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The Prodigal Son: A Ballet for Orchestra

by

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ABSTRACT

The Prodigal Son is a ballet for orchestra, scored for 2 flutes (1st doubling alto flute and 2nd doubling piccolo), 2 oboes (2nd doubling English horn), 2 clarinets in B-flat (2nd doubling clarinet in E-flat), 2 bassoon, 4 horns in F, 2 trumpets in B-flat, 2 tenor trombones, 1 bass trombone, timpani, 2 percussion, piano and strings with a duration of about 22 minutes.

The ballet sets the Biblical parable in a fictional, small farming community in Saskatchewan during the Depression years, making use of folk materials and soundscapes associated with the time and place. It also explores the psychological aspects of the characters. A variety of harmonic languages and orchestration techniques are explored. An analytical paper is included which discusses the musical materials, relating them to the scenario and characters.

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I also want to thank my husband, Bryan, for his constant encouragement and support and my children, Elise and Keith, for their patience throughout the entire process of writing the piece.

Dedicated

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to

Bryan, Elise and Keith, whose love is a refuge,

and Mom and Dad, whose door is always open.

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THE PRODIGAL SON: AN ANALYSIS Introduction

In the book, *Modern Dance: Seven Statements of Belief*,¹ seven choreographers describe how they would portray the story of *The Prodigal Son*. Erick Hawkins' view is that his art must not only be wondrous, but also serve to communicate the purpose of the story. He says, "[f]or the artist, most completely when he is using art in its second function, is a priest and not just a reporter."² In the creation of my ballet, my intent was to explore the great truth Christ taught through the parable of *The Prodigal Son* ³ - the unconditional love of God the Father toward his children. Because this truth is timeless, I chose to set the story within my own Canadian heritage. Since I am the grand-daughter of Saskatchewan homesteaders of Irish and English descent, I have set my adaptation of the Biblical story in Saskatchewan during the 1930s. While presenting events that are parallel to the Biblical parable, I have also fashioned situations the prodigal may have experienced while he was away from home to suit the setting and established an ending to fit my purpose. In order to heighten the dramatic impact, I chose to write my piece for dance.

The severe famine mentioned in the parable corresponds to the Great Depression. Some precious values have been passed down to the present generations through the hardships suffered by prairie Canadians of that time. When employment was hard to find, families committed to work together and provide support for each other. Most adopted a "waste-not, want-not" attitude and learned to enjoy the simple things in life, including ways to entertain themselves. As I reflect upon the past, I contemplate some of the values my parents and grandparents taught, recognizing the legacy they have given me - a loving devotion to God, unconditional love for each other, and grateful appreciation for what we

¹Selma-Jeanne Cohen, ed., *Modern Dance: Seven Statements of Belief*, (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1966).

² Erick Hawkins, "Pure Poetry" in *Modern Dance: Seven Statements of Belief*, ed. Selma-Jeanne Cohen (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1966), 48.

³ Luke 15: 11-32.

have. My piece is written as part of my devotion to God. The other values are reflected within the parable of *The Prodigal Son*.

Scenario

The most poignant moment of the Biblical story is the reunion of the father and the prodigal son. Here, two powerful virtues are at work - the courage of the "broken" son to return home and the unconditional love of the father toward his son. I wanted my piece to end in the wake of this joyous moment. But the Biblical story concludes with the father explaining to the elder son why it was necessary to celebrate the return of his prodigal brother. Because I wanted the ending to be joyful, I felt it would be more effective to end with the celebration. In order to keep the elder son's response part of the story, I used it near the beginning as a springboard to go back in time and unfold the events of the story, leading back up to the celebration at hand. As a result, I have taken a cyclic and end-accented approach to the piece.

The piece begins with a celebration. Family members, hired hands and neighbours are dancing and feasting in response to the return of the young son. The elder son comes in from the field toward the house and asks what is happening. When he finds out, he refuses to go in. The father comes out to persuade him to reconsider. The elder son is indignant because he had continued to serve the father while his brother threw away his life with reckless living. Yet no party was given in *his* honour. The father tries to reassure the elder son and bring understanding. Then, the story goes back in time.

One typical day at the farm, the younger son dreams of his freedom while other family members and hired hands work diligently. He boldly asks his father for his share of the inheritance so he can make a life of his own. After a vain attempt to dissuade his son from leaving, the father graciously agrees to let him go. The father gives him a coat, symbolizing not only the inheritance, but also the son's life.⁴

When the young son arrives in the city, he is fascinated by the attractions and the

⁴ the inspiration for this is drawn from my grandfather's memoirs (*The Life Story of Lisle Whiteside*, 52), where he wrote, "I well remember how Dad took us early in the morning the day we were to leave [to join the army]... Dad bought me a coat similar to Add's. I often thought of that and the faith Dad must have had in our return sometime, for it could have only been used that once by me."

fast pace. He foolishly spends his money on trivia, parties and gambling. Meanwhile, the whole country has been plunged into the Great Depression. Many people lose their jobs and homes. Some turn to bootlegging, stealing, and prostitution in order to survive. Unscrupulous people (their faces veiled with gauze as a symbol of their trickery⁵) follow the prodigal around trying to get what they can from him. They enjoy the hospitality he provides at a party, stealing what they can from him while he becomes drunk. They also recklessly spill food and drink on his coat.

He becomes brash and arrogant, challenging a certain brawny character to a fight on which he bets all of his money. Mocking him, the crowd begins to cheer for his opponent. No match for his opponent, he loses the fight and his money. Finally, all of his resources are gone.

A mysterious young woman comes to his rescue after the fight. He falls in love with her. When he discovers that she too was only after his money, he is repulsed and runs away in horror. Other swindlers converge upon him. The woman laughs hideously as they tear at his coat.

Having come to complete ruin, he wanders in search for some means to support himself. Every door is closed. Hungry and homeless, he tries to barter a meal of food scraps from another vagrant with the last of his possessions - his coat. The vagrant grabs it from him, leaving him heartsick and devastated.

He decides to return home, planning to plead for forgiveness and for a job as one of his father's hired hands. While he is still a long way off, his father sees him coming. The father runs toward him, his heart overflowing, and embraces him. The son begins his penitent speech. But the father is so filled with compassion, he drapes his own coat around the son⁶ and doesn't really listen. He calls upon everyone around him to prepare a celebration.

The action of the story freezes momentarily. The music creates an atmosphere of

⁵ the idea for this is adapted from Pauline Koner's article, "Intrinsic Dance," in *Modern Dance: Seven Statements of Belief*, ed. Selma-Jeanne Cohen (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1966), 88.

⁶ a robe was used similarly by George Balanchine in his choreography of *The Prodigal* Son, described by Anna Mouat in a personal interview.

reverence. The action shifts to a reflection of the father's grace toward the prodigal - his "door is always open."⁷ The story comes back in time and the father beckons the elder son to join in. Realizing the father's joy at finding his brother alive, the elder son finally concedes⁸ and the celebration continues.

Musical Form

The piece has three tableaux: Home - Away from Home - Home.⁹ The form is an inverted arch as illustrated in Appendix A. The first and third tableaux share the same hymn-like material and celebratory music as well as a continuous narrative based on the Biblical story. Following the Introduction, the first tableau begins with the dance music of the celebration. The dance (RR2-7)¹⁰ follows a modified rondo form (ABCA'C...). After the celebration music is interrupted by the elder son's inquiry (R7), the music portrays the story in the manner of a dialogue between the father and the elder son (RR8-15), heard antiphonally between the woodwinds and muted strings. The tableau continues with a narrative approach, ending with a commentary by the father (RR18-20). The third tableau is a through-composed narrative, combining music representing the return of the prodigal with music representing the anticipation of the father. It leads back to the celebration music of the opening, continuing the modified rondo structure of the first tableau with a completion of C material, and then A material (...CA'). The hymn-like tune of the Introduction, treated fugally, is inserted before the return to the celebration music. Both of these tableaux depict the main characters through instrumentation - the father represented by the woodwinds and the sons by the strings.

The second tableau is not based on the continuous narrative of the Bible story like the other two tableaux. In contrast, it describes a series of discontinuous vignettes based on my own invention. In addition, the music focusses on portraying place and mood rather than character. The return to the continuous narrative style and the music of the

⁷ Hawkins, 51.

⁸ my embellishment of the Biblical parable.

⁹ adapted from Koner, 87-88.

¹⁰ Use of R indicates citation of a rehearsal number (RR indicates a span of rehearsal numbers). Use of the plus sign (+) means measures following the rehearsal number and use of the minus sign (-) means measures before the rehearsal number.

introduction and celebration in the third tableau constitutes the overall arch form.

In her discussion of an approach to the parable, choreographer Pauline Koner suggests that the scenes do not connect in a narrative fashion but as isolated episodes.¹¹ I took this approach in the second tableau. The episodes explore different encounters the prodigal experienced while he was away from home, according to my adaptation of the story. The result is a more sectional approach, with each vignette having its own formal shape.

The first vignette (RR21-25) features a two-part invention between clarinet and bassoon in an ABA shape.

The shopping scene (RR25-28) is constructed on a modified palindrome, featured in the violins and cellos. The centre of the palindrome occurs on the fifth beat of R27. The retrograde half of the palindrome transposes the original melodic material up a minor third (later major third) with some harmonic alterations. The party scene (RR30-37) follows in a basic ternary shape. The return of A varies the rhythm of the melody in polyphonic texture.

In order to construct the fight scene (RR28-47), I created a *moto perpetuo* using a series of metric patterns with a common eighth-note value ranging from 4/8 to 8/8.

Metrical Patterns

a) 3+3+2/8	b) 4/4	c) 3+2+2/8	d) 2+2+3/8	
e) 3/4	f) 6/8	g) 3+2/5	h) 2+3/8	i) 4/8

The original plan was to arrange four groups using three of one metrical pattern with one of another (eg., aaab). In the second section those arrangements would be exchanged (eg., bbba). The third section was to build to the apex similarly using two groups instead of four.

Basic Plan

section 1	section 2	section 3
aaab	bbba	eeeg
aaad	ddda	hhhg
cccd	dddc	ggge
cccf	fffc	ggghapex

In the composition itself, I replaced a pattern of i where h was planned in order to bridge into the 2/4 meter at the apex. Interpolations were used to broaden and vary the idea.

¹¹Koner, 87.

Actual Pattern

section 1	section 2	section 3
aaab	bbba	ee(d*)g
aaad	ddda	hhhg
cccd	dddc	ggge
cccf	(fc*)fffc	ggg(i)apex
(fff*)	-	

*interpolation

Section 3 has an 8/8 *ostinato* underneath the changing metric patterns, creating a perceived polymetric texture and adding to the tension which builds toward the apex. I arranged the rhythmic patterns in order to progressively decrease the number of eighth notes over time. By this, a planned *accelerando* brings the scene to a violent ending.

The love scene (RR48-52) has two parts. The first one features an unmetered flute solo, accompanied by an *ostinato* celesta. The second part is a metered duet between the flute and solo violin, accompanied by the strings and celesta with an arpeggiated pattern (later the piano).

The last vignette also has two parts. The first section (RR54-59) features a solo cello passage in a basic arch form. The arch is created by the character and direction of the melody and its accompaniment. It ascends to its highest note at R57-1, beginning with widely-spaced intervals and sparse accompaniment. At R56, the accompaniment drops out and the cello becomes more recitative-like (R57). At R57+1 the accompaniment re-enters while the cello gradually returns to the widely-spaced intervals of the opening and descends even lower. The second section of the vignette (RR59-66) takes on a linear approach, portraying a series of emotions the prodigal experiences in his final decline.

Musical Materials

In order to portray the story, I have taken an eclectic approach in terms of the harmonic language and supporting musical materials. As a way of defining the time and place, I used folk elements and soundscapes to contrast prairie and urban settings. Some of the folk materials include the use of hymn tune, folk song, and folk dance. To emulate sounds associated with rural musical settings, I used fiddling and guitar-like strumming in the strings and imitation of a penny whistle by the piccolo. To capture the activity, sounds and sights experienced in urban settings, I created various orchestral textures meant to

evoke bustling motion, horns honking in traffic, sparkling lights, and the "push and shove" of crowds. I also used the sound of a jazz band to convey urban night life (RR31-37).

Leitmotifs

The two main characters and the place of home are identified within the piece by using leitmotifs. The father's leitmotif is based on transpositions of a quartal chord and is predominantly presented by the woodwinds. For the most poignant moments, this motif is given to the English horn.

Ex. 1



Home is represented by seventh chords which are related to the father's leitmotif. They are arranged in open fifths and fourths, played by the brass. These chords are featured in the Introduction, the climax of the piece, and the Epilogue.

Ex. 2



The prodigal's theme is restless, designed in zigzag melodic shape to mirror the prodigal's quest for fulfilment. It is based on a symmetrical tone row, the second half of the row being the inverted form of the first half transposed a perfect fifth higher (t-7). Ex. 3



Several parts of the piece juxtapose leitmotifs, which reveal parallel streams of action within the story. Between RR15-16, the brass choir plays the home motif, representing the family at work. Concurrently, a solo violin introduces the prodigal's

theme, displaying the spirit of a maverick.

The beginning of the third tableau (R66) combines the essential ideas of the piece. The father's leitmotif, fanning out of the home leitmotif, is juxtaposed over the son's transforming theme. This represents the two important actions that take place prior to the climax: the son's return home and the father's expectation of the son's return. At the same time the lower strings anticipate the hymn tune of the Epilogue. Beginning at R67, the father's leitmotif becomes increasingly more animated in the woodwinds. This portrays his mounting excitement and increased physical activity in his desire to reunite with his son. At the same time, the son's theme represents the prodigal's homeward struggle with its "stumbling" rhythm, pauses and upward-stretching melody.

In the *tutti* at the climax (R70), the son's transformed theme culminates with the home leitmotif, punctuated by an effervescent presentation of the father's leitmotif in the woodwinds. This represents the joyful reunion of father and son.

The piece ends as it began with the fiddle music of the celebration but overlaid with the resounding hymn-tune of the Epilogue which closes the piece with a sense of resolution and joy.

Musical Signals

Changes of narrative time, from the present to past and vice versa, are indicated by musical signals. To go to the past (RR14-15), I used a wash of sound consisting of prepared piano (to sound like a dulcimer), vibraphone, tam tam and timpani. The vibraphone echoes the celebratory folk tune. To return to the present (RR75-76), I used the wash of sound and a polyrhythmic presentation of the tune in the vibraphone (in groups of four) simultaneously with its refrain in the piano (in groups of three).

The sound of the rainstick is a simple but significant signal. It serves as a musical curtain to separate the tableaux.

Christ's parable was told to illustrate a spiritual truth - the grace of the heavenly Father toward each individual. I wrote a hymn-like tune in the Epilogue (R72) in order to signal that the piece has a spiritual dimension. It is developed as a fugato, a style drawn from the Renaissance for its connection with sacred music. By using material historically associated with Christian worship, I intended to signal the spiritual meaning of the story.

Melodic Materials

The celebration theme is a parody of a Saskatchewan folk tune I learned as a child entitled *Flunky Jim*.¹² I chose the tune because the words poke fun at the depression years when the government paid a bounty for gopher tails. The text was written by Dan Ferguson who, like my grandparents, came to homestead in Saskatchewan. The tune is altered by changing the melodic contour, using *appoggiatura* and offsetting the rhythm. Ex. 4



The general contour of the tune is held within the fiddling passages such as at R6, but uses enharmonic equivalents to explore a variety of key areas. This is a way of expressing elation. I derived a refrain that draws from the sound of Irish traditional music with the drone of the double reeds and cellos against the fiddle music of the violins. Woodblocks serve to evoke the tapping of the folk dancers' feet (R5) in counterpoint to the melody.

The melody of the party scene is based on the octatonic scale, emphasizing minor thirds, tritones and sevenths that occur in jazz. Examples 14 and 15 show the octatonic scales and the melodic outline, respectively. As the party progresses, the clarinet melody depicts the growing level of intoxication that overtakes the party with the bending of tones, reckless leaps, high register and *glissandi*. When the melody returns in a multi-voiced canon, the resulting swirl of sound is a metaphor for drunkenness.

The prodigal's theme is a row. The row forms are used according to traditional twelve-tone technique and they are also treated more freely. The row forms are shown in Appendix B. Sometimes the rows are extended by repetition or by spiralling back to reiterate notes from the beginning of the row before continuing with the row. An example is shown below, taken from the clarinet at R21+4m, with the reiterated notes in

¹² Folksongs of Saskatchewan, Folkways Ethnic Library FE 4312. According to the record notes, the tune was adapted from the Irish folk song *The Wearing of the Green*.

parentheses.

Sequence of notes: Bb B A Eb G (Bb B A G) C# F E F# C Ab D

At R22, the clarinet presents the first hexachord of I-1only. Groups of notes are retaken from the beginning, incorporating more members of the hexachord each time.

first hexachord I-1: C B C# G Eb A

sequence of notes: C B C#, (CBC#)G, (CBC# - BC#G) Eb A

This method of extension is used at the close of the vignette in the clarinet at R24+3m, using the full P-0 row.

The theme (P-8) becomes more passionate at R56 by repeating the opening notes and displacing the F# an octave higher. At R57, it becomes more speech-like through a kind of stutter and repetition of the first three notes, elongating P-0.

Occasionally, the rows overlap one another, using the last note or notes of one as the beginning of another. An example is at R23-2m in the bassoon. The note B is the last member of I-4, heard in the previous measures, but is also the first one of P-0 which follows. At R58, the F#-G notes are the last two notes of RI-8, overlapping the first two notes of P-7.

The rows can also be slightly rearranged. In the row at R54, the solo cello omits G# and G from P-2, attaching them to the end of the row.

P-2: C#		С	F#	ВЪ	Ε	G#	G	A	D#	В	F
rear C#	rang D	ed P C	-2: F#	ВЪ	E	A	D#	 В	F	G#	G

Then, G becomes a pivot note into the following row form (I-0). But rather than using the normal sequence which ends on G, the row begins on G, followed by its normal order.

normal I-0 row: B Bb C F# D G# E F Eb A C# G rotated I-0: G B Bb C F# D G# E F Eb A C#

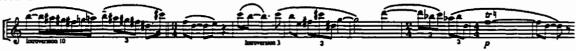
The flute melody associated with the mysterious young woman is based on introversions of the row. These are produced by weaving the notes from the end of the row to the beginning in sequence as shown below, keeping the starting pitch (B) constant. The introversions are shown in Appendix C.

row order 1 2 3... 10 11 12
$$1 \times 2 \times 3 \times 4$$

yields introversion 1: 1 12 2 11 3 10 4...

At R49, introversion 2 is treated strictly, heard twice in succession. The introversions that follow (to R52) are obscured by repetition of selected notes, fragmentation, overlap and extension. Introversion 10 begins with an ornamental figure, using the first six notes. It reiterates the first four of those notes and then skips to the remaining notes of the introversion. The last note (C) of Introversion 10 is attached to Introversion 3, becoming the first note of the next phrase. Introversion 3 is treated very freely, repeating the C from Introversion 10 as an upper neighbour tone and hovering around a central note D.

Ex. 5



In addition, it leaves off the last note (A) which is the second note of the following Introversion 4. Introversion 4 is extended by using its last 6 notes in retrograde.

Harmonic Materials

The three major sections of the piece are marked by contrasting harmonic ideas. Tonal and modal ideas are featured in the outer tableaux. Chromatic ideas belong with the prodigal and his life away from home, and are therefore explored to a greater extent in the second tableau.

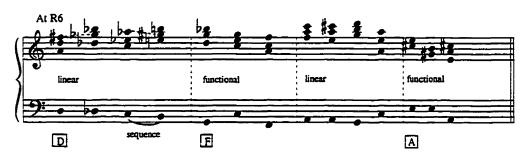
Tonal and modal harmonies represent the family home. The hymn tune of the Introduction opens the piece in A major. With the entrance of the brass at R1, it draws from the minor mode for harmonic enhancement. When heard in the Epilogue (R72), it is transposed down a fifth in D major. Both the Introduction and the Epilogue outline the fifths associated with home. The harmony is pandiatonic. Direction results from root and bass movement. Richer chords (with four notes) move to simpler ones (with two or three notes) at cadence points. The chords feature perfect fifths, which I consistently use in parallel motion.

Ex. 6



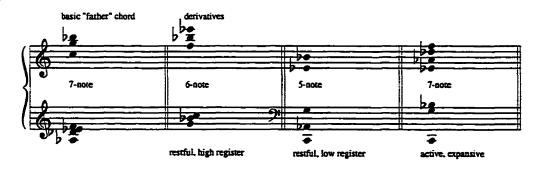
The tune of the celebration begins in A, with tones from both major and minor modes. I veiled triadic harmonies by using added tones of seconds and fourths. The piece modulates to D at the height of the celebration (R6). Chromatic mediant relationships and sequences produce harmonic shifts. Functional harmony is mixed with chromatic linear thinking. Triadic sonorities provide unity.

Ex. 7

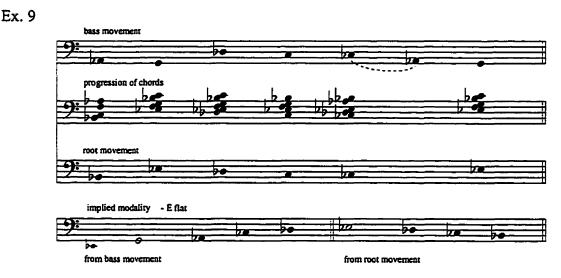


The harmonic language associated with the father is based on quartal chords. They are constructed on arrangements of varying densities and registers, ranging from restful to more active combinations.

Ex. 8



The harmonic progressions use bass movement mainly in thirds, seconds and fifths. The progressions move away from and back toward stable chords which suggest functional modal harmony as shown below. An example is between RR10-11.



The harmony associated with the elder son is polychordal. There are two layers of predominantly parallel major chords at work. The upper layer harmonizes the melody using chromatic mediant relationships. The melody tends to revolve around B using both the major and minor modes. The lower layer smudges harmonic definition by relating an interval of one semitone away from one or more chord members of the upper layer. Ex. 10



I use this harmony with muted strings played loudly to represent the elder brother's disapproval of the father's response to his brother's return (RR9-11). The strict homophonic texture and speech-like rhythm yield a declamatory style.

The harmonic ideas of the second tableau are drawn from the prodigal's theme. The first scene (RR20-25) is a two-part invention for woodwinds based on the row forms. The *ostinato* accompaniment draws intervals of seconds and thirds (both major and minor) from the row and provides cohesiveness for the contrapuntal duet. At R22+1, the accompaniment is thickened through the introduction of an upper tritone, returning to the harmonies of the beginning again at R24+1. The motoric rhythm and muted brass suggest an urban setting.

Each subsequent vignette continues to feature different pitch material derived from the row, beginning with the smaller intervals. Using the first three notes of the row, I constructed cluster chords which are featured in the shopping scene. These chords have varying densities and appear in open and closed arrangements. They are heard in the accented notes of the string section. The lack of harmonic direction and arbitrary rhythm of the chords mimic the capricious buying habits of the prodigal.

Ex. 11



The closed groupings tend to ascend in register and expand in density toward the middle of the vignette's palindromic form, then descend in register and thin to the end. They are punctuated with open cluster arrangements in lower registers. The accompanimental duplets of the violas use the essential cluster material in a twisting pattern (R26ff), representing the protagonist's journey through the course of his shopping spree. Ex. 12



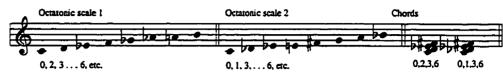
The sound of a jazz band with its intrinsic dance rhythms and harmonic flavour is used for the party scene. Within the row is a trichord which suggests the blue third of the jazz idiom. The surrounding notes can build an octatonic scale.

Ex. 13



Having found this, I freely used the octatonic scale, deriving harmonies which stress the 0, 2, 3, 6 and 0, 1, 3, 6 pitch sets.

Ex. 14



As in most jazz, seventh chords (0, 2, 6) dominate the accompaniment. Generally, the chord that accompanies the melody draws from the opposite scale of that used for the melody.

Ex. 15



The whole tone scale can also be drawn from the row (Ex. 13). As a way of representing the growing level of intoxication at the party, I added harmonies derived from this scale.

The fight scene is based on transpositions of the two hexachords of the row. The chords move between different degrees of tension, providing a sense of linear harmony. Tension varies by arranging the chords in different registers and inversions as demonstrated below.

Ex. 16



The following examples of chord progressions show the contrast of tension that can be accomplished using the two hexachords in this way. Ex. 17



The second chord is not actually built on one of the hexachords but demonstrates a kind of passing chord within the progression. The passing quality is achieved by using common tones between the chords. The following shows the three common tones between P-0(2), the passing chord and P-1(1).

chord	pitches	pitch class	common tones
P-0(2)	Eb F# G C# F A	1, <u>3, 5</u> , 6, <u>7</u> , 9	
passing	C E Bb Eb F G	<u>0, 3, 4, 5, 7,</u> 10	> 3, 5, 7
P-1(1)	F A C Eb B C#	<u>0, 1, 3, 5,</u> 9, 11 —	≥ 0, 3, 5

The rhythm of the chords and their antiphonal treatment simulate the punching action of the fighters. In order to contrast the fighters, I used woodwinds for the weaker prodigal and brass for his opponent. I also used the piano, joined later by strings (R45), to represent the commentary of the crowd. The piano initially states linear arrangements of the hexachords (Ex. 18), which become harmonic structures at R45.

Ex. 18



When the prodigal becomes love-struck, his theme is united with the melody of the mysterious young woman (RR50-52). Here, the prodigal's theme is transformed into a countermelody based on the hexachords of the row rather than the row forms. Both melodies are supported by chords derived from the row.

Ex. 19



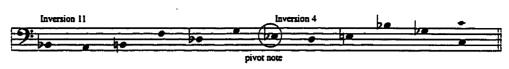
Thematic Development

Because *The Prodigal Son* is essentially a story about transformation of the heart, I have chosen to reveal the various stages of the younger son's journey by transforming his theme. When I begin to change the structure of the row, I do so from the central part of the row, from its heart, outward in both directions.

When he first leaves home, the prodigal's theme sounds bright and hopeful (RR21-25). By using the Eb clarinet and a motoric rhythm, I tried to portray his cocky attitude in his new-found freedom. As the piece progresses, the theme generally descends in register, representing his decline. During the party, it is a haunting countermelody, heard in the horn. The cymbals approximate the theme at the beginning of the fight scene (R37+1), representing the prodigal's challenge to his opponent. The theme, in the cello and contrabass, becomes lonely and desperate when his life is in ruins (RR54-59).

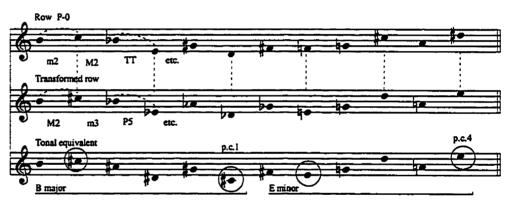
When the son decides to return home (R65-1m), I used the first hexachord of each of inversions 11 and 4 with the E-flat note serving as a pivot note to connect the two inversions. I chose to use only inversions in a rising sequence passed from the lower strings to higher ones in order to emphasize his decision to return home.





From this point, the theme transforms from the inside out in both directions, based on Inversion 8. Appendix D shows the process of transformation. The row is permuted, exchanging the placement of B and C# in the row order. Inversion 8 is only partially reconstructed between the F# and the C#. The F#(Gb) of the row becomes the pivot note from which the newly transformed theme begins. At R67, the theme continues to flower from the inside out in retrograde. Every other note is altered in order to expand adjacent intervals by one semitone. The resulting row has 10 pitches, with pitch classes 1 and 4 repeated, making the theme tonal (B major/E minor).

Ex. 21



In addition, the theme ascends in register to the climax. The transformation of the prodigal's chromatic theme results in tonal/modal harmony, associated with home, and symbolizes of his change of heart. The newly transformed theme is heard just before the climax of the ballet.

Orchestration

Throughout the piece, I have used orchestral colour to heighten the psychological and emotional impact of the scenario. A segment of the piece that exemplifies this process is found in the two final vignettes of the second tableaux (RR51-63), beginning with the end of the love scene and continuing to the time at which the prodigal's coat is stolen by another vagrant. At the point when the young woman reveals her true character (RR51-52), I represent her duplicity by changing the solo flute to an alto flute, adding clarinet subtones when it plays fluttertongue and without *vibrato*. At the same time, the lower strings change from *arco* to *pizzicato*. His initial response is disappointment, portrayed by the solo violin in a descending *glissando*, followed by no *vibrato* and a *sul ponticello* harmonic. Then he is repulsed, which is represented by divided strings and woodwinds in a "blurred toccata"¹³ passage at R52. The instruments converge from the extreme registers to the middle range. To heighten the psychological drama, muted brass imitates the mocking laughter of the young woman.

In order to create the lonely setting and plaintive mood following this encounter (RR54-59), I used a solo cello, which is initially shadowed by the clarinet. The accompaniment is very sparse, played by divided, muted upper strings and intermittent "seagull" glissandi¹⁴ in the cellos. The upper strings play in clusters which fan out and contract, representing the waxing and waning of the prodigal's faint hope for a job. As he considers trading his coat for some food, I used double stop glissandi on natural harmonics in the strings¹⁵ to create a feeling of expectation. The melody of the solo violin represents his desperate request. In order to add an eerie quality, I doubled the first and last notes of this melody with the bowed vibraphone. When his coat is stolen, he experiences an inner turmoil which is represented by divided strings and reed instruments. The wooden timbre of the piano, produced by striking the low B-flat note loudly while damping the wires inside the piano and keeping the pedal on, punctuates his feeling of being "struck to the core." The strings spread out from a single note and hold a mid-range cluster chord, depicting a feeling of being dazed. A babbling sound, produced by the dry timbre and the texture of the reed instruments in "blurred toccata" style, represents his frenzied thoughts. They spread outwards from the middle register to the outer ones, joined later by the strings. At the apex (R63), the reeds drop out and the strings and piano arrive in extreme registers, resting on the 0, 1, 6 pitch set. This pitch set, combined with the colour of loud harmonics

¹³ a term used to describe this kind of controlled alleatoric texture in Steven Stucky's book, *Lutoslawski and His Music*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 125.

¹⁴ a special effect used in Alexina Louie's The Eternal Earth, 1986, rev. 1996.

¹⁵ a special effect used in Sophia Gubaidulina's Offertorium, 1986.

played on the violins and the brittle sound of the upper notes of the piano, evokes a cold, empty feeling with which he is left.

Ex. 22



Conclusion

In describing the appeal of the story of The Prodigal Son, Erick Hawkins said,

"The story is poignant and ... the ending shows new sight, growth, and especially joy. When we see the hero come to self-knowledge, we are full of joy, because we see there is the chance that we ourselves can come to self-knowledge and so to our maturity. When the theatre does this, each man and woman walks out renewed."¹⁶

For me, the self knowledge and renewal must happen within the full context intended in the original parable. When we see the love of the father toward his son, we have a model of the kind of love God has toward us. Like the prodigal, we can have confidence there is an open door awaiting our return. In addition, like the prodigal's father, we too can be a refuge for those who need our forgiveness, encouragement and love. Throughout the creation of this ballet, I tried to make musical choices that would remain true to this spirit.

¹⁶Hawkins, 48.

THE PRODIGAL SON: A BALLET FOR ORCHESTRA

Instrumentation

2 Flutes (1st Doubling Alto Flute and 2nd Doubling Piccolo)
2 Oboes (2nd Doubling English horn)
2 Clarinets in B-flat (2nd Doubling Clarinet in E-flat)
2 Bassoons
4 Horns in F
2 Trumpets in B-flat
2 Tenor Trombones
Bass Trombone
Timpani
2 Percussion
Piano (Doubling Celesta or Synthesizer with celesta sample. If synthesizer is used, the celesta part should sound one octave higher than written). Some passages require prepared

celesta part should sound one octave higher than written.) Some passages require prepared piano.

Strings

Percussion

- 1: Three woodblocks (high, medium, low), five temple blocks, castenets, claves, cowbell, two bongos, two roto toms, snare, five tom toms, bass drum,* triangle, tambourine, hi-hat, three suspended cymbals (small, medium, large),* tam tam,*
- 2: Three suspended cymbals (small, medium, large),* crash cymbal, sizzle cymbal, tam tam,* bass drum,* glockenspiel, xylophone, vibraphone, rainstick, ratchet, whip

*these instruments are common to both percussionists and could be shared between them

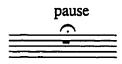
Duration

Tableau I	c. 7 minutes
Tableau П	c. 10 minutes
Tableau III	c. 5 minutes
Total Duration	c. 22 minutes

Transposed score

Notation

- "' short pause
- " shorter pause
- * shortest pause



as fast as possible





In Senza misura passages, accidentals apply only to the note to which it is attached. Resume the conventional use for accidentals in Alla misura passages.

Trill accidentals refer to the accidental attached to the note which is a step above.

Percussion

C means play in the center of the cymbal E means play on the edge of the cymbal N means play normally

Note

The action is an adaptation of the Biblical story of *The Prodigal Son* taken from Luke 15:11-32. It is set in the Canadian prairies around 1930.

First Tableau. Opens with celebratory music. The family is dancing and feasting in response to the return of the young son. The elder son comes in from the field toward the house and asks what is happening. When he finds out, he refuses to go in. The father comes out to persuade him to reconsider. The elder son is indignant because he continued to serve the father while his brother threw away his life. Yet no party was given in *his* honor. The father tries to reassure the elder and bring understanding. The story goes back in time.

The younger son shocks the family with his premature request to his rightful inheritance and leaves for the big city. The father gives him a coat, symbolic not only of the inheritance, but also the son's life.

Second Tableau. The young son arrives in the city, fascinated by the attractions and the fast pace. He foolishly spends his money on trivia, parties, and gambling until all of his resources are gone. The whole country is affected by the Great Depression. As a result, unscrupulous people try to get what they can from him, including a mysterious young woman with whom he falls in love. After running out of money, he begins to look for a job, finding nothing. Hungry, homeless and ruined, he tries to barter a meal of food scraps with his last possession - his coat. Another begger steals it from him, leaving him devastated. At this, he remembers the comfort of home.

Third Tableau. He returns home, planning to plead for forgiveness and for a job as a hired hand. While he is still a long way off, his father sees him coming. His heart overflowing, the father runs toward him and embraces him. The son begins his penitent speech. But the father is so filled with compassion, he drapes his own coat around the son and doesn't really listen. He calls to everyone around him to prepare a celebration. An atmosphere of reverence emerges. The action shifts momentarily to a reflection of the father's grace toward the prodigal. His door is always open. The story comes back in time and the father beckons the elder son to join in. Realizing the father's joy at finding his brother alive, the elder son concedes and the celebration continues.



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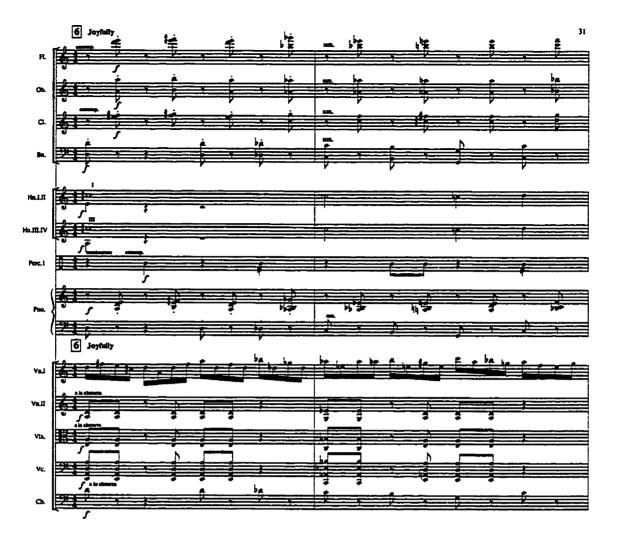


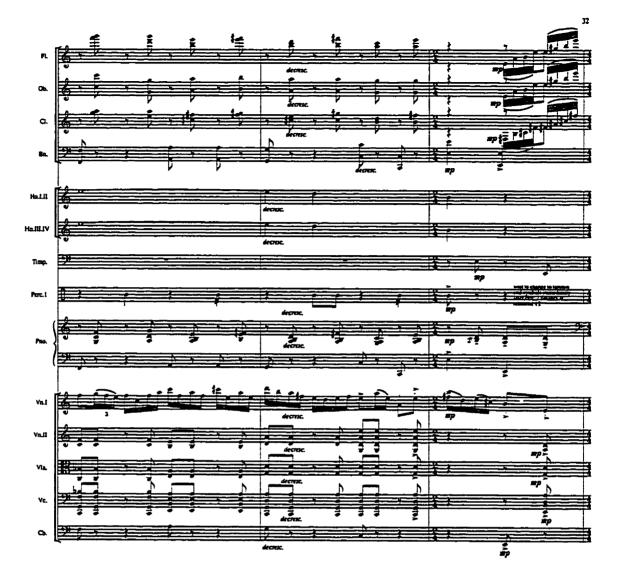








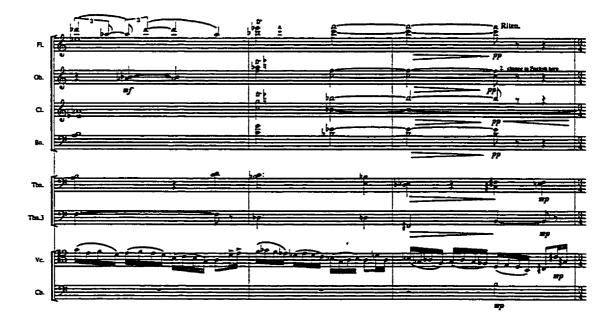






















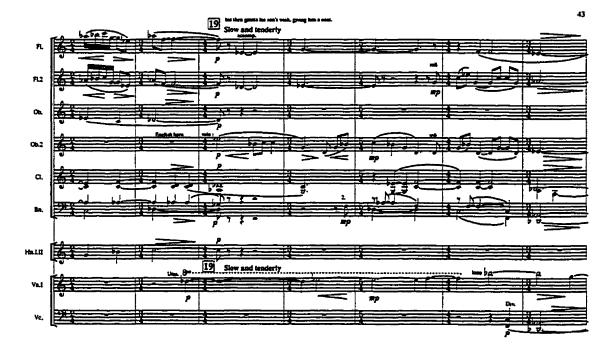




















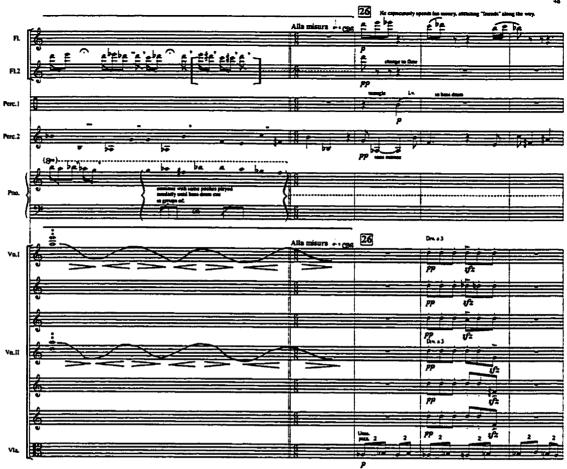




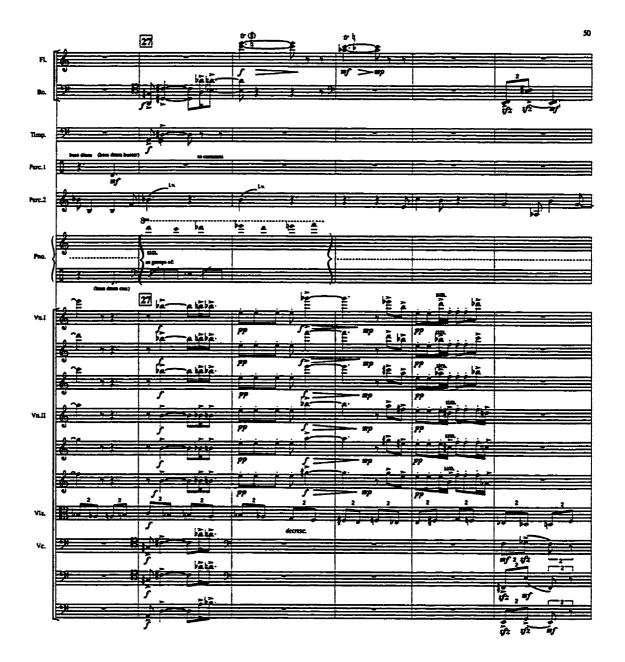


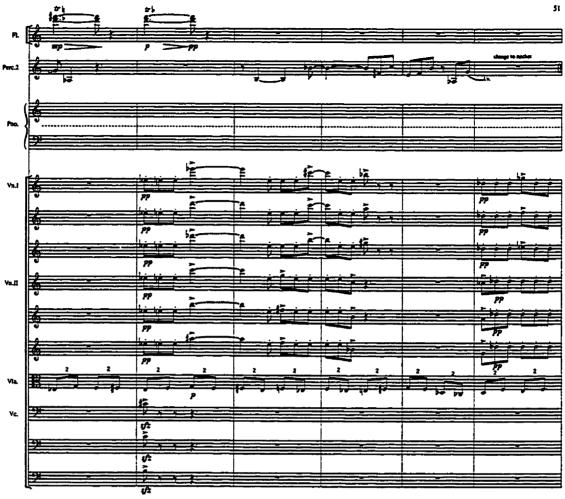


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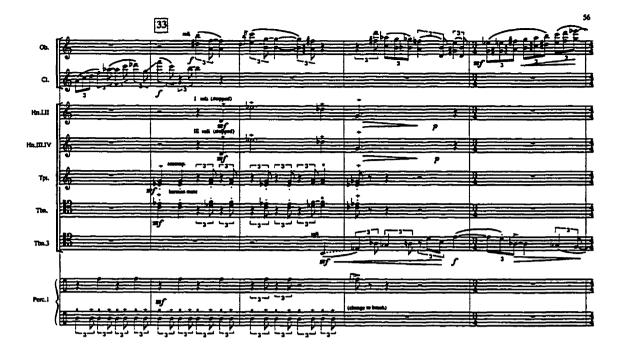




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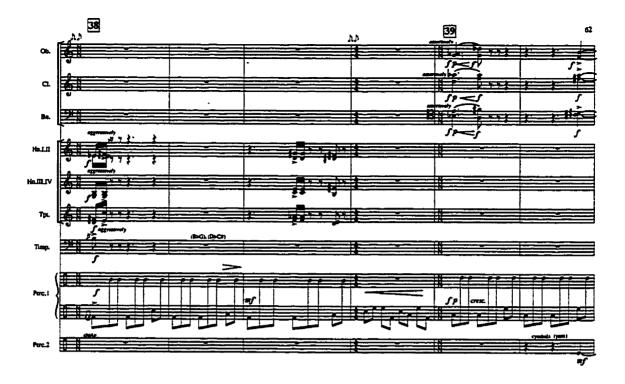
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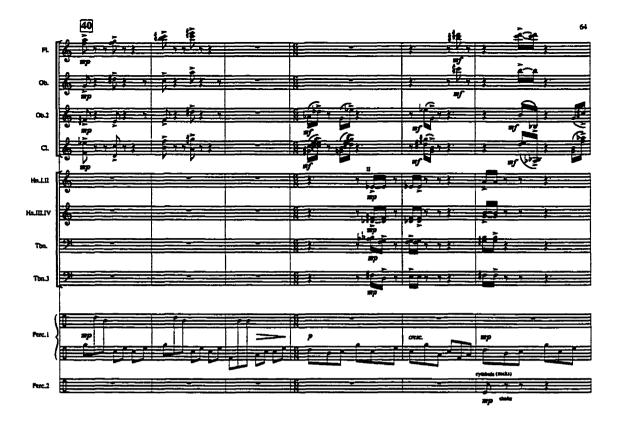
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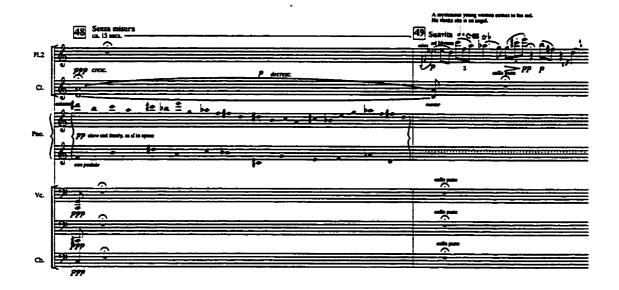


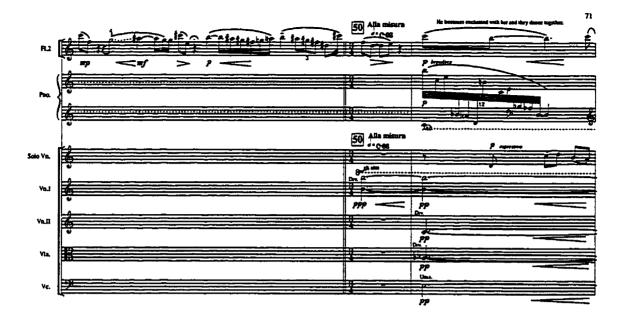


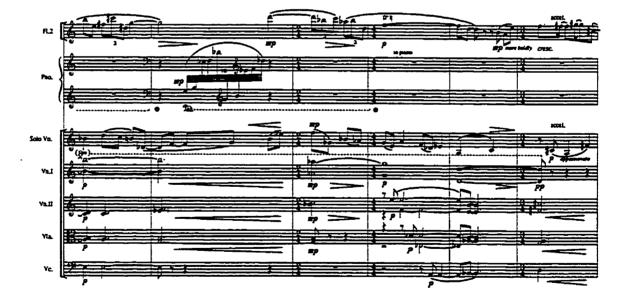


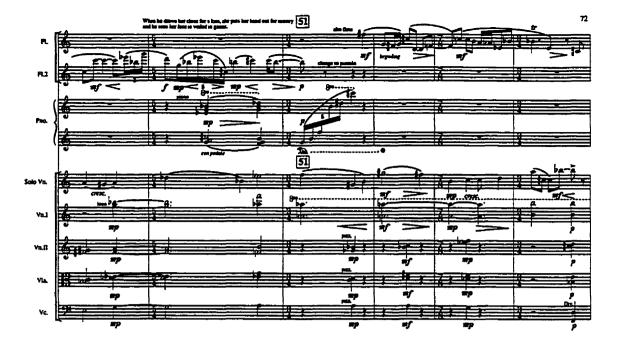


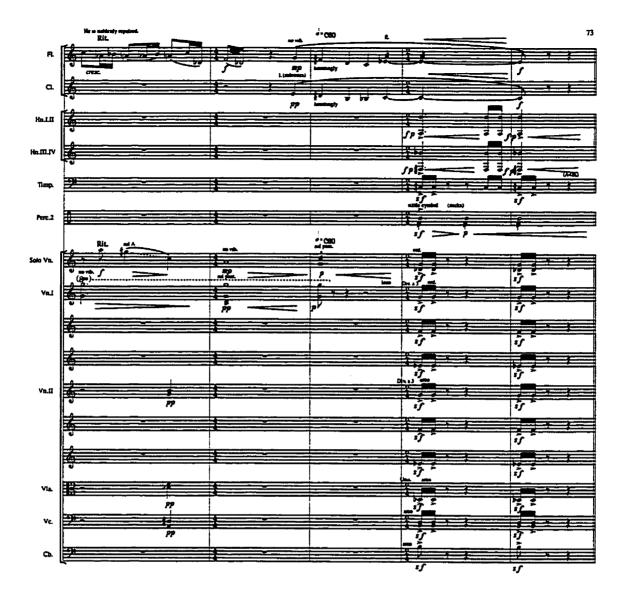












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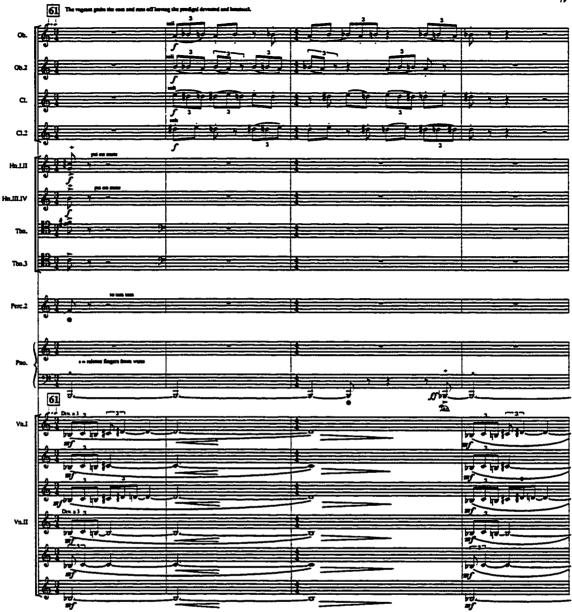
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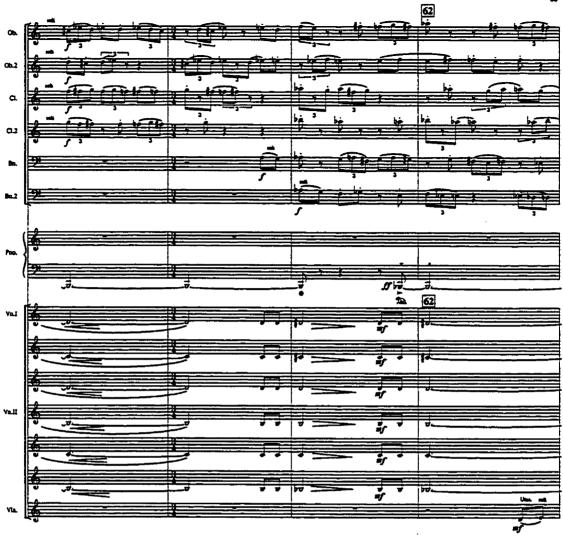




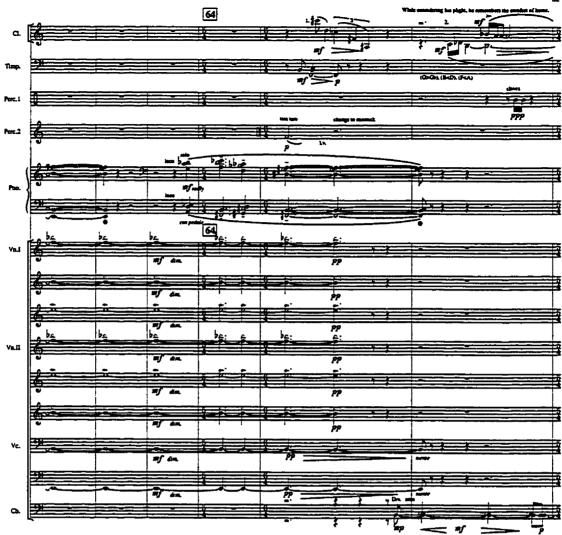


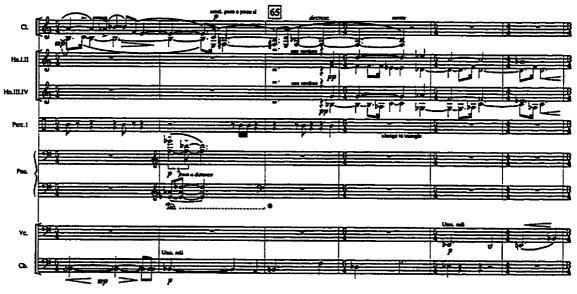
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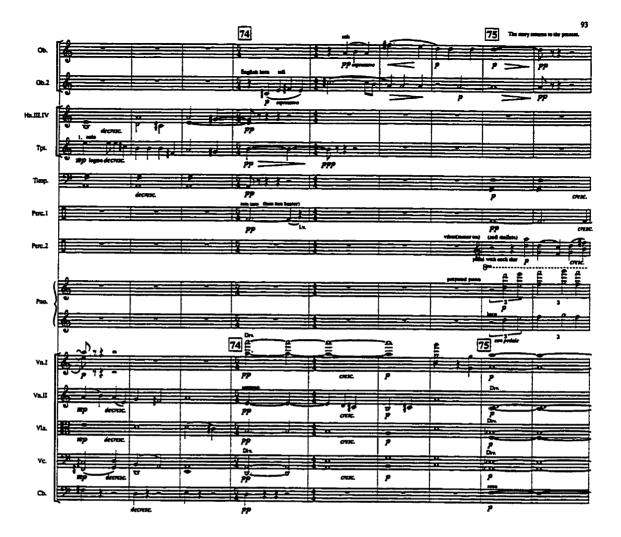












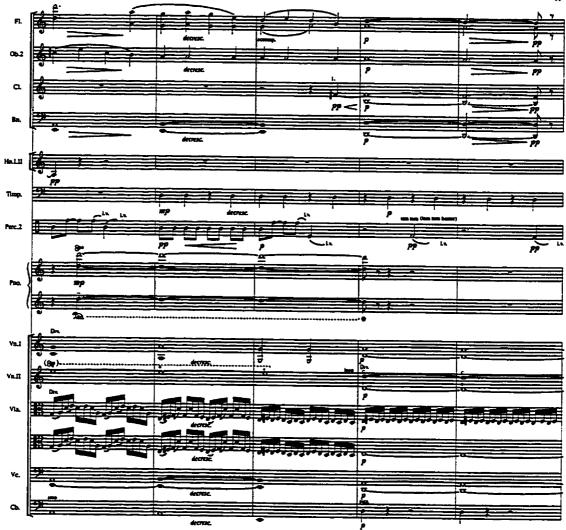


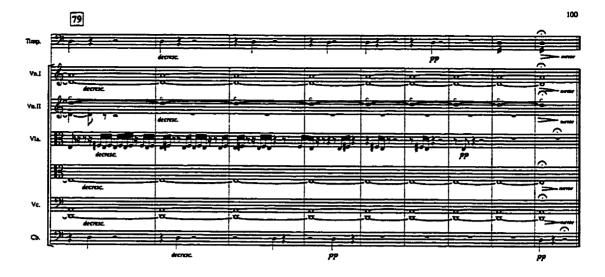












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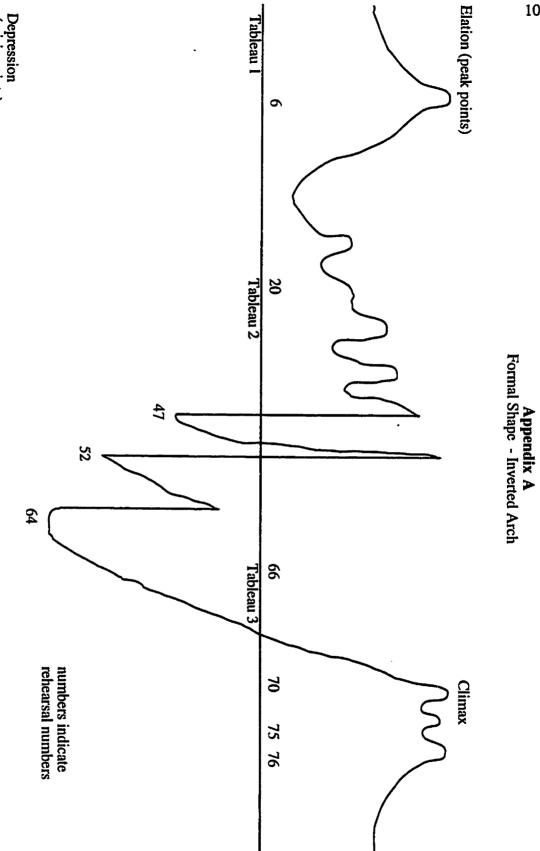
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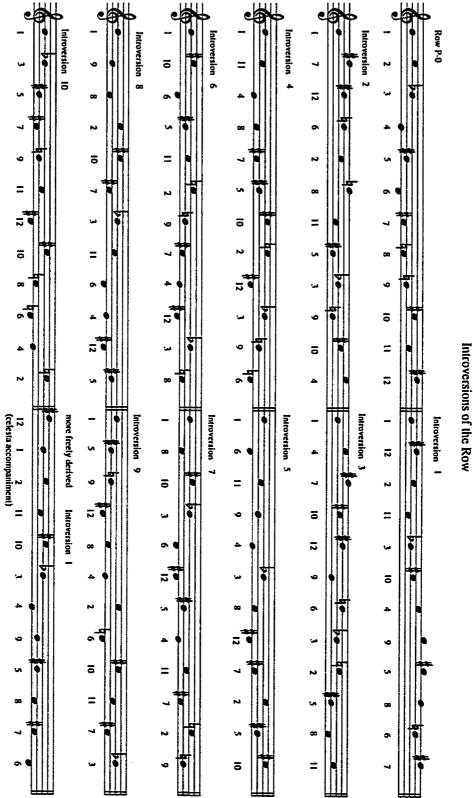
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Depression (crisis points)

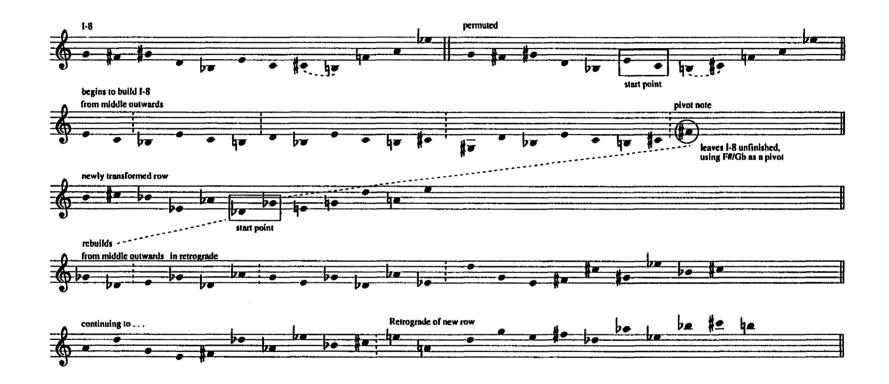
**Row Forms** 

	I-0	I-1	I-11	I-5	I-9	I-3	<b>I-</b> 7	I-6	I-8	I-2	I-10	I-4
P-0	В	С	Bb	E	G#	D	F#	F	G	C#	A	D#
P-11	Bb	В	Α	Eb	G	C#	F	Ε	F#	С	Ab	D
P-1	С	C#	В	F	Α	Eb	G	F#	G#	D	Bb	Ε
P-7	F#	G	F	В	D#	Α	C#	С	D	Ab	Е	Bb
P-3	D	Eb	Db	G	В	F	Α	Ab	Bb	Е	С	F#
P-9	G#	Α	G	C#	F	В	D#	D	Е	Bb	F#	С
P-5	Е	F	Eb	Α	C#	G	В	Bb	С	F#	D	G#
P-6	F	F#	Ε	Bb	D	Ab	С	В	C#	G	Eb	Α
P-4	Eb	Е	D	G#	С	F#	Bb	Α	В	F	Db	G
P-10	A	Bb	Ab	D	F#	С	Е	Eb	F	В	G	C#
P-2	C#	D	С	F#	Bb	Ε	G#	G	Α	D#	В	F
P-8	G	Ab	F#	С	Е	Bb	D	C#	Eb	Α	F	В

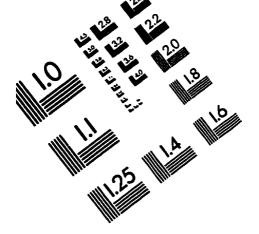


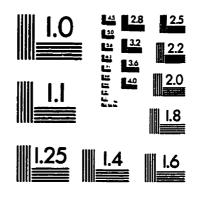


## Appendix D

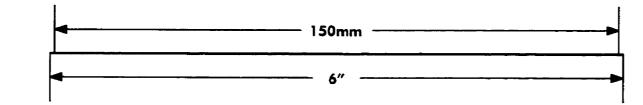


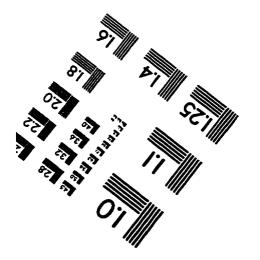
**Process of Row Transformation** 



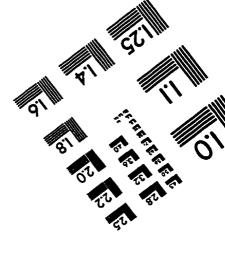


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