. The subsequent chapters will discuss Lauda, Alcott Songs, and Magnolia Star in detail with analysis and commentary. Background information for each piece will be presented followed by analysis of each work, which will outline the melodic and harmonic content of each composition, as well as a complete formal diagram to place each of the melodic and harmonic concepts in the larger vision of the work as a whole. Chapters Three, Four, and Five will consist of the information for each of the three compositions, respectively.

RESULTS

By providing a biography, background, and analysis of each piece, the artistic significance and importance of Steve Danyew’s Lauda, Magnolia Star, and Alcott Songs will be supported and validated.

SIGNIFICANCE

Steve Danyew has come to the forefront of wind band composers recently with frequent performances of Magnolia Star by some of the most decorated wind bands throughout the world. As Magnolia Star becomes more popular, Danyew’s other works have been explored and received more performances. This monograph stands as the initial in-depth study of the compositions of Steve Danyew.
As previously mentioned, there is no known scholarly writing on the subject of Steve Danyew or his music. It is common, however, for a composer and some of his prominent works to be the subject of a scholarly study. As such, a vast bank of parallel literature exists. Some examples would include: *The Life and Works of Karel Husa with Emphasis on the Significance of His Contribution to the Wind Band* a Ph.D. dissertation from Florida State University by Donald Malcolm McLaurin in 1985; *Gustav Holst: The Works for Military Band* an Ed.D. dissertation from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign by John Ceander Mitchell in 1980; *Carter Pann’s Four Factories for Wind Symphony: An analysis and discussion* a D.M.A. dissertation from the University of Oklahoma by Russell Todd Pettitt in 2010; *A Study of the Wind-Band Music of Frank Ticheli with an Analysis of Fortress, Postcard and Vesuvius* a D.M.A. dissertation from The Ohio State University by John A. Darling in 2001; and *Band Music of Morton Gould* a Ph.D. dissertation from Texas Tech University by Ronald David Scott in 1997.
CHAPTER 2: Biography

Steve Danyew was born in Danbury, Connecticut in 1983 – a fact that he often draws upon with some humor to point out that he and the composer Charles Ives share the same birthplace. While Danyew shares a birthplace with Ives, Danbury is not truly Danyew’s home town. Danbury simply housed the closest hospital with maternity capabilities to Danyew’s hometown of Newtown, Connecticut. Newtown is noteworthy in its own right, but, unfortunately, it is for a tragic event on December 14, 2012 when twenty six- and seven-year-old students were killed by a gunman at Sandy Hook Elementary. This tragedy was particularly poignant to Danyew as his home town, and the very school that he had attended as a child, suffered an unfathomable loss that sent an entire nation into mourning, not the least those that consider Newtown to be their home.

Danyew grew up in Newtown, and lived there until his departure for college in 2002. While Danyew began his formal music education with instrumental music classes in the fourth grade, his exposure to music began even earlier with his parents in the home. Neither of his parents were trained musicians, but he says “my parents are both music lovers.” Danyew began experimenting with music early on as he would “improvise at the piano.” Danyew says that this is “something I still like to do, something that’s always intrigued me, just sitting down at the piano and improvising.”

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3 Steve Danyew, telephone interview by author, December 12, 2016.
4 Ibid.
5 Ibid.
This early interest in improvisation is the seed for what would become a successful career as a composer. Noticing this aptitude for creation at the piano, Danyew’s parents enrolled him in piano lessons, an endeavor that would prove to be short-lived, as it often is for the young child, because Danyew showed to have limited patience and motivation for practice.

Danyew’s interest in music was piqued later as his older brother enrolled in the public school band and began playing trumpet. This started a fascination with wind instruments that would eventually be the avenue to his career as a musician. In fourth grade, Danyew began playing the violin, because band classes were not available until fifth grade. But when a year had passed, he moved on from the orchestra and began playing in band to satisfy his curiosity for wind instruments. He says that “there was something a little more intriguing about playing a wind instrument – that I could play in band, and maybe jazz band – maybe a little more versatile.”  

From this intrigue for wind instruments Danyew began his studies as a saxophone player, an instrument which he says he picked because of its sound, timbre, and versatile capabilities. From this point on, his saxophone became his closest companion as he spent as much time as possible playing the instrument and fostering a growing love and passion for music. In his own words, he played “in every possible ensemble, playing in ensembles on the side, getting together with friends and doing . . . informal music outside of school, marching band, pit orchestra, jazz band, and concert band.”

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6 Steve Danyew, telephone interview by author, December 12, 2016.
7 Ibid.
After graduating from high school Danyew was sure that he wanted to pursue a career in music, but was unsure of what that career would actually be. He had experimented with composing in high school and completed the school’s music theory sequence, but still doubted the practicality of studying composition or theory in college. He considered music business to be, perhaps, the most pragmatic field for securing a job after graduation, and began to research schools with strong music business programs. This search for music business programs led to an interest in the University of Miami, a college which his aunt and uncle had both attended and still lived nearby, and would eventually lead to Danyew enrolling at Miami as a student in the music business program.

It did not take long while at the University of Miami for Danyew to realize that his “favorite classes freshman year were the theory classes.”\(^8\) This realization would ultimately lead him to study music composition and theory, with hopes that he would still be able to pursue a career in the music business field. One of the defining moments in Danyew’s undergraduate college career came when he first heard the University of Miami Frost Wind Ensemble play under the direction of Gary Green. He described the experience, saying “I was sitting in the audience and I remember the first chord that I heard them ever play. It was . . . so in tune, and so together, and therefore was so loud, and it was just really amazing.”\(^9\) It didn’t take long for Danyew to earn himself a place in

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\(^8\) Steve Danyew, telephone interview by author, December 12, 2016.
\(^9\) Ibid.
the ensemble, as he auditioned into the baritone saxophone chair during his sophomore year – a chair he would hold until he graduated from the university.

During his time in the Frost Wind Ensemble Danyew felt inspired by the leadership of Green, saying “he definitely inspired me to want to be the best musician I could be.”\textsuperscript{10} In addition to being inspired by Green, both as a musician and as a person, Danyew also gained cherished experiences when composers would come to visit the campus. During his time in the Frost Wind Ensemble, several composers came to rehearsals and performances as the ensemble played their compositions, and Danyew has many treasured memories from watching the composers interact with Green. One example of a composer visiting the wind ensemble and leaving a lasting impact on Danyew came from Scott Stinson. Danyew recalls that “he came in to our wind ensemble rehearsal and . . . all the parts were hand written. At the end of the reading he was putting them away in a box and that . . . blew my mind that someone was actually handwriting this music.”\textsuperscript{11} Because of the impression that Stinson’s hand written parts had on Danyew, he began a conversation with Stinson that led to weekly meetings and informal lessons that lasted for the remainder of Danyew’s time at the University of Miami. In addition to these informal lessons, Danyew also studied composition with Robert Gower and Dennis Kam. Danyew’s mind was opened to a new world of music during this time, as his experience in high school band had lacked exposure to many of the more modern and experimental trends in music that are often explored more at the

\textsuperscript{10} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{11} Steve Danyew, telephone interview by author, January 13, 2017.
The influence of these teachers also shaped many of Danyew’s practices for composition and orchestration.

After completing his composition degree at the University of Miami, Danyew stayed in the Miami area for two years managing a chamber ensemble under the musical direction of conductor Chung Park. He cites this experience with Park as a great growing opportunity as they collaborated together and learned from hands-on, real world experience in the music industry. This time also provided Danyew the opportunity to focus on composing and launch his career. The relationship developed with Park during this period also proved to be a valuable asset for Danyew’s career to this day, as Park continues to perform Danyew’s works for chamber and string ensembles.

After two years of freelancing, Danyew resolved to continue his education and improve his voice as a composer. This desire took him back to the Northeast where he attended the Eastman School of Music at the University of Rochester. Danyew’s first exposure and impression of Eastman came from his high school band director. Danyew says “My high school band director, Jim Dumas, went to Eastman, and as I’m sure you know, high school band directors can have a big impact on students.”12 In addition to the influence of his high school band director, Danyew also cites his desire to begin writing more music for winds as a dynamic that swayed him to attending Eastman, as well as Eastman’s Institute for Music Leadership. According to Danyew, the combination of Eastman’s history with the Eastman Wind Ensemble and the Institute for Music Leadership provided a valuable opportunity to develop his compositional skills.

12 Steve Danyew, telephone interview by author, December 12, 2016.
Leadership “fit me and what I was doing.” Danyew says “those were things that I think made it a good choice for me.”

During Danyew’s time at Eastman he studied composition with Carlos Sanchez-Gutierrez and David Liptak, and saxophone with Chien-Kwan Lin. Studying saxophone with Lin was a great experience for Danyew, stretching him as a performer and musician and challenging him in ways he had never experienced. Both composition teachers connected with Danyew in an intimate and personal way and helped him to develop as a musician and composer. He credits Sanchez-Gutierrez for opening his mind to new and different kinds of music. Liptak helped him to develop his musical ideas and use them in new and exploratory ways. The individual time Danyew spent with Lin, Sanchez-Gutierrez, and Liptak, influenced and developed his musical voice, preparatory to the success that would come.

During his time at Eastman, Danyew connected with Mark Scatterday, the director of the Eastman Wind Ensemble. This connection would prove to be a valuable step in Danyew’s career as Scatterday would become a frequent performer and advocate of Danyew’s music. Scatterday was first impressed by Danyew as a person. During their interactions Scatterday says that Danyew’s “intentions were always really good” and that “you always knew how much he appreciated your time and effort.” Scatterday was also impressed by the clear and distinct voice that Danyew owned, and knew that this voice would lead to a successful career for a developing young composer.

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13 Steve Danyew, telephone interview by author, December 12, 2016.
14 Mark Scatterday, telephone interview by author, January 12, 2016.
By making a connection with Mark Scatterday and Gary Green, Danyew’s music for wind ensemble was sure to have exposure to a wide audience of significant conductors and other performers throughout the world.

Today Danyew continues to reside in Rochester, New York where he lives with his wife Ashley, herself a church musician and music educator who holds a Ph.D. in music education from the Eastman School of Music. He is in high demand for clinics and residencies for composition, saxophone, choir, and wind band, as well as music leadership and entrepreneurship. He also “serves as an instructor in the Arts Leadership Program at the Eastman School of Music where he teaches a course on creative music careers”\(^\text{15}\) and is project manager for the Paul R. Judy Center for Applied Research, also at Eastman.

CHAPTER 3: *Lauda*

BACKGROUND

Danyew composed *Lauda* during the fall of 2009 in the course of his time in Rochester and specifically for the Eastman Wind Ensemble. Early on in his studies at Eastman he visited with Mark Scatterday and developed a connection with the conductor of the Eastman Wind Ensemble. Scatterday first collaborated with Gary Green, then director of the Frost Wind Ensemble at the University of Miami, to commission a work from Danyew in 2008. This commission would result in *Flash Black*, Danyew’s first published composition for wind ensemble. Impressed by Danyew’s musical voice, Scatterday subsequently expressed interest in playing more of Danyew’s music, should he continue to compose for winds. From this series of events, *Lauda* came to fruition.

The title *Lauda* is Latin and translates most closely to the English word “praise.” Danyew’s title comes from the hymn tune, *Lauda Anima*, which is the main theme of the second movement of Danyew’s *Lauda*. In the case of *Lauda Anima* the title comes from the beginning of Psalm 103, which, in the King James Version of the Bible, reads “Bless the Lord, O my soul.” Here the translation interprets the words “bless” and “*lauda*” to be similar to the English word “praise.” Danyew’s *Lauda* is in two movements, titled “*Montis Dei*” and “*Hymnus Anima Mea*” respectively. “*Montis Dei*” is also Latin and translates to English as “God’s Mountains” while “*Hymnus Anima Mea*” translates as

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16 Ps. 780.
“Hymn for My Soul.” Danyew says that “the overall structure of the work can be understood somewhat loosely as a prelude and fugue” with the first movement serving as the prelude and the second movement serving as the fugue.¹⁷

The germinating idea of the first movement comes from a chord progression that Danyew experimented with during the time leading up to the composition. The chord progression of C major, D major, E minor, G major intrigued Danyew, who subsequently spent time adding various extensions to those chords to make them more complex. While he developed musical ideas around this progression he found that “one led to another in a way that was fresh and different. C going to D, to E, to G, it was a little bit unexpected, but still somewhat expected. But it wasn’t, to me, like a tonic dominant feeling.”¹⁸ From this progression developed the entire first movement of *Lauda* and from the roots of these chords – C, D, E, and G – the passacaglia that is present for nearly the entire movement was created. One of the key traits of this passacaglia is that G leads back to C, so that the passacaglia organically becomes cyclical. Through the development of the movement Danyew noted the visual ascension of the passacaglia, moving up from C to G, followed by the descent back to C, before the whole process is repeated again. This visibly depicted a range of mountains, which Danyew implied by titling the movement “Montis Dei” or “God’s Mountains.”

The second movement, “Hymnus Anima Mea,” serves as the fugue section in the overall prelude and fugue form. Some elements of this movement were inspired by John

¹⁸ Steve Danyew, telephone interview by author, December 12, 2016.
Tavener’s *Song for Athene*, a choral piece that Danyew lists as one of his favorite musical compositions.¹⁹ *Song for Athene* has an F tonality, and the bass voice sings a continuous F pedal point for the entire piece. Danyew’s love for Tavener’s work inspired the pedal that exists throughout the second movement of *Lauda*. All of the other musical elements from this movement come out of the hymn *Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven*. Danyew says that “the hymn tune itself is one of my favorite hymns. My wife and I really like it.”²⁰ Out of their great love for this hymn comes the title of this movement, which translate to “Hymn of My Soul.” The text for *Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven* was written by Henry Francis Lyte, an Anglican clergyman, and was published in his 1836 collection of texts *Spirit of the Psalms*. During the Protestant Reformation, John Calvin espoused the belief that hymns should be congregational but should only contain sacred biblical texts. From this tradition came “psalters,” or hymns that use translations of the psalms into the vernacular. In these translations the text was slightly altered so that it would fit a logical syllabic meter for a musical setting. Over time the translations became more and more flexible. The preface for *Spirit of the Psalms* explains that it is a publication after this tradition, in which the texts are intended to replicate the spirit and sentiment of a particular psalm, but not directly translate the original text.²¹ *Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven* was written in the spirit and sentiment of Psalm 103. The hymn tune for *Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven* is titled

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¹⁹ Steve Danyew, telephone interview by author, December 12, 2016.
²⁰ Ibid.
Lauda Anima and was composed by John Goss in 1868. Danyew and his wife are not the only ones to recognize the beauty of this hymn tune, as a review in the June, 1869 edition of The Musical Times says “it is at once the most beautiful and dignified hymn tune which has lately come under our notice.” From this simple, yet beautiful, hymn tune, and from the four note passacaglia of the first movement, Danyew creates fifteen minutes of beautiful and captivating music that will be further explored and understood through an extensive analysis.

ANALYSIS

The first movement of Lauda has three main sections. The first fifty-seven measures serve as the A section and introduce and develop a passacaglia that becomes the foundation of the entire movement. Measures 58 – 93 comprise the B section and contain a dramatic build and ultimate climax, all of which is based on the material from measures 1 – 57. Measure 94 to the end of the movement is a reflective closing section that contrasts the intense drama of the middle section. Each of these three sections becomes gradually shorter in duration, the first being fifty-seven measures long, the B section thirty-six measures long, and the closing section twenty-eight measures long.

The opening section begins as the Bible does, with a genesis. For Lauda, the genesis is of a passacaglia that will play a significant role throughout the entire movement. As is true of the Bible’s depiction of the creation of the Earth, the passacaglia comes about slowly and in phases. As a single pitch becomes a dyad, a dyad

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becomes a triad, and a triad adds extended harmonies, the creation of the passacaglia truly takes place over a fifty-eight measure period.

This building process begins in measure 1. A common pitch is shared between the bass clarinet, baritone saxophone, muted trombone, timpani, pedaled vibraphone, harp, and pizzicato bass. The pitch is C, and is held for two measures before halting and beginning again in the third measure. The pitch C sounds again, but this time is able to take one step further and arrive on D in measure 4. The progress is thwarted once again, however, as there is a return back to C in measure 6. This slowly developing process of introducing the passacaglia continues, either adding one note or repeating the previously introduced notes on each repetition, until the complete product is revealed with an arrival on G on the fourth beat of measure 10. The completion of the passacaglia is highlighted by the changing of one pitch in the harp. Beginning in measure 2, each halted effort to complete the passacaglia is acknowledged by a descending triplet figure in the harp from the pitch C down to A and then down to C an octave lower. In measure 10, when the passacaglia is finally made whole, this triplet figure changes to ascending triplets moving from C to G to C. The arrival of the pitch G in the passacaglia, accompanied by the change from A to G in the harp triplets, creates what could be described as a cadential sensation, as tension that had gone unnoticed leads to a pleasing and relaxing resolution. This entire section takes place over a pedal C. Figure 3.1 illustrates the trombone and harp parts from measures 1 – 10 of Lauda and the introduction of the passacaglia as described above.
After the sequence of root pitches in the passacaglia have been completed, a development process continues in the following measures. The C pedal that sounded for the first eleven measures continues, but now with an E added to it. The entire passacaglia is present in measure 13 in the flute, vibraphone, and harp, but now with harmonic content added to the previously solitary pitches. Interestingly, the dyadic harmony contains the exact same pitches as the passacaglia itself, but in a different order. E, G, C, and D sound against the C, D, E, and G of the passacaglia, respectively. This harmony returns throughout the movement and is illustrated in Figure 3.2, where the passacaglia sounds above the harmony.
In measure 15 a statement of the passacaglia sounds in the harp, but has been transposed down a whole step to begin on B-flat with augmented rhythmic values. Simultaneous to the harp statement, the passacaglia is presented in the horn at the original pitch level of C, with the same dyadic harmony previously used in measure 13. Also of significance is the addition of G to the C and E pedals, creating a full C major triad sounding as a pedal in measure 15. Immediately afterward, in measure 18, the passacaglia is played by Clarinet 1 while, at the same time, Trumpet 1 plays an inversion of the passacaglia. After these variations of the passacaglia have been introduced, the harp once again ascends from C to G to C, creating a moment of resolution. The resolution is intensified by a 4-3 suspension as the F-natural, which resulted from the trumpet inversion of the passacaglia starting on C, is resolved to E.

The next six measures develop the passacaglia further as, beginning in measure 21, the previous C pedal moves up to D and begins to ascend through the passacaglia itself. This initiates a true ground bass, and this bass ascension is accompanied by a series of progressively complex harmonies. When the bass note arrives on D it is functioning as the 9th of a C9 chord. In addition to the C9 chord, C13 exists solely in the
piano part. The C\textsuperscript{13} is presumed to offer a splash of color to the structural C\textsuperscript{9} chord that sounds in the wind parts. Moving forward, the pitch D remains and the harmony resolves to a D major chord. As the bass moves from the pitch E the F-sharp is suspended before resolving up to G as the third of an E minor triad. The bass E is held for another measure as the harmony transforms to Am\textsuperscript{7} before the bass finally arrives on G and the harmony settles on the G major chord. Figure 3.3 is a piano reduction of measures 20 – 25 of Lauda, which displays the new harmonies that have been built upon the passacaglia foundation.

Figure 3.3. Steve Danyew, Lauda, I. Montis Dei (Measures 20 – 25, piano reduction by the author).

Within the first twenty-six measures, there are several other elements that are significant to the overall harmonic structure of the movement. The passacaglia pitches, C, D, E, and G, lack the fourth scale degree. Hearing this sequence of pitches in repetition leads the ear to C major tonality. The major tonic chord is built from the notes of the passacaglia and the movement from G back to C during the return of the passacaglia has the feel of a tonic-dominant relationship. The absence of the 4\textsuperscript{th} scale degree as the passacaglia develops is convenient, because it allows for the listener to be lulled into the major mode before the arrival of F-sharp in measure 22 begins.
implications of the Lydian mode. In measure 27 the harmonic development stalls for a moment as a static harmony remains for five measures. The static chord throughout these five measures is CM\(^7\#11\), a chord that has been nicknamed the “Lydian chord” or “Lydian Dominant Chord” (Lydian, because it contains a sharp 11, or sharp 4\(^{th}\) scale degree).\(^{23}\) When this chord arrives in measure 27 the implications of the F-sharp in measure 22 come to fruition and, to assure that there are no doubts about the modality, this chord remains unaltered for five measures. During these five measures of harmonic stasis an oboe solo provides some of the first free melodic material, and continues to congeal the Lydian mode. The harmony finally begins to progress to a G major chord which then resolves deceptively to A minor in measure 33. A four-measure venture into the passacaglia material in an A minor tonality ensues, which eventually arrives on a D\(^9\) chord and also resolves in an uncharacteristic way – The D\(^9\) resolves to a bass note of G as the ear would expect, but instead of functioning as the root of a G major chord the G functions as the 5\(^{th}\) of a CM\(^7\) chord. These two sections of static harmony, first on the C Lydian chord and then on A minor, lead to measure 37 where a small ternary sections begins within the large overall A section.

In measure 37 the passacaglia continues in several voices, and then shifts to other voices within the same instrument family before it is completed. The passacaglia begins in trombones and bass clarinet on the pitch C, and those instruments play through the E. The final note of the passacaglia (G) is then found in horn and Clarinet 3.

This eight-measure statement of the passacaglia is the A section of the small ternary form and closes on an extended G major chord which resolves to a first inversion extended C major chord.

The B section of the small ternary form begins in measure 45 as the harmony becomes static once again, and a horn solo sounds. This horn solo culminates with a resolution from C-sharp to D, which elides (in measure 50) with a repeat of the small A section to complete the small ternary form. In the repetition of the A section, the extended G major chord resolves, this time, to an extended C chord in root position. This cadential statement, much stronger than the others that have been present up to this point, ends the large A section of the first movement. The passacaglia, previously still in its developmental phase, has now grown to maturity, is unbridled, and is allowed to express its full potential in the subsequent sections of the composition.

The overall B section of the first movement consists of three small sections. The first section, measures 58 – 75, builds to the climax of the movement. As mentioned before, the passacaglia is now free from the metaphorical restraint of the first fifty-seven measures of the movement. Beginning in measure 58 the passacaglia is set in rhythmic augmentation, diminution, uneven rhythms, hocket, inversion, and transposition. The passacaglia sounds, at the original pitch (C), in the double bass and tuba. At the same instance the euphonium begins the passacaglia, transposed to begin on G, with the last note of this transposed passacaglia (D) jumping to Trombone 3 instead of being completed by the euphonium. The rhythms of the transposed statement are offset to the aforementioned statement in the tuba and double bass.
Prior to this the Trombone 3 part begins a transposed passacaglia of its own, which begins on E. The first note of the passacaglia is the only one found in the Trombone 3 part, however, as the subsequent F-sharp, G, and B are found in Trombone 1 and 2. It is also important to understand that the third pitch of this transposed passacaglia should be G-sharp, but in this case is lowered a half step to G natural in order maintain an E minor chord. This concurrent use of transposed passacaglias with offset rhythms can be visualized in figure 3.4 below, where the low brass parts have been extracted from measures 58 – 60 of the score.

Figure 3.4. Steve Danyew, *Lauda*, I. Montis Dei (Measures 58 – 60, Trombone 1, 2, and 3, Euphonium, and Tuba).

Similar treatment of the passacaglia ensues through the rest of this section. In measures 61 – 63 the passacaglia repeats in the tuba and double bass while it also
sounds, in diminished rhythmic values, in the chimes. The passacaglia can also be found in the bassoon, with the first entrance delayed by a half step in comparison to the tuba and double bass. The tuba and double bass continue to provide a ground bass, albeit with rhythmic values that are altered slightly at different points throughout, while the other parts add color with variants of the passacaglia. In measure 64 the passacaglia is transposed to begin on D in the chime part. This results in the final pitch of A which, in the following measure, steps up to B. From the pitch B the passacaglia is inverted and descends. All the while the Lydian F-sharp continues to hold a prominent place for the listener. In measure 63 the intensity begins to build as a bass drum and two large tenor drums are employed with two 32\textsuperscript{nd} notes followed by a quarter note. This percussion rhythm adds a sense of ominous expansiveness to the sound of the ensemble, and drives the crescendo forward as the passacaglia variants build dynamically to a strong cadence in measure 76. The cadence begins the second segment of the overall B section, and ultimately proves to cue the musical climax of the movement.

The second segment of the overall B section, measures 76 – 83, comprises the musical climax. To Danyew, the cadence in measure 76 feels as if one has driven up a mountain and arrived at an overlook with an expansive view.\textsuperscript{24} This sense of climax draws back slightly before building again to another moment of cadential arrival in measure 84. At this point, the intensity begins its long recession to the end of the movement. This climactic section from measures 76 – 84 consists of one full statement

\textsuperscript{24} Steve Danyew, telephone interview by author, December 12, 2016.
of the passacaglia in the tuba and double bass. This statement is convoluted, however, and, if not for the harmonic progression, it would seem that the passacaglia had been fragmented. The initial measures, 76 and 77, contain the pitches C, G, and E, respectively, in the bass voice. Despite venturing away from the pitch C, the harmony above the bass remains C major, although various extensions are added to the triad throughout the two measures. In measure 78 the pitch D arrives at the same time that the harmony changes to D major, again with various extensions. The pitch D moves up to F-sharp, but the harmony again remains the same, and in measure 80 the bass changes to the pitch E while the harmony changes to E minor with some extensions. The bass then changes to the pitch B, while remaining on an E minor harmony, before arriving on the final pitch of the passacaglia (G) along with an extended G major harmony. In short, the arpeggiation of the bass voice may cause the passacaglia to appear that it has been broken. Danyew explained, however, that the passacaglia is more than a mere repetition of four pitches; rather it is actually a harmonic progression. The harmonic changes of the passacaglia coinciding with the arrival of each passacaglia note in the ground bass make it clear that the passacaglia remains strong.

In measures 84 – 93, the third segment of the overall B section, the intensity eases and leads into a soothing closing section of the movement. With yet another arrival on an extended C major chord with root movement from G to C, in measure 84, it

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25 Steve Danyew, telephone interview by author, December 12, 2016.
seems at first as if all will continue as it has for the previous eighty-three measures. This notion is rebuffed in measure 86 as the C major chord, instead of continuing to function as a tonic chord, acts more like a dominant chord leading to an F major chord. This F-natural is particularly curious because of the previous use of F-sharp in C Lydian mode. The change to F tonality is initially vague, as the notes of the tonic triad are present at the arrival of the root F-natural in the bass in measure 86, but the additional presence of the pitches B-natural and D make it less distinguishable. From measures 87 – 88 the bass begins movement from the pitch F to G to A, reminiscent of the passacaglia but transposed to begin on F, and further hints to an F tonality. Measures 89 – 93 comprise of a long decrescendo that eventually dissolves into a three-measure percussion solo that further de-escalates the climax before the reflective closing section.

As the closing section begins, an assured F major tonality is finally heard as the horn melody in measure 94 is clearly centered on F. The melody begins on the pitch C and is ultimately a variation on the inverted passacaglia. In the opening section of the movement the passacaglia was inverted and consisted of the pitches C, B-flat, A-flat, and F. For the melody beginning in measure 94 the A-flat has been altered to A-natural so that an F major tonality may exist. It is interesting that the pitch F has played such a major role up to this point; it first provides modal ambiguity in the beginning as it is missing from the passacaglia, later sounding as an F-sharp to show that the Lydian mode is present, and now when the movement finally ventures away from C tonality it arrives on F. This juxtaposition on F, or the fourth scale degree, throughout the movement is coincidental (according to the composer) but it is none the less masterful and
The percussion soli from measures 91 – 93 continues as an undercurrent as low brass choir and horn melody are added to the texture through measure 105. In measure 97 the low brass enters and moves harmonically from B-flat major to C major, which implies a subdominant to dominant progression in the key of F major. This progression resolves deceptively, however, to a D minor chord; a resolution that begins to imply another change of tonality as the pitches B-flat, C, and D would begin the passacaglia in B-flat major. The modulation to B-flat major is further implied in measure 102 as the same pitches repeat in the bass voice, before ultimately returning to C Lydian tonality in measure 105. The venture through B-flat Major, therefore, has simply been a passing harmonic in a return to a C-centered tonality, albeit this time major instead of Lydian.

Measures 105 – 109 alternate D minor and C major chords, and measures 110 – 115 alternate E minor and G major chords. Measure 112 begins a flourish of the passacaglia as it sounds in Horn 1 and 2 with the dyadic harmony from measure 13, and then continues moving upward in the following measure, in Clarinet 1 and oboe, with the final G sounding in measure 114 in the piccolo. As the movement comes to a close, uncertainty is cast on the final resolution as a C major chord sounds in measure 116 while the upper woodwinds and vibraphone have a simultaneous statement of the passacaglia and its inversion, transposed to begin on the pitch A. This deterrence from the final cadence is ultimately vanquished as the G chord does indeed lead to C a chord.

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26 “Steve Danyew, telephone interview by author, December 12, 2016.”
Instead of the supposed unaltered C major chord, the composer has now set all of the notes of the passacaglia as a harmonic sonority. The D of the passacaglia chord ultimately resolves to C, functioning as a 9–8 suspension, but the feeling of simple tonic chord closure is brief. One beat after the resolution the C major triad is colored by a CM\(^7\#11\) chord in the piano and harp. The Lydian chord, important throughout the movement, is present again as the last sound. A comprehensive graph in support of this analysis, depicting the form, harmonic structure, and dynamic pacing of this movement, can be found in Appendix A.

The beginning of the second movement, “Hymnus Anima Mea,” is a contrast to the first movement in many ways. Most importantly, while the first movement began with only a few voices slowly developing and introducing the main theme of the movement, the second movement begins with the full ensemble assertively introducing several musical elements of the movement at once. Much of the ensemble plays a driving rhythmic motive – two sixteenth notes followed by two eighth notes – in unison on E, while low brass and double bass carry the “alleluia” motive from the hymn Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven. The rhythmic motive relates to the hymn tune, as does all of the material in this movement, and is a diminished version of a rhythm near the beginning of the hymn: two quarter notes followed by two half notes. Both of these important motives are displayed in the horn and trombone part which are extracted from the score in figure 3.5.
Figure 3.5. Steve Danyew, *Lauda*, II. Hymnus Anima Mea (Measures 1 – 4, Horn and Trombone).

This forceful introduction lasts for five measures before a *poco piu mosso*, in measure 6, begins the pedal note B. As previously mentioned, Danyew has said that the overall form of this piece is “quasi-prelude and fugue,” with the first movement serving as prelude and the second movement as fugue.\(^{27}\) The second movement is divided into two major sections, a fugue section and a closing hymn section. After the five-measure introduction, followed by four measures of the pedal B, the fugue section begins in measure 10. For ease of understanding, the fugue subject, tonal answer, and countersubject are all notated in concert pitch in figure 3.6.

Figure 3.6. Steve Danyew, *Lauda*, II. Hymnus Anima Mea (Fugue subject, tonal answer, and countersubject).

The subject is first presented in the fugue exposition, beginning at measure 10. Clarinets carry the subject in an E minor tonality over the continuous B pedal. In measure 12, Clarinet 2 and 3 begin to provide a harmonic accompaniment as the subject continues in Clarinet 1. Other reed instruments join the clarinets until the subject ultimately comes to rest in measure 18. The tonal answer immediately commences in measure 18 in horn, tenor saxophone, and baritone saxophone, and the countersubject begins in measure 19 with alto saxophone, clarinet, English horn, and
obo. This continues, as expected, until the answer and countersubject have been completed in measure 26. Fragmentation of the fugal components carry on to measure 32 with the pedal B continuing throughout. Along with an E minor chord comes fragments of the rhythmic motive from the introduction. These fragments intermingle with fragments of the fugal components that intensify and culminate with a large crescendo (measure 42) followed by a *subito* soft dynamic in measure 43 as only the pedal remains once again. At this point the fugal episodes begin.

The first episode of the fugue begins in measure 45, still in E minor tonality after two measures of only the pedal B sounding. In this episode, the subject is stated in inversion, after which, in measure 52, the countersubject sounds on its own without the answer. The rhythmic motive can be heard in percussion throughout this episode. In measure 63 the pedal again sounds alone, although only for one measure, before the second episode begins in measure 64. The second episode treats the subject with stretto and, for the first three measures, is free of the rhythmic motive that haunted the entirety of the first episode. The rhythmic motive returns, however, in measure 67 with the addition of the flutes. In measure 72 the tonal answer is presented in its original state, with a slightly varied version of the countersubject. The rhythmic motive is absent for three measures, once again, and returns afterward with the addition of Timpani and Trumpet 2 and 3. The trumpet parts begin to incorporate sixteenth-note triplets against the duple sixteenth notes of the motive which builds chaos and intensity. This is accompanied by a greatly increased harmonic rhythm in measure 80, which combines with a dynamic crescendo in measures 81 – 83 where a B major chord arrives. The B
major chord functions as a dominant and facilitates an immediate shift to E major
tonality in measure 84, where the hymn tune arrives and the fugue section of the
movement has been completed.

The closing hymn section of the second movement begins in measure 84 with a
triumphant statement of the hymn tune. The rhythmic motive in the flutes carries over
in to the hymn statement for four measures before giving away completely to the hymn.
The B pedal that has been present since measure 5 of this movement remains, which
gives the hymn, in E major, a hint of dissonance as the tonic chord sounds in 2\textsuperscript{nd}
inversion. By measure 97 the hymn tune has been completed and the fugue subject is
presented, reminding the listener that the fugue contains elements of the hymn tune,
particularly the “alleluia” motive. Prior to this, in measure 96, the B pedal begins to
descend stepwise. This descent happens hesitantly as the bass literally takes two steps
downward and one step back up before standing on F-sharp for four measures, and
finally arriving on the tonic pitch E as an E major chord sounds with \textit{fortissimo} brass in
measure 106.

The brass, saxophone, and bassoon choir in measure 106 opens a powerful
chorale section based on the “alleluia” motive, with interjections of chime sixteenth
notes, also based on the “alleluia” motive. In measure 118 the horn and alto saxophone
return the fugue subject, while the bassoon, bass clarinet, baritone saxophone, and
Trombone 3 present the “alleluia” motive. At the same time a rhythmic crescendo
begins in the chimes, which changes from continuous quarter note triplets, to eighth
notes triplets, to sixteenth notes over the space of six measures. These chime rhythms
could be described as reminiscent of clanging church bells. The rhythmic crescendo of the chimes is partnered with a dynamic crescendo from forte back to fortissimo, and a bright moment of arrival at measure 124. The rhythmic crescendo of the chimes is transferred to the harp where a rhythmic decrescendo immediately transpires. The sixteenth notes return to eighth note triplets and, although the actual rhythmic values remain eighth-note triplets, the *molto ritard* of the tempo results in a mirror of the previous chime rhythm arriving on an E major chord harp roll in measure 126. The rhythmic decrescendo is then echoed again by the harp in measures 127 and 128 as eighth-note triplets become eighth notes, which become a quarter note and then arrive, once again, on an E major roll. As the harmony remains on E major for the last five measures of the piece, the entire work is brought to a close as clarinet and harp reflect on the passacaglia from the first movement, stating it in the present key of E major with the final notes of E and G-sharp sounding only in harp, crotales, and glockenspiel with two triangles adding color to the sound. The recalling of the passacaglia at the end of the second movement unifies the work and provides an effective conclusion to a composition that has magnificently and extensively elaborated on very few musical ideas. A comprehensive chart displaying the form, harmonic structure, and dynamic pacing of this movement, as discussed in the previous paragraphs, can be found in Appendix B.

In *Lauda*, Danyew has managed to create an extensive work from a seemingly small amount of musical ideas. The entire first movement builds and grows out of a simple four note passacaglia. Through various techniques and extensions, the
capabilities of this passacaglia are fully explored, demonstrating Danyew’s ability to elaborate on simple musical concepts. The second movement further displays this technique as the entire movement consists of material rooted in the hymn tune. It also shows Danyew’s capacity to create new musical ideas from a pre-existing melody. The orchestration of the brass choir, with added saxophone and bassoon, in measure 106 is a great example of one of the facets of Danyew’s unique voice. Lauda proves to be a magnificent and mature composition for wind band that continues to receive frequent performance and recognition.
CHAPTER FOUR: *Alcott Songs*

BACKGROUND

In 2013, Danyew composed *Alcott Songs*, a song cycle for solo soprano and piano, with text taken from poetry by Louisa May Alcott. Danyew says “I really enjoy the poetry of Louisa May Alcott, and I decided to create a song cycle comprised of six of her relatively short poems. I tried to pull together poems that are particularly fun, witty, and whimsical.”28 By the time of this composition, several wind conductors throughout the country had become familiar with Danyew’s music, and some recognized that this song cycle had the potential to be even more exceptional if arranged for soprano and winds. As a result, Danyew was commissioned to arrange *Alcott Songs* for winds. The result is a work for soprano and wind octet, including flute, oboe, two bassoons, two clarinets, bass clarinet, and contrabass clarinet. With a small and intimate musical setting, Danyew creates warm connections between the vocalist, the chamber ensemble, and the audience, displaying his strengths and nuances as a composer.

Danyew states that in picking the texts he “realized that it would be fun to organize them in a way that could depict a summer day.”29 The titles of the songs show how this day progresses. “Awake! Awake!” was chosen as the first song in the cycle. “Hello! Hello!” brings the greetings of friends at the beginning of the day. “Dear Grif” is a comical anecdote about spring flowers. “Here’s a Nut” depicts the musings of a squirrel. “Don’t Drive Me Away” is described by Danyew as being dream-like, saying, “I

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29 Ibid.
picture this as the point at which we dose off to sleep.”

The cycle closes, fittingly, with “Lullaby.”

The poetry of Louisa May Alcott is unique and clever but remains very unpretentious and approachable. Her poetry and stories are all a reflection of her personality and upbringing. Alcott was raised by transcendentalist parents, and her father, Amos Bronson Alcott, provided most of her education. Her parents instilled in her a great compassion and love for helping others. Through her childhood she had many experiences providing aid to the needy, even sometimes to her own detriment. Slightly bothered by her parent’s frequent offers for others to stay in their home, at a young age Alcott said “I wish we could be together, and no one else. I don’t see who is to clothe and feed us all, when we are so poor now.”

Although these experiences caused Alcott to fret during her childhood, they helped to mold a woman that exuded love and compassion for others in the stories that she wrote. The transcendentalist beliefs in the purity of the individual and of nature are apparent in the themes of her stories. An understanding of her childhood upbringing adds a certain sentimentality to her writing that is otherwise could be perceived as missing. She is most known for her novel *Little Women*, which is loosely based on her own life. The setting for *Little Women* is the very homestead in which she grew up in Concord, Massachusetts. The curious thing about Alcott is that she did not write and publish much poetry. Instead, most of her poetry comes about in the context of a story. A character may write a poem,

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animals may be overheard singing, or a character may sing a lullaby. In this sense, the poetry is written by Alcott but it is not presented as stand-alone poetry. To fully comprehend the whit and tone of each text, it is necessary to know the context of the story from which it comes, and what the poem is truly depicting.

The first text “Awake! Awake!” is more commonly referred to as Lily-Bell and Thistledown Song I and comes from the story Lily-Bell and Thistledown, which was included in Alcott’s Flower Fables and published in 1855. Flower Fables consists of a series of short stories with uplifting messages about fairies, flowers, and other garden creatures. This particular story tells of a wonderful and kind-hearted fairy named Lily-Bell, and a selfish and careless fairy named Thistledown. They set out on a journey together, Lily-Bell only going to make sure that Thistledown does not do too much damage to those around him. As the story progresses, they find a bed of flowers on which to rest for the night and Lily-Bell slips off to sleep. In the meantime, Thistledown runs about gratifying himself while incidentally damaging the flowers. When it begins to rain, Thistledown seeks shelter among the flowers but is turned away because of the bad he has done to them. Dejected, Thistledown ventures in to the night, certain that he will suffer an ignominious death. He makes acquaintance with a bee and is invited to come and stay in the hive if he will do his part to contribute to the colony. Thistledown agrees, and when he finally reaches the colony and lays his head to rest in one of the cells he is completely exhausted. He awakes in the morning to the sounds of the bees singing:
Awake! Awake! For the earliest gleam
Of golden sunlight shines
On the rippling waves, that brightly flow
Beneath the flowering vines.
Awake! Awake! For the low, sweet chant
Of the wild-bird’s morning hymn
Comes floating by on the fragrant air,
Through the forest cool and dim;
Then spread each wing,
And work, and sing,
Through the long, bright sunny hours;
O’er the pleasant earth
We journey fourth,
For a day among the flowers.32

This provides the text for Danyew’s setting of “Awake! Awake!” and begins the programmatic day with the singing of a colony of bees.

“Hello! Hello!” is the second text used in Alcott Songs and comes from the story The Skipping Shoes, which is part of Lulu’s Library Series I – a collection of short stories that Alcott prefaces as stories read to her nieces and nephews. Interestingly, instead of signing the preface to this series with her own name, Alcott signs as “Aunt Jo,” which is the character in Little Women that she created to be autobiographical of herself. In the story The Skipping Shoes a young girl named Kitty is given a new pair of shoes by her mother. After putting them on, her mother asks her to “run and tell the cook to make a pie for dinner.”33 Although Kitty is defiant, she finds that the shoes stand her up and begin running her to the cook with great haste. Throughout the story, Kitty discovers that the shoes require her to be obedient and perform whatever task is asked of her.

33 Alcott, Complete Works, 83205.
During the school day she discovers that the shoes will also allow her to do no wrong (as she attempts to smash another student’s sandcastle the shoes freeze her to the spot). She begins to conspire to use the shoes for her own good, and when a ball bounces over the hedge she volunteers to retrieve it. Because this is an act of service the shoes allow her to do so, and the other students are amazed at how easily she is able to jump over the hedge. After school, Kitty returns home and finds herself quite busy, being asked to complete several chores and the shoes not allowing her to do otherwise. She finally asks her mother “when all the errands are done, may I come back through Fairyland, as we call the little grove where the tall ferns grow?” Her mother obliges, and it is in “fairyland” that Kitty discovers that the shoes are more magical than she had imagined. She learns that the shoes allow her to understand the speaking of animals, and here she overhears the text for “Hello! Hello!” (which is actually “Hollo! Hollo!” in the original story) as sung by frogs in a nearby pond:

Hollo! hollo!  
Come down below, —  
It’s lovely and cool  
Out here in the pool  
On a lily-pad float  
For a nice green boat.  
Here we sit and sing  
In a pleasant ring;  
Or leap-frog play,  
In the jolliest way.  
Our games have begun,  
Come join in the fun.35

34 Alcott, Complete Works, 83269.  
35 Ibid., 83315.
The third text, “Dear Grif,” comes from one of Alcott’s final novels, *Jack and Jill*, which was published in 1880. This novel is an elaboration of the simple nursery rhyme, and is an example of some of Alcott’s more mature writing. In Alcott’s version of the story Jack Minot is a best friend to his next-door neighbor Janey Pecq. Jack and Janey’s friendship is so well known throughout the town that the locals have begun to refer to them as “Jack and Jill” to mimic the old rhyme. They go sledding one day and, against Jack’s better judgement, Jill convinces him that they should go down a hill that is known to be dangerous. After careening down the hill once without injury they are excited to go back up and tempt fate again. During the second excursion they are not so lucky, and as they tumble down both are seriously injured. Jack suffers broken limbs, Jill a broken back. Alcott’s novel is the story of how these two friends progress through adolescence, deal with the results of their horrible accident, and learn that choices always have consequences. When the spring comes the children and their friends carry out the town tradition of making “May baskets” to give to friends and family. The girls stay at home to make baskets with Jill while the boys go out to search the countryside for flowers, an activity that Jill would be unable to perform while confined to her home with the injury. The boys resort to playing games and end up purchasing flowers at the local greenhouse instead of picking wildflowers. The girls, at first upset that the boys had not accomplished their task, suggest that they make baskets with the purchased flowers but also attach poetry in place of the more festive wild flowers. The poem provided by their friend Molly, known as a fanciful joker, is the text for this song. It is written to the boy she fancies (Grif) who is to be the recipient of her May basket. The final line of the text,
“But think of me when this you see and put it on your cranium,”\textsuperscript{36} is better understood in the context of the story. At one-point Molly has been working on her poem and says “Oh, dear! I can’t find a word to rhyme to ‘geranium’ while “pulling her braid, as if to pump the well of her fancy dry.”\textsuperscript{37} Another of their friends (Frank) calls out “Cranium.” It is from this interaction that this humorous text comes about:

Dear Grif,
Here is a whiff
Of beautiful spring flowers;
The big red rose
Is for your nose,
As toward the sky it towers.
Oh, do not frown
Upon this crown
Of green pinks and blue geranium
But think of me
When this you see,
And put it on your cranium.\textsuperscript{38}

The text for the fourth song, “Here a Nut,” also comes from the previously discussed story \textit{The Skipping Shoes}. As Kitty is in the fairyland she also hears the musings of a squirrel as he gathers nuts in preparation for the winter:

Here’s a nut, there’s a nut;
Hide it quick away,
In a hole, under leaves,
To eat some winter day.
Acorns sweet are plenty,
We will have them all:
Skip and scamper lively
Till the last ones fall.\textsuperscript{39}

\textsuperscript{36} Alcott, \textit{Complete Works}, 48475 – 48485.
\textsuperscript{37} Ibid., 48454.
\textsuperscript{38} Ibid., 48478.
\textsuperscript{39} Ibid., 83293.
The fifth text is titled “Don’t Drive Me Away” and comes from the story *Rosy’s Journey*, which is also included in *Lulu’s Library Series I*. This story is about a young girl named Rosy. Her family is very poor and as a result her father left when she was very young to dig gold. Unfortunately, he never returned. After some time, her mother grew sick and died, and the estate had to be sold to pay her mother’s medical bills. “Rosy was left all alone, with no mother, no home, and no money to buy clothes and dinners with.”\textsuperscript{40} When no other option remained, Rosy resolved to leave her village and find her father. The journey was sure to be difficult and was almost certain to be the end of such a young and inexperienced girl. Rosy was a kind-hearted girl, and along her journey she helped save a fish, a field mouse, and a fly, out of the goodness of her heart. They all promised to help her in return; the fly stated “You saved my life, and I’ll save yours, if I can.”\textsuperscript{41} Rosy doubted that a little fly could ever be of help to her and replied “You silly thing, you can’t help me.”\textsuperscript{42} As the story progresses each of the animals that Rosy saved return to help her on her journey to find her father. With their help she arrives at the gold mine and finds her father, who had personally unearthed a large chunk of gold that very day. With the new found fortune, and the joy of being reunited with his daughter, the father plans to set out in the morning to return to his old village. The fly that Rosy had previously helped returns to offer this warning, a warning that would save their lives and bring to pass his promise to return Rosy’s favor:

\textsuperscript{40} Alcott, *Complete Works*, 83485.
\textsuperscript{41} Ibid., 83518.
\textsuperscript{42} Ibid.
Without context this text seems strange and out of place, but the story provides a clear setting that causes this peculiar writing to become relatable and logical.

The final text in *Alcott Songs* is simply titled “Lullaby.” It comes from *The Rose Family*, which was written in 1864, and is published in the collection *Morning Glories and Other Stories* in 1868. This story is about a family of fairies with four little daughters, Blush, Brier, Moss, and Eglantine. Eglantine is still a baby, but Blush, Brier, and Moss cause their fairy parents many troubles. After several unsatisfactory attempts to tame their wild children, the mother fairy resolves that “there is no way left but to send them to the good fairy, Star, who is gentle and wise, and will make them what we desire.”

The children are sent to this good fairy where they are each given a talisman to remind them of their mother. They all drift off to sleep and awake in different places. Moss awakes among a family of mice from whom she learns obedience. Blush awakes in a field of flowers from whom she learns humility. Brier awakes in a bird’s nest where she

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44 Ibid., 59213.
is charged to help care for two baby birds. From this experience she learns the importance of being responsible. During this experience Brier sings the little birds to sleep one night with a fairy lullaby that she remembers from her childhood:

Now the day is done,  
Now the shepherd sun  
Drives his white flocks from the sky;  
Now the flowers rest  
On their mother’s breast,  
Hushed by her low lullaby.

Now ‘mid shadows deep  
Falls blessed sleep,  
Like dew from the summer sky;  
And the whole earth dreams,  
In the moon’s soft beams,  
While night breathes a lullaby.45

ANALYSIS

Alcott Songs contains six short songs placed in the order in which they might occur during a summer day. Each song is unique and independent of the others, but there are a few traits that unify each setting. One overarching feature of all of the Alcott Songs is that the music is inseparably connected to the text. This is displayed beautifully in every song by the introduction provided by the winds before the vocalist begins. The wind introductions always serve as the opening paragraphs or chapters of a story, setting the scene and mood before the true plot is introduced. The connection between text and music is also masterfully displayed by frequent use of text painting, or the

45 Alcott, Complete Works, 59436 – 59447.
conveying or expressing of the text through musical means. Another feature that is shared by all of the Alcott Songs is the use of musical themes that fit into very definable and simple phrases. It could be said that the idea of this music is to emulate the works of Alcott, not to confound the minds of the greatest of chamber music connoisseurs but, on the other hand, to be simple and quirky, understandable by the layman yet pleasing to the musically educated. By exploring the melodic content, harmonic content, and use of text painting the compositional craft in Danyew’s Alcott Songs is clearly demonstrated.

“Awake! Awake!” is the first song in Danyew’s cycle, and from the onset the music and text connection is present. The text speaks of awaking on a beautiful day. The setting is provided by a clarinet choir and flute with a rippling motive in 6/8 time. This motive conveys a feeling of beautiful spring time. Harmonically, this motive alternates between an implied G major chord and an A minor chord. The song opens in the key of G major with these two chords functioning as the tonic and supertonic triads. This motive continues in measure 5 where the vocal melody begins. It is here that the first example of text painting occurs. The text “Awake! Awake!” rises stepwise from the pitch A to D and suggests the rising of the sun, or of a person, at the onset of the morning. In this phrase there are two measures of a basic idea in measures 5 and 6. These are followed by two measures of a contrasting idea and a weak cadence in the third measure (measure 9). The contrasting idea is slightly asymmetrical to the basic idea, as the cadence does not occur until the third measure, as opposed to the two total measures of the basic idea. The following four measures (10 – 13) constitute a cadential
progression which finishes in measure 13, and it could be argued that it modulates to the key of D major and ends with an imperfect authentic cadence. The immediate return to G major in measure 14 seems to imply otherwise however, as the arrival of the D major chord in measure 13 functions more as a half cadence that has been approached by a secondary dominant. During this eight-measure theme there are two additional occurrences of text painting. In measure 8 the text “earliest gleam of golden sunlight shines” arrives, and on the word “golden” an F major chord is presented. Up until this point the harmony has only alternated between G major and A minor. The arrival of this chord begins a harmonic progression, just as the rising of the sun brings the progression of the day. Also, in measure 10, the text “rippling” is accompanied by the clarinet rippling motive that was used to set the tone of spring at the beginning of the song.

Figure 4.1 displays the outline of this musical phrase and its harmonic progression.

Figure 4.1. Steve Danyew, *Alcott Songs*, “Awake! Awake!” (Measures 5–13, Soprano, harmonic analysis added).
Moving on from the first phrase, the rippling motive is repeated again for two measures, beginning in measure 15, before the vocal melody returns and repeats the same musical theme, slightly altered, with the next line of text. This phrase begins in measure 17 and contains the same structural skeleton as the previous phrase. Measures 17 and 18 provide a basic idea, measures 19 and 20 a contrasting idea with a half cadence in measure 21. This is followed by the same cadential progression that uses an A7 chord as a secondary dominant to lead to a half cadence on the D major chord. In this phrase the same text painting is used for the first two words as “Awake! Awake!” is repeated. In measure 19 the lowest melodic note of the entire song is placed on the word “low” in the text. In measure 21, immediately after the text states “wild-bird’s morning hymn,” the flute is made to emulate a bird song. A fascinating bit of text painting occurs in measure 23 as the clarinet rippling motive from the beginning of the song comes again at the same point in the musical phrase. Although the use of the motive is simply following the form, the rippling motive fits just as nicely with the word “floating” as it did with the previous word “rippling.”

In the next phrase, beginning in measure 28, the basic idea is stretched out over four measures instead of two. The purpose for this will be described later in relation to text painting. The phrase also begins with an unexpected shift to an E major chord after the usual half cadence in the key of G major. The contrasting idea is the same as it has been in the other phrases with two measures of melodic material followed immediately by a half cadence in the third measure. The cadential portion of this phrase has been augmented, as was the basic idea, to take up eight measures instead of the usual four.
The first measure is stretched out into a two measure gesture ending with a fermata on a G7 chord. The G7 functions as a secondary dominant leading to the next two measures which begin on a C major chord and end on a fermata with an A-flat7 chord. A-flat would be the Neapolitan chord in the key of G major. This leads to a second inversion tonic chord in a cadential function leading to the dominant chord (D major) and finally arriving on a root position tonic chord for the first and only perfect authentic cadence of the song. As previously mentioned, the augmentation of the basic idea into four measures rather than two has relation to the text. Beginning in measure 28 the text reads “Then spread each wing,” and the arrival of the unexpected E major chord, the stretched out melodic material, and the sixteenth note flourishes in the bassoon and clarinet parts all provide beautiful scenery that represents the spreading of wings in flight. The connection between the music and text is noteworthy, and this trend continues into the other songs of the cycle. This song could be considered roughly strophic with three verses (roughly because the second verse is varied slightly and the first four measures of third verse are new material). Looking through a wide lens, the first four measures of the third verse still accomplish the same function as the opening measures of the other verses, an initial ascent to the fifth scale degree, and therefore are considered related and the overall form considered roughly strophic. Appendix C provides a chart visualizing the structure and form of “Awake! Awake!” as described.

“Hello! Hello!” is the second song in the cycle and also begins with an instrumental introduction that sets the mood for the text. A four-measure clarinet solo in a 6/8 time signature adds some cohesion to the transition from the first song (also in
6/8) to the second song, which is mostly in common time. The solo introduces motivic material that is used in other sections of this song. Measures 5 and 6 begin to make the transformation in to common time as the rhythmic idea that makes up most of the songs accompaniment first appears. In measure 8 the instrumental introduction begins to set the scene for the text as traded eighth notes between sections of the ensemble provide a jovial and enthusiastic greeting. In measures 10 and 11 the flute returns the motivic material from the clarinet solo, slightly altered to fit into the precepts of common time, before a one-measure segment of harmonic planing brings the introduction to a close.

Measure 14 marks the opening of the first phrase of text, but before the vocalist begins the accompaniment is played alone for two measures. In this accompaniment every beat alternates between two chords, E-flat major and F minor. In the key of E-flat major the harmonic material is the same as the beginning of the first song, alternating from the tonic to supertonic chords within the respective key. In this song the alternating chords take place over an A-flat pedal. This harmonic material continues as the vocal melody begins in measure 16. Here the melodic phrase is only four measures long, and seems to consist of one measure of a basic idea, one measure of contrasting idea, and then a two-measure cadential gesture. In this case the phrase “cadential gesture” is more appropriate than “cadential progression” because of the harmonic material. Measures 14 – 18 consist of the same repeated pattern, alternation from E-flat major to F minor. When the phrase comes to a close in measure 19 this material continues, but descends a whole step to alternate from D-flat major to E-flat minor.
chords. Because the harmony is more static than progressive this simple downward step provides closure to the melodic phrase and therefore serves as a type of “cadential gesture.” This static harmony with repeated eighth note figures is an idea that Danyew borrowed from Igor Stravinsky in *L’Historie du Soldat*. At the beginning of “*Musique de la 1ere Scene*” Stravinsky employs this technique in the bass and violin and creates the same standing harmony with repeated eighth notes.⁴⁶

There is also one instance of text painting in Danyew’s opening phrase. When the text reads “come down below” the melody includes two leaps downward followed by a step downward. The outline of this phrase is shown in Figure 4.2. The accompaniment in the figure has been reduced to three lines for ease of viewing.

⁴⁶ Steve Danyew, telephone interview by author, January 13, 2017.
As the song continues, in measure 21, the harmonic alternation between E-flat major and F minor chords returns and sounds for two measures before the vocal line enters in measure 23. Here, the same phrase structure is used with one measure of basic idea, another measure of contrasting idea, and two measures of a cadential gesture with the harmonic step downward. Text painting is present as well. In measure 23 eighth note triplets are used over the duple eighth notes in the instrumental parts.
This rhythmic effect causes a feeling of separation between the vocal line and instrumental part, as if the vocal line is floating above. This takes place on the phrase “lily-pad float” in the text. Next, a clarinet interlude that matches the four-measure structure of the vocal phrases is presented with the same accompaniment material as the vocal phrases. This short interlude leads into the vocalist’s third melodic phrase.

In measure 32 the same phrase structure exists again, and the harmonic material is also the same. There are two occurrences of text painting present in this phrase. In measure 32 the text proclaims “leap frog play.” To accompany this text, the oboe, bassoon, and bass clarinet parts contain octave leaps, and afterwards the flute plays a quick upward leaping flourish that sounds similar to the leaping of a frog. At the end of this phrase the text reads “come join in the fun” and the music immediately becomes faster and more playful with the flute, once again, using the motive introduced by the clarinet solo at the beginning of the song. Measures 38 – 41 also contain material from the introduction, and in measure 42 the cadential section of the final phrase is repeated, with some extension, to add finality to this statement and bring the song to its end. The overall form of this song is a little more complicated than the first song. Although the accompaniment material for each verse is essentially the same, the melody is different each time making it challenging to justify labeling this as a strophic form. The closing material is borrowed from the introduction, making the song somewhat rounded. Accordingly, it is more appropriate to say that it is in an A-B-A form with the verses serving as the B section. A full form chart for this song can be found in Appendix D.
The third song in the cycle is “Dear Grif,” and the playful nature of the text is exemplified in the music of the first four measures. The oboe and bassoon exchange descending and ascending quarter notes from the pitches A-flat and F. This gives a strong implication of an F minor triad and therefore F minor tonality. As the vocalist begins in measure 3 the descending leap from A-flat to F moves to the vocal line but is accompanied by the pitch D-flat in the bassoon. This D-flat finally makes clear that the opening tonality is D-flat major instead of F minor. This song functions much like a sixteen-measure period. Measures 3 – 6 present a basic idea. The basic idea is modulatory as it arrives on a G7 chord in measure 6. In measure 5 the melody steps downward from the pitch D to G. This stepwise descent has ties to the key of G major by a Schenkerian viewpoint, as it steps down from scale degree 5 and finishes on scale degree 1, relative to the key. The four-measure basic idea, therefore, breaks down the stability of the initially unsure D-flat major tonality and ends with a chord that facilitates a modulation to C major tonality. The next four measures, measures 7 – 10, present a contrasting idea. This four-measure contrasting idea builds towards an authentic cadence with the arrival of a G7 chord in measure 9, but instead of resolving to C major as expected the G7 leads to a C0 chord which acts as the leading tone triad to a D-flat major chord to close the antecendent phrase. The consequent begins on beat four of measure 10, and a modified version of the basic idea is presented from measures 10 – 15 ending on a G7 chord just as the basic idea of the antecedent. The contrasting idea begins in measure 16 and progresses just as the contrasting idea of the antecedent. Contrary to the antecedent phrase, when the G7 chord arrives it resolves as expected to
C major, creating an authentic cadence (although an imperfect one as the melody ends on the third scale degree, E). The imperfect authentic cadence brings the whimsical song to a close. Text painting is used in this phrase in measure 4 when the text states “here is a whiff” and a stretched triplet figure represents the wafting of a smell. In the subsequent measure the text contains the words “beautiful spring” and the clarinet and flute flourishes promote the atmosphere of a spring morning. Appendix E provides a full analytic chart of “Dear Grif” to help visualize the form as discussed.

The trend of certain material connecting one song to the next in the cycle continues. The first and second song were connected by the second songs 6/8 introduction as well as the use of harmony alternating statically between the tonic and supertonic triads. Here the second and third song are united by a harmonic step downward. The second song functioned primarily in an E-flat major tonality but at moments of cadence stepped downward to D-flat. The third song begins in D-flat major, after flirting with F minor, which unifies the two songs. The third song also has a harmonic motion downward from D-flat major to C major, albeit this downward motion is a half-step instead of the whole-step found in the second song.

“Here’s a Nut” is the fourth song in the cycle and returns to the key of E-flat major that existed in the second song. The text of “Here’s a Nut” is the musings of a squirrel as it gathers nuts and saves them for a winter day. The first two beats of the first measure contain light and bouncy rhythms and an E-flat major chord. The next measure and a half change to a dark French augmented six chord with a breezy sounding flute motive. This sounds similar to the changing of seasons as the E-flat major
spring gives away to the augmented six winter. These two measures are repeated again in measures 3 and 4 before the main melodic material of the song is introduced by the wind players in measures 5 and 6. The nimble and bouncy music, relative to the vivacity of a squirrel, continues as the melody moves to the vocal part for the first line of text in measure 7. The same melodic phrase is repeated in measure 9 but in this repetition the 4th scale degree is raised a half step to facilitate the return of the French augmented six chord which resolves to a cadential second inversion tonic chord followed by an imperfect authentic cadence. Figure 4.3 shows these four measures and displays that the A-flat has been changed to an A-natural in the second two measures.

Figure 4.3. Steve Danyew, Alcott Songs, “Here’s a Nut” (Measures 7 – 10, Soprano, Oboe, Bassoon 1 and 2, Clarinet 1 and 2, harmonic analysis added).
The next two measures contrast the light and bouncy melody that has been presented thus far. This contrast matches the new tone of the text as the squirrel briefly fantasizes about possessing all of the sweet acorns. Measures 13 and 14 then conclude the song as the light and bouncy melody returns for one more final statement, this time finishing with a perfect authentic cadence. This song most closely resembles a small ternary form with measures 7–8 being the exposition and measures 9–10 being a repeat of the exposition in a slightly altered prime form. Measures 11–12 serve as the contrasting middle, and measures 13 and 14 as the recapitulation. A form chart of this song can be found in Appendix F.

With “Here’s a Nut” finishing in the key of E-flat major, the fifth song, “Don’t Drive Me Away,” begins in the key of F minor. This movement from E-flat major to F minor mimics the alternation from the E-flat major chord to F minor chord in the second song. This is another example of the unifying qualities that run through the heart of this song cycle. The first five measures of “Don’t Drive Me Away” stand on a foreboding F minor chord with a major seventh, or FmM7. This chord is presented in driving staccato 16th notes, perhaps in relation to the title of the song, with wide sweeping dynamics. Underneath this driving rhythmic pattern the dark and menacing melody is introduced by the bass clarinet and contra-bass clarinet. This whole opening section of music, measures 1–6, could be heard as the fly from the story frantically racing to warn the girl and her father of the men conspiring to steal their gold.

The frantic feel of the first five measures begins to slow in measure 6, perhaps as the fly arrives at his destination, and a pedal F begins under the sound of a C major
chord. The C major chord functions as a dominant chord in an F minor tonality and eventually leads back to the FmM7 harmony as the first phrase of the text begins.

Measure 8 starts a two-measure basic idea which is followed by a two-measure contrasting idea ending on what could be viewed as an implied half cadence. The only note present is an E-natural, but the fact that this note does not exist diatonically in F-natural minor would suggest that it is a harmonically raised leading tone and therefore functioning as the third of an implied dominant chord. This is followed by three measures of melodic material over a standing FmM7 chord. The root of the F minor chord moves downward and lands on an E major chord to end this section and lead back to the prominent FmM7 chord to begin the next section of music. Figure 4.4 depicts this melodic phrase and the accompanying harmony.

Figure 4.4. Steve Danyew, Alcott Songs, “Don’t Drive Me Away” (Measure 8 – 16, Soprano, harmonic analysis added).
The connection between the music and text is strong in this song, perhaps more so than any other in the cycle, and the text painting virtuosic. In measure 9 the text pleads “hear what I say.” In the following measure all of the instrumental parts tacet in order to figuratively listen to what the vocal part will say. The text in measure 12 instructs “you must take flight,” and the Flute part in measure 13 contains a flourishing flight motive which also emphasizes the key notes of the FmM\(^7\) harmony that accompanies it. The word “flight” is placed on the highest note of the melody to this point. In measure 14 the text states “so be quiet” just as the flute and vocalist finish a decrescendo to piano while the other instruments tacet. In the next section of the song the brilliance of this text painting will be displayed as some of the same instrumental material is used with the new text, and still provides a text and music connection.

The next section of music, which begins in measure 17, starts with a repetition of the instrumental introduction from measures 2 – 7. The melodic phrase that follows, beginning in measure 23, matches the eight-measure length of the previous vocal phrase. but is constructed more closely to the model of a parallel period. Measures 23 – 26 make up an antecedent phrase with the first two measures serving as a basic idea and the latter two serving as the contrasting idea. The antecedent ends on an E diminished chord creating a quasi-half cadence with the leading tone triad substituting for the dominant chord. The consequent phrase begins in measure 17, where the basic idea of the antecedent is repeated in measures 27 and 28. In measures 29 and 30 the contrasting idea is varied to facilitate a type of authentic cadence as the leading tone triad substitutes for the dominant triad once again, and the cadence is completed with a
harmonic arrival FmM, which has functioned as the tonic chord to this point of the song. Measures 31 – 33 are instrumental only and provide a closing to the song. Within the final phrase there are several occurrences of text painting. The first instance is found at the end of measure 22 where the anacrusis of the vocal line prepares measure 23. The text reads “slip away with me,” and the half step movement from the pitch E to F is like the slithering escape of a serpent. Also, the very last word of the text, “sky,” is placed on the highest note of the melody matching the word flight from the first section. Accompanying the word sky, the flight motive returns in the flute and the flourish is extended to makeup the closing section of the song. The overall form of this song can be viewed as strophic with two total verses. The verses are bookended by the flute flight motive at the beginning and end of the song. A complete chart of “Don’t Drive Me Away” can be found in Appendix G.

The last song of the cycle is “Lullaby.” This song represents the closing of the day and brings a quiet and thoughtful end to the cycle. The song begins with a theme based on a sequence of 7-6 suspensions in the B-flat clarinet parts. This theme is displayed in figure 4.5 with the clarinet parts transposed to concert pitch.
This suspension theme is followed by four measures of instrumental introduction to the first phrase of vocal melody. These four measures set an F major tonality and end with a half cadence before the melody begins in measure 16. As the vocal melody begins, a two-measure basic idea is presented in measures 16 and 17. This basic idea is repeated in measures 18 and 19 with slight variation to lead to a half cadence. These four measures are followed by a cadential progression in measures 20 – 21, ending with an imperfect authentic cadence. This cadential progression is only two measures long, making it asymmetrical to the four measures that preceded it. Following two measures of instrumental interlude ending in a half cadence, the vocal melody begins again in measure 23. Here the basic idea is presented and repeated again with the second statement ending on a half cadence. After these two basic ideas, measures 27 – 29 consist of the closing melodic statement for this section of the song. The text and music
connection that has been present throughout the song cycle is again present in the final song. The fermata half-rests in measures 17 and 25 provide a deep and refreshing breath of reflection at the end of the day. In measures 28 and 29 the text speaks of the mother’s “low lullaby.” In these same measures the melody reaches to its lowest notes.

Measure 29 begins a restatement of the suspension theme, this time between flute and Clarinet 1. Following this theme, the vocal melody returns in measure 40 with the same formal structure, but slight variation to the melody itself. In measure 42 the second statement of the two-measure basic idea has been altered to incorporate a leap down from C to F. This change has been made to provide a moment of text painting as it aligns with the word “falls” in the text. The same musical phrase is repeated again in measure 47 and closes in measure 54 when the text has been completed. Following this section of melody another statement of the suspension theme occurs, this time between the oboe and vocalist with the vocalist repeating the text “a lullaby.” The song has five measures of closing material, beginning in measure 62, where measures 62 and 63 end in a half cadence and measures 64 – 66 close the entire song cycle with a perfect authentic cadence in the key of F major. A chart displaying a full analysis of “Lullaby” can be found in Appendix H.

In the six Alcott Songs Danyew displays a beautiful ability to connect text and music. He also demonstrates the diversity of his talents by creating such a personable and intimate work for chamber winds and vocal soloist. Furthermore, he manages to magnificently catch the nature and tone of Alcott’s poems and create an emulation of that nature and tone in music. Although becoming familiar with the context of Alcott’s
poems brings a new light of understanding to the text, the music that Danyew has composed provides a context of its own, making *Alcott Songs* an audience friendly work. While Alcott’s poetry is somehow both simple and complex, Danyew manages to recreate Alcott’s voice in music by creating melodies and textures that are also both simple and complex.
CHAPTER FIVE: Magnolia Star

BACKGROUND

Danyew’s initial inspiration for Magnolia Star is rooted in the experiences he had in his middle school jazz band. Every rehearsal began with the same exercise. “At the opening of each rehearsal, the whole band played the blues scales ascending, resting for one measure, descending, and resting for another measure. During the measures of rest, each member of the band took turns improvising a solo.”\(^{47}\) This introductory improvisation exercise had a lasting impact on Danyew, and inspired a desire to compose a piece comprising of this collection of pitches. Magnolia Star is the realization of this desire. It was not composed by commission or for any particular ensemble, but was, instead, written to quench and fulfill those desires. Nearly every note of Magnolia Star can be found in the C blues scales. Magnolia Star takes a unique approach to the blues scale, however. In Danyew’s words, “I didn’t want to create a ‘blues’ piece, but rather a piece in my own musical voice that uses and pays homage to the blues scale.”\(^{48}\) Danyew accomplishes this by building upon the triads that are “embedded within the C blues scales.”\(^{49}\) Danyew notes that “a C minor triad, an E-flat minor triad, and an E-flat major triad” are all found within the C blues scale.\(^{50}\) Because these triads are derived from the C blue scale they become the primary tonal areas of the piece. Within these tonal areas Danyew also builds further harmonies from the notes of the scale, creating a

\(^{48}\) Ibid.
\(^{49}\) Ibid.
\(^{50}\) Ibid.
distinctive harmonic atmosphere that is new and fresh. While the blues scale served as the original inspiration for Magnolia Star, an additional influence became prevalent as the compositional process progressed.

Danyew states that “When I first started improvising ideas for this piece based around the blues scale, I began to hear the influence of driving rhythms and sonorities which reminded me of trains.” As Danyew recognized the sounds of the train, the railroad became another influence for Magnolia Star. It is an amazing coincidence that the railroad became the second influence for this piece, because both the blues scale and the American railroad have a strong and rich influence on the history of jazz music in America.

The importance of the blues scale in the creation of jazz music, particularly to the early delta blues of the New Orleans region, needs no introduction or explanation. The key role the railroad played on jazz music in America is a little more discreet. To fully understand how integral the railroads are to the history of jazz, two important factors need to be further explored: the great migration of African Americans to the north during the first half of the twentieth century, and the correlation between this migration and the development and advancement of the American railroad system in the United States.

According to the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz “The great migration of African Americans out of the South into the northern states began slowly after the Civil

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51 Danyew, Magnolia Star.
war but increased dramatically in the early 1900s. Between 1910 and 1940, approximately 1.75 million black Americans migrated north.”52 There are a number of reasons why this migration took place, not the least of which is the steep tradition of racism and segregation that existed in many of the southern states. When slavery ended in 1865, freedom was granted to slaves throughout the south. Many of these former slaves had limited job skills beyond those they had gleaned in slavery, and this left countless former slaves attempting to succeed as farmers. Because of financial limitations they could not purchase plots of land, and many “black southerners struggled to survive as farmers on small plots of land they rented from white landowners.”53 In addition to struggling financially, many black Americans were faced with violent racism. “Between 1906 and 1921, white mobs attacked black neighborhoods in southern cities and rural areas.”54 Living in fear for their financial and physical well-being, many African Americans chose to move to the north. Conveniently, passenger trains were beginning to flourish during this time, and provided an escape route for these individuals and their families.

Developments in engineering and architecture led to a booming railroad industry in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In 1856 the first direct railroad line from Chicago to Cairo, Illinois was laid. Soon after, sleeping cars, or “sleepers,” were introduced to this part of the country. This was the beginning of a railroad line that would eventually

53 Ibid.
54 Ibid.
run continuously from Chicago to New Orleans: The Illinois Central Railroad. Because of the connection that the Illinois Central made from the north to south, directly through the heart of the United States, it would come to be known as the Main Line of Mid-America. The initial connection to Cairo, Illinois was important because Cairo was “the confluence of the Ohio and Mississippi rivers.”\textsuperscript{55} A rail station in Cairo allowed for a connection to the south via steamboats, these boats would come to be known as the Blue Line. “The services of the Illinois Central and the Blue Line were so coordinated . . . that for all practical purposes the Blue Line was the southern extension of the railroad.”\textsuperscript{56} In 1889 a bridge was completed in Cairo that allowed the railroad to continue laying tracks to the south. This connection was important to the railroad industry, particularly the Illinois Central Railroad, because developments in the progress of the Panama Canal would signal the coming of major ports of trade in the south, particularly in New Orleans. These ports would bring large shipments of imported goods to America. The goods would need to be transported from the south to the north, and extending the railroad to the south would open great financial opportunities for railroad owners, and would also free them from their collaboration with the Blue Line.

As America became involved and expedited the completion of the Panama Canal, it eventually became recognized as a great success for the American economy.

“In honor of the mighty work at the Canal Zone, the Illinois Central on February 4, 1911, renamed its premier train. Thereafter the \textit{Chicago & New Orleans Limited}, Nos. 3 and 4,

\begin{footnotesize}
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\bibitem{56}
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was known as the *Panama Limited.*”

The *Panama Limited* ran from New Orleans to Chicago, and would become one of the most famous and luxurious passenger trains in the country. The *Magnolia Star*, which Danyew borrows the title of his work from, is the name for a series of coach cars that would eventually be added to the Panama Limited. The Panama Limited would not only become famous for its luxurious ride, but also for some of its legendary feats. “In March 1925 after a terrible tornado had torn across southern Illinois . . . the *Panama* . . . was detained until 130 doctors and 40 nurses with medical supplies and food could be loaded aboard.”

The nation’s great love and appreciation for this train was exemplified by Chancellor T. P. Guyton of Mississippi who “recessed his court 5 minutes every session for 12 years so that everybody could watch the *Panama* roll through town.”

As the southern black Americans began their migration to the north, it is this very *Panama Limited* train that carried these underappreciated people to the promise of a brighter future. One can only imagine the great sacrifices that individuals and families made in order to obtain a ticket to ride on the *Panama Limited*. This train was often the vehicle for elitists and dignitaries. It can be assumed that less wealthy individuals could only afford passage for a portion of the train’s route and would stop somewhere along the way to save money before finishing the journey. Whatever hardships the trip could have caused, the *Panama Limited* provided an escape for a people that were in dear need of one. It is of no small consequence that this train ran from New Orleans, the jazz

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58 Ibid., 22.
59 Ibid.
capital of the world, to Chicago. As the migration of black Americans to the north continued, the people of New Orleans took with them their culture and their arts. The people of New Orleans took jazz to Chicago. It is for this reason that the dissemination of jazz from the southern states to the north can recognize the railroad industry as it’s mode of transportation.

Decades later the *Panama Limited* would remain a beloved train of the American people, and it continued to run with moderate success. It did, however, stop running for a short period of time. “May 28, 1932, was a sad day for the *Panama*. The lean years of the depression and a resultant dearth of passengers caused the train to be discontinued.”60 The train returned at the end of 1934, with improvement, adding air conditioning to the cars and decreasing the travel time for the route from 23 to 18 hours. As technological advancements continued, luxury passenger trains began to fall out of style. The Illinois Central introduced coach cars to the *Panama Limited*, although they gave this line of cars a separate name and essentially segregated them from the luxury cars. The coach cars were known as the *Magnolia Star*. *Magnolia Star* is a fitting title for a piece of music that has two strong influences, both of which have had a lasting and significant impact on the culture and music, particularly jazz, in America.

ANALYSIS

Formally, *Magnolia Star* consists of two large sections which are separated by a short middle section featuring a flute solo. The first 132 measures of the piece introduce several different motives and ideas in succession before shrieking to a halt. The harmonies of this section remain relatively simple, with few extensions beyond the seventh. Measures 161 to the end return all of the motives and ideas from the first large section, but begin to synthesize them and add variations. As the audial train ride races to a finish, the harmonies become more complex and begin to incorporate quartal sonorities and polychords. Within these two large sections there are smaller sections of varying lengths, many of which can be divided into eight-measure segments at the most micro of levels. As the first section begins, the rhythmic motive, or motor, that underlines the entire piece is introduced in the first four measures, along with the pitches of the C blues scale.

The first macro section can be divided into three separate intermediate sections, each separated further into micro sections. In measures 1 – 4 the main motivic drive for *Magnolia Star* is provided by repeated *staccato* eighth notes in 7/8 time, with a 2+2+3 pattern. Accents are placed on the first and fifth (first in the group of three) eighth of note of each measure. These accents magnify the naturally occurring agogic accents. Within the rhythmic motive, every note of the C blues scale is played simultaneously, creating a harmony that will be used often in the remainder of the piece and will be referred to as the C blues cluster, or CBC. The rhythmic motive and introductory voicing of the C blues cluster are displayed in figure 5.1.
This rhythmic pattern is repeated again in the next four measures (5 – 8) by a full brass choir minus the trumpet, with the harmony changed to an E-flat minor triad. These four-measure segments constitute a small eight-measure phrase, the first of the micro sections. Eight measure segments will become important to the overall structure of the piece. The four-measure alternation between the C blues cluster in the woodwinds and E-flat minor chord in the brass repeats from measures 9 – 16. The only change is that in measures 9 – 12 the rhythm has been altered to fit into a 4/4 time signature in order to facilitate a brief segment of another motive. Above the rhythmic motive, fragments of the other motives are exposed before being introduced in their entirety later in the piece. In the previously mentioned 4/4 section (measures 9 – 12), an eighth note and sixteenth note pattern in the flutes and oboe presents the concept of
what will later become an important motive. In measures 14 – 16 another sampling of a motive is presented in the trumpet parts. This short segment is a fragment of what will later become the principal melodic motive. These eight measures make up the second micro section.

After the eight-measure sections, the harmonic rhythm begins to accelerate in measure 17. The alternation from the C blues cluster, in the woodwinds, to the E-flat minor chord in the brass is rhythmically diminished from four measures each to one measure each. The trend of acceleration continues as one-measure alterations become one beat each in measure 21, and then only a portion of each beat in measure 23. The acceleration culminates in a return of the C blues cluster harmony, in whole notes, and ends the first intermediate section. This constitutes the end of what could be referred to as a lengthy introduction.

Small eight-measure phrases continue into the next intermediate section of music, in measure 26. Four measures of brass presenting the rhythmic motive is followed by four measures of woodwinds. Beginning in measure 26, however, the harmonic content has been altered. The brass harmony consists of the pitches C, E-flat, G-flat, and G. This harmonic sonority will be referred to as a Cm/9 chord, as it contains the pitches necessary to spell both the minor and diminished triads. The woodwinds, on the other hand, play an E-flat minor chord with an added ninth. Measures 26 – 34 contain these alternating harmonies, while more melodic material is introduced by the horns. The next eight-measure segment strips down the rhythmic and harmonic content to its most basic skeleton. By measure 39, the rhythmic motive consists of only the first
eighth note of each grouping, and sounds in octave C’s. As measure 42 begins, the rhythmic motive has started to rebuild and a full phrase of melodic material is presented.

In measure 42 the horns present a four-measure basic idea. This sounds over the rhythmic motive, which is now voiced in an open 5th from C to G. The basic idea steps down a half step from concert pitch G to G-flat before leaping down to E-flat. The basic idea is repeated in measures 46 – 49, but instead of leaping down to E-flat it leaps up to B-flat, giving the melodic content an implied half cadence with E-flat as tonic. These two basic ideas are followed by eight measures of continuation, which ultimately land on an E-flat tonic. It is difficult to define any of these moments as truly cadential, with the only harmonic content being an open 5th from C to G. The implications of the melody are clear however, and fall into the precepts of an E-flat major tonality. This melody and its implied phrases are displayed in Figure 5.2.

Figure 5.2. Steve Danyew, Magnolia Star, (Measures 42 – 58, Horn, phrase analysis added).
After this melodic presentation, the rhythmic motive builds again in volume, rhythm, and harmonic content, and arrives on a C major chord in measure 70. This is the first occurrence of a note (E-natural) that cannot be found within the standard C blues scale. This ends the second intermediate section within the first macro section of *Magnolia Star*.

The C major sonority only exists for the length of one eight note, as the next section of music, beginning in measure 70, provides a full statement of a new eighth note and sixteenth note motive (foreshadowed in measure 10 by the flutes) in an implied C minor tonality. This rhythmic motive is found in a 4/4 time signature, but has imbedded within it a 3/8 hemiola. This hemiola is emphasized in measures 74 – 77 by the bass clarinet and marimba accenting every third eight note. This is illustrated in figure 5.3.

Figure 5.3. Steve Danyew, *Magnolia Star*, (Measures 74 – 77, Clarinet 1, 2, and 3, and Bass clarinet).
The melody, as is visible in Figure 5.3, can be reduced to consist of the top note of each three eighth notes, aligning with the eighth notes in the bass clarinet. From this viewpoint, a Schenkerian approach to analysis would suggest that the first two measures provide prolongation of the third scale degree in C minor (E-flat), and the third measure descends by step from scale degree three to scale degree one. While this motive is introduced in its entirety for the first time, a four-part saxophone choir emulates a train horn by holding out a $C^6_7$ chord with a downward pitch bend.

Measures 70 – 78 consist of two statements of the clarinet motive, and continue the tendency for micro eight-measure phrases. Another eight-measure phrase makes up measures 82 – 90, which is comprised of the same clarinet motive. The motive has been varied slightly, however, so that the first two measures no longer provide a prolongation of scale degree three but, instead, make an initial ascent from tonic up to the third scale degree before descending back down. The hemiola emphasis exists in these eight measures as well, but now in trumpet and trombone. The train horn effect continues in the saxophone parts. Measures 90 – 98 add intensity and movement to the features from the previous sixteen measures, and finally lead to a return to the full C blues cluster and rhythmic motive in measure 98.

The return of the C blues cluster, in measure 99, coincides with the arrival of a new motivic idea in the low brass and horns. The original rhythmic motive and new low brass motive provide an undercurrent for the return of the melodic material from measure 42. Instead of remaining in horn, the melodic material is now found in piccolo and oboe. The four-measure basic idea is presented in measures 103 – 106. The basic
idea is then repeated in measures 108 – 112 with alteration to end on the pitch B-flat, just as before. The continuation moves to brass choir in measures 115 – 119. All other parts are systematically removed, as the brass finish the melody alone. The melody ultimately lands on a concert G, providing a sense of half cadence and return to C major tonality in measure 120. Measures 120 – 127 continue the rhythmic motor, although now in 4/4 time. The harmonic content of the rhythmic motive is now a C minor chord with an added 4th. The 4th sounds as a dissonant chord tone and does not suspend or resolve. Meanwhile, fragments of melodic material pass around the woodwind sections before all winds tacet in measure 129. Here, bowed cymbals create the sound of screeching train brakes, and the chimes represent the ringing of the train’s bell. This signals the end of the first macro section of the piece.

As the short middle section of *Magnolia Star* commences, the train slowly accelerates. A quarter note rhythmic drive begins on unison E-flats in marimba and flute. The pitch F is added by the end of the next measure and, less than two measures later, a B-flat is added. This provides a quartal harmony that remains for several measures and offers a driving nuance under a tuneful flute solo. This gentle solo and relatively soft rhythmic drive provide a brief respite from the constant energy that prevails in the rest of the work. Throughout the solo, the rhythmic drive picks up intensity as the metaphoric train continues to return to speed. In measures 157 – 160 the clarinet motive from measure 70 returns, and the four-measure statement finishes with the return of the full rhythmic motive and C blues cluster in measure 161. The return of this material begins the second macro section of the work.
As the rhythmic motive resumes full pace, in measure 161, the Cm/° chord returns for a four-measure statement of the rhythmic motive. Afterwards, in measure 165, all of the motives converge to synthesize all of the material. There are simultaneous soundings of the clarinet motive from measure 70, the rhythmic motive, the horn melody from measure 42, and a new countermelody in the trumpets. The texture continues to build as the flutes, oboes, and saxophones join in measure 173. The full ensemble is now in use. This textural climax begins to de-escalate in measure 179 with the return of quartal harmony and the end of the high brass melody and countermelody. Measure 182 brings another statement of the horn melody, with the basic idea in measures 182 – 185. The basic idea is repeated in measures 186 – 189 and ends on concert B-flat. The rhythmic motive continues through this section, in 4/4 time, but begins to add sixteenth note glitches as the rhythm becomes increasingly unstable. The melody is extended and decorated and builds intensity until measure 201.

The *fortissimo* arrival in measure 201 initiates the first use of polychords. The low brass have a vigorous E-flat major chord, while the woodwinds continue the rhythmic motive with an $A^\#^7$ chord. These two chords sounding together create a thick harmonic texture, and the inclusion of the pitch A is one of the rare uses of a pitch not found in the standard C blues scale. The woodwinds alternate between ideas every two measures. In measure 205 the brass chorale harmony changes to a C minor chord while the $A^\#^7$ chord remains in the woodwinds. In measure 209 the harmony begins alternating between E major and Cm/°, and the rate of alternation accelerates until
measure 215. Here the Cm/° harmony sounds alone in low brass, horn, and bassoon quarter notes. The space between these quarter notes is silent with full ensemble rests.

Following these spaces of rest, measure 219 begins a closing section that could be considered a condensed repeat of the opening section of the piece. The rhythmic motive continues with the harmonic C blues cluster. After two measures the harmony changes to a Cm7 chord. Two measures later the Cm/° chord returns again. Following this harmonic change, in measure 224, there is a short interjection of the low brass motive from measure 99. Subsequently measures 226 – 229 are essentially the same as measures 64 – 67, and measures 230 and 231 the same as measures 68 – 69. Measures 232 – 234 then present the clarinet motive, as does measure 70, but this time it has been reduced by one measure. The saxophone section train horn sounds, one final time, in measure 234. All of this leads to a final C major chord to bring this exciting work to an end.

While there are undeniably programmatic elements to Magnolia Star (the sound of the train horn, the ringing of the bell, the screeching of the brakes) Danyew did not intend for the music to tell any specific story, or provide any specific visions for the listener. Instead, he leaves the details of the train ride to the listener’s imagination. The listener could imagine that this piece, as a whole, constitutes a train ride. While Magnolia Star does not contain the depth of symbolism that exists in compositions such as Karel Husa’s Music for Prague 1968 or Hector Berlioz’s Symphonie Fantastique, it is

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certainly possible to argue that it contains the element of storytelling these
masterworks possess. One possible scenario could be the following: *Magnolia Star*

begins as the train leaves its station of departure. The speed of travel progresses and
builds through the opening sections, and it could be imagined that anxiety sets in as the
train continues to accelerate. At measure 70 the train finally reaches its cruising speed,
the passengers begin to settle, and the train blows its horn as it passes by cities. The
train begins to slow, approaching a stop where more passengers will load, and the
brakes screech as the train stops and rings the bell, allowing passengers to board. The
train begins to accelerate again, but this time the acceleration process is not as alarming
to the passengers, and the flute solo signifies peace of mind. The ride becomes rough as
sixteenth notes are added to the rhythmic drive, but the steady cruising speed finally
resumes and the passengers are set at ease with the arrival of the final C major chord.

Any listener could have infinite variations on this story. The sounds of *Magnolia Star*
could even be understood in a completely different way. Regardless, by hearing and
associating the music in this way, performers can connect to the work of art and provide
more stimulating and entertaining performances. It can be a beneficial practice for
conductors to listen to the piece and describe their personal interpretation of the
*Magnolia Star* “story.” It is difficult to listen to this music and not be transformed to
another place and time: riding on an old passenger train and enjoying all of the thrills
that this brings.
CHAPTER SIX: Conclusion

*Lauda, Alcott Songs, and Magnolia Star* are three of Danyew’s most commonly performed compositions for winds. These three pieces contain several different examples of the skill and voice that Danyew possesses. The creation of an extensive and serious musical work from a small amount of material, as with *Lauda*, follows the example of techniques used by the great composers of the Baroque and Classical periods such as Bach, Mozart and Haydn. The broad use of text painting and inseparable connection between the text and music in *Alcott Songs* is reminiscent of the great *Lieder* composers of the Romantic period such as Franz Schubert and Robert Schumann. The use of notes from the blues scale and the entertaining aspects of *Magnolia Star* parallel some of the other interesting works for wind band such as Adam Gorb’s *Awayday*.

This study provides important information to enhance future performances of these three works. With extensive historical information for each of the compositions, performers will be better prepared to understand and represent the true sentiment of the music. The background information provided will be helpful for preparing program notes to help the audience understand and enjoy the music. This study further provides a thorough analysis of each of the three pieces, which will enhance future performances by helping the performers make educated artistic decisions in regard to phrasing and pacing the performance. The combination of historical and analytical understanding of each work provides performers with the information necessary to be successful in performing these three works by Danyew, and will also provide a foundation for further studies and research into Danyew’s current and future compositions.
Each of these works are written for moderately advanced or advanced ensembles, but other compositions, such as *Rivertown Jubilee* and *Goodnight*, *Goodnight*, are playable by younger ensembles and also display a breadth of musical, educational, and entertainment value. Both of these compositions are scheduled to be performed in 2017, and *Rivertown Jubilee* has already been performed a number of times by high school bands and honor bands. Viewing the complete works of Danyew show that he is successful in composing for various levels of musical development.

The process of selecting musical repertoire for ensembles can be difficult, and it would be safe to assume that conductors have spent many hours fretting over all of the considerations required to make educated decisions. *Lauda, Magnolia Star, and Alcott Songs* are three works by Steve Danyew that are worthy of consideration in this process and are likely to be well received by the audience and performers. Further research of Danyew’s other compositions can prove that he has many other works that are reputable and worthy of performance.

**SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY**

As previously mentioned, there are a number of other compositions by Steve Danyew that are worthy of research. All of his compositions list a certain inspiration that can be studied and explored extensively. In addition to further studies about Steve Danyew, there are certainly opportunities for further research into the life of Louisa May Alcott to help provide more context to her life during the composition of the
poems used for *Alcott Songs*. Further exploration is available to provide specific examples of jazz musicians and cultural migration from New Orleans to Chicago. But perhaps most intriguing is the opportunity for in-depth study and discussion of the common traits that exist in Danyew’s compositions for all mediums. An attempt to define what orchestration practices create his distinct voice is a strong possibility for further research.
PART TWO

PROGRAM NOTES

Doctoral candidates beginning a degree in performance with a focus in Wind Conducting in 2014 were required to complete three recitals: two conducting recitals that would equate to two full concert programs, and a lecture recital. Following are program notes from two comprehensive recitals that involved excerpts from the University of Kentucky Wind Ensemble, Symphony Band, Concert Band and Chamber Winds during the Fall 2014, Spring 2015, Fall 2015, and Spring 2016 semesters. The lecture recital was given as part of the Symphony Band concert on March 9, 2016.
COMPREHENSIVE CONDUCTING RECITAL #1
University of Kentucky Symphony Band and Concert Band
Singletary Center for the Arts
Concert Hall

Program:


UK Symphony Band, November 23, 2014

After a Gentle Rain (1981)  Anthony Iannacone (b. 1943)
I. The Dark Green Glistens with Old Reflections
II. Sparkling Air Bursts with Dancing Sunlight

UK Symphony Band, March 2, 2015


UK Concert Band, April 24, 2016

Irish Tune from County Derry (1911)  Percy A. Grainger (1882 – 1961)

UK Symphony Band, April 24, 2016
Program Notes:

David R. Gillingham (b. 1947) earned Bachelor and Master Degrees in Instrumental Music Education from the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosk before moving on to receive a Ph.D. in Music Theory and Composition from Michigan State University. Dr. Gillingham has won numerous awards for his compositions, and many of his works are now considered part of the standard repertoire for the wind band. He is now on faculty at Central Michigan University where he teaches composition. He provides the following composer’s notes for Be Thou My Vision:

It was an honor and privilege to compose this work for Ray and Molly Cramer in honor of their parents. The work is heartfelt, expressive and hopefully inspiring. The hymn tune, Slane, is one of my favorites and inspired me to compose a countermelody that is likened to an old Irish ballad. Since Slane is, in fact, an old Irish ballad, the two tunes share this unique camaraderie. The work opens with a medieval-like flavor of reverence leading to the first presentation of Slane (Be Thou My Vision) in D-minor stated in chant-like somberness by the euphonium. Following, the newly composed Irish ballad is sung by the flute that leads to a dramatic statement of Be Thou My Vision by the full ensemble in A-major. The work is interrupted by a prayerful interlude. Following is the marriage of the two Irish tunes in D#-major that grows to a glorious climax and then subsides. A heavenly benediction closes the work.

Anthony Iannacone (b. 1943) is a composer with degrees from the Manhattan School of Music and the Eastman School of Music. He lists his principal teachers as Vittorio Giannini, Aaron Copland and David Diamond. Iannacone spent 30 years teaching at Eastern Michigan University where he conducted the Collegium Chamber Orchestra and Chorus. The majority of Iannacone’s compositions are for strings, but he has made a few explorations into the wind band medium and After a Gentle Rain is one of those compositions.

After a Gentle Rain is in two movements “The Dark Green Glistens With Old Reflections” and “Sparkling Air Bursts With Dancing Sunlight.” The first provides a beautiful array of colors and explores the many different unique sounds that can be created by the wind ensemble. The majority of the musical concepts for this movement come out of a motive that is introduced at the very beginning, two superimposed major triads. This movement is gentle and meditative. The second movement contrasts the mood of the first with light and buoyant dance-like rhythms. This movement offers a refreshing since of renaissance after the rain has fallen.
Claude T. Smith (1932 – 1987) was renowned as an American wind band conductor, educator, and composer. He has been commissioned to compose works for several important events in American history, such as the 50th anniversary of United States Navy Band. The majority of Smith’s teaching career was spent in public schools in Nebraska and Missouri. He is one of the most prolific composers in the history of the American wind band, with over 100 compositions for band alone. The following program note is included in the score for God of Our Fathers:

Originally written for brass choir and organ, this chorale prelude was rescored by Claude T. Smith for symphonic band where it has become a staple of concert band literature. It opens using the same brass choir as the original version before the expanded instrumentation with woodwinds and percussion is introduced.

Percy Grainger (1882 – 1961) was born in Australia and rose to international fame as a composer, pianist, and ethnomusicologist. He spent years studying folk songs from different areas of Europe and has provided several field recordings from his research. He is one of the most beloved of all wind band composers, and many of his works are inspired by and based on the folk songs that he studied and gathered. Irish Tune from County Derry is one of the most frequently performed compositions in all of the wind band standard literature. Grainger arranged this folk song for multiple mediums, including chorus, piano solo and, of course, band. The original folk song did not have a listed title in the folk music archives and only noted that it came from County Derry in Ireland. To today’s listener the melody is easily recognized as Danny Boy, although this is not the text that originally accompanied this famous melody.
COMPREHENSIVE CONDUCTING RECITAL #2
University of Kentucky Wind Symphony, Chamber Winds and Symphony Band
Singletary Center for the Arts
Concert Hall

Program:

Nocturno (1825)  
Felix Mendelssohn (1809 – 1847)

Flag of Stars (1954)  
Gordon Jacob (1895 – 1984)

Fanfare for the Common Man (1942)  
Aaron Copland (1900 – 1990)

Shepherds Hey (1911)  
Percy A Grainger (1882 – 1961)
Program Notes:

**Felix Mendelssohn** (1809 – 1847) was a composer, pianist and conductor of Jewish descent. Mendelssohn’s compositions are recognized as some of the greatest from the robust Romantic period. He composed concerti, oratorios, symphonies, and numerous pieces for solo piano. Mendelssohn’s Jewish descent and German nationality led to a period of time in which his music was frowned upon by the largely anti-Semitic German population. Today his music is some of the most beloved of the 19th century. *Nocturno* was composed when Mendelssohn was only 14 years old. He overheard an ensemble of wind musicians playing during the summer of his 14th year and was fascinated by their sound. At the age of today’s high school sophomores, Mendelssohn set out to compose a piece for this instrumentation and now, almost 200 years later, the young man’s composition is still frequently played by chamber wind ensembles around the world.

**Gordon Jacob** (1895 – 1984) was born in England and served his country during the first World War. At 22 years of age he was taken as a prisoner of war and was one of 60 men to survive from his battalion of 800. After his time in the military Jacob studied at the Royal Academy of Music and ultimately became a professor there until his retirement in 1966. Jacob made great contributions to the wind band literature, and, although not performed as often as some of his other works, *Flag of Stars* is recognized as an outstanding work of music. The composer’s own program notes read:

> The overture was written during the end of 1953 and the beginning of 1954 and is intended as a gesture from an inhabitant of the Old World to those of the New.

> The introductory fanfare and the slow section which follows recalls the sacrifices made by your country in both world wars in the struggle with dark forces of destruction. The allegro is prompted by thoughts of the energy, vitality, and cheerfulness of the American people – young, optimistic, and full of their faith in their destiny. The second subject in 3/4 time might perhaps suggest a sort of national song and right at the end there is a brief quotation from the “Star Spangled Banner.” But apart from any extra-musical meaning the work is constructed solidly on classical formal lines though its musical language is that of the 20th century (though not of an extreme type).

**Aaron Copland** (1900 – 1990) is immortalized through his music and is recognized as the dean of American composers. His ballets, *Appalachian Spring*, *Billy the Kid* and *Rodeo*, provide some of the most recognizable music of the 20th century. Copland was born in Brooklyn, New York to a conservative Jewish family, and is said to have struggled to find his place as child, lacking the ability to throw a ball any great distance or the coordination to be competitive in athletic
activities with his peers. Copland found his niche through music, and the world is forever indebted for his historic contributions. *Fanfare for the Common Man* was written in 1942 for the Cincinnati Symphony and conductor Eugen Goossens. Goossens planned to open each of the symphony’s concerts that season with the world premiere of a fanfare, and enlisted the skills of several composers to provide for this endeavor. Goossens’ proposal was that the fanfares be named after allies and military organizations in honor of the way the world was uniting in the midst of World War II. Copland named his after the common man, a title that can be taken as symbolic at many different levels. The fanfare was not only profound in title, but the music has proven to be one of the greatest fanfares ever written and is used frequently in performance and commercial settings to this day.

**Percy Grainger** (1882 – 1961) was born in Australia and rose to international fame as a composer, pianist and ethnomusicologist. He spent years studying folk songs from different areas of Europe and has provided several field recordings of old folk songs. He is one of the most beloved of all wind band composers and many of his works are inspired by and based on the folk songs that he studied and gathered. *Shepherd’s Hey* is a folk song recorded by Cecil Sharp that Grainger expertly set for the wind band. In Grainger’s arrangement the folk tune is repeated four times in its entirety, and every repeat proves to be an example of the quintessential Grainger sound. If one was ever to wonder what Grainger’s compositional voice sounded like, or what scholars mean when they refer to “Graingerisms” in music, *Shepherd’s Hey* is perhaps the best example to study.
Lecture Recital

“T.C. Kelly’s A Wexford Rhapsody”

March 9, 2016
Singletary Center for the Arts
Concert Hall

I. Biography of TC Kelly
   A. Thomas Christopher Kelly
      1. 1917 – 1985, born in Wexford
      2. Studied music at the University College in Dublin
      3. Worked as an Organist and Choirmaster in Newry, County Down and later as the Music Master at Clongowes Wood College in County Kildare
      4. Very successful as a choir director
      5. Well known throughout Ireland during his time
      6. Composed numerous works for orchestra, choir, and chamber ensembles.
         a. Only 1 for symphonic band, A Wexford Rhapsody, and 1 for brass band Suite for Military Band
      7. Most compositions contain traditional Irish melodies, and those that are original melodies are in the style of traditional Irish melodies

II. A Wexford Rhapsody
   A. Composed in 1954 during his second year at Clongowes Wood College
   B. A well-crafted work for wind band which makes use of three melodies from County Wexford folk songs
      1. All three melodies are taken from folk songs written in commemoration of the Wexford uprising of 1798
   C. One of, if not the, most well known and most played wind band compositions in all of Ireland

III. The uprising
   A. After the American, French, and Polish revolutions the Irish believed that they could accomplish the same
B. The Society of United Irishmen, a political party, organized many uprisings. The Wexford uprising was a people’s uprising first, and the United Irishmen came to their aid
C. The uprising was in protest to the British domination of Ireland, including the call for all of Ireland to surrender its arms
D. The five-week Wexford Rising was one of the bloodiest periods in Irish history. It is estimated that more than 30,000 people died in that short time, during which the British forces captured 79,630 pikes and 48,109 guns. Besides arms and ammunition, the rebels badly lacked competent leaders and trained troops

IV. Boolavogue
A. Story
1. The first of the three folk songs that Kelly uses in A Wexford Rhapsody
2. Tells the story of Father Murphy, one of the originators of the Wexford uprising
3. Father Murphy initially asked his followers to surrender their arms under the agreement that England would offer them protection
4. They were given 14 days to surrender all of their arms
5. Plundering, flogging, and burning of homes began after one day
6. In defense Father Murphy and his followers took up stones and drove back the soldiers
7. After this small victory they regained their weapons and went on a bloody rampage that eventually led to the capture of Father Murphy. He was tried in a tribunal and sentenced to death for treason, this was followed by torture, flogging, hanging, body being burnt in a barrel of tar, and head being placed on a spike as a warning to other rebels

B. Musical Setting
1. Kelly sets the melody of Boolavogue masterfully with frequent changes in instrumentation that create a constantly changing sound color
   a. Melody is played throughout by saxophone
      1) Have saxophones play from measure 3 to letter B
   b. Other instruments such as muted trumpet, oboe, horn, euphonium and flute join the saxophones in different combinations to provide a wide array of musical color.
      1) Have all melody people play from measure 3 to letter B

V. Kelly the Boy from Killane
A. Story
1. John Kelly is well known as a leader in the Wexford uprising and in the Society of United Irishmen, but little is known of him before this time.
2. Kelly was given the charge by Begenal Harvey to take his troops and attack the British outposts around New Ross, but not the city itself.
3. Upon arriving in the area Kelly saw that his rebels greatly outnumbered the English and sent in a messenger to offer them the opportunity to surrender.
4. The messenger was shot while carrying a white flag, and the rebels engaged the city of New Ross out of anger.
5. Kelly was injured and taken back to Wexford to heal, but never had the chance as Wexford fell to the English before he could return to the fight.
6. Kelly was dragged from his bed, tried, and sentenced to death for treason.
7. He was hung and decapitated. His body was thrown into the river while English soldiers used his head as a soccer ball to discourage further rebellion.

B. Musical Setting
1. The composer takes care to consider the text when creating a musical setting for *Kelly the Boy from Killane*.
2. A verse of the folk song reads:

   But the gold sun of freedom grew darkened at Ross
   And it set by the Slaney’s red waves
   And poor Wexford stripped naked hung high on a cross
   With heart pierced by traitors and slaves

3. This text is set to a much a slower tempo with the melody being played by a reminiscent trumpet solo.
   a. Whole band play from measure 58 to 66
4. The next section of the text reads:

   Glory O, Glory O to her brave sons who died
   For the cause of long down trodden men
   Glory O to Leinster’s own darling and pride
   Dauntless Kelly the boy from Killane
5. The music here morphs into a triumphant and majestic full
ensemble fanfare that echoes the triumphant ending to the text
a. Whole band play from measure 67 to 75

VI. Croppy Boy
   A. Story
1. Croppy boy is a term that was used to describe the men of the Society of United Irishmen
2. Men of this organization wore a “cropped” or short hair cut in protest to the aristocratic powdered wig
3. This folk song does not tell the story of a particular historical figure, but rather the story of the fate that most of the “croppy boys’’ face
4.

   As I was passing my father’s door
   My brother William stood at the door
   My aged father stood at the door
   And my tender mother her hair she tore.

   As I was going up Wexford Street
   My own first cousin I chanced to meet;
   My own first cousin did me betray
   And for one bare guinea swore my life away.

   As I was walking up Wexford Hill
   Who could blame me to cry my fill?
   I looked behind, and I looked before
   But my aged mother I shall see no more.

   And as I mounted the platform high
   My aged father was standing by;
   My aged father did me deny
   And the name he gave me was the Croppy Boy.

   It was in Dungannon this young man died
   And in Dungannon his body lies.
   And you good people that do pass by
   Oh shed a tear for the Croppy Boy.
B. Music

1. The musical setting to *Croppy Boy* is similar to the musical setting of *Boolavogue* in that the melody is carried in its entirety by the saxophone section with other instruments being added and subtracted frequently.

2. The difference lies in the percussion. While Kelly used little to no percussion in *Boolavogue*, *Croppy Boy* is accompanied by a march-like timpani ostinato. This could signify the “croppy boy’s” march through town on his way to be executed, which is described in the text.

3. Saxophone and timpani play from letter G to letter H

VII. And now the University of Kentucky Symphony Band will perform TC Kelly’s *A Wexford Rhapsody* in its entirety.
APPENDIX F

ALCOTT SONGS

"Here's a Nut!"
APPENDIX J

Interview Transcription

A Discussion with the Composer About His Life and About His Composition Lauda

Phone interview

December 2, 2016

Michael Black: I guess, just to start with, the way I intend to start my document is with a little bit of biographical information. So it would be good to get some information from you. Of course I know what’s there on your website, but just in to more detail. I’m sure you’ve probably looked over the questions a little bit, so talking about your early childhood, where were you raised? What kind of exposure to music did you have? Do you feel like that led to a career in music for you? That kind of stuff.

Steve Danyew: Yeah, absolutely. So, I grew up in Connecticut and I went to public school. I guess the earliest musical exposure I would have had was at home. My parents were both music lovers, not musicians per se, but always had music on. We had a piano, because my dad likes to dabble in piano a little bit in his spare time, so we had a piano in the house and I would play the piano. I guess at an early age I would improvise stuff at the piano, something I still like to do—something that’s always intrigued me, just sitting down at the piano and making things up, and of course all the possibilities the piano has. I took piano lessons, I think maybe when I was seven, eight years old, but like most kids that age didn’t really practice that much.

MB: [laughs] Right.

SD: So I think I did it for a year or two, then my parents decided to stop because I just wasn’t putting in the effort I guess. Then, of course, I had music in school. We had choir in elementary school, I learned the recorder, that sort of thing. Then I have a brother that is a few years older than me, and so I was sort of following his footsteps and he started to play the trumpet. In our school the band program started in fifth grade and the orchestra program started at fourth grade. I guess I got to fourth grade, and I couldn’t play a band instrument yet, so I played the violin a year in the orchestra. I remember really liking it. My brother was playing the trumpet at that point and there was something a little more intriguing about playing a wind instrument, that I could play in band and maybe jazz band, maybe a little more versatile. I don’t remember exactly how, but I ended up choosing saxophone. I think I was probably intrigued by the sound of it and, again, the possibilities, timbre wise it can do a lot of different things, and thought it was kind of a cool instrument. Then after fifth grade I really got in to saxophone, middle school, high school, playing in every possible ensemble, playing in ensembles on the side, getting together with friends doing informal music outside of school, marching band, pit orchestra, jazz band, concert band. So I guess that brings us to college. I don’t know if you want me to go in to that or if there are more things you want to touch on from earlier than that.
MB: No I don’t think so. Kind of funny, my Dad played saxophone when I was growing up, and I wanted to play saxophone as well, and then [laughs] we had to get in lines in sixth grade as to what instrument we wanted to play and so I went and got in the saxophone line and, no joke, this was the conversation, I got to the front of the line and the teacher said “let me see your teeth.”

SD: [laughs]

MB: So I showed him my teeth and he said “buzz your lips for me” and I said “OK,” and I buzzed my lips, and he said “go get in the trumpet line.”

SD: No kidding, wow.

MB: And the rest was history. So that’s just kind of funny how that stuff works out. Anyway.

SD: [laughs]

MB: just a little side note about my experience.

SD: Yeah, I wonder... how do you decide... you want a bassoon or two, how do you decide someone’s going to play the bassoon, you know? [laughs]

MB: [laughs] right, right, exactly, exactly. So did you... I know you spent some time in Danbury, is that where you grew up?

SD: I grew up in Newtown, I was born in Danbury. I like to say I was born the same place as Charles Ives.

MB: Right, yeah. [laughs]

SD: But I grew up in Newtown which is right next to Danbury, and that’s where I went to all of my schooling. My parents still live there.

MB: Ok, so did you live in Connecticut all the way up until you left for an undergrad degree?

SD: Yes

MB: Ok, so I guess that does bring us to college. So what played in to your decision to go all the way to Florida?

SD: Yeah, it’s interesting because, so I was... I guess just back-track, so in high school I was mostly experimenting with arranging and composing ... [loss of phone signal] ... had a lot of instruction in that. We did have theory courses at the high school, I think there was a theory course and an AP theory course. I took those and I was really interested in the theory and I think that played in to wanting to write music. I remember just hearing, I was always listening a lot in those ensembles I was playing in, and I know that my playing by ear was stronger than my reading. When I got into college I felt like I was a little bit behind in some more technical reading aspects and stuff, but my ears were good. So I think I’d been relying on my ears probably a lot, and that kind of got me by. My teachers in high school maybe just let it go. So, I’d be in those groups and hearing stuff and I’d just be really fascinated with some sound or some chord and that kind of drove me to want to create similar sounds or write things. So I wrote a few things in
high school but, again, I wasn’t being taught that so I wasn’t doing it a lot. I was thinking of going to college, I wanted to do music but I didn’t really know what I was going to do in music, so I was looking at music business programs as a way to be in music but maybe help me find some kind of job. That’s a big reason why I ended up going to the University of Miami, because they have a good music business program, and I actually had an aunt and uncle who lived in Miami so... if I didn’t have some connection there I probably wouldn’t have gone so far, but they were there and they both went to the University of Miami so I felt like I had some connection there. I went in my freshman year as a music business major and what I realized pretty quickly was that all the music majors, regardless of what your actual music major was, basically took the same classes and took the same number of ensembles, and you had lessons. It just seemed like everything was the same, and then if you went in to a different program maybe you could take a few more of those specific classes, but you could also just take whatever electives you want. So my favorite classes freshman year were the theory classes, and I thought, why don’t I just switch to music composition and theory and then I can take more of those classes and write some music, and I can still take some music business classes and do it that way. I think I also realized that I was looking at people in the field who had positions and stuff, and I was noticing that most people just had a degree in music, they didn’t have a degree in music business. And so I thought, maybe I’ll just try this other way. So I switched at the end of my freshman year and it ended being great because I had some really great composition teachers and the program was very small. I was the only composition student; well I shouldn’t say that, I was the only saxophone student of my year, but there was only four or so composition students in my year as well so, with the size of the school and the number of players and opportunities that there were, it was a pretty small program, so I felt like I got a lot of opportunities as a composer.

MB: Ok, cool. So I know at some point there, while you started studying composition, you eventually advanced into playing in Gary Green’s group. How was that, and do you feel like that had any specific impact on your voice? Certainly, I’m sure, it helped develop you as a musician, working with such as fantastic conductor.

SD: Yeah, absolutely. I remember my freshman year I played in the Symphonic Winds, I think is what they call second band, and I remember there was one day where the tenor player in the wind ensemble, he was going to be somewhere else so he needed a sub, and he asked me to sub in the wind ensemble which rehearsed in a different rehearsal hall, a little more elite feeling. The whole thing just felt elite. As a freshman, yeah, it was kind of intimidating.

MB: [laughs]

SD: I remember going in there and I was so nervous. I don’t even know if I played any notes in the right place [laughs].

MB: [laughs]

SD: But, yeah, Gary Green was conducting, but the wind ensemble was a lot of upper classmen and graduate students, and that was kind of my first experience with it. But it was certainly something I wanted to be part of because everyone talked about Gary Green and the Wind Ensemble. I actually remember, too, the first concert we shared a concert, so the group I was playing in, we played in the beginning and the wind ensemble played the second half. And I was
sitting in the audience and I remember the first chord that I heard them ever play it was, for my ears just coming from a high school and it was, probably ok but not great, and it was so in tune and so together, and therefore was so loud, and it was just really amazing. So it was one of the moments that I remember, I don’t remember anything else from the concert, but I remember that moment. And so then, yeah, my sophomore year I got in to it on bari sax, which is what I would play in the group for the next three years, sophomore, junior, and senior year. And it was a great musical experience. Gary Green, I think I learned a lot just from him talking about the music. He would often just stop and talk about the music and what it meant to him, what the composer was trying to do. And that was really the first, I guess even my freshman year we had a composer or two come work with the group and be there for rehearsal or something, but then certainly with the wind ensemble it was almost every semester we had someone come, David Maslanka several times because we did the mass which was a huge project. And so when I was in high school we never had a composer come to a rehearsal and our concert, so that was a totally foreign thing for me. That was obviously really interesting to have the composer there, and for me the interaction between Gary Green and them. But, yeah, I think Gary Green just really, he’s an inspirational guy, he definitely inspired me to want to be the best musician I could be and want to be part of the group and make good music. It was interesting because I didn’t write a piece for wind ensemble until, I guess, half-way through my master’s degree. It just really wasn’t something, I don’t know, looking back I really don’t know why, obviously a big ensemble, it’s more complicated, but I’d written a little for orchestra and it just seems like now, I grew up playing in those groups so it’s natural for me, but when I did start to write for wind ensemble I definitely drew on those experiences in Gary Green’s group for sure.

MB: Ok, great. Thank you. So after the University of Miami, then you went to Eastman. Was that immediately after or was there some space there?

SD: Yeah, I took two years off and for most of that time I was still in Miami. I had started a little chamber ensemble with a conductor friend of mine, Chung Park, who I still collaborate with today, and he had wanted to start a chamber ensemble to do some different kind of programming, do some new music and old music together and do some interesting chamber concerts. At that time Miami didn’t really have a lot of chamber music like that, and so it seemed like it would fill a niche, and he asked me, I guess it would have been my senior year, to kind of help him put this together and so we, during those two years, I think we did two concerts a year. So it wasn’t a big operation, but it was a way for him to conduct a group. I did a lot of administrative stuff and we learned a ton, it was learning by doing. I had, when I was, I think, a Junior, we had a little Society of Composers chapter there, which the Society of Composers is a national organization but you have student chapters at universities, so then chapters give concerts of student work and stuff, so there’s a little student organization, little board and stuff. I was kind of interested in putting on concerts and stuff so I was given the reigns of this group for the last couple of years that I was there, so administrative kind of things I think I realized I could do and I was pretty good at it, so I think that’s part of the reason Chung thought I could help out with this. So, yeah, all to say I was doing that. I was also helping a music festival at the university that ran in the fall. So I was doing those and composing for, yeah, for two years and then I applied for a bunch of master’s programs and decided on Eastman and so I ended up here in Rochester.
MB: Ok, great. And so applying to Eastman, is that something that was, sort of, always on your radar or was it kind of a, somebody else stepped in and said “hey I think you can do this,” how did that work?

SD: Yeah, it was kind of always on my radar. My high school band director went to Eastman and, as I’m sure you know, high school band directors can have a big impact on students.

MB: Definitely, yep.

SD: And so that was definitely the case for me. He was one of the people that definitely supported me and pushed me and made me want to go in to music and was a fantastic musician. So I don’t think I’d heard about Eastman until I met him, but then for me there was always this aura of like, he was a great musician, he’s got perfect pitch, and he went to Eastman, so I always had this, Eastman is… this guy was amazing so it has to be amazing.

MB: Right, right.

SD: So then, of course, over the next few years I would learn more and more, and so it seemed like a great place and it was always on my radar. So, yeah, when I was looking at master’s programs I wanted to go somewhere where I would be around the best musicians possible so that I could get great performances of my music, and learn a bunch. I was starting to think a little bit about writing for winds, and I thought, OK if I go to Eastman there is definitely a focus there on, with the wind ensemble history and stuff, that would make sense for me. And they had the institute for music leadership which is, again, sort of like entrepreneurship for musicians and being a leader in music and stuff, so that also felt like it fit me and what I was doing. Those were things that I think made it a good choice for me.

MD: Yeah, sure. Great. So while you were there at Eastman who specifically were you studying with and how did the studies go? If you could talk a little bit to that effect, about your experience at Eastman.

SD: Yeah, so I studied, I guess, Eastman was, I think, the only place I applied where I had to audition on saxophone and have a composition interview. And, I guess it depends on the school, the program I was doing was the MM in music composition instead of an MA or something. So that required that I take saxophone lessons for half of the time: one year. And then for my composition recital I had to play saxophone on my recital, music that I wrote, and music I didn’t write, and then present music on other instruments too. So just to say I studied saxophone with Chien-Kwan Lin for two semesters and I studied compositions my first year with Carlos Sanchez-Gutierrez and then my second year with Dave Liptak. And, so I guess I’ll just go back to saxophone for a second, the performance level is very high, that was not my focus of course, I was in it to study composition, but I had to take saxophone lessons, and Chien-Kwan knew that so he wasn’t, he kind of didn’t have the same expectations for me that he did of the performance majors. This was also kind of unusual because most people in my degree, I guess normally would be pianists, so Chien-Kwan had never had a saxophone composition student. I’m sure there’s other examples, but I guess it’s less common. So I think it was great, I learned a ton, it was intense, so I feel like even in a short amount of time I grew as a player. We had a studio class every week and we shared it with the jazz saxophone class, it was all together and so it
would basically alternate, one week would be a classical week, the next week would be jazz. For most of the semester the studio class basically was a class with all the classical players playing something, and sometimes it would be like you’re preparing for juries and so you’re playing in preparation for that. A bunch of the times it would be the studio class and everyone is playing an etude or something from memory, so you can imagine, every two weeks or something, or even sometimes it wasn’t skipping a week with the jazz and we went two classical weeks in a row, you’re standing up there in front of these people and playing an etude from memory, that was pretty intense.

MB: [laughs]

SD: Again, you… you grow by doing that. So then on the composition side Carlos Sanchez-Gutierrez, I think he exposed me to a bunch of music that I didn’t know, but I think really took a personal approach to looking at music and what I was trying to do, and help me think about more and more possibilities for things to do and directions to go. I think he’s a great teacher, that really opened my mind up to thinking about more and more possibilities. Sort of like thinking about the music as I’m writing it and different directions to go, and so I think that still has an effect on what I write now. With David Liptak, again I think similar sort of approach, very personal, wanted me to write for whatever I wanted to, so that’s when I was writing a lot, while studying with him. We had to do a thesis project, which would just be some sort of large scale work, and so I said I’d like to write a piece for wind ensemble and he was supportive of that. So I would show him the piece and he, again, would kind of give me ideas about what I was doing and ways that I could take some ideas further or just go and think about more and more ways to use the material. So, yeah, hopefully that answers your questions.

MB: Yeah that does, thank you for going through all that. One last, kind of, little add-on question, along with that. So as you composed *Lauda* and started to, I guess, develop a relationship with Mark Scatterday, did that kind of come organically through the composition of *Lauda* or is that something that came after when he looked at the music and said “hey, this is good stuff lets continue to go in this direction,” and how did that come about?

SD: Yeah, I think I met with him my first year and just introduced myself and kind of explained who I was and told him about being at Miami and everything, and I think he had said something like, and I was just kind of wanting to meet him and talk, and I think he brought up “hey if you want to write something let me know.” Or he might have said something like, “if you write something we’ll play it.”

MB: [laughs] They like new music a little bit there

SD: Yeah, so I don’t remember how… I think, well, so I think this piece *Flash Black* that I wrote, which was really the first piece for wind ensemble that I wrote, I think that that was in progress when I left Miami to go to Eastman. Gary Green was talking to me about writing a piece and, I don’t remember exactly how this happened, but then I had met Mark and talked to him and maybe mentioned that I was going to be writing this piece for Gary Green and he said he would like to be involved, so it was really written for the two of those ensembles. And so we had already kind of met and developed a relationship and I think it’s, I wish I could remember this more clearly, but I know we talked about, that I was going to write a piece specifically for him,
for the ensemble, and it may be my thesis piece, and that he was going to play it, he would, you know, we were going to do that. So that was part of the plan going in to it.

MB: Ok, alright, great. Thank you for addressing that. So I guess we can kind of shift gears a little bit now and look at the music.

SD: Sure

MB: Talk about Lauda a little bit. So I sent you some questions ahead of time, I kind of want to just go through and discuss from the beginning, and some of the things that I’ve picked up on, and make sure that we’re on the same page. I certainly don’t want to print something that you completely disagree with [laughs]...

SD: [laughs]

MB: ...about your music here. That would be great.

SD: Yeah, sure, sure.

MB: So I see, obviously, from the beginning we have this slow introduction of the passacaglia, that, it’s almost like the, I can’t remember the theorist, you probably know, that coined the term “one more time technique” it like, we almost got there, let’s try it again.

SD: [laughs] yeah.

MB: As the passacaglia builds note by note, and then where I really want to start is around measure 15, I put this in the note, but I was really curious about the harp part here, it’s just interesting to me. So we have, later on we have the inversion, a mirror inversion, of the passacaglia that descends from C to B-flat because it’s the whole step, and here it appears to be really the first variant on the passacaglia in measure 15 starting in the harp but it doesn’t follow the same stepwise motion because it starts with a half step so I was wondering if you could maybe shed some light on what’s going on here?

SD: Yeah, so, that is interesting because, it’s supposed to be a B-flat is the short answer.

MB: [laughs] ok

SD: The harp part has, clearly, a B-flat in the actual harp music that the player is reading, and the score has no flat there which is just one of these times when Finale is [laughs] just kind of [laughs]...

MB: Oh yeah, of course, of course.

SD: So yeah, I mean, it’s a good catch [laughs].

MB: Well I just, it’s funny, I try to assume that it’s not an error and try to figure this out, what’s going on here.

SD: Right.

MB: And I think even in. I don’t remember for sure, but I think even in the recording I heard that it was B-natural and I thought, wow what is this, what’s going on here [laughs].
SD: Interesting, yeah.

MB: I'm not sure which recording I was listening to, there's a few of them that are out there. But anyway

SD: I was thinking in my head, looking at this and thinking like, yeah I'm pretty sure I remember telling it a B-flat [laughs] I don't know.

MB: Ok, well that solves that. That's easy enough [laughs].

SD: Yeah, yeah, sorry about that.

MB: [laughs] That's fine, I think there's always errata somewhere.

SD: Yep.

MB: They always exist. So moving on from there clearly as the passacaglia develops the harmony develops along with it. And the harmony, as you mention in the program notes, becomes more complex as the passacaglia repeats over and over again. And we have an inversion, as I mentioned, in the passacaglia, starting in measure 18 in the trumpet, which arrives on an F-natural because that's how the mirror inversion would play out. But then, a few measures later, of course, is the first introduction of an F-sharp, which is pretty frequent throughout and kind of hints towards Lydian which, it doesn't hint it's clearly [laughs] a Lydian F-sharp. And then later on, as you know, there's some, maybe, tonicization or even just clear F-natural tonality before again returning to F-sharp. So I was wondering if you could just talk, maybe, a little about the significance of the 4th scale degree here and what it meant to you as you were composing, the kind of battle there between the F-natural and F-sharp?

SD: Yeah, I mean, I was just looking at it, I was just looking at these measures going back to 18. Yeah, I mean, I think for me it wasn't really a... this sort of dichotomy between the F and F-sharp wasn't something I was consciously trying to play with.

MB: Sure.

SD: I think it was really just the result of that inversion like you said, doing the inversion from C down it gets that F-natural, and then, so that's really where it comes from. But most of the piece is moving upwards and then, just the harmonies that I'm using, then incorporating the F-sharp. So that wasn't really a, I don't think, a lot of thought or any programmatic reasons for the difference between F and F-sharp it was just, I think, that inversion that brings it out.

MB: Great. What about the sort of, I guess, modal ambiguity at the beginning because of the lack of F, the fourth scale degree, in the passacaglia? Was that intentional that it was then introduced as Lydian later? Or was that also just a result of what the passacaglia was?

SD: Yeah, I mean, I was thinking about that and I was thinking that when I wrote this I'm pretty sure that this whole thing started for me really when I was playing around with this progression of chords. It was really like the, we kind of stripped it down to the bare simplest chords, it's just like, C, D, E minor, G. Those series of chords, like C major, D major, E minor, G. With all these other notes in there. And so, because then we get to the G and the G, it can lead back to the C, and so it can be this circular thing that can repeat and repeat. And so that is, I think, what
inspired this whole movement. Then I sort of figured out, what if I just start with, basically, the roots of those chords? So C, D, E, G and then I think I decided that it would be, it would be really like C, D, E, G, C, D, E would be like the whole motive or something. But so I think that’s the order that things came out in, if that makes sense. So the absence of the 4th scale degree is really just the result of, again, those chords I was playing with. That was the basic harmony, those were the chords. I felt like, it was... one led to another in a way that was kind of fresh and different. C going to D to E to the G, it was a little bit unexpected but still, but still somewhat expected, but it wasn’t, to me, like a tonic dominant kind of feeling. So I guess, does that make sense?

MB: Yeah, yeah. And that’s kind of what I was looking for is just, is this really, was it intentional? Because sometimes, like, exactly, apparently this is what happened, you look at the music and you find things and you think, wow that’s kind of cool. Was that intentional?

SD: Right, right.

MB: So, yeah. That’s really what I wanted to know there.

SD: Sure.

MB: Going on there a little bit, and I, to be honest, listening to this so many times, I didn’t even notice this until I started trying to make some sort of form chart of the first movement. That at the beginning there is a little bit of a pattern, that there’s these small, kind of ternary type, forms. There’s two of them. The way I looked at it is that there really could have been two possibilities, it’s that there’s these two moments: one at measure 27 and then, if I can get to it here, later in the horn part at measure 46. There’s these two moments where the harmony just sort of stands, and those are the moments where there’s a sort of free melody that breaks a little bit away from the passacaglia that’s so prominent in all the other parts. And at first I thought maybe that these little moments were some sort of link between large structural formats, and then I started to think that maybe these were actually the center of a type of ternary thing where, beginning at 24, or not at 24 at 18, you have an inversion of the passacaglia, and then at 27 you have this new melody, which clearly is based on the scale and somewhat on the passacaglia but it’s new and fresh and different, and then immediately following it you have another sequence, another occurrence, sorry, of the inversion of the passacaglia. So there’s, it’s like there’s something, and then there’s this new melody, and then there’s something again. And the same thing occurs again at 37 where you have these developed and extended chords to go along with the passacaglia, and then you have a halt in the harmonic progression as the horns now play a different, new kind of melody, although albeit only like four measures long. And then at measure 50 we have a repeat of the same thing that was at 37. So again you have something, an A section of some sort, and then something in the middle that is this new melody, and then the something, the A section again. So I just want to make sure that I’m kind of on the same page with you on this. Do you see this as, kind of, two sections with ternary form or do you imagine this as something completely different?

SD: Yeah, I mean, it’s interesting because I don’t analyze this as much as you are.

MB: [laughs] Right.
SD: You’re analyzing it more than I would, so let me get to the answer by saying I think what I was trying to do was basically, like, the whole section leading up to, whoops I lost my spot, hold on a second [laughs]... Yes, 58. So 58 is where I think it really starts, where the passacaglia continues, kind of, without interruption.

MB: Uh-huh, yeah.

SD: So, like, everything before 58, to me, I wanted to like introduce the passacaglia in a way that was, in a different way than at the beginning it’s just one note, and then we add some other things and so, like, there’s, where it’s sort of fragmented, it’s like you were saying how you, like going in to 33 and like 37 it sort of builds like the passacaglia does later but then it kind of doesn’t go anywhere, it stalls. Like you were saying it gets this sort of harmonic stasis.

MB: Uh-huh

SD: And so, I mean, that’s kind of how I was thinking about it, that I’m sort of fragmenting it. I’m starting it but I’m not letting it, I’m stopping it and then doing something different like adding the little horn melody or the little oboe melody, you know at the point where I’m stopping it and not letting it take over. So all of that is in, if you really pull back and look at it, to me, it’s like an introduction all the way until, kind of introducing the motives and then the passacaglia, getting everything ready and then 58 is where I kind of open it up and let it loose. It can cycle around and do its thing and add more and more on top. So, does that make sense?

MB: Yeah, yeah. That makes perfect sense.

SD: So that’s, that’s like the simplified way that I would analyze it.

MB: Right [laughs]

SD: From what I was trying to do, so then I think you’re taking it to the next level and zooming in a little more and I think what you’re saying makes sense that there’s these kind of like ternary forms in there, so that, I guess, wasn’t intentional per se on my part, but I think what you’re saying makes sense. Yeah.

MB: OK. So before I start asking all of these questions about programmatic significance or anything like that, let me just start with a broad question of, just, as you were composing this, to you was there any programmatic significance more than just the basic stuff you mention in the program notes, that it’s based off of hymn and things like that?

SD: You know, I mean, I guess there’s a difference with the two movements. The second movement is really, it’s totally different.

MB: Right, yeah.

SD: That’s based on a hymn and other motives and stuff. The first movement, again, how it grew out of these harmonies, this series of harmonies, the only programmatic thing is really just the, that I felt like it was, I think really the music in this case, I had started this music and then was going to start writing this piece, so I already sort of had this particular motive going and I thought it was sort of like a mountain. There’s certainly this ascending motive, of course, and then I was going to take and add more and more to this movement upwards, and so I think it
didn’t just, in a visual since, and kind of when we return to the C in some climactic moments where it goes from the G to the C and it’s kind of a big moment.

MB: Uh-huh

SD: There’s a sort of, you know my wife and talk about it, you’re maybe driving on a mountain or something, you come around, this mist opens up in front of you and it’s this expansive view. I think with this movement that’s really all the programmatic intention.

MB: Ok, yeah. Because, I mean, certainly you could, from a performers view, which obviously as a composition happens then it goes in to the hand of the performer and the performer makes what they do of it, I can see how somebody would say, oh well it starts in its beginning, in its genesis, with this very simple passacaglia that’s very bare bones. And then it builds and it grows and it grows in intensity and it’s like, parallel to life or something. I don’t know if that was intentional or if that’s something that one could say, because those things happen in music. You start to associate things that are often not what the composer was thinking, but are to some degree there.

SD: Yeah, absolutely. I mean, I’m totally open to performers and others interpreting the music the way that they want to. I mean, yeah, that wasn’t what I was thinking or doing, but I can definitely see that. And I can see people saying, again the visual aspect of it, it starts really low and then it goes higher and lower so that looks kind of like a mountain.

MB: Yeah, right.

SD: So, was I intending to do that? I don’t know. I definitely saw the visual of the root notes of that, C, D, E, and G, back to C, there’s kind of an up and down mountain, kind of visual there too.

MB: Alright. If we can jump ahead to, let’s see, 84. Still in the first movement. Actually shortly after 84, so 84 we have a kind of cadential gesture. There’s been, as you mentioned, root movement from G to C in the past, and here we move from B to C which is almost like a Seven to One. And then after that, to me at least, as I look at it and hear it, it seems to venture off to F a little bit. To an F tonality, which is really like the first true venture away from a C tonal center that has happened. So if you could just maybe talk to the effect of what your intent was here after staying in C for so long and then, how this venture in to F happens. And even there’s, so we were clearly having some Lydian harmonies in C and then in F there’s B-flats, so not Lydian here.

SD: Yeah, I mean, it’s interesting, really interesting to look at this because you talked about the absence of F in the beginning and I’m sure you thought about this and I wish I could say, like, this arrival in F is filling the void of F in the beginning.

MB: [laughs] Right.

SD: That makes perfect sense [laughs]. It’s hard to know, again, I’m such a, in a way aural, like I was talking about relying on my ears early on, and still so much of what I do is that way that it’s somewhat instinctual, using my ears. So I don’t know if, again, that was not something I was thinking of, but did that play in to the decision? Because what I did do was, yeah, I wanted to do something new here to arrive at a point that would make you feel like we’ve gone at another level. We’ve built the passacaglia harmony more and more, added more and more layers, and
added counterpoint and these lines, and it’s just picking up, picking it up, and so we’ve gotten to a sort of climactic point on C, and that’s all good and fine, and I think I just saw what if I could, was there some way to pick it up even another notch. And so to go somewhere related but somewhere that we haven’t been and your ear hasn’t been expecting, you’re not going to expect. So my ear landed on F. So I think that was the thought process, so it was intentional in the way of, like, the way it was related to C and then I wanted to do something slightly new and different. But I wasn’t thinking theoretically “how cool would it be [laughs]...”

MB: [laughs]

SD: ...to, for it be the F that we didn’t have at the beginning?”

MB: Right [laughs]. Well that’s a very nice coincidence [laughs].

SD: [laughs] Yeah.

MB: So after that I feel like we kind of stand on an F tonality for a while, not a super long time, and then around, somewhere around 105, it kind of goes back to C and starts repeating, in a way, the passacaglia again in the bass. C to D and then C to D and then C to E to G so the notes are there. Briefly before that, around 97, just looking at the movement in the bass voices, is this, after a little of tonality in F, is this hinting at a B-flat tonality before returning to the C?

SD: Yeah, exactly. I think it was a sort of way to bridge back to C and, I mean, in a way, but I guess also it was, again, 94 we have sort of this brass chorale that’s in inversion in the horns, and so that’s on F. Then I think I just felt, it felt like, to me it made sense to go to the fourth there, to go to B-flat, just in a way this moment felt like this sort of chorale like structure and I just needed to write something that was more of that, but then I was able to use, harmonically, the bass notes there to spell out the passacaglia and move maybe a little bit, hint towards going to C.

MB: Ok, yeah that’s kind of what I saw I just wanted to...

SD: Yeah

MB: ...confirm that movement, because it’s almost, going from C to F to B-flat, there you have root movement by 4th, or 5th depending on which way you go.

SD: Yeah

MB: And then it goes from the B-flat back to the C. I just wanted to confirm that. Ok, is there any other, I want to go ahead and move on to the second movement, is there any other particular things that you want to mention that maybe I skipped over, that are of significance in the first movement?

SD: I don’t think so. I think, yeah, I think that’s pretty much it and then obviously we have, we’re heading back to C when we get to C there were kind of back where we started. But I think that’s a pretty good snapshot of the movement.
MB: Ok, yeah. And I really like at the very end here in the penultimate how there’s a chord now built out of the passacaglia notes and then the D resolves. I thought that was a really cool effect at the end.

SD: Yeah, thanks, yeah.

MB: OK so moving on to the second movement. So obviously we have, and I think it’s pretty clear what’s going on here formally so I won’t spend a lot of time on that, you know, we have this introduction which introduces the hymn tune and the rhythmic motive and then the pedal starts and we kind of go from there. I just want to kind of make sure that I am, that my reading of where, kind of, exposition and episode here is kind of how, is the same as you view it. And that would be that at measure 10 the exposition begins with subject and then of course a tonal answer and then the countersubject, that all is there.

SD: Yep

MB: And then going on to, oh that’s not correct, 45 then is what I considered after the exposition, the first episode, where we have the subject inverted and then the countersubject kind of standing alone.

SD: Right, yep.

MB: And then, right after 63 in measure 64, then we have stretto use now which would be the second episode. And that builds in to, then, the hymn at 84. So is that just real, real macro, is that kind of the form that you were looking at?

SD: Yeah, I think that describes it. Yep.

MB: So it’s clear, and again this is sort of interpretation of programmatic things that may or may not have been intended, but it’s clear from the beginning that throughout there is relation, of course, between the fugal subject and the hymn. And then there’s this rhythmic motive at the beginning with alternating sixteenth and eighth notes. And so I really hear that there’s just a few elements here, that there’s the fugal elements, there’s the rhythmic motive, there’s the hymn, and then there’s the pedal. And it seems interesting to me that the pedal, kind of, stands as a constant throughout most of this. And as the fugue progresses and different things happen to the fugue and there begins to be interjections of this kind of disruptive rhythmic motive that the pedal just remains, that it’s just constant, and I didn’t know how intentional, again, some of this programmatic stuff was, but with this being something related to praise, and certainly to religion with the hymn tune, I didn’t know if, or I’m just wondering, if the constant pedal had any relation to, like, the constants of God in life despite conflict, or anything like that? Or if that was intentional?

SD: [laughs] That’s another good interpretation.

MB: [laughs]

SD: Actually the pedal really was inspired by another piece of music, so the, again, I had written the first movement first. I had some of that passacaglia music swirling around in my head as I started the piece, and, I mean, I was sort of writing both movements at the same time, but part
of what inspired the piece was this piece by John Tavener called Song for Athene, which is a choral piece, and I actually heard the piece first because Mark Scatterday did a wind transcription with the wind ensemble and, it must have been my first year at Eastman, but then I listened to the choral version and it’s one of my favorite pieces. So in that piece there’s a pedal that, I’m trying to think know, I think it goes through the entire piece, it doesn’t actually change. It’s an F. So that’s totally different, but the, I’m trying to remember now if it changes, I guess, well, I think it doesn’t but what does change is in that piece the harmony, so I think if you heard the piece it would make sense when, just looking at my score here, where the hymn tune, where we go to E, so 84, because in Song for Athene the tonality sort of alternated between minor and major over this pedal. So there’s a moment where it gets to the climax and it does a similar thing. It sort of elides on this major tonality, it’s just amazing because you’ve been setting up, for a while, this minor tonality and it just opens up the world. And so there’s two things I took away from that piece. This pedal, it was just there, I just thought it was really fascinating. This idea that this pedal there... there’s stuff happening over it but it’s just still there and there. And then at the climax he’d been setting up this sort of minor tonality and drawing you in to that, and then you get to this moment where it changes and so, this piece was my way of trying to do something, this movement rather, was my way of trying do something similar but with totally different material.

MB: Yeah, OK. Cool, that makes perfect sense. From there, that kind of leads in to my next question, and maybe this is just more curiosity, but as it changes to the strong E major tonality at 84 with the hymn tune, that makes the B pedal make the one chord sound in second inversion which, of course, is kind of dissonant. And was it out of, I assume that it was out of that descending pedal down to E happens, that that was just a result of that?

SD: Yeah, I mean, I wanted to keep the B when we arrived at 84 and we get that shift to E, I wanted to keep the pedal just at that point for, sort of, a connection to what’s come before. So the pedal is still there, but, yeah, I intended to move it eventually so that we get this moment at 84, and then when the pedal finally moves we have another kind of moment too. So, yeah, that was kind of always my intention was, I eventually move it down but I kind of wanted to wait until after we’d gotten the climax.

MB: Yeah, sure. So in building up to the hymn tune from the beginning when you started this movement, was it planned out and intentional that the hymn would be in E and that it would be over the B pedal?

SD: Yeah, I think so. I think that I, I don’t think that I had, at that point, planned out exactly what the subject and countersubject would be or anything like that, but I think in that big formal way I think I had thought that I want to do this pedal and that I was playing with the hymn tune and this differentiation between minor and major tonalities and then have that arrive and I think, yeah, I was playing around with those and thinking ‘ok, I’ll arrive on E with the hymn tune so then thinking backward I’m going to start the fugal part of the piece with this B pedal and then the subject and stuff, then that will be in minor so I can build off this minor tonality for a while, then change it to E major.’

MB: OK. And then last thing, you had mentioned that as the second movement started and the compositional process began you kind of had the passacaglia still spinning around in your head

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there, and so I assume the very end, the last three measures of the second movement, how we have the passacaglia here in E is an intentional, kind of, bringing everything back together as the entire piece closes.

SD: Yeah, exactly. Yeah, I thought it would just be a little hint at looking backwards, yeah.

MB: OK, alright. Cool, well that’s all I have for now. I guess I’ll ask the same question about the second movement, is there anything, I didn’t talk a lot about the formal stuff, but I think that’s pretty clear, I’m fairly confident that I understand it, so is there anything that you want to bring up that I didn’t specifically touch on?

SD: I mean, the only thing I can say is the hymn tune itself is just one of my favorite hymns. My wife and I really like it and so I, again, thought about, there’s these different elements in this second movement like you said there’s the pedal, the hymn tune, the fugal thing, and so when I started to think about, I was really inspired by this Song for Athene and the pedal and the tonal changes, and so I was thinking, ok I might try and do that, and what, for me, what should I do, what should be my musical material, and I thought maybe try and incorporate a hymn tune, and so this one seemed like it would be, it would have that sort of grandiose feeling, and then that felt like it would work so that’s kind of where I came from. And then the, you may have figured this out already, but the little rhythmic motive [sings rhythm] which is at the beginning but also then comes back at the climax and in other spots too, that’s part of the hymn. So, I’m trying to think where, it’s just like, sort of, in diminution.

MB: Uh-huh.

SD: Like if you look at 92 [sings melody] so you get that in the very beginning in the low brass.

MB: Right, right.

SD: But the rhythm, just the rhythmic thing where it’s on a repeated note, [sings rhythm] ...

MB: Yeah, yeah the...

SD: ...is like [sings hymn tune]. So, just to say, like, I tried to keep, I think you kind of pointed it out, there’s only so much here, I tried to keep it pretty compact with the material, so even something like that I tried to pull out of, make that material out of the side of the hymn.

MB: Yeah, yeah. That’s cool. Alright, well, great. I appreciate this conversation and I look forward to continuing it on.

SD: yeah, absolutely, yeah.
APPENDIX K

Interview transcription

A Discussion with the Composer About Magnolia Star and Alcott Songs

Phone interview

January 13, 2017

Michael Black: I realized when I started writing the biography section of the paper that I missed talking about your experience, specifically studying composition at Miami. We talked about Gary Green and about playing in the wind ensemble but not much about your composition studies, so I wanted to start, for a minute, just talking about that if you would.

Steve Danyew: Yeah, sure. I think I mentioned that I went in to Miami, in to college, as a music business major.

MB: Yeah.

SD: And so, I think I said I got there and was taking all these classes and I realized that everyone, regardless of your major, kind of took the same classes and you could kind of take whatever classes you wanted to and focus on what you wanted to. Everything was pretty similar in terms of degree programs, you just had a little more time on your area of focus. There was that and there was... I really liked my music theory classes and those were some of the first experiences I had with more contemporary music. Coming out of high school band I wasn’t really exposed to what we consider contemporary music, not just contemporary band music. That’s what I encountered in some of these theory courses and it was just fascinating. So by the end of my freshman year I decided to change my major to composition. So I studied with a number of the faculty, many of whom are not there anymore because they’ve retired. Bob Gower was someone who I took theory class with my freshman year and I studied a little bit with. Dennis Kam was the chair of the composition department and, again, I took a theory class with him freshman year and I ended up studying with him a fair amount. He was probably officially the composition teacher who I spent the most time with. Then I had an interesting experience where I, playing in the wind ensemble we, one day, were doing some reading and we read a piece by this composer, Scott Stinson, who was, at the time, on the faculty at Miami, but as an adjunct I think, and had done his D.M.A. in composition there a few years before. I remember he came in to our wind ensemble rehearsal and all the parts were hand written. So at the end of the reading he was putting them in to a box and that just blew my mind that someone was actually hand-writing out this music. So we just kind of... I struck up a friendship with him and we started to meet unofficially and I would show him music I was working on. We started to meet once a week and it basically turned into I was studying with him, having lessons once a week. I did that for the rest of my time at Miami, so that was really almost three years, and so I learned a ton from him. He taught a lot of orchestration classes there, and so I really got a lot of my orchestration knowledge from him. In a way he was sort of a mentor to me, and, again, it
was never like I got any academic credit for working with him and he never got anything official for working with me but I’ll always be thankful for his guidance I guess. So that definitely had a big impact on me, and then I studied with Dennis Kam which was kind of my official composition studies, especially later in my last couple of years there. So I guess that’s a summary, there were other faculty members and I certainly had interactions with them in class and everything but I guess those are the more prominent people.

MB: Ok, cool. Thank you for going over that. So I want to jump in to *Alcott Songs* here.

SD: OK.

MB: I had a lot of fun looking at this, it’s just fun music. It’s fun poetry and it goes together well.

SD: Thanks.

MB: A little tedious maybe, but if we could just kind of go through, I really want to highlight in my document the wealth of text painting that’s going on here. In my analysis I want to make sure that I didn’t miss anything that you really intentionally did, and make sure that I cover it all very thoroughly. So I sent ahead of time, but if we can go through quickly, and maybe I picked up on things that were not intentional because that happens sometimes as well.

SD: Yeah.

MB: But if we can just go through this and discuss the text painting a little bit. So the first movement, the first thing I noticed is that we have this idea of awakening as “awake” is repeated twice at the beginning of the text and the upward stepping melody is sort of like rising out of bed. And then just a few measures later in measure 8 the F-major chord, which is out of the diatonic harmony, right on the words “golden sunlight,” which is the beginning of the new day, seemed to be a strong musical statement to me. Then in 10 and 11, in the woodwind parts, well they’re all woodwind parts, in the clarinet and bassoon, this idea of rippling and waves, and we have rippling and flowing waves in the sixteenth notes and thirty-second notes and triplets there. Measure 19, the lowest note of the entire melody for the vocalist is on the word “low.” Obviously the bird song in measure 21 in the flute. In measure 23 the thirty-second and sixteenth note triplet figure that happened before comes again, and this time it’s on the word floating which seems to fit, to me, just as well as it did with ripple and flow in the previous statement of that part of the music. Then in 28 – 31 on this section of “spread each wing” this new bold E-major chord and the parts obviously just sound like flying. When you listen to it, it sounds like flying has begun, and that’s implied by the music. Those are the main things I picked up on here, and I just wanted to check and make sure that there wasn’t anything else major that you intended that I glossed over.

SD: No, I think... I’m just looking through to the end. I think that’s all good. I think the only one, to me, that wasn’t necessarily intentional was the first one. “Awake! Awake!” and thinking about there being a rising motive. But that certainly makes sense. I guess the only other thing I would say is not as much text painting, but just the motive that we have in the first two measures in the clarinets that repeats throughout in different ways, that I just felt like I was trying to create something that sounded spring-like. It just sounded to me like the start of a spring/summer day. I guess that’s the only other thing I would mention.
MB: Yeah, so it just kind of sets the tone for... I guess a Spring/Summer day sets the tone for the entire piece, really, because this is the morning.

SD: Right, right.

MB: OK, awesome. I guess along with that, since this motive that happens at the beginning that you were just referring to happens a couple of times throughout this movement, in particular, and matches the text, I was just curious, myself, I don’t know if this will make its way in to the paper or not but I’m honestly just wondering, how difficult was it to group these sections of text with repeated sections of music and make this repeated motive end up matching the text in a way that it still made sense in a text painting sort of way?

SD: Yea, I think looking back it’s tricky. I think it happens different ways sometimes. I think, honestly, occasionally it was just lucky. I think, probably, more often than not, especially with a text that’s not that long like this, that I wouldn’t get too far into writing it without thinking all the way through the text. So I would have the poem in front of me and be working on some motives and have a melody, and so I’m singing through with the text and the motive or melody or something and thinking about, if I repeat this motive or this melody how is that going to fit these words. A lot of times I’m thinking practically, how are they going to fit syllabically. So is the actual rhythm, or the notes, is it going to work for those words that come later on. And so I’m thinking that, and then maybe I’m also thinking a little bit, does this work, in terms of text painting, to do. I think there’s some, I think it depends a little bit, it’s not something that I’m thinking quite as consciously about as much as I’m thinking about the logistics of the syllables and how all of that’s going to fit and sound. But I think you’re singing through and thinking about it ahead of time a little bit.

MB: Ok. Alright great, thank you. Moving on to the second movement some, looking at the harmonies, to begin with, or at least starting in measure 14 actually, where we start to have this repeated figure. I toiled with this a little bit at first before it clicked in my head that, “oh I think this is the same harmonic structure as the beginning of the first movement where you have, in a roman numeral analysis, I, ii, I, ii, I, ii repeated. Or a major chord and then a minor chord a whole step away from it.” Was that the intended harmony here, except this time over a pedal?

SD: No, I think that makes sense.

MB: Ok, then with the end of each phrase, so we have that repeated back and forth between the two chords and you could say it’s over an A-flat pedal, and that figure, the whole thing, moves down a step at the end of the phrase and even though there’s not really cadential movement towards any kind of cadence I think that this, being the end of the phrase, we could say that this is sort of a cadential gesture. It’s not really cadential but it signifies the ending of the phrase. Do you have any problem with that description?

SD: No, I think that makes sense. I think part of what I was thinking was... again, a lot of this I was thinking about the text and trying to support the text and create some kind of sound environment that I felt like supported what the text was saying, but I also was thinking about, this particular motive with the staccato eighth notes, it’s a little bit static with that low pedal and everything, I was thinking about there’s some Stravinsky, like in Soldier’s Tale or other
MB: Ok, great. So here, again, to talk a little bit about the text painting and make sure I haven’t skipped over anything. I found that in measure 17 the large leap down and downward movement of the vocal melody on the text “come down below” seems to be an occurrence of text painting. In 23, right on the words “lily-pad float,” is the first time, I believe, yeah, that the melody has had a triplet figure, and that over the top of the duple figure gives a really, kind of, floating feel to the melody. In measure 32 it just seems like here it happens all over. In the melody there’s a leap from the E-flat to the C on the pick-up, and then the large leaps start to happen in the bassoon and oboe, in the double reeds, and then you have the little leap that happens with the flute there, and then the trills come in, which match the “playful” spoken in measure 32 as well. Then in measure 36, right after the text invites to “come and join in the fun,” all of a sudden the music becomes faster and more playful as it moves on, eventually, to the next phrase and the end. So is there anything else in this movement that you would like to highlight?

SD: Nope, I think you got it. The playfulness, the “leap frog play” “jolliest way” just playing off that. So, yeah I think you got it.

MB: Ok. Going on to the third movement, give me just a second here, ok, so again with the text painting there is, in measure 4, you have this stretched triplets where the time is stretched a little bit and that seems to me to signify a wafting smell. Then measure 5 the Flute part and clarinet parts have this little motive that just sounds like spring, just sounds like it, right on the word “spring.” Those were the main things that I found here, then again that flute motive is repeated in measure 14 on “green pink and blue geranium.” Was there, again, in this movement anything else that you would like to highlight?

SD: No, I think those are... this one has a little less of those text painting moments. I think it’s still obvious the music still has the lightness and the wittiness that the text seems to have, but in terms of text painting I think those are the main things.

MB: Yeah, sure. And I’m not... as we’re going through this I’m not spending a lot of time, if any, necessarily talking about harmony or form because I’m pretty confident in my analysis of that, and so I don’t feel that there’s a need, necessarily, to spend a lot of time talking about it. But there are some things that I’ll hit here and there that I had some questions about.

SD: Yeah, sure.

MB: But moving on to the fourth movement, “Here’s a Nut.” We have a clever little squirrel thing here. [laughs]

SD: This one always seems to get... I guess the end of the last one with “put it on your cranium” always gets some chuckles from the audience. [laughs]

MB: [laughs] right.
SD: This one a little bit too.

MB: Yeah, it’s just fun. Fun little poem, and the music is just clever and fun as well. I don’t know that this was intentional, but when I was listening to it and I hear the alternation between the E-flat major and the augmented sixth chord at the beginning it sounds to me like the changing of seasons. Some people might say that that’s a stretch, but that’s what it sounds like to me, and that certainly matches the text, so I’m going to go with it. [laughs]

SD: [laughs] Yeah, you got to go with your gut. I mean yeah, that’s interesting. That makes sense when you say that, again that wasn’t intentional on my part but I could understand that.

MB: And then, obviously, in this there’s not so much specific text painting, but just, as you said before, the music matching the tone and overall feel of the text. So we have, the melody is buoyant and staccato and light like the skipping of a squirrel, and then in measure 11 there’s this small segment of the text that almost seems fantastical, like the squirrel is fantasizing about what the winter is going to be like when he has all of these acorns to feast upon...

SD: [laughs]

MB: ...and the music becomes slower and thoughtful there. That’s what I found there.

SD: Yep.

MB: Is there anything else in this movement that you would like to touch on?

SD: No. Yeah, I think that’s the biggest thing is that change in measure 11. I kind of wanted to suspend that moment and draw that out. Just for contrast there.

MB: Yeah, alright. That brings us to the fifth movement, “Don’t Drive Me Away.” I wanted to talk a little bit, just about the harmony here, this F minor major seven chord that is frequent throughout this whole thing and if there was… what the process was, how this came about. Was this just a sound that you were going for, because the text is definitely foreboding, that these bad men are coming to steal the gold, and if it was just that sound that you were going for or if there was some structural sense to it in the overall piece? If you could just talk about this chord and why it’s so prevalent in this movement.

SD: Yeah, I think I just liked the sound of it and thought, thinking about scoring this scene or what’s happening here. I think I mentioned in my program notes for this that I envisioned this one as being, in the course of a day, that your dreaming as you’re drifting off to a sleep state. So it’s exciting and dangerous and maybe not real, but it has that element of excitement and dream-like, that anything can happen. So I thought that sonority would give me that element of somewhat foreboding, dangerous, and then I could play around with it and kind of shift it around and modify it. I think that’s where I started.

MB: OK. I noticed several places, one example that I mentioned in my notes is measure 11, where there’s some enharmonic spellings, like here the soprano has an E-natural and the clarinets have what comes out as a concert F flat. I’m just curious why it was scored that way.

SD: Yeah. I was looking back at this. I think what I was thinking… clarinets have a B-flat, I think that I was just thinking of the way they would be reading it and the way the chord is built on the
page for them, B-flat to F-flat as opposed to B-flat to the enharmonic. Sometimes I just think about how that’s going to look reading it.

MB: To the player.

SD: Right, to the player. Or if you’re looking at how the chord’s built. Probably not important either way but I think that’s why I did it.

MB: Ok. I figured that the reasoning was along those lines, but I just wanted to ask about that.

SD: Yeah, yeah.

MB: The progression in measure 27, when I listen to this I like it. I like the way that it sounds, but analyzing it, it’s kind of interesting what happens here. So all of this over an F pedal in the bass clarinet, as I read it is the F minor major seven chord that has been prominent throughout, and then G-flat, which, if F is tonic, would be the Neapolitan. Of course we don’t really know an inversion because of the pedal but traditionally called Neapolitan six, then there’s F-minor seven, and then the B-flat chord, and then returns to the F minor major seven and then E diminished leading to the F minor major seven chord. So if analyzing this and stripping away the extended chords it would be like i, Neapolitan, i, IV, i, vii, i. I just wondered if you could talk a little about how that progression came about?

SD: Yeah. I think if you just go back a little bit to 22 that’s where this section starts and obviously, I’m just scrolling back, it’s another version of what happens at measure 7 where we get this the first time. In that version, just for a couple measures, you get that F minor major chord but it doesn’t change. So what I was thinking was, when it comes back at 22, that I wanted to bring it back but I wanted to do something new with it, and so I thought I’ll use what came before as a starting place but then take it somewhere new. So I think what I did… so even at 22 you get the chord shifting the notes around there, but it’s still pretty static, and then it moves away. So 27 I think I was playing around with… keep this pedal, keep this foreboding, this pedal that’s just going to be there and not got way, just going to be insistent, but then above that, playing around with, what other chords can I go to that are close by where there’s not too much change. So everything is pretty much stepwise, how can I just change each chord slightly, keep the pedal but give it a little bit of a… I don’t know what the best word to describe it would be, almost a little like slithering, snake-like motion. I think that’s kind of what I was going for.

MB: Ok. I’m just looking at it here.

SD: I think your analysis makes sense, but there’s not necessarily a harmonic reason why I choose those chords other than I feel like those, again, are closely related to where it started and they would give us some motion and some drive, something like slithering that’s going to take it somewhere new.

MB: Yeah, I can see that. That’s great, that makes a lot of sense. As you were saying that I was just looking, I just had the thought that maybe neo-Riemannian theory could be applied but I don’t think that works. Anyway, I’ll look at that later. [laughs]

SD: [laughs]
MB: So to talk about the text painting in this movement. Quite a bit of it. At the beginning I thought this driving rhythmic motive and the word “drive” is in the title, so that sets the tone for the whole thing, and then of course the foreboding that I mentioned before. In measure 10 all of the accompaniment drops out right after the text proclaims “hear what I say,” so everything stops to listen to what the vocalist is going to say. Then, obviously, this flight motive in measure 13. The piano dynamic on the word quiet in measure 14. This E major chord, or what is a major VII chord if F is tonic, in measure 15 right on the word bold is a bold chord and has a bold sound to it. And then as this whole thing repeats here in measure 30 “up in the pathless sky” is, again, a text discussing flying and taking off and then the flight motive again repeats in measure 30. So in this movement is there anything else that you wanted to touch on in that regard?

SD: I think the only thing would be at 22, and this is a little more of a stretch, but the “slip away with me.” I think that the melody there has a little bit of a “slip away with me,” to me it sounds like it means. So that moment to me is sort of text painting I guess.

MB: Sure, it’s a little bit slippery. [laughs]

SD: Right, or like slithering like I was saying before.

MB: Yeah, yeah. I get that, that makes sense. It’s kind of like the change in the tone of the music in, say, like the most basic go to example of text painting, in Erlkonig when the troll king begins speaking and it’s this seductive sound. Same kind of thing here with that slippery slither or slip away. That makes sense. I didn’t send any notes about the last movement, about the lullaby. I love it by the way.

SD: Thanks

MB: It’s beautiful. It almost is a... it’s different than everything else to me. So I had to approach it differently, so I don’t see so much text painting here other than that the music is strikingly different than everything else. It’s more calm and reverent and peaceful and signifying sleep and slipping off to sleep and the peace that that brings. So I don’t know if you had specific examples in here of text painting, but I really didn’t find any that stood out to me.

SD: Yeah, I guess the only... there’s a couple little things. So the whole rest idea where there’s the fermatas. Like 16, “now the day is done,” pause. I think I did that for both a musical pause and because I felt like it makes sense with the text. You pause for a second there, “now the day is done,” kind of hammer that point home, and then it comes back later with “now the flowers rest,” pause in measure 24. And then there’s a little thing in measure 42 “falls blessed sleep,” there’s a little fall on the word “falls.” Pretty little, but I think that’s it. In measure 52 “long night breathes,” break.

MB: There’s a break for a breath, yeah.

SD: Right. I think those are the only things.

MB: OK. Alright great, well that was good. I enjoy looking at this music, it was just fun to delve into and to analyze.

SD: Thanks, yeah. It was fun to write.
MB: Yeah, I think fun is just a good description of it in all regards, and that’s good. To move on a little bit to *Magnolia Star* now.

SD: Sure

MB: Looking at this, I took a different approach to things. First of all, as you mentioned in the program notes, and is very clear, the predominant use of notes from the C blues scale. There’s a few exceptions, but not a lot. And creating from those notes harmonies that are different than listening to a blues chart. And so, looking at some of the different things that you’ve done I came up with my own way to name these things that I think makes sense. Like practical ways to think of it. I just wanted to go over those and see if that matches the way that you were thinking. Make sure that I’m not too far off course here with this. So first of all at the beginning, and at several times throughout, there’s a combination of all the notes of the blues scale, which I’m just going to call a C blues cluster. Just a combination of all these notes. That happens at different times throughout, and alternates between other harmonies and then returns. Some of the other harmonic figures that I found are, what seemed to me to be a combination, basically, of a C minor chord and C diminished chord because it has both the G-flat and the G. And then adding a seventh to that, to add the B-flat, to create what would be a C minor/diminished seven chord. There’s another place where there’s some extended use of a C minor chord with an F in it and it’s not really a suspension, it doesn’t resolve, and so it’s more like a chord tone than a non-chord tone as you would traditionally think of it, and so a C minor chord with a fourth added.

Then, way later on, toward the end it almost seemed like stacking two chords, like poly-chordal type of writing, where there would be an E-flat major chord in one section of the ensemble and then an A half-diminished seven in another section of the ensemble, but both sounding at the same time. And then also, in addition to the E flat major at another point there was C minor with an A half-diminished seven with it, sounding at the same time, split between two sections of the ensemble. So is this how you viewed the harmonies when you were writing them, or was it more just a sound? If you could just talk about that a little bit.

SD: Yeah, I think that’s basically right. I tried to use the notes from the blues scale to create some different harmonies, so I played around with that a lot. Obviously the piece starts with that cluster and then we get the alternation between the E-flat minor and then you get the C minor, C diminished. All of those chords come out of the blues scale. And then, like you said, most of the first two-thirds of the piece is really just that, and then it’s when we get to the climax that I start to deviate from that a little bit, but I think that’s basically it.

MB: OK. Now as I went through this, I mentioned that I felt like I had to take a different approach to it and the reason for that being, when I tried to apply traditional ideas of form to this it was... I didn’t feel like I could say “this is ternary” or “this is strophic” or “this binary” or anything like that because it almost has a feel of being through composed but it does have repeated sections. So the thought came to me as I listened to it more and more that it was less about form and more about a story. It was experiencing a train ride, and it was this constant forward motion of progressing through the train, whatever its destination was. I guess, to follow the program, New Orleans to Chicago. Is that how you thought about this as you were composing it?
SD: I guess there’s a few things. I wasn’t necessarily thinking about the sights and sounds from New Orleans to Chicago, or that kind of thing. I wasn’t thinking real programmatically about looking out the window of a train other than that I was certainly incorporating elements of the train in to the piece, but not in a form way like, we’re going to go into the woods now, and then we’re going to come out, and now we’re going over a bridge.

MB: [laughs]

SD: Not like that. I think the only element like that that I thought was in middle where things pull back. Just before the flute solo you get chimes going ding ding ding, ding ding ding ding. Where is that... It’s 131 is where the chime comes in, so it’s this section of 130. We get the bowed cymbals which are kind of like screeching brakes, and then the chimes, so this is like coming to a station or leaving a station. That’s the only thing that, to me, that I thought about happening. Obviously there’s other train elements like you were talking about the constant drive and this train whistle in the saxophones. But I think in terms of form, I guess the way I think about it, from 30,000 feet, an ABA. Basically everything that happens up until that point, 130, is this driving rhythms and blues scale motives, and then at this point in the middle we pull back, things get quiet, a little simpler and things happen for a longer period of time.

MB: It’s almost minimalist through here.

SD: Yeah, yeah. A little more drawn out. The flute solo happens and then there’s basically a return to this A material for the rest of the piece, so kind of ABA. But of course within that beginning A section and that later A section, like you said, there’s several micro sections of different material that come and go and last a certain amount of time. So those sections are in a way through composed, there’s things that come back and it’s not totally free, but I think you could say that.

MB: Ok. It just kind of... when I listen to this and try to grasp what’s going on and try to comprehend it, the best comparison I can think of, and obviously these are two completely different things, two completely different balls of wax, but when I listen to Music for Prague if I close my eyes I can imagine that there’s a story of some sort being told.

SD: Sure

MB: And it’s not like... I’m not paying attention to, oh, this is the same motive that happened at this point, but I imagine this story. And I could sit down and say, when I listen to Prague this is the story that I hear, and that’s probably a different story than someone else hears, and it’s probably maybe not even what Husa intended.

SD: Right.

MB: But that’s what happens for me when I listen to it. That’s what I was thinking about this, obviously completely different, but when I sit and listen to it I experience a train, and it’s not so much, at least aurally, not so much about a particular motive and things like that, although those certainly are here like I said, but it just becomes more about experiencing this train ride that’s driving forward and then screeches to a halt and then continues on again to a dramatic climax.
SD: Yeah, and I think that’s a good assessment. I think that’s one of the neat things about music is that we can all hear something and interpret it differently. What you’re talking about is essentially how I approached the piece too, like I had this idea of writing a piece about the blues scale and about trains, so then I just wanted to create this energy, this drive that’s exciting and it permeates the whole piece. That, in a nut shell, is what I tried to do. So, it’s a train ride but there’s no specifics of what that train ride is.

MB: Yeah, sure.

SD: You leave that open to whatever your imagination conjures up.

MB: Yep. One last question I have about this. At 182 when this rhythmic drive starts to hiccup a little bit. Again, was this just for variation or did you have something in mind about how there’s these little hiccups in the rhythm here?

SD: Yeah, I think it was basically just for variation. Obviously at that point, right before that, at 179 the harmony shifts a little bit out of this more, for lack of a better word, out of a darker tonality into a brighter tonality which is going to lead us to the climax. I think at this point I just wanted to continue to mix it up, just like when I was throwing in different meters, just to add some variety, some unpredictability.

MB: OK, I guess along with that, now that I’m looking at this I was wondering about this too. At 179 where that harmony does change, would you define this as quartal harmony?

SD: Yeah, yeah.

MB: That’s obviously what it was, but I didn’t know if that’s what you were trying to do. If that makes any sense.

SD: I was just looking at it, thinking as you said that, that, yeah, that’s definitely a way to describe it. I think I probably just was thinking that, but also thinking that I was going to go to this place where it would not be major or minor but just let me set up this shift or new sound so that I can set a direction to go somewhere new.

MB: Yeah, OK. Well I think those are all of the questions that I have about this.
APPENDIX L

Interview Transcription
Performing Steve Danyew’s Alcott Songs
Phone interview
January 12, 2017

Michael Black: Because you have so much experience with Steve I wanted to talk to you about him a little bit, to begin with, before we go on to Alcott Songs, just for helping with the biography portion...

Mark Scatterday: Uh-huh.

MB: ...and some of the background. So if you can talk about your first experiences with him and your impressions about him. Anything about him that impressed you as you began to deal with him during his time at Eastman as a student.

MS: Yeah, he’s a great guy. Very serious person, but very personable. I always felt that he was easy to talk to and work with, and that’s been that way ever since I’ve known him. Some composers are a little bit more difficult to figure out, but with Steve I always felt that his intentions were always really good. He was not someone that really pushed his music, but always made me aware of what he was doing. I always felt like he was one of those guys that was not always pressuring me to do his music. I get a lot of scores every week from composers, “Hey I hope the Eastman Wind Ensemble will play my music” and it’s difficult to do everything that everyone asks you to do. It’s almost impossible. He was always very patient for me to “oh, well maybe we could do something like this next year” and never pressured me about anything, which I really appreciated from a composer.

MB: Ok, sure.

MS: I would just say really great to work with and you always knew how much he appreciated your time and effort.

MB: OK great, thank you. And I’ve gotten that impression from him as well, interviewing with him and talking with him, he’s been really great. I think he has a bright future. That’s for sure. So, having performed a large amount of his works, are there any of them that stand out to you, or that you have really fond memories of as opposed to any others?

MS: I think, it’s tough, I didn’t look back to see all the stuff that I’ve done, but I think the first piece I did was Flash Black, and that’s when I really knew that he had his own voice, and then I think we did Lauda after that. I’ve also done This World Alive. Then I did the Vermont State Fair with a music educators band last summer. I think that those are the pieces that I know well, other than the Alcott Songs, and have actually performed. I’m aware of the other pieces but haven’t done everything obviously, because some of the stuff is not really that appropriate for
the Eastman Wind Ensemble but maybe more appropriate for something like an honors band or something like that.

MB: Definitely, yep. Can you describe what it is that’s appealing? You mentioned that you feel like he really had his own voice when you performed Flash Black, is there anything that you can pin-point that is, like, this is what really brings me back to his music time and time again now?

MS: Well, it’s refreshing with a young composer that he’s not afraid to be tonal. A lot of time we get pieces, either whether we do readings or we... for instance I just did a piece by Nathan Stang last year that just won the Fennell prize, which is great for him, and our recording is what he submitted, and there’s another composer that I think has a very good voice, but I think that with Steve’s music it just seemed like there was a connection, with me, to the tonality of his music. It wasn’t afraid to be clear and maybe even... he’s not afraid of being popular. There’s this stigma, and it’s always been this way with young composers, they’re afraid to have something that immediately everybody likes. They want to have something that is played, but they want it to be more dissonant, not quite as user or listener friendly, which is fine too. Steve’s music, early on, was pretty simple to prepare and to feel like audiences would get it the first time. I do so much crazy music, and sometimes I wonder whether the audience really likes it, or gets it, or appreciates it, and you knew with Steve that that wasn’t going to be an issue with audiences. On the other hand, I encouraged Steve to get a little more dissonant and challenging and not so predictable harmonically, and incorporate a lot of these things, and then come back to his tonality to refresh the ears. So that was my first take with the first couple of pieces like Flash Black and Lauda that I think, ok this is great and this does lend itself to a lot of history of music before him that he loves and that he listens to, but maybe at first may come off as being simplistic, at least harmonically and melodically, and rhythmically, but I kind of appreciated it because there’s so much new music that I do that’s the opposite of that. I would say that’s why I was very enthusiastic and willing to program the music because it was kind of refreshing. You know, it’s got an authentic cadence here, that works.

MB: [laughs]

MS: It’s hard for me to describe, I’m trying to make sense, for you, what I’m saying, but it’s kind of like... I used an example with him a while ago, and the same goes with David Maslanka’s music, which, again, is very tonal, very triadic, and then David, being a much older composer and experienced more, he can go outside that and really get kind of crazy and dissonant and not very predictable, and then come back to a triad. To me it’s like Stravinsky, Maslanka was always able to write what I call the “right wrong note.” Which means you might expect an F major chord and you get it, but there’s also this strange B-natural in there too that’s kind of thumbing its nose. I’ve always said to Steve, “that’s the next thing I’m waiting to hear in your music is the right wrong note, because I hear a lot of right notes.” I think that he is starting to develop that quite a bit. I found that more with This World Alive that there was more interesting harmonic extension to various things. Not so much in the Alcott Songs, I think that he was trying to be transparent and not be too in the way of the voice, which I think he was very successful with. His harmony there and his melody there is pretty straight forward, but he really makes it work. I think one of the reasons why it works for Steve is that it’s very honest. What I mean by that is it’s really the way he hears and likes music. He’s not trying to write something that he thinks
other people will love, he loves writing the music that he’s writing. You hear that in the music, you see it in him and working with him, so that’s really refreshing.

MB: Yeah, that makes a lot of sense. Thank you for putting that in to words. I don’t think I mentioned this in the email, I did my Master’s degree at the University of Connecticut and Jeff Renshaw there does a lot of Steve’s music. He did This World Alive while I was there and so as you’re saying this I’m thinking about what you’re saying and hearing what you’re talking about with the placement of notes and adding to the triads and things like that. So thank you very much.

MS: Yeah, I see that developing, but I knew that it would. I was trying to encourage him saying “hey Steve, your music is very beautiful, don’t be afraid for it to kind of get ugly at times. Then it makes the beautiful sections even more satisfying.”

MB: Sure, yep. Ok, so moving a little bit specifically to the Alcott Songs. Can you describe your overall impression of it, how you feel about it as a piece artistically?

MS: Yeah, I like it. I think that it was very successful in what it’s trying to do. It’s supposed to be a fun playful piece. The singer that I performed it with was a student here at Eastman, and the Eastman Wind Ensemble. The piece was pretty easy to put together with the players, obviously. I did a couple rehearsal with them and then, I had auditioned a bunch of singers for it and found one that had, really, the right voice for it. Somebody that was used to singing a lot more contemporary sounding music, meaning a lot more real difficult intervals. This piece, I think, was not challenging in that way for her. The fact that she was very, very comfortable with contemporary music made this very easy for her. I think she really loved the fact that she had a real tonal piece to sing herself. I think that each movement has a lot of really nice moments. It has a lot of really great pacing. It’s not just straight forward. Of course there’s little moments in there where the audience would chuckle if they understood the text, which he did a great job at being able to clear out the ensemble so that it could be done without amplification. I think a lot of it really led itself to an intimate experience, which I think it’s supposed to be. He and I had talked about writing for orchestra wind section a lot, instead of just the band. I got a feeling that this was a nice lean orchestra woodwind section, with the contra-bass clarinet added. It really worked to make it transparent enough that the voice really came through. I like the little counterpoint between the voice and various instruments back and forth. He’s doing a lot more of that lately. I think, that’s what I thought, in his earlier music it was more homophonic and needed a little bit more counterpoint and development of that. I think he certainly did that in the Alcott Songs more than he did in his earlier pieces.

MB: Yeah, that’s great. I can hear that as well. You mentioned that it was just a few rehearsals. It wasn’t incredibly difficult for the talented performers you have there. Through those couple of rehearsals was it well-received by the performers? Did they grasp the concept and get it and enjoy it? How was their reaction to it?

MS: It’s not a hard piece to sell to the players because there’s not a lot of really hard technical things that they had to work out. It was just about pacing. What I really tried to do the first couple of rehearsals is make sure that it’s elastic so that when the singer comes in if she wants to go fast here, slower here, that sort of thing, so that the players were able to do that with her.
I think we probably only had five total rehearsals of the whole thing, which we probably could have done in three, so that's one thing I like about the piece too is that it is pretty easy to put together and you feel like you can really pay attention and spend time on nuances rather than just holding stuff together and constantly be battling balances. That’s the one thing with winds and voices is that a lot of pieces are not scored really well and you’re constantly changing dynamics a lot softer to the players which can make them a little anxious. If something’s high or really low and you’re asking the players to play even softer it adds a lot of tension to the process because it’s much more difficult for them. The way he scored it we didn’t have a lot of balance problems at all.

MB: Then, in that same regard, you mentioned you worked mostly on pacing, would you say that that was the most challenging aspect of it? I know that it’s not incredibly challenging, but what were the things that you really had to work on during rehearsal?

MS: I think getting the right tempos that, eventually, we want to do in the performance. Exchanging different sections and going on a little faster here or a little slower there. What, really, is that? How does that work? Drawing it from the rehearsal room in to the performance venue, that affects things other than balance, it affects tempos too. We performed it in the Eastman theater, which is a very large hall for a piece like this. So I would say the hardest thing for me was to really find the perfect tempos for every section.

MB: OK. Then after the rehearsal process when the final product was presented, can you talk a little bit about how the performance was received? How the performers felt about it afterwards and any comments you got from the audience, how it was received from them?

MS: I think everybody really liked it. The singer was great, she did a nice job and really sold it. Not only vocally, but physically. She’s done quite a bit of theater and opera. She really played it to the audience. The players, it was pretty simple for them as accompanist. But they had little places where they were suddenly the soloist themselves, and they enjoyed that. I think the players really liked it. It wasn’t something that took a lot of their outside time to prepare. These guys are so busy at Eastman, they’re all involved in three or four ensembles every week and doing recitals and other programs, not just for the wind ensemble or for the orchestra. So it was probably refreshing for them to play something that they could almost sit back and relax and enjoy themselves.

MB: Ok. And specifically the audience, was it well received as far as you could tell?

MS: Oh yeah, I think it was very, very successful. I remember talking to a few people afterwards about how they were able to hear every word and understand every word, even though we had the text in the program they didn’t have to look down at their program. They could feel like they could really pay attention to the performance rather than follow along.

MB: Ok. So, lastly... I guess to explain the direction that all of this is going, my document is going to present, for three pieces of Steve’s, it’ll be *Lauda, Alcott Songs*, and *Magnolia Star*, present background information and then analysis of the pieces, and then some performance suggestions and rehearsal things for people that might wish to do these pieces in the future. So
if you could offer, with that in mind, what suggestions and help, or anything of that nature, you might have for people that plan to conduct this piece in the future.

MS: Since I don’t have the scores in front of me I can’t really talk specifically about certain spots, but if you want to send me a few things that you might think, might be problematic, like getting in and out of fermatas and getting in to new sections and various things, Steve’s music is not full of a lot of that kind of stuff, you know?

MB: Yeah.

MS: There aren’t a lot of hard transitions and metric modulations that are difficult, but I would say the overall thing with most of his music is really pacing. When you think about This World Alive, pacing is everything on that because you want the photographs to be coordinated with the music. Even though it doesn’t have to be perfect, there are places that it really makes a difference if you transition to something and then the photograph changes it’s really quite effective. But I think even with music that doesn’t have visuals it’s about not plowing through things and really giving things time to breathe and then go on. There’s a lot in his music where he’ll come to a cadence or a fermata and then he’ll give you a new tempo, or he’ll say something like “faster” or “slower,” I think you kind of have to decide on your own, if I’ve done a gradual ritard in to an end of a phrase or an end of a section and then I go on, am I really faster or am I just resuming a certain type of motion. Composers sometimes will write a new tempo or say faster when it really doesn’t feel that way, it just feels like it’s con motto. You’re going back to something that has motion again after resolving and suspending time for a while. So I would say that kind of pacing is the most important thing in his music. I think, because his music is still fairly triadic, it’s actually more difficult to tune than music that might hide itself a little bit, pitch-wise, in dissonance. So I think you need to spend a lot of time in really making sure all the thirds and fifths are where you want them. I think it’s pretty easy for the players to hear that, but you need to make sure that you give them time enough, especially on cadences, so that they settle in and it feels like we’ve really come to something that is a moment rather than there’s some pitch problems that don’t really lend themselves to that resolution. That’s another thing, other than pacing, is just paying attention to pretty straight-ahead tonality which, like in Bach or anything else, is a lot more difficult than if you’re doing something by Berg.

MB: Sure, yeah. Well great, I appreciate your time and the things that you’ve added for me here.

MS: Yeah.
4-27-15 Concert Band Concert. Performed by Texas Tech University Concert Band. 
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C9JIN3k30XQ.


“Lauda Anima (Goss).” *Lauda Anima (Goss) – Hymnary.org*.  


https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dHb1ndA06G0.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jNNNzvzFzPE.

GIA WindWorks, 2016, CD.


Vita for Michael C. Black

Education


2003 – 2009 Bachelor of Music Education (summa cum laude), Northeastern State University, Tahlequah, Oklahoma

Positions and Appointment

2016 – present Franklin College, Franklin, Indiana; Director of Instrumental Music
2014 – 2016 University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky; Graduate Teaching Assistant
2012 – 2014 University of Connecticut, Storrs, Connecticut; Graduate Teaching Assistant
2010 – 2012 Panama Public School, Panama, Oklahoma; Director of Bands

Scholastic and Professional Honors

2014 Kappa Kappa Psi, Delta Omicron Chapter – Honorary Membership
2013 Tau Beta Sigma, Gamma Kappa Chapter – Honorary Membership
2012 National Junior Honor’s Society – Most Influential Teacher
2008 Northeastern State University – Academic Achievement Award