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POETIC IMAGERY in VINCENT PERSICHETTI'S *POEMS for PIANO*

by

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A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Music in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts, The City University of New York

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ABSTRACT

POETIC IMAGERY IN VINCENT PERSICHETTI'S *POEMS FOR PIANO*

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Advisor: Professor Philip Lambert

Persichetti's *Poems for Piano* are character pieces inspired by poetry. This study shows how these pieces depict specific poetic images in their melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic elements. Volume I No. 2, "Soft is the Collied Night" (James Elroy Flecker), depicts the darkness of the poetic night and the humorous play of the goldfish, stars and nenuphars, and the pleasant summer night's breeze. Volume I No. 3, "Gather for Festival Bright Weed and Purple Shell" (Hilda Doolittle), celebrates the abundant and diverse colors of nature, including different colors of roses, amusing sand patterns, footprints, the "weaving" of the citron flower, and nostalgic reminiscences. Volume I No. 6, "Whose Thin Fraud I Wink at Privily" (William Watson), is an offbeat comical piece that reflects the poem's multiple personalities and mischievous actions. Volume II No. 7, "And Warm Winds Spilled Fragrance into Her Solitudes" (Edmond Kowalewski), is a dark romantic piece which evokes the poem's sensuous essence and twisted story, along with more specific images such as the sweet silver music,

"harrowing solitudes," an imaginary conversation, and "cruel awakening winds." Volume II No. 9, "Sleep, Weary Mind; Dream, Heart's Desire" (Edna St. Vincent Millay), is a painful lullaby that reflects the horrifying wounds of World War II, along with a musical depiction of the imagery of "sleep" and "dream." Volume III No. 15, "And Hung Like those Top Jewels of the Night" (Léonie Adams), is a beautifully haunting piece portraying the poem's doomed love story.

PREFACE

This study analyzes and interprets Vincent Persichetti's (1915-1984) *Poems for Piano.* This work consists of sixteen character pieces with descriptive titles containing a line or sentence from poems by different authors. I have selected six of these pieces for close scrutiny. The task of this study is to examine each poem and consider how Persichetti depicts and responds to the poetic imagery. I also address issues pertaining to program music and explore the challenges of relating instrumental music to poetry. My goal is to show some of the ways that music can stir the emotions of the listener. In the words of Roger Scruton, "The understanding listener is not a computer. . . . Why should not the musical experience embrace pleasure, feeling and evocation just as much as pure structured sound?"[1]

The six *Poems for Piano* I picked for this study--which are each analyzed through chapters two to seven--belong to the four different subject areas found in the poems of the complete set. These are comedy (Chapter 4, "Whose Thin Fraud I Wink at Privily"), tragedy (Chapter 6, "Sleep, Weary Mind; Dream, Heart's Desire"), love of nature (Chapter 2, "Soft is the Collied Night" and Chapter 3, "Gather for Festival Bright Weed and Purple Shell"), and romance (Chapter 5, "And Warm Winds Spilled Fragrance into Her Solitudes" and Chapter 7, "And Hung Like Those Top Jewels of the Night"). In making these selections I have tried to demonstrate the variety of

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[1]Roger Scruton, "The Aesthetics of Music," *The Aesthetic Understanding* (New York, N. Y: Methuen & Co., 1983), 40.

Persichetti's poetic choices, and of his musical responses.

I begin in Chapter 1 with an exploration of the various concepts, definitions, and history of program music. After laying this foundation, I then devote one chapter to each of the six pieces I have selected. In the analyses I consider harmonic, melodic, rhythmic and structural elements and their contributions toward extra-musical meanings. I often make reference to Persichetti's harmonic practice as outlined in his book *Twentieth-Century Harmony.*[2] The scores for the selected pieces appear in an Appendix (reproduced by permission of Elkan-Vogel Inc.).

The Conclusion chapter briefly sums up the study and also mentions the positive influence of program music throughout my teaching experiences.

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[2]Vincent Persichetti, *Twentieth-Century Harmony* (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Co., 1961).

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

This study discusses and analyzes the compositional technique and portrayal of extramusical ideas in the *Poems for Piano* by Vincent Persichetti (1915-1984). Persichetti wrote eleven character pieces under that title (Volume 1 and 2) in 1939, and added five more (Volume 3) in 1941.[1] Each one is inspired by a different poem from a variety of authors. Persichetti took a line or sentence from each poem and made it the title and organizing feature for each piece. In this dissertation, I examine the musical devices Persichetti uses to portray the themes and images of the poems.

These pieces have fascinated me for years, but I was not sure exactly why. Was it the exquisite melodies? Was it the distinctive quartal and quintal harmonies? Or was it the extramusical associations? Perhaps it was all of these things, but I also felt that there was more, something more intangible that made the music memorable. The pieces seemed to penetrate to the core of the poems with which each was associated. The connection seemed much deeper than just a musical imitation on the surface.

The poetic associations also helped me to understand better how to play the pieces. I experimented with picturing the poetic images as I played. The more I immersed myself in the music's programmatic elements, the more doors were opened into my own imagination and creative emotions. I also began to develop programmatic ideas about pieces that did not have explicit programs. I began to feel that a study of

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[1] *Poems for Piano,* volume 1 and 2 were published in 1947 and volume 3 was published in 1981, all by Elkan-Vogel Inc., in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania.

programmatic interpretation could help me to better understand and play all kinds of music.

The titles of all of the sixteen pieces in the three volumes are given in figure 1-1. My discussion focuses on those shown in bold type.

Figure 1-1. Vincent Persichetti, sixteen *"Poems for Piano"*

Volume 1.

1. "Unroll the Flicker's Rousing Drum," from "First Words Before Spring" by Louis Untermeyer.

2. "Soft is the Collied Night," from "Fountains" by James Elroy Flecker.

3. "Gather for Festival Bright Weed and Purple Shell," from "Songs from Cyprus" by Hilda Doolittle.

4. "Wake Subtler Dreams, and Touch Me Nigh to Tears," from "The Frontier" by William Watson.

5. "Ravished Lute, Sing to Her Virgin Ears," from "Song after Campion" by Robert Fitzgerald.

6. "Whose Thin Fraud I Wink at Privily," from "The Mock Self" by William Watson.

Volume 2.

7. "And Warm Winds Spilled Fragrance into Her Solitudes," from "Change" by Edmond Kowalewski.

8. "To Whose More Clear than Crystal Voice the Frost had Joined a Crystal Spell," from "Home Coming" by Léonie Adams.

9. "Sleep, Weary Mind; Dream, Heart's Desire," from "There are No Islands Any More" by Edna St. Vincent Millay.

10. "Dust in Sunlight, and Memory in Corners," from "A Song for Simeon" by T. S. Eliot.

11. "Make Me Drunken with Deep Red Torrents of Joy," from "Autumnal Clouds" by John Gould Fletcher.

Volume 3.

12. "Rear Its Frondings Sighing in Aetherial Folds," from "Royal Palm" by Hart Crane.

13. "Listen! Can You Hear the Antic Melody of Fear Those Two Anxious Feet are Playing?" by Walter Prude.

14. "Puffed Out and Marching upon a Blue Sky," from "Lilacs" by Amy Lowell.

15. "And Hung Like Those Top Jewels of the Night," from "Twilit Revelation" by Léonie Adams.

16. "Each Gay Dunce shall Lend a Hand," from "The Country Clown" by John Trumbull.

This study begins each chapter by quoting the entire poem that inspires each piece. Persichetti however, uses only one line as a title and does not quote the entire poem. It was important to include the full poetry because, it makes the title much more understandable in depth;[2] presumably Persichetti read the entire poems before composing the pieces. By quoting the entire poem I am not suggesting that Persichetti's music corresponds specifically to the form of the poem. Persichetti seems to concentrate more on the evocation of the characters, settings, occurrences and atmospheres of the poetry. This is, perhaps, similar to Robert Schumann's *Waldszenen,* Opus 82. Especially in the ghastly atmospheric *"Verrufene Stelle"* with a preface of

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[2]I felt as if I was getting only small portions of the poetic stories with the pieces' titles. For example, in chapter 6 *"Sleep, Weary Mind; Dream, Heart's Desire,"* I could not understand why the music contained so much subtle pain and disturbance. After reading the whole poem about World War II, the irony contained in the piece's title and the music was understandable.

the full poetic inscription by Friedrich Hebble, Schumann uses the simple ABA form, focusing more on the poem's dark evocation than formally following the order of the poetic story.[3]

POETRY AND MUSIC

My understanding of the poetry and its relationship to the *Poems for Piano* is influenced in part by comments made by the composer himself. Persichetti seems to have been fascinated, for example, by the idea that poems can have different and possibly contradictory interpretations:

> One day, while I was doing one of my visitations to a university, I happened to be in the faculty lounge where several professors of the English department were discussing an interpretation of a poem by one of the master authors--and it hit me that they (the professors) were openly disagreeing as to the exact meaning of a poem. It suddenly occurred to me that I also had just as much right to my own idea of what the poem should say, and that I had the right to express my reaction in the idiom at my disposal: musical composition . . . . I realized that poetry is, in reality, a distilled concept full of implications that you can interpret many ways.[4]

This open-minded view was encouraging, because my literary interpretations of these pieces are personal and might vary and differ from other people's views.

I am also influenced by Claude Debussy's beliefs in the poetic power of music. He wrote, "It is musicians alone who have the privilege of being able to convey all the

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[3]F. E. Kirby, "The Early Nineteenth Century," *Music for Piano: a short history* (Portland, Oregon: Amadeus Press, 1995), 137-203.

[4]Robert E. Page, "In Quest of Answers," *The Choral Journal* 14/3 (1973): 5.

poetry of the night and the day";[5] and, "For it is music alone that has the power to evoke imaginary scenes at will, to conjure up the intangible world of fantasies secretly shrouded within the mysterious poetry of the night."[6] Debussy also offered one of the most credible and best thoughts on what makes good and effective program music. On criticizing Beethoven's *"Pastoral"* symphony, Debussy gave the reasons for the positive results of programmatic music:

> Certain of the old master's pages do contain expression more profound than the beauty of a landscape . . . [by] capturing the invisible sentiments of nature . . . . It is more a process where the limitless depths of the forest give free rein to the imagination.[7]

This study will explore how one can capture the "invisible sentiments" of the extramusical subjects, reaching out to "a process where the limitless depths of the forest [or other subjects] give free rein to the imagination" for both performers and listeners.

Rey Longyear also praised the programmatic elements of Beethoven's music, which became the model for all program music that followed:

> Beethoven had raised [orchestral music] to a peak as an expressive medium . . . . Instrumental music, as Beethoven had shown, could express everything that speech could not; it could arouse indeterminate emotions and, through the power of association, could recall past incidents, ideas, and feelings, and could actually produce

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[5]François Lesure, *Debussy on Music,* trans. and ed. Richard Langham Smith (New York: Cornell University Press, 1977), 261.

[6]Ibid., 101.

[7]Ibid., 117-18.

more precise impressions than words alone could do.[8]

In examining the *Poems for* Piano with these ideas in mind, this study also considers how Persichetti's work might present certain different issues than those raised by Debussy or Beethoven.

DEFINITIONS AND HISTORY OF PROGRAM MUSIC

This work begins by considering "program music" in general. A simple definition of the term is an "instrumental music which either by its title, or by description printed upon the composition, gives a definite picture of events or objects."[9] Or in Roger Scruton's slightly different words, program music is "a narrative or descriptive kind; the term is often extended to all music that attempts to represent extramusical concepts without resort to sung words."[10] The term also applies to music composed to "represent a character (Strauss's *Don Juan* and *Don Quixote*) or to describe a scene or phenomenon (Debussy's *La Mer*)."[11] Absolute music, by contrast, is instrumental music that is "free from extramusical implications,"[12] and

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[8]Rey M. Longyear, "The Music of the Future," *Nineteenth-Century Romanticism in Music* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1973), 173-74.

[9]Louis C. Elson, "Program-music," *Elson's Pocket Music Dictionary* (Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania: Oliver Ditson Co.), 1919.

[10]Roger Scruton, "Programme Music," *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians,* 2nd ed. (London: MacMillan and Co., 2001), 20: 396-400.

[11]Roger Scruton, "Programme Music," *The Aesthetic Understanding* (New York, N. Y: Methuen & Co., 1983), 42.

[12]Don M. Randel, "Absolute Music," *Harvard Concise Dictionary of Music* (Cambridge, Massachusett: Belknap Press), 1978.

"has no admitted association with anything outside itself."[13]

According to Scruton, the concept and the practice of "musical imitation have abounded from the very beginning of music."[14] Plato and Aristotle "ascribed an imitative character to the music of their time."[15] But it is Franz Liszt who originated the term "program music," over one thousand eight hundred thirty years later. Liszt refreshed and renewed the idea by adding deeper and various dimensions to the preexisting concept. Liszt defined a program as a:

> preface added to a piece of instrumental music, by means of which the composer intends to guard the listener against a wrong poetical interpretation, and to direct his attention to the poetical idea of the whole or to a particular part of it . . . He did not regard music as a direct means of describing objects; rather he thought that music could put the listener in the same frame of mind as could the objects themselves. In this way, by suggesting the emotional reality of things, music could indirectly represent them.[16]

This was not an invention of a new idea. The earliest example of program music that closely fits Liszt's definition is Johann Kuhnau's *Musicalische Vorstellung einiger Biblischer Historien* (six *Biblical Sonatas for Keyboard*), published in 1700. Each sonata is "preceded by a summary of the story that the music is meant to convey, and

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[13]J. A. Westrup and F. L. Harrison, "Absolute Music," *The New College Encyclopedia of Music* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co.), 1960.

[14]Scruton, *The Aesthetic Understanding,* 43.

[15]Ibid.

[16]Ibid., 41.

each is divided into recognizable parts, corresponding to the events of the arrative."[17] The six sonatas' titles and the preceding literary program are chosen from the Old Testament: "Der Streit zwischen David und Goliath (The Fight between David and Goliath); Der von David vermittelst der Music curirte Saul (Saul Cured through Music by David); Jacobs Heyrath (Jabob's Wedding); Der todtkrancke und wieder gesunde Hiskias (The Mortally Ill and Then Restored Hezekiah); Der Heyland Israelis / Gideon (The Savior of Israel / Gideon); Jacobs Tod und Begräbriß (Jacob's Death and Burial)."[18] Thus, many of the important characteristics of program music are found in these sonatas, including the preceding literary program for the music to depict; the divided movements within the sonatas that depict the story, and the flexibility to ignore the rules of absolute music.[19]

A few decades later (1729-30) Antonio Vivaldi wrote the popular programmatic concertos, *Il Cimento dell'armonia e dell'inventione,* Op. 8, No. 1-4 (The Contest of Harmony and Invention, *The Four Seasons*), which are also prefaced by the literary "programs in verse."[20] Vivaldi is also called "a pioneer of orchestral programme music" in the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians,* 2nd ed. for his celebrated *Four Seasons* and numerous other programmatic works, such as the

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[17]Ibid., 45.

[18]John Gillespie, "Johann Kuhnau," *Five Centuries of Keyboard Music* (Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Co., Inc., 1965; reprint, New York: Dover Publication, Inc., 1972), 126 (page reference is to reprint edition).

[19]Scruton, *The Aesthetic Understanding,* 45.

[20]Ibid., 46.

concertos *per la Solennità di S Lorenzo* that "[recalls] the particular feast" and *L'inquietudine,* which reflects the characteristic mood of its title.[21] One of the ways in which Vivaldi portrayed extramusical matters is by the use of the fashionable Baroque *ritornello* form: In the *L'Autunno* Concerto's finale, the constantly recurring *ritornellos* represent the "huntsmen," which conveys the programmatic character of the movement. For the literary transitory occurrences--such as the quarry's sad death--Vivaldi employs separate musical episodes. Another way in which Vivaldi successfully depicts the literary settings--for the slow movements of the concertos--is by using a specific and different instrumentation to represent different literary characters. He chooses orchestral violins for a running brook, a solo violin for a sleeping shepherd, and a viola for a vigilant sheepdog to be represented at the same time in the slow movement of the *La Primavera* Concerto, thus setting all the literary characters and the background to musical depiction.[22]

Musical works including an extramusical association became more common during classic and romantic periods. One greatly respected example is Ludwig van Beethoven's symphony no. 6, the *Pastorale*. Similar to Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*, the *Pastoral* symphony--along with Beethoven's other clearly programmatic work, the Piano Sonata, op. 81a, *Lebewohl*--"[combined] a narrative depiction with a rigorous musical form" which foreshadowed the nineteenth and twentieth centuries' symphonic

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[21]Michael Talbot, "Vivaldi, Antonio (Lucio)," *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians,* 2nd ed., 26: 817-43.

[22]Ibid.

poems.[23] Similarly, Beethoven's *Egmont, Coriolan* and the three *Leonore* overtures' superb ability in dramatizing the related literary works and opera elevated them to leading examples for future symphonic poems to follow. Another early romantic example is Mendelssohn's overture to Shakespeare's play *A Midsummer Night's Dream.* [24]

Franz Liszt coined the term "symphonic poem" for a work of orchestral program music in one movement. Liszt demanded musically literal and narrative description of the attached program to be conveyed through the symphonic poem, of which he wrote thirteen. The form flourished from 1840 to the 1920s with many composers contributing to the genre from all over Europe, Russia and America. The symphonic poem's extramusical associations were heavily influenced by literature during this time. Moreover, the extramusical ideas expanded much beyond literary influences to encompass other diverse subjects such as painting (Liszt's *Hunnenschlacht*), philosophy (Richard Strauss's *Also Sprach Zarathustra* after Nietzsche's poem), and even autobiography (Richard Strauss's *Ein Heldenleben* and Hector Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique*) for its programmatic associations. Program music also flourished in piano repertoire during this time. Literature once again inspired Schumann's *Papillon* and *Kreisleriana,* as well as Liszt's *Dante* Sonata and the *Vallée d'Obermann,* to name a few.

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[23]Scruton, *The Aesthetic Understanding,* 46.

[24]Hugh MacDonald, "Symphonic Poem," *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians,* 2nd ed., 24: 802-7.

A more "modern" conception of program music begins with Debussy. His *Prelude á L'après-midi d'un faune,* for example, turns away from narrative and description and toward subtle evocations. The composer describes *Faune* as "a very free illustration . . . a succession of settings through which the *Faune's* desires and dreams move in the afternoon heat." In the middle part of the twentieth century program music declined in popularity but remained vital nonetheless in works of Olivier Messiaen (*Vingt Regards sur l'Enfant Jésus,* [1944], and *Catalogue d'Oiseaux,* [1956-58]), Aaron Copland (*Sunday Afternoon Music,* [1935] and *Resting Place on the Hill,* [1945]), and the subject of this study, Vincent Persichetti and his *Poems for Piano* volume 1 and 2 (1939), and 3 (1941).[25] Since the 1960s, interest has been revived somewhat, in works of Peter Maxwell Davies and Pierre Schafer, among others.[26]

As previously mentioned, the piano repertoire was also richly influenced by program music in the nineteenth century, throughout the impressionistic period, and, into the twentieth century. In the twentieth century, however, program music played a minor, but continuing role for the piano repertoire, similar to that of the orchestral repertoire. Also, like the orchestra repertoire, literature again served as the major force for the extramusical material, with its subject stretching beyond the norm, and

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[25]Maurice Hinson, *Guide to the Pianist's Repertoire* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994) 212-13 and 496-500.

[26]Scruton, *The New Grove,* 396-400.

eclectically including political issues, eastern philosophy and even astrology.[27] This significant literary impact on the piano programmatic repertoire, which also constitutes the subject of this paper, should be explored more closely.

Liszt once again shows himself to be the dominant force within the genre of the nineteenth century. Schumann was also a significant contributor to the genre, as previously mentioned. Thus, most of the Romantic period's piano program pieces stylistically took shape after Liszt's previous request for "musically literal and narrative description of the attached program."[28] Liszt further praised the value of literary influences on the genre, as he expressed to strive for "the renewal of music through its inner connection with poetry," and to aim to contain the "intrinsic and poetic meanings of things" into his piano programmatic pieces.[29] Liszt voices the latter quotation in the preface of the *Album d'un Voyageur* (S. 156, [1835-1836]), the early embryonic, programmatic piece set that launched his later major programmatic work, *Années de Pèlerinage* (*Years of Pilgrimage)* in three volumes (Vol. I, S. 160, *Suisse* [1835-1852], Vol. II, S. 161, *Italie* [1838-1849], Vol. III, S. 163, [1867-1877]). A few pieces from the earlier set, *Les cloches de Genève* (*The Bells of Geneva),* for example, actually reappear in a reconstructed and refined form in the later major set. One of the notable literary influences in the earlier set, *Album d'un Voyageur,* comes from the Old Testament, Psalm 47, which is incorporated into Liszt's "chorale-like" piece

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[27]Kirby, *Music for Piano: a short history,* 137-395.

[28]MacDonald, "Symphonic Poem," 802-7.

[29]Kirby, "Liszt and Brahms and Their Age," 217.

Psaume.[30]

The literary inspiration for the later, Liszt's largest programmatic piece set, *Années de Pèlerinage* principally comes from the work of the Romantic poet Lord Byron's (George Gordon), *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*. The music set also combines elements of and reflects on Liszt's real life and years of journey through Switzerland, Italy and perhaps Hungary, the composer's homeland.[31]

From the set's Vol. I, significant literary influences appear in the *Vallée d'Obermann* and *Le mal du pays.* They are associated with Étienne Pivert de Sénancour's French novel, *Obermann.* Also, another piece from the same volume that is connected with literature is *Au bord d'une source*. The piece reflects J. C. Friedrich von Schiller's poem.[32]

From the set's Vol. II, *Canzonetta del Salvator Rosa* is enlivened by poetic verses by the title's Rosa, the famous poet, painter and musician. Liszt further employs and inserts his poetic verses into his piano piece. Also from the same volume, the three Petrarca pieces (*Sonetto 47 del Petrarca, Sonetto 104 del Petrarca and Sonetto 123 del Petrarca),* are based on three songs Liszt composed, employing the same sonnets by the Italian poet Francesco Petrarch. Another important writer Victor Hugo, and one of his poems also inspired Liszt's last virtuosic piece in Vol. II, *Après*

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[30]Hinson, *Guide to the Pianist's Repertoire*, 447-48.

[31]Kirby, "Liszt and Brahms and Their Age," 217-18.

[32]Ibid.

une lecture de Dante (After reading Dante).[33]

Liszt continued being influenced by literature in many of his other pieces. The ten pieces in Liszt's other set, *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses* (S. 173, 1842-1852), are programmatically based on the French romantic writer Alphonse de Lamartine's poetic collection. Liszt further inserts the program's Latin prayer verses into his piano pieces in *Ave Maria, Pater noster, Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude, Miserere (d'après Palestrina),* and *De Profundis.* Moreover, Liszt conveyed Bible's Psalm 129 in *Pensée des mortes* of the musical set.[34]

Liszt's other piece set *Consolations* (S. 172, 1849-1850), similarly contains six pieces that are programmed after "critic Saint-Beuve's" poetic collection. Also in *Légendes* (S. 175, 1863), Liszt wrote two pieces *St. François d'Assise: La predication aux oiseaux (St. Francis of Assisi Preaching to the Birds),* and *St. François de Paule marchant sur les flots (St. Francis of Padua Walking on the Waves),* that are thematically religious with legendary story programs about two renowned Saints. Liszt pianistically portrays them, masterfully.[35]

Some of Liszt's separate pieces also express his enthusiasm for associating his music with literature: The technically monumental piano etude *Mazeppa* (one of the *Études d'une exécution transcendante,* S.139, 1851) is vivified by Victor Hugo and Lord Byron's writings. Another piece the *Lyon* (S. 156, 1834), is motivated by real

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[33]Gillespie, "The Romantic Composers: Liszt," 241-42.

[34]Kirby, "Liszt and Brahms and Their Age," 218-19.

[35]Ibid.

world social and political issues. The piece deals with a rebellion of textile workers in the city of Lyon in 1834. An elegiac motto dedicated to the city silk workers prefaces the piece. This piece also inspires later composers with similar compassionate social issues. Lastly, Liszt's nocturnal style piece *Schlaflos! Frage und Antwort* is inspired by Toni Raabe's poem.[36]

Schumann is another Romantic period composer whose piano program pieces are strongly influenced by literature. Schumann's impressive piano sets that are vividly connected to specific literary works are: *Papillons* (Op. 2, 1829-1831) and *Carnaval* (Op. 9, 1833-1835). They are linked to Jean Paul's novel *Flegeljahre* and its ending scene, the "masked ball."[37] Schumann himself considers his *Papillons* "as a continuation of Jean Paul's *Flegeljahre,*" from the novel's ending scene.[38] Also, Schumann's other significant piece sets, *Kreisleriana* (Op. 16, 1838), *Phantasiestücke* (Op. 12, 1837) and *Nachtstücke* (Op. 23, 1839) are inspirited by E. T. A. Hoffman's writings.[39]

Jean Paul's writing once again serves as a literary inspiration for Schumann's piece, *Blumenstück* Op. 19, (1839). This time it is Jean Paul's novel *Siebenkäs* that

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[36]Ibid.

[37]Ibid., "The Early Nineteenth Century," 167.

[38]Robert Schumann, "Schubert Symphony in C," *Schumann on Music,* translated, edited and annotated by Henry Pleasants (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1988), 167.

[39]Kirby, "The Early Nineteenth Century," 167. Also, see Gillespie, "Weber, Schubert, Mendelssohn, and Schumann," 216-17.

programs the music. Moreover, the *Blumenstück* also is influenced by a painting of a flower. Another of Schumann's colorful programmatic piece sets, *Waldscenen* Op. 82, (1848-1849), is enlivened by Heinrich Laube's hunting and forest theme poetic collection, *Jagdbrevier,* as a whole music set. In addition, Schumann prefaces a different darker poem by Friedrich Hebbel, for one of the pieces in his music set, *Verrufene Stelle* (*The Haunted Place*), as previously noted.[40]

Schumann and other composers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, wrote non-programmatic titled pieces that, ironically, are considered important program music in their distinct connections with literature. Such pieces composed by Schumann are his Fantasie in C major, Op. 17, (1836), which is one of his most prominent program music, and the second piece from his set piece *Noveletten,* Op. 21, (1838). The monumental piece, Fantasie, prefaces a full poem by the famous Romantic writer, Friedrich Schlegel, while the piece itself contains three movements in sonata style-like form. As for the second piece in the *Noveletten,* it was originally inspired by Goethe's poetic collection *West-östlicher Divan;* thus Schumann had given it the programmatic title *Sarazene and Suleika* in the piece's original draft.[41]

In the Romantic period, Frédéric Chopin also wrote four important poetic pieces, titled Ballades, that are not specifically programmatic, but which may be linked to specific poetic stories. Scholars speculate that they may be inspired by the Polish writer Adam Mickiewicz's poems, and may also be connected to other writings.

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[40]Kirby, "The Early Nineteenth Century,"167-68.

[41]Ibid., 168-177.

The Ballades' associated literary sources of inspiration contain legendary, mystical, or historical events of the past.[42]

The German composer of the Romantic era, Johannes Brahms, similarly wrote six non-programmatic titled pieces that clearly bear programmatic element of the literary association. The lyric and love poems are contained within the slow andante movements of all three of his large scaled Sonatas. The slow movements in Brahms's first two sonatas (Sonata No. 1 in C major, Op. 1, 1852-1853, and Sonata No. 2 in F# minor, Op. 2, 1852), are influenced by the style of the German Minnesinger's melodies and lyric poetry of the Middle Ages. The first Sonata's slow movement is also specifically connected to Zuccalmaglio's poem, *Verstohlen geht der Mond auf,* in an imitation of Minnelied style.[43] In the second Sonata's slow movement, Brahms again directly links Count Kraft von Toggenburg's *Winterlied* with his music. In the third Sonata's slow movement, Brahms programs and uses Sternau's love poem as a preface.[44]

Brahms's three other significant non-programmatic titled pieces that contain programmatic literary links are: Ballade Op. 10, No. 1 in D minor, which is associated with the harrowingly terrifying Scotch poem "Edward," in Johann G. V. Herder's

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[42]Gillespie, "The Romantic Composers: Chopin," 220-33.

[43]Brahms moreover prefaces "Nach einem altdeutschen Minnelied (After an old German love-song)," at the beginning of the movement, and inserts the poetic text with the movement's first appearance of the principal theme, to make the literary connection explicit (Kirby, "Liszt and Brahms and Their Age," 229).

[44]Ibid.

published folk poetry collection; the Rhapsody Op. 79, No. 1 in B minor, which is poetically connected to another Scottish poem, this one written by Archibald Douglas, and the Intermezzo Op. 117, No. 1 in E-flat major, which programmatically connects with yet another Scotch lullaby in Herder's folk poetry collection.[45]

In the turn of the twentieth century, both Debussy and Maurice Ravel wrote many program pieces. Some of their pieces contributed to the finest examples of the program music genre in their distinctive, evocative, impressionistic style. In harmony with Debussy's desire to loosen the constraints placed on performers and audiences by literary programs, Debussy often only indirectly connects programmatic poems and their poets with his pieces.[46] This is a different view from that of Liszt's programmatic focus from the Romantic era, as discussed. One such poet alluded to by Debussy, is Jules Laforgue. Laforgue was a significant writer linked to the literary Symbolist movement, which paralleled the musical impressionistic movement. Many of his poems humorously contain musical background imagery of piano students, idly practicing tedious piano exercises like scales and arpeggios. Debussy pianistically reflects back upon those amusing, musical poetic images in some of his pieces: *Jardins sous la pluie* (*Gardens in the Rain*) from the set *Les Estampes* (L. 100, 1903), and, *Le vent dans la plaine* (*The Wind on the Plain*), from the set Prelude I (L. 117, 1909-1910), contain the fondly unending arpeggios mentioned in Laforgues's poems. *Doctor Gradus ad Parnassum* from the set *Children's Corner* (L. 113, 1906-1908)

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[45]Ibid., 237-39.

[46]See François Lesure, *Debussy on Music,* 10, 48-50, 240, 317.

also musically reflects Laforgue's endearing poetic imagery of the sweetly boring routines of piano exercises being practiced.[47]

Among other pieces by Debussy that may possibly be associated with other poets and artists are the *Golliwog's Cakewalk* from the set *Children's Corner,* perhaps influenced by Laforgue, Theodore de Banville and Charles Baudelaire's clown theme poems, as well as several circus theme paintings by Georges Seurat, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec and Edgar Degas.[48] Also, Debussy's famous piece, *Clair de Lune,* from the set *Suite Bergamasque* (L. 75, 1890-1905), and *L'Isle Joyeuse* (L. 106, 1904), could have been vivified by the poetic aura of Paul Verlaine.[49]

In his two sets of Preludes Book I and Book II (L. 123, 1910-1912), Debussy directly links some of them with specific literary sources. However, Debussy distinctively put the extramusical titles at the very end of each piece, as if he is only hinting at programmatic suggestions, and possibly, to continue his wish to emancipate performers and listeners from binding programs.[50]

Another influential impressionistic composer, Ravel, wrote three reputable programmatic pieces associated with literature. Unlike Debussy's only shadowy and suggestive allusion to his extramusical associations, Ravel prefaces all of his

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[47]Ibid., 4-5, 18-19, 333.

[48]Ibid., 70-71.

[49]Gillespie, "Debussy and Ravel," 332-33.

[50]Kirby, "The Twentieth Century to Midcentury: France and Germany," 282. Also, see Gillespie, "Debussy and Ravel," 335-36.

programmatic notions in the beginning of his pieces. However, like Debussy's music, Ravel's following two pieces may conceivably rank highly among and epitomize the programmatic impressionistic style: *Jeux d'eau* (*Play of the Waters,* 1901) programs Henri de Régnier's poetic motto "The river god laughing from the water which is tickling him" and the *Poems for Piano "Gaspard de la Nuit"* (1908) programs French Romantic writer Aloysius Bertrand's poetic set of the same title. Ravel's major piece, *Gaspard de la Nuit,* vividly captures the essences of the bizarre, horrific, mystical settings and atmospheres contained in Bertrand's poetic set. The third piece to be mentioned is *Valses nobles et sentimentales* (1911), which bears a neoromantic title, and prefaces another programmatic line by Henri de Régnier.[51]

A few other composers from various countries also notably contributed to the program music genre. They are Alexander Scriabin from Russia, James Hewitt, an Englishman who immigrated to America, and Edward MacDowell from America. Scriabin oddly and diversely composed his pieces to reflect on his beliefs and involvement with the occult religious doctrine, Theosophy. His numerous piano *Poems* (1904-1914) bear extramusical titles conveying such beliefs. Also, Scriabin's two programmatic piano sonatas (Sonata in F# minor, Op. 23, 1897-1898, and Sonata in F# major, Op. 53, 1908), depict the similar occult themes, as well. The latter Sonata, at the beginning, fully prefaces such poetic theme lines from *Le Poéme de l'Extase.*[52].

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[51]Gillespie, "Debussy and Ravel," 341-42.

[52]Kirby, "Twentieth Century to Midcentury: Other Countries," 319-21.

In the very early nineteenth century in America, Hewitt composed a purely programmatic Sonata, *The Battle of Trenton,* that contains four movements, each bearing descriptive titles. The piece's detailed programmatic nature and its subject seem influenced by Kuhnau's Bible Sonata and one of its movement, *Battle between David and Goliath*, in particular.[53] Roughly nine decades later, MacDowell wrote four programmatic sonatas associated with literature (1893-1901). The most notable one is the second Sonata *Eroica* in G minor, Op. 50 (1895), which meticulously reflects the legend of King Arthur.[54]

For the rest of the twentieth century, program music played a less significant role, as discussed previously. However, the copious number of works listed below that were contributed to the genre, evidences the fact that the programmatic genre has never truly faded away.

All over Europe, South America, and the United States, composers continue to write piano program music inspired by literature. From France, Erik Satie composed *Le Piège de Méduse* (*Medusa's Snare*, 1913), after the Greek mythological figure, and Darius Milhaud wrote *L'Album de Madame Bovary* (1933), enlivened by the French novel by the same title. About a decade later, Olivier Messiaen composed the significant program piece, *Vingt Regards sur l'Enfant Jésus* (*Twenty Contemplations of Looking at the Christ Child*, 1944), associated with the Bible story, as previously

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[53]Gillespie, "Early American Piano Music," 311.

[54]Kirby, "The Later Nineteenth Century," 270-71.

mentioned.[55]

From Italy, Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco, composed three notable pieces connected to literary sources. They include: *Questo fu il carro della Morte* (*The House of Death,* 1913) Op. 2, which prefaces Giorgio Vasari's lengthy quotation *Vita di Pier di Cosimo*; *Candide,* a programmatic suite derived from Voltaire's novel; and the *Evangelion: the story of Jesus, narrated to the children in 28 little piano pieces,* which contains various Biblical scripture in each piece.[56]

From Germany, Paul Hindemith wrote a non-extramusical titled Sonata No. 1 (1936), which contains clear ties to literature, as do Brahms' Sonatas, as previously mentioned. The Romantic era poet Friedrich Hölderlin's poem *Der Main,* programs the piece, while Hindemith further fits the poetic text into his Sonata's principal theme.[57] From Belgium, Henri Pousseur composed *Miroir de votre Faust* (*Mirror of Your Faust*, 1967), modeled after the fabled literary character of *Faust.*[58] And from Brazil, Heitor Villa-Lobos composed *The Three Maries* (1939), which is programmed after his own three poems, *Alnitah, Alnilam* and *Mintika.*[59]

From the United States, Charles Ives composed a prominent programmatic Sonata No. 2, *Concord, Mass., 1840-1860* (1909-1915). This piece includes four

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[55]Hinson, *Guide to the Pianist's Repertoire,* 621, 503 and 498.

[56]Ibid., 170.

[57]Kirby, "The Twentieth Century to Midcentury: France and Germany," 303.

[58]Ibid., "From Mid- to Late Twentieth Century," 380.

[59]Hinson, *Guide to the Pianist's Repertoire,* 735.

extramusical titled movements inspirited by the important American writers of the piece title's place and time: *Emerson, Hawthorne, The Alcotts* [and] *Thoreau.*[60] Also, Charles Tomlinson Griffes wrote a set, *Four Roman Sketches,* Op. 7 (1915-1916) which associates Fiona Macleod's (William Sharp) poem, *The White Peacock,* for the set's first piece by the same name. A few years later, Ernest Bloch composed the *Poems of the Sea* (1922), which prefaces Walt Whitman's poems.[61] Almost two decades later, the subject of this paper *Poems for Piano* (1939-1940s), by Vincent Persichetti, appears, the works which were inspired by several different poems by various American and British writers.

Another American composer, John Cage, wrote an unusual program piece, the *Music of Changes* (1951), that is reflective of the Chinese philosophical work, the *I Ching* (The Book of Changes, tenth to twelfth centuries B.C.). The piece is performed by "chance operations," which for this piece, requires three coins to be tossed six times, in order to determine many musical elements within the piece, and, referring to the results of the *I Ching's* "table of sixty-four hexagrams."[62]

Another unusual programmatic piece was composed, by George Crumb. Crumb's *Makrokosmos* Vol. I (1972) and Vol. II (1973), both titled *Twelve Fantasy Pieces after the Zodiac for Amplified Piano*, are inspired by astrology, mythology and primitive religions. Crumb seems to have been greatly influenced by Debussy

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[60]Ibid., 391.

[61]Gillespie, "Contemporary Piano Music in the United States," 408, 414.

[62]Kirby, "From Mid-to Late Twentieth Century," 383.

Preludes' shadowy suggestive titles at the end of each piece, as Crumb himself uses the same device for his pieces in *Makrokosmos* Volumes I and II. Crumb's titles, however, contain odd subjects of various zodiac signs, and religious and mythical references. Crumb's titles also sometimes include personal references to the different zodiac signs of his friends and associates.[63] In late 1980s, David Del Tredici wrote a more traditional program piece linked to literature. His piece, *Virtuoso Alice,* depicts Lewis Caroll's *Alice in Wonderland.*[64]

There are several modern composers who seem to have modeled their pieces after Liszt's *Lyon,* and its idea of incorporating actual political issues and events into the program music. They are Cornelius Cardew from England, and Christian Wolff and Frederic Rzewski from America. Cardew's *Piano Album* (1973) contains several pieces that are composed after "protest and revolutionary songs," based on factual events.[65] Also, Rzewski's piece, *The People United Will Never Be Defeated* (1975), is modeled after the Chilean Sergio Ortega's revolutionary song. This work sprang from the overthrow of the Allende government by the Chilean military. Lastly, Christian Wolff's piece *Bread and Roses* (1976), is drawn directly from the song about the 1912's "great mill strike at Lawrence, Massachusetts."[66]

Thus, the piano repertoire, like the orchestra repertoire, appears to be

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[63]Ibid., 386-87.

[64]Ibid., 391.

[65]Ibid., 385-86.

[66]Hinson, *Guide to the Pianist's Repertoire,* 611-12, 755.

overwhelmingly enriched by program music.[67] Liszt and Debussy's influences again are highly pervasive within the genre, as has been discussed. Liszt's program-focus view and his love for association with literature, as well as including other diverse subjects and unique materials for programmatic inspiration, strongly impacted other composers far into the twentieth century. Debussy's different view of encouraging the imaginative role in suggestive programmatic associations, also reached far and deeply into the twentieth century.

MUSICAL REPRESENTATION, EXPRESSION and IMITATION

Music historians have written frequently on the subject of musical representation and extramusical associations in absolute music.[68] Lawrence Kramer notes that "a representation is established to the extent that one thing is taken to

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[67]There are also cases where the non-programmatic piano pieces are titled *Poems.* They may further carry additional characteristic headings without any connection to literature. They are not the same variety as the subject of this study, *Poems for Piano* which are specifically associated with literature. However, the non-literarily associated piano *Poems* should also be briefly mentioned here in awareness of such works. The following list shows some of the piano *Poems* that are not related to literature. There are many more such pieces that are not listed here: Edvard Grieg's *Poetiske Tonebilleder* Op. 3 (*Poetic Tone Pictures,* 1863) from Norway, Edward MacDowell's *Scotch Poem* Op. 31, No. 2 (1887), and Charles Tomlinson Griffes's *Tone Pictures* Op. 5 (1910-1912) from America, Cyril Scott's *Poems* (1912) from England, Heitor Villa-Lobos's *Rudepoema* (*Rude Poem,* 1921-1926) from Brazil, Aram Khachaturian's *Poem* (1927) from Russia, Domingo Santa Cruz's 5 *Poemas Tragica* (1929) from Chile, and Frederic Rzewski's *Poem* (1959) from America. See Hinson, *Guide to the Pianist's Repertoire* and Kirby, *Music for Piano.*

[68]Scruton, *The New Grove,* 396-400.

resemble another, provided that the resemblance is also taken to be intentional."[69] Roger Scruton says, as "long as music aims to capture a particular episode, a particular sequence of events or a particular human character, then its representational claims are not in doubt."[70] Scruton also emphasizes the aesthetic aspects of representation, contrasting his views with those of Eduard Hanslick. Scruton writes, "The understanding listener is not a computer. . . . Why should not the musical experience embrace pleasure, feeling and evocation just as much as pure structured sound?"[71]

Kramer explains that subjects are conveyed through music first by the use of the "designator . . . that tells the observer what is being represented. . . . In music, the most common designators consist of . . . titles, programs, and epigraphs: and musical allusions to sonorities, styles, or specific works."[72] Scruton describes the experience of learning and implementing a designator for Debussy's Piano Prelude entitled "Voiles": "[by] learning [of its title] . . . I may begin to hear in the musical line a leisurely and day-dreaming quality that I did not hear before, as though I were watching the to-ing and fro-ing of sails on a calm bright sea. . . . What is 'depicted' is not something heard. May we not say, all the same, that we *hear* the music as the

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[69]Lawrence Kramer, "Music and Representation: the Instance of Haydn's *Creation,*" in *Music and Text: Critical Inquiries,* ed. Steven Paul Scher (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 140.

[70]Scruton, *The New Grove,* 396-400.

[71]Scruton, *The Aesthetic Understanding,* 40.

[72]Kramer, "Music and Representation," 140.

drifting of sails?"[73] The designator also prevents the audience from getting the wrong idea of what the music is representing, an important concern for Liszt.[74]

The functioning of the designator is aided and enhanced by the use of a leitmotif-like musical metaphor that may be "based on resemblance, [moving] in two directions. It 'condenses' the discursive field into the music, and at the same time reinterprets the discourse by means of music."[75] This metaphoric use could possibly apply to many more musical devices, going somewhat further than Berlioz, Wagner and Liszt's similar practices. Such metaphoric devices could include the different usage of modes, dynamics, rhythms, rests, meters, registers, textures, tempo changes, and mixtures of various instruments and elements.

In a musical context, there are two other similar terms--expression and imitation--that should be separately distinguished from the practice of representation. Representation, according to Scruton, is "displaced by narratives, stories and descriptions." Expression "may exist even in the absence of story telling."[76] Expression is something "that touches the heart, but numbs the tongue."[77] The goal of imitation is to attempt to personify a literal sound through musical means; although

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[73]Scruton, *The Aesthetic Understanding,* 68.

[74]Ibid., 41.

[75]Kramer, "Music and Representation," 141.

[76]Roger Scruton, "Representation," *The Aesthetics of Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 119.

[77]Ibid., 132.

"its intention may be no more than decorative."[78] For example, Beethoven's *Pastoral* Symphony shows an effective imitation of the various birds' chirpings in its second movement, "Scene by the Brook." Specific kinds of birds are linked to, and noted in the score with, specific instruments (nightingale by the flute, quail by oboe and cuckoo by clarinet). Scruton distinguishes this from representation as follows: "Representation may involve an interest in its 'lifelike' quality; but it is not, for all that, an interest in literal truth. It is irrelevant that the depiction be inaccurate; what matters is that it be convincing. To require accuracy is to ask for a report rather than a representation."[79]

Persichetti's *Poems for Piano* certainly deliver "a definite picture of events or objects"[80] of its attached programs, without necessarily being precisely imitative. Their musical and representational style contains hints of its precursors, including Beethoven, Liszt, Strauss, and Debussy. The pieces can be musically descriptive, but more often they simply evoke the core emotion or dreamy magical impression of the attached program. The harmonic language of the pieces may include tonality, bitonality, modality, quartal and quintal harmonies, synthetic and folk scales, and whole-tone and pentatonic scales.[81] Persichetti writes in his own distinctive

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[78]Scruton, *The New Grove,* 396-400.

[79]Scruton, *The Aesthetic Understanding,* 63.

[80]Elson, 120-121.

[81]The following books, among others, were consulted, to explore the technical aspects of Persichetti's musical language and their poetic significance. On the quartal harmony, Arnold Schoenberg's *Theory of Harmony* (Los Angeles: University of

style to respond to poetic ideas and images in ways that are fairly typical of the program-music tradition.

In an interview with Rudy Shackelford, Persichetti expressed his own personal views and intentions toward program music. Persichetti stated that "my interest in program music is [that] of expressing my reactions to incidents." Furthermore, particularly in program music associated with literature, Persichetti believed in and valued the capability of music to "enhance the emotional color of ideas expressed in words." For example, in his own words Persichetti described and viewed one of his program piece linked with literature, like the *Poems for Piano*, in a similar evocative manner: "*The Hollow Men* for Trumpet and String Orchestra is a delicate evocation of T. S. Eliot's lyric poem; it emulates the poet's concentration and simplicity, to create a musical parallel of one's mood just after reading the poem." In David Ewen's article, Persichetti explains his other literarily associated program work, *Fables for narrator and orchestra*, as "an emotional parallel of the ageless tales and the text, an integral part of music; no certain instrument is assigned to any one character, but rather a musical equivalent is given the underlying meaning of the fables." These personal and intimate opinions by Persichetti on the subject of program music, particularly on those associated with literature, helped and guided the writer when poetically interpreting the *Poems for Piano.* Quite a few similar views can be found

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California Press, 1978) aided and offered his undying enthusiasm for the subject in chapter 21 "Chords Constructed in Fourths." On synthetic or folk scales and quartal harmonies with detailed explanation of his compositional colors, Vincent Persichetti's *Twentieth-Century Harmony* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1961) was helpful.

in the *Poems for Piano,* especially the gentle evocative quality and the music's "emotional parallel" conveyance of the attached poems, along with the piece's "emulation" of the "underlying meaning" of the connected poems. Some of Persichetti's program pieces, including the *Poems for Piano,* well deserve Robert Layton's compliments on his program pieces as successfully containing " . . . many incidental beauties . . . "[82]

The concept of program music will never completely lose its appeal, perhaps because of its profound purpose in reaching for deeper and different means of musical expression. Quite a few programmatic works succeed brilliantly and ultimately timelessly. Therefore, it would be enlightening to explore and venture more into the subject within Persichetti's *Poems for Piano.*

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[82]David Ewen, "Vincent Persichetti," *Composers Since 1900* (New York: The H. W. Wilson Co., 1969), 405-7, Robert Layton, "Music in the United States," in *Twentieth Century Music,* ed. Rollo H. Myers (New York: The Orion Press, 1968), 238, and Rudy Shackelford, "Conversation with Vincent Persichetti," *Perspectives of New Music* 20/1-2 (Fall/Winter 1981-Spring/Summer 1982): 104-34.

Chapter 2

"SOFT IS THE COLLIED NIGHT"

FOUNTAINS

Soft is the collied[1] night, and cool
The wind about the garden pool.
Here will I dip my burning hand
And move an inch of drowsy sand,
And pray the dark reflected skies
To fasten with their seal mine eyes.
A million million leagues away
Among the stars the goldfish play,
And high above the shadowed stars
Wave and float the nenuphars.[2]

James Elroy Flecker.

This piece is loving and soft, yet quite dark in color; it is built in a ternary form with a tonal center loosely based around G major. Although the piece uses a conventional form (see figure 2-1) and references to tonality, in other ways it departs from traditions, especially in its use of harmony and modes. For example, the piece employs many added note chords, several kinds of church modes, and "synthetic scales (specifically, the Neapolitan major scale and Leading Whole-Tone scale, from among them)," as Persichetti called and listed them in his book *Twentieth-Century*

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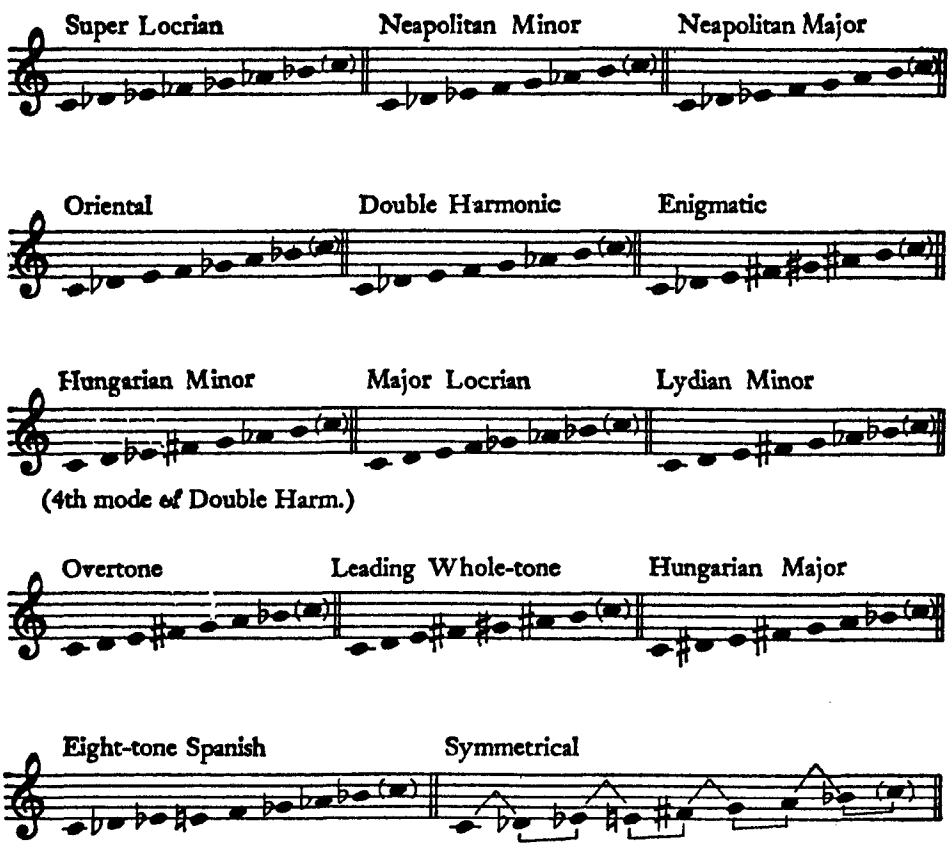
[1]Collied -- "Begrimed or darkened; made black, as with soot." *Webster's New Universal Unabridged Dictionary,* 2nd ed.

[2]Nenuphars -- "The great white lily of Europe, or the yellow water lily." Ibid.

Figure 2-1. Formal structure of "Soft is the collied night"

A (3/4 meter)	B (2/4)	A^1 (3/4)
mm. 1 ----------	18, 19 ----------	31, 32 ---------- 46.

Example 2-1. Persichetti's Synthetic scales



Harmony.[3] These scales that "often coincide with folk scales" were also used by other famous twentieth-century composers, such as Bartók, Britten, and Ravel.[4]

The first A section is comprised of four phrases, suggesting a "double period" with a weaker cadence at the end of the second phrase, and a stronger cadence at the end of the last phrase: a (mm. 1-4), b (mm. 4-8), a^1 (mm. 8-12) and c (mm. 12-18).[5] In this section, both a and a^1 phrases begin almost exactly the same, but they each reach different cadential points at the end of b and c phrases. The cadence at the end of b (m. 8) feels less stable, while the c cadence (m. 18) feels more stable, which conforms to the double period's traditional cadential relationship.[6] More specifically, the first cadential point suggests a half cadence. The notes of a dominant seventh chord (V^7) are heard in m. 8, in the lower part (D, C, F#) of the full chord. The full chord also includes an added perfect fourth (B-flat, E-flat) at the very top (m. 8). It is preceded by a ii chord (m. 7, a, c, e) that also includes an added perfect fourth (F#, B) at the top. These harmonic chords in the lower parts function well in a fully cadential passage (ii to V^7), even with the added notes.

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[3]Vincent Persichetti, *Twentieth-Century Harmony* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1961), 43-44.

[4]Ibid., 43-44, 50. Persichetti mentions these examples of music based on "synthetic" scales: Béla Bartók, Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion, p. 65; Benjamin Britten, *Turn of the Screw,* p. 180; Charles Griffes, *The Pleasure-Dome of Kubla Khan,* p. 14; Arthur Honegger, Symphony no. 5, p. 49; Olivier Messiaen, *Vingt Regards* (piano), p. 128; Maurice Ravel, Concerto for Left Hand, p. 20; Jean Sibelius, Symphony no. 4, p. 13; Igor Stravinsky, *Fire Bird* Suite, p. 25.

[5]Douglass M. Green, "Design of the Period," *Form in Tonal Music* (New York · Dallas · London: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1979), 63-64.

[6]Ibid.

Some of those high added notes help to create a pleasant top line, like the happily mellow atmosphere of the poem. Furthermore, it also linearly forms an elusive augmented sixth chord at the cadential point (from the end of m. 7 through the first beat of m. 9). The descending top line G - E-flat - C# (enharmonically E-flat - G - B-flat - D-flat [C#])--an augmented German sixth chord of the tonic key G--smoothly resolves down by half steps to D ($\hat{5}$) and C ($\hat{4}$), the first notes of the following a^1 phrase (beat 3 of m. 8). Also, the resolution to the dominant is reinforced with the sustaining bass note D ($\hat{5}$) from the same measure's V^7 chord of the first beat (m. 8). This furthermore makes a smooth transition into the next phrase and its chord, starting with a I six-four (m. 9).

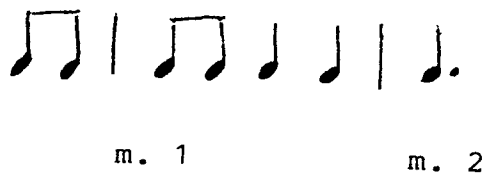
The previously mentioned upper-register fourths help to create an effective poetic setting, by suggesting the poem's endless night sky above the fountain. They also appear much throughout the piece, to reinforce that poetic imagery: E - A in m. 2 and m. 10, C - F in m. 6, E-flat - A-flat in m. 12, and G# - C# in m. 13. In the returning A section, they also similarly reappear: E - A in m. 34, C - F in m. 38, F# - B in m. 39 and B-flat - E-flat in m. 40.

The second cadential point at the end of the c phrase (m. 18) is a fuller cadence, even though it suggests a second - inversion chord. Much as before, it is approached from a hint of an augmented sixth chord on beat 3 of m. 17. This time, though, it works to clearly mark off the section.

One old-fashioned device that holds the two A sections strongly together is the persistent regularity of the two-bar sub-phrases (see example 2-2). As William Rothstein notes, this type of "motivic repetition" of the sub-phrase is "an especially

powerful one," because the "motive and phrase become two aspects of a single, more generalized shaping process--grouping in the broadest sense."[7]

Example 2-2. The basic sub-phrase rhythm of the A sections



The second A^1 section (mm. 32-46) contains the full returns of the original a and b phrases (mm. 32-40), but the returning a^1 and c phrases are somewhat different. The returning a^1 phrase (mm. 40-44) includes differentiated tones in its latter three measures (mm. 42-44), while maintaining much of its original rhythmic structure. The returning c phrase is much shorter (mm. 44-46)--just three measures the second time, compared to the six measures the first time--and suggests a codetta. The section's ending feels much more conclusive the second time. The final suggested tonic triad is prepared by a dominant-seventh-like chord (D, A, C), with added notes G, E-flat and B-flat in m. 45. Compared to the ending tonic chord in the first A section which contained just two notes of the tonic chord (G, D), with the doubled fifth in the bass and an added note A, the last cadential passage of the A^1 section feels much more

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[7]William Rothstein, "Techniques of Phrase Rhythm," *Phrase Rhythm in Tonal Music* (New York and London: Schirmer Books., 1989), 30-32.

stable and final, thanks to the root position of the tonic (G) triad.

Intriguingly, some of the mentioned added notes (G, E-flat, B-flat) once again create a passage that forms a linearly elusive chord. This time it is a Neapolitan sixth chord of the dominant (D), that appears above the D^7 chord (m. 45). The E-flat with the G on the first beat, proceeds to B-flat, forming the flat-II^6 (G, B-flat, E-flat) chord in D. This resolves linearly to C by a whole step, which belongs to its sustaining tonic D^7 chord in the bass. The flat-II^6 chord was also smoothly approached from its tonic D, without a fifth (A) of the chord (m. 44), just a half a step away from the chordal tone E-flat. Furthermore, the linear flat-II^6 chordal passage offers a darker colorististic effect, like the poem's "Collied Night," with its B-flat and the E-flat becoming the half-step lowered flat-$\hat{3}$ and flat-$\hat{6}$ of the piece's tonic key G, through the use of the mixture. The darker poetic color is continued through the next measure (m. 46) with the flat-7 ($\hat{F}$) humming as a lower neighbor tone between the two tonic Gs in the top voice. Finally, the subsiding dynamic indication--pianissimo with the soft pedal, *una corda*--helps capture the piece's full poetic title "Soft is the Collied Night," softly and colorfully.

The B section (mm. 18-31) takes on quite a different personality, with a different meter (2/4), new thematic materials, and the use of modes. It is much more humorous and playful, with a quicker feeling of duple meter and faster sixteenth notes and dotted rhythms as a new motive. Of course, with these new characters, different poetic imageries are represented, as discussed below.

The B section seems to be loosely comprised of five right hand motivic sequential phrases (except for the last one which starts in the left hand and moves into

the right hand), all sharing similar fleeting sixteenth note figuration in mostly step-wise motion, with dotted upbeat rhythm. However, phrase lengths vary quite a bit, and their direction also changes. Tonally, the five phrases do not appear to have a tonal center nor a dominant-to-tonic relation, like the A sections. They start carefreely on different tones (D-flat in m. 18; D natural, overlapped with the last note of the previous phrase in m. 22; F, overlapped with the last note of the previous phrase in m. 24; G in m. 26; E in m. 30). Though, sporadically they pass swiftly through various modes, which are analyzed much in detail later (pp. 42-43), together with the various poetic imageries that they represent. The phrases ascend (in the beginning only) in: the first phrase (mm. 19-22 with an upbeat to m. 19), the second phrase (mm. 23-24 with an upbeat to m. 23), the third phrase (mm. 25-26 with an upbeat to m. 25), and the fifth phrase (mm. 30-31). The fourth phrase descends in mm. 27-29 with an upbeat to m. 27. The last fifth phrase transforms from the previous phrases, as it variously starts in the left hand without the dotted upbeat rhythm and sweeps up dramatically, reaching almost four octaves in many leaps of fifths, fourths and thirds, while the previous phrases reached slightly over one octave. The last transformed phrase creates a comically dramatic climax of the piece, which hints a poetic imagery (it will be discussed more in detail, later with all the other poetic imageries).

How, exactly, are the poetic metaphors portrayed? Just like the title "Soft is the Collied Night," to me the two starting passages--resembling "Soft" melody and "Collied Night"--contain varying personalities from each other, yet delicately melt together. When I play the piece, I associate the tender tune in the top voice of the right hand (mm. 1-5) with the title's "softness." This sweet folk song-like melody is mostly

constructed from step-wise motion and thirds, and mostly remains in G major. When I play the left hand, however, I get a different sense. I associate these darker colors with the "Collied Night" poetic imagery. Its movement is quite angular with no particular tonal center, but contains an abundance of chromaticism, dissonances and tritones. Strangely though, the feeling of this "Collied Night" passage does not project gloominess or ominousness. Rather, it seems that when both melodies are softly played together--following the gentle and delicate performance indication (dolce) and the quiet dynamic (mezzo piano)--they sound and feel like they are softly embracing and amiably blending together, without clashes of differences. Thus the full essence of the title is portrayed.

In the consequent-like phrases of both A sections (in A: mm. 8-18 and in A^1: mm. 40-46), the portrayal of the blending title takes a more emphatic and literal turn. Those phrases start as before, but then (in A: mm. 12-16 and in A^1: mm. 42-45) the "Soft" melodies suddenly seem to switch character to become the unchanged "Collied Night" passage's characters. The transformed "Soft" melodies now share the "Collied Night" passage's thicker texture, and there is more chromaticism in the linear and vertical movements. Thus, they appear to melt closer to that of the "Collied Night" melody's characters, just as the title, by evolving the character of the non-chromatic "Soft" melodies into the chromatic and thicker textured "Collied Night" passage's characters.

Moreover, the first A section's consequent-like "c" phrase also serves as a sectional climactic passage, with its register rapidly rising to the highest point of the section (m. 15)--and also of the piece--and with many more of the faster eighth notes

climbing in louder crescendo. These climactic building elements seemingly lead to more heightened and tensely intertwining emotions, without feeling negatively dark. Thus, the climactic passage resonates much more deeply in detailed description by musically telling more of the poetic idea and image as to why such a dark night became inseparable with the softness.

The piece's associated poetic title, "Fountains," is in many ways about nature's reflections and a merging between the night sky and the earth. These poetic imageries are depicted by the music in several different ways. The first such depiction occurs in echoes of the left hand's "Collied Night" rhythm: [ in m. 2]. We find this same rhythm echoed in the right hand in mm. 6, 15 and 38.

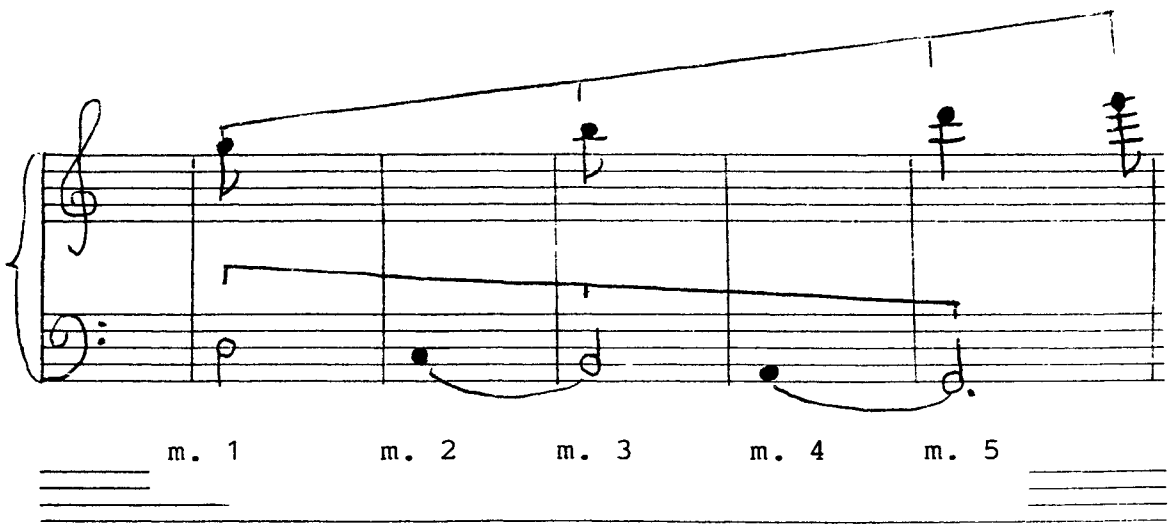
The next type of reflection involves intervals or melodic figures. Many of these mirroring elements appear at the highest voice in the right hand and at the lowest voice in the left hand, at the same time or played closely together, thereby musically capturing the reflections of the high, immense sky and the earth. For example, a G triad unfolded by the right hand in mm. 1-5 is echoed by its inverse unfolding in the left hand (see example 2-3). Like a far stretched "dark reflected sky" on the fountain, the right hand's ascending linear tonic chord (G, B, D) reflects the left hand's descending linear tonic chord (D, B, G) on the first beats of the first, third and fifth measures, and merge together at the last beat of measure five (G and G). This imagery also enables one to picture a bigger kind of fountain, like a lake or an ocean stretching out beneath the sky above and eventually merging as one line at the farthest sight. The same imagery also returns at the beginning of the A^1 section (mm. 33-37).

There is another charming mirroring imagery even within the reflection just

discussed. The right hand's high-register descending notes B, A and G (m. 3) are reflected by the left hand's lowest and rhythmically augmented notes B, A and G on the first beats of mm. 3-5. The left hand's lengthened mirrored imagery feels like a floating fountain reflecting and waving around the shapes of the stars, therefore, modifying and enlarging them.

In the first A section's climactic passage (mm. 9-18), an additional and different poetic imagery of clasping reflections appears. The image portrayed here is of the poet fastening and sealing his eyes on the dark reflected sky through the fountain and being very happy and excited to be able to look into the fascinating spatial universe through the lens of the fountain. Here, these images are expressed as different sets of identical notes placed mostly at the highest and lowest voices to convey the high sky and earth

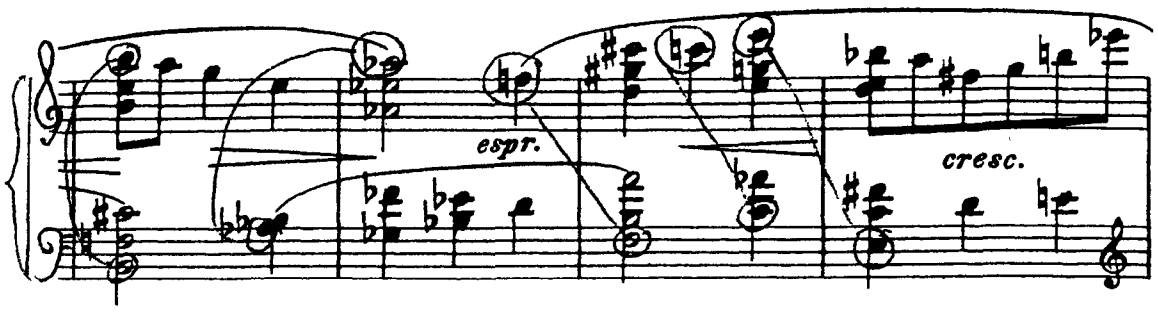
Example 2-3. Persichetti, "Soft is the collied night," mm. 1-5



(see example 2-4): in m. 11, the notes B5 and B2 mirror each other on the first beat, from the highest and lowest register; in the last beat of the same measure, the note A3 flat in the lowest voice of the left hand is reflected by A5 flat at the top of the first beat of the next measure; in m. 12, the note F5 in the last beat in the top voice is mirrored in the first beat of the following measure (m. 13) in the bass (F3); in m. 13, as the pace of presentation accelerates, the top note C6 on the second beat is echoed by C4 on the next beat, in the bass; and finally the top note E6 on the same third beat reflects itself with E3 on the first beat of the next measure (m. 14) in the bass.

There is one more intervallic mirroring toward the end of the piece. In m. 44, set 024 (B3 flat - C3 - D4 in the left hand) is mirrored by itself (F-sharp [G5 flat] - A4 flat - B5 flat) in the right hand. Indeed, since the hands share one pitch class (B-flat), the hands together present five notes of a whole-tone collection (set 02468), lacking only

Example 2-4. Persichetti, "Soft is the collied night," mm. 11-14



the E that just precedes them at the end of the previous measure.

The last representation of poetic reflections to be mentioned occurs through the use of imitation. For example, the eighth-note figure in m. 14 is immediately imitated by an inner voice in the following measure. These passages--along with the other reflective streams of same notes by sets (as previously mentioned earlier), in these measures--help to build and accentuate the heightened emotional rise to the previously mentioned climax of the first A section.

In the B section, two different musical motives represent two different poetic imageries. The first is a sweeping figure, fast ascending or descending scale steps and similar intervals, that suggests the "Wind about the garden pool." The other is the playful, folk song-like melodic passages consisting of dotted rhythms and sixteenth notes, which seem to represent the play among the goldfish, stars, and nenuphars in the reflecting pool (see example 2-5a and b).

The "wind" motive sweeps across several different and quite foreign scales. In mm. 19-20 it goes through the Persichetti's Neapolitan major scale mode.[8] This melodic figure contains a complete presentation of that mode (H W W W W W H). Then the melody uses Dorian mode (mm. 20-23, see example 2-6). Measures 24-25 in the treble suggest G-flat major, and in m. 27, Persichetti again uses the Neapolitan major, now on G. In measures 28-29, F major is indicated in the left hand, and in m. 31, G-flat major is used in both hands, but with the flat-$\hat{7}$. It is also possible to analyze this measure as a Mixolydian mode starting on G-flat. The final quickly ascending

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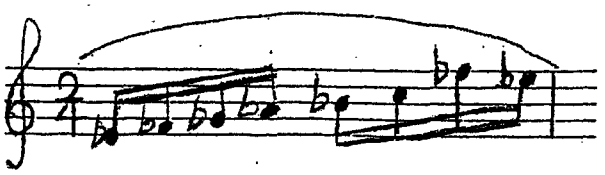
[8]see example 2-1, p. 32

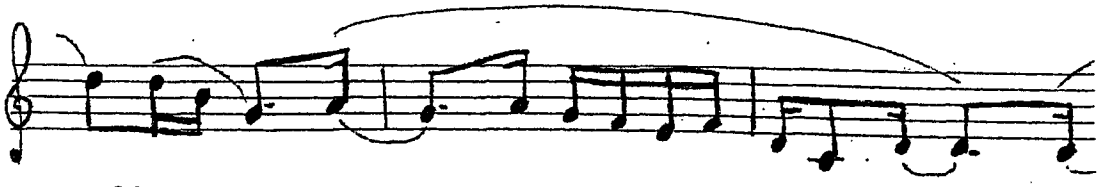
Example 2-5. "Wind motive"

m. 19



a: In Neapolitan major mode.

b: "Playful" motive of the goldfish, stars and nenuphars.



m. 20 m. 21 m. 22

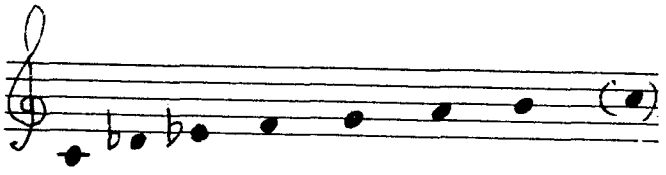
passage ascends more than three octaves in m. 30. This climactic passage suggests a cooler night wind, blowing harder as the poetic night turns darker and softer.

The poetry's playful image of the goldfish swimming together with the stars and nenuphars is represented by humorous and dance-like melodies characterized by

dotted eighth note rhythms and short bursts of sixteenth notes. These playful melodies first appear in C major in the right hand in mm. 20-22, then in G-flat in m. 24. The playful melody appears for the last time in left hand in F major through mm. 28-29, as previously mentioned, and recurs briefly in m. 31, hinting at G-flat once again. All of a sudden, Persichetti cuts off the B section without any warning. The abrupt halt, followed by an unexpected long silence, feels amusingly mischievous, like the playful poetic characters.

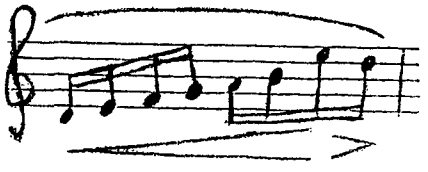
In this relatively short piece, the seeming musical metaphors are closely packed to represent various poetic images. Persichetti uses rich and resourceful musical elements to imaginatively portray the evoked poetic subjects and emotions. Personally when I play this piece, I feel as though I am no longer sitting at the piano, but sitting by the lively fountain under the magnificent night sky, enjoying the dark and beautiful scene.

Example 2-6. More of the "Wind" motives

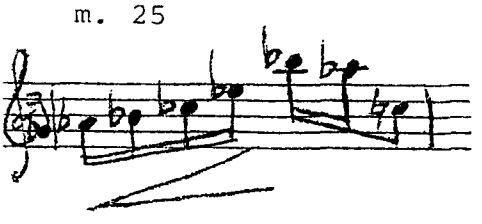


Neapolitan major scale as shown in the Persichetti, ex. 2-1, p. 32.

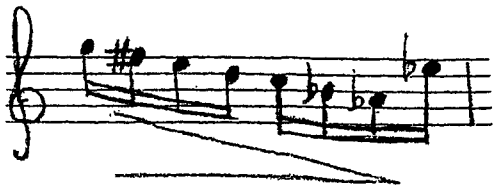
m. 23



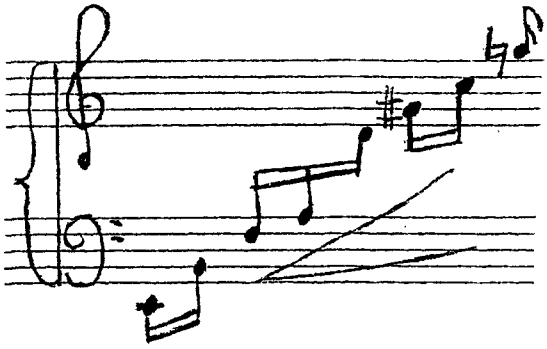
m. 25



m. 27



m. 30



NOTE TO USERS

p. 46

style and freely move through various modes without establishing strong tonal centers.

Figure 3-1. Formal structure of "Gather for festival bright weed and purple shell"

A (2/4 meter) B (2/4) A^1 (2/4)

mm. 1 ---------- 18, 18 ---------- 34, 34 ---------- 51.

The only few notes that achieve some prominence in the piece are F#, E and D-flat. F# is a focal point of the melody at the beginning (mm. 1-6, 34-40) and an important bass note in mm. 20-22 (spelled G-flat) and 33. E is the tonal arrival point at the end, starting in m. 46 and concluding with a descending E minor scale configuration in mm. 49-51. In the beginning of the B section, D-flat in the right hand melody is a brief arrival point (m. 20) from the A section's expanded motive, and also the climactic destination point (mm. 24-26's first beat) for the continuously long expanded phrase. These instances of tonal focus help unify the piece without involving dominant--tonic relationships. The piece feels free, without seeming fragmented or diffuse.

In the first A section, Persichetti introduces a thematic phrase (mm. 1-4) in the right hand, which reappears three more times with variations and extensions (see figure 3-2). Persichetti manipulates the phrase's contours, melodic intervals, phrase lengths, modes, and accompaniment. However, despite the varieties, these four phrases appear to be patterned and balanced. Their stable sense of regularity is produced by a common, similar starting rhythmic motive shown in example 3-1. The

motive is expanded slightly in the second sequential phrase (  in mm. 8-10); the same expanded motive introduces the B section (mm. 18-20).

Figure 3-2. The thematic and its sequential phrases

		Length
Starting Thematic Phrase	mm. 1-4	4 measures
1st Sequential Phrase	mm. 4-8	3½ measures
2nd Sequential Phrase	mm. 8-12	4½ measures
3rd Sequential Phrase	mm. 12-18	5½ measures

The second A^1 section, starting in m. 34, begins the same as the first A section up to the first beat of m. 46. From then on, the codetta-like section differs somewhat, with a lighter texture and steadily descending register. The material here is also more tonally suggestive, as the right hand figuration hints at G minor over an E pedal (mm. 46-48), and the left hand concludes with E minor (mm. 49-51).

Example 3-1. Persichetti, "Gather for festival bright weed and purple shell," mm. 1-2

The B section begins with the expanded motive from the A section. It is a new section, however, because the melodic line is ultimately more diatonic, hinting at D-flat major or B-flat minor. Also, the starting B section's phrase is much more expanded (mm. 18-26, nine measures in length) than the previous ones. This phrase takes the quarter beat sounding rhythm of the original phrase's last two measures (mm. 2-3, = 20-26) and continues with similar rhythmic movement, as in one of Koch's definition of the expansion of a phrase: "the [expansion] of a phrase . . . through the continuation of a segment by means of the reigning rhythmic pattern."[1] Furthermore, unlike in the A section, this phrase steadily climbs and builds to a climax in the second half of the B section (mm. 26-34), suggesting a poetic celebration.

The B section also contrasts with A in its use of chordal materials and louder dynamics, blasting festively like a trumpet fanfare. The chords may not be harmonically related as in a common key or a mode, but they share important structural properties. Many of them are constructed from whole-tone tetrachords: B - D-flat - E-flat -- G in m. 26 weaves through after several different notes and reappears a half-step lower (plus octaves) on the first beat of m. 27. Another transposition of this tetrachord appears on the second beat of m. 28. The whole-tone pentachord also appears throughout: the C - D - E - F# - G# on the last beat of m. 27 appears, transposed to E - F# - G# - A# - C, on the first beat of m. 29. Other whole-tone simultaneities include the D - E - F# - G# on the second beat of m. 29. The section

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[1]Heinrich Christoph Koch, *Introductory Essay on Composition,* trans. and ed. Nancy Kovaleff Baker (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), 159, in William Rothstein, "Phrase Expansion," *Phrase Rhythm in Tonal Music,* 74.

concludes, however, with F# half-diminished seventh chords on the first beat of m. 31 and the first beat of m. 33. This helps prepare the listener for the return of the A section, which also starts with the note F#.

The music makes many allusions to the poetic images. The sequential phrases from both A sections--spun from the original theme (mm. 1-4)--are constantly changing and transforming. These ever-changing colors and other aspects of the sequential phrases represent the poetry's variety and abundance, the spectacular colors of nature. The music features chromatic segments (C, C#, D, D# in mm. 2-4 and mm. 36-38, left hand; D, C#, C, B from the end of m. 9 to the first beat of m. 12 and from the end of m. 43 to the first beat of m. 46, right hand; and D, E-flat, E natural in mm. 44-46, left hand bass), an Aeolian scale segment in the right hand (E, D, C, B, A in mm. 14-15), another Aeolian scale segment in the left hand bass this time, that ends on the right hand (E, D, C, B, A in mm. 15-18), a whole-tone scale segment in the left hand bass (F#, E, D, C, in mm. 14-17), a Dorian scale segment starting in note G in the right hand (G, A, B-flat, C, D, E in mm. 18-19), and a D-flat major scale segment in the right hand (mm. 20-26), plus the aforementioned G minor and E minor at the end. The left hand's bass and tenor movements also contain a linear character in mostly stepwise motion, that changes its colors similarly to that of the right hand melody (some of them already have been analyzed):

Figure 3-3. Tenor and Bass motions

Tenor motion

mm. 2-4 and 36-38 (E - E-flat - D, Chromatic scale segment)

mm. 10-12 (F# - F natural - E, Chromatic scale segment)

mm. 14-15 (A - B - C - D - E, Aeolian scale segment)

mm. 16-17 (B - C - D, Locrian scale segment)

mm. 17-18 (F# - E - D#, Phrygian scale segment)

Bass motion

mm. 2-4 and 36-38 (C - C# - D - D#, Chromatic scale segment)

mm. 6-7 and 40-41 (G# - A, Chromatic scale segment)

mm. 10-18 (D - E-flat - A-flat (G#) - F# - E - D - C - B, Whole-tone scale segment from F# to C)

mm. 19-33 (F# - E (F-flat) - E-flat - D - C - B-flat - A - G - F#)

mm. 44-49 (D - E-flat - E natural, Chromatic scale segment)

This subject was noted in the poetry's title and throughout the poem. Even a "weed" shines joyfully bright and gives reason for a celebration. The poetry is rich with color: "purple shell," "rose-red heel," an evergreen "myrtle shade," "white rose and red," and a golden field of "citron flower". Especially when the dazzling sunlight is everywhere, those colors come alive much more, as if splashed with neon party lights.

There is another way in which the exuberant colors of the poetry are symbolized. In mm. 15-17, the right hand's A-G-A figure is given three different harmonic settings: e half-diminished 7^{th} chord in m. 15, G major six-four chord in m. 16 and D dominant four-two chord in m. 17. It suggests the poem's roses (represented by the right hand's same motive), each of a different color (represented by the left hand's

varying chords).

To depict the hustle and bustle of a festival, Persichetti uses the left hand's accompanimental material in a broken chord figuration. This sprightly accompaniment briskly walks through most of the two A sections. Especially when the hands play together, the consistent eighth-note momentum of the accompanimental figuration is unbroken throughout the sections. The continuous and lively beats appear to accentuate the effect of the poetry's joyful excitement.

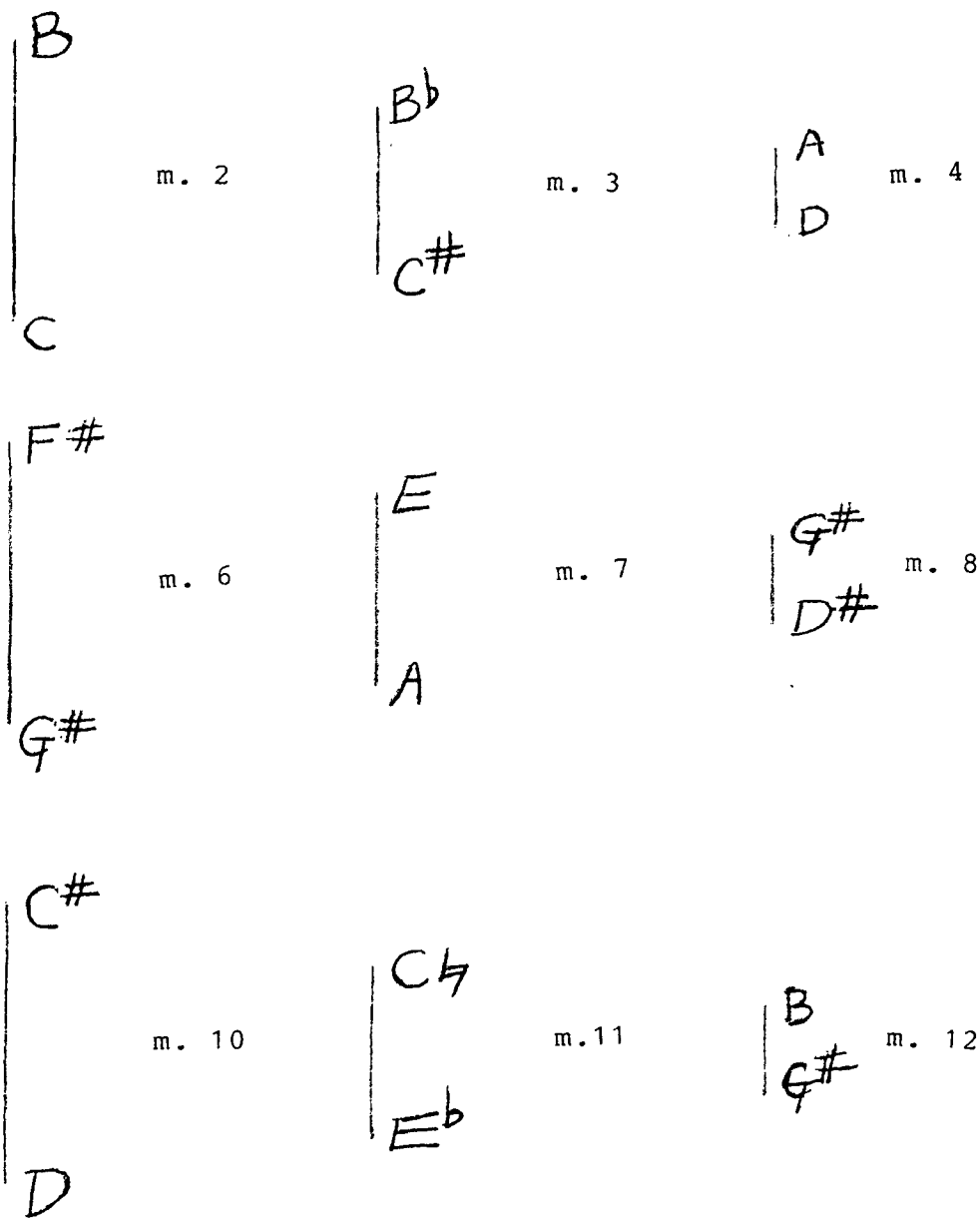
When I play the lyrical passage (mm. 20-26) that begins the B section, the poignantly nostalgic side of the poetry seems to be reflected. The right hand's D-flat major-like whistling line--under the dolce and soft piano dynamic indication--appears to tell a story of joy and fun. The line contains two phrases (mm. 20-23 and mm. 24-26) that melodically complement each other. The second phrase is placed one octave higher than the first phrase and is a rhythmic diminution of the D-flat - E-flat of the preceding phrase, as a wisp of memory, a fond reminiscence.

An amusingly hidden musical metaphor seems to appear among the B section's chords (mm. 26-34). As previously discussed, several identical or similar quality chords continually appear, like an interlace or weaving of a fabric. This depicts the "weaving" of "the citron flower."

There are two more cleverly hidden musical metaphors in the piece. The first one is the seeming reflection of the "pattern" as in the "make on the holy sand / pattern as one might make . . ." The poetic "pattern" is made through contracting lines, or "wedges" between outer voices. Example 3-2 shows three instances of this in the A section.

The last hidden musical metaphor is one that reflects the footprints of the "tread with rose-red 'heel.'" I feel that the consistent presence of minor sixths suggests that this interval "treads" throughout the whole piece. Linear minor sixths appear

Example 3-2. Persichetti, "Gather for festival bright weed and purple shell," mm. 2-4, 6-8, and 10-12



(sometimes enharmonically) in: mm. 0-2 and 34-36 (G - B, the highest to the lowest notes in the right hand's first phrase), m. 2 and 36 (C - G# - E - G# in the left hand), m. 3 and 37 (G - E-flat in the left hand), m. 4 and 38 (A - F ascending in the right hand), mm. 8-10 and 42-44 (C# - A - C#, the lowest to the highest, back down to the lowest note in the right hand's phrase), m. 10 and 44 (D - B-flat and B-flat - F# - B-flat in left hand), m. 11 and 45 (A - F - A in the left hand), m. 12 (B - G in the right hand and G# - E in the left hand, the lowest to the highest notes in both hands' passage), m. 13 (F - C# (D-flat)) in the left hand and G# - E in the right hand), m. 32 (F - A, the highest to the lowest notes in the right hand's passage), and lastly m. 46 (A - C# in the left hand, and B - G in the right hand notes of the lowest to the highest ones in the passage).

Chapter 4

"WHOSE THIN FRAUD I WINK AT PRIVILY"

THE MOCK SELF

Few friends are mine, though many wights there

be

Who, meeting oft a phantasm that makes claim
To be myself, and hath my face and name,
And whose thin fraud I wink at privily,
Account this light impostor very me.
What boots it undeceive them, and proclaim
Myself myself, and whelm this cheat with shame?
I care not, so he leaves my true self free,
Impose not on me also; but alas!
I too, at fault, bewildered, sometimes take
Him for myself, and far from mine own sight,
Torpid, indifferent, doth mine own self pass;
And yet anon leaps suddenly awake,
And spurns the gibbering mime into the night.

William Watson.

This musical piece immediately leaps out as very comical, just like the poetry that inspired it. The poem's quirky humor and hints of multiple personalities are intricately revealed through numerous musical metaphors in the rondo-like form. The recurring material (mm. 1-7 = mm. 30-36 = mm. 54-57, shortened) is subsumed into larger sections that include a few other themes as well. Most of the time there is no clear tonal center, except at the very end (mm. 59-61), which suggests G major ("V" in mm. 59-60, I in m. 61). As Stefan Kostka notes, rondo form in post-tonal music

Figure 4-1. Formal structure of "Whose thin fraud I wink at privily"

A (2/4, 1/4, 2/4)	B (2/4)	A^1 (2/4)	C (2/4, 3/8, 2/4, 3/4, 3/8, 2/4)	A^2 (2/4)
mm. 1 ---------	13, 14 -----	29, 30 ------	36, 37 ----------	53, 54 ------- 61.

depends more on the "contrast of themes as opposed to contrast of key centers."[1]

The first A section contains two parts (mm. 1-7, 8-13). The first part (the recurring rondo material) jump-starts the piece with antecedent and consequent-like phrases (mm. 1-4, 5-7). The legato melody in the left hand contrasting with the short accompaniment notes above help keep the mood amiably light, like the poetry. Furthermore, the melodic dotted rhythms are humorously awkward as they unexpectedly change directions (these melodic lines carry poetic meaning, to be discussed later with all the other poetic imageries).

The beginning of the melody suggests the Hungarian major mode from Persichetti's synthetic scale chart.[2] The right hand plays thirds to form chords with concurrent left-hand notes (see example 4-1). However, just the left hand's sixteenth notes from its dotted line melody were analyzed to the right hand's thirds as triads, because audibly they are played almost together, or at the same time (sixteenth notes apart in mm. 1-2, and in m. 3, the considered chords are played together), than from more distanced dotted-eighth notes. Those dotted-eighth notes seem more

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[1]Stefan Kostka, "Form in Twentieth-Century Music," *Materials and Techniques of Twentieth-Century Music,* 2nd ed. (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1999), 144.

[2]See example 2-1, p. 32.

Figure 4-2. Persichetti, "Whose thin fraud I wink at privily," mm. 1-2, and Hungarian major mode

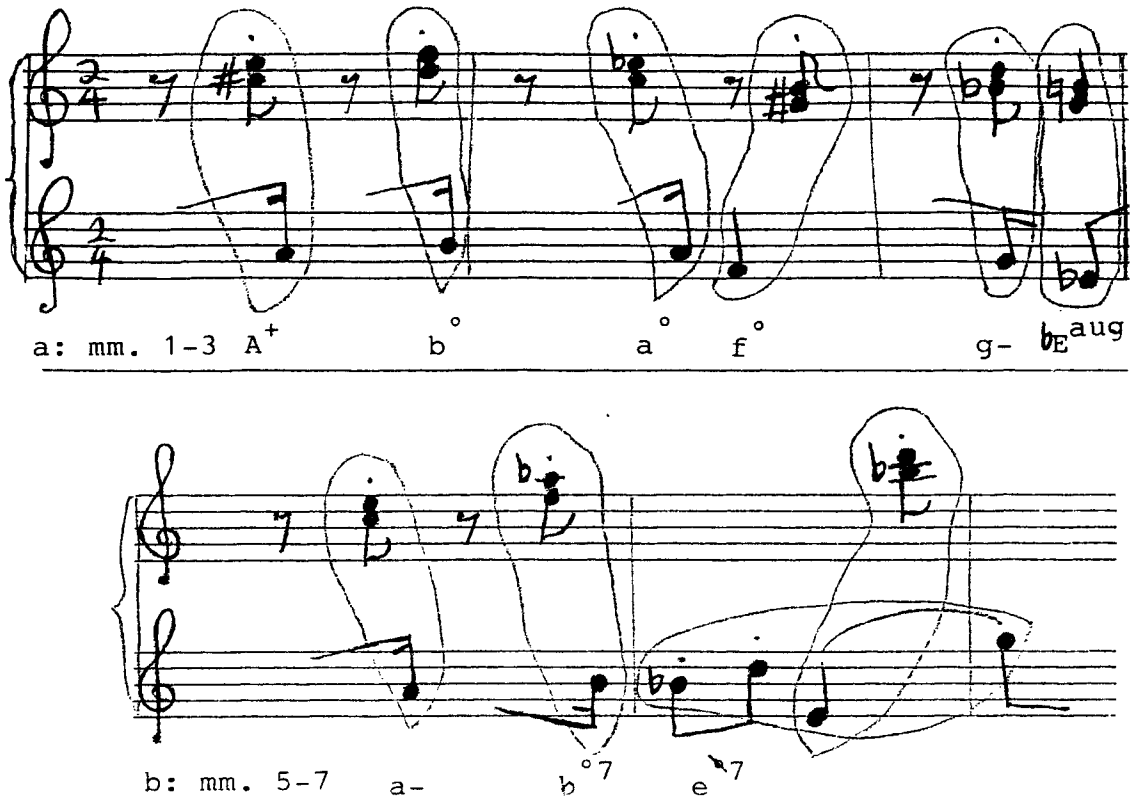
mm. 1-2, left hand, in scalar form	Hungarian major mode
(F, G#, A, B, C)	(C, D#, E, F#, G . . .)
A2 ½ 1 ½	A2 ½ 1 ½

programmatically independent with their monodic, longer note sound. They seem to strengthen their individual linear character in Hungarian major mode that carries a separate poetic imagery from the right hand's thirds. Also, the relationship between hands contributes to the poetic imagery.

The second part of the first A section (mm. 8-13) brings the hands together in a higher register, stating one extended phrase. The right hand mostly contains series of descending consecutive sixths, while the left hand outlines the fourths, fifths and octaves in contrary motion to the right hand, like a mirror image. At first E minor is suggested by containing all the notes from the E natural minor in m. 8: E - F# - G - A - B - C - D, but this does not continue.

The first and the second parts of the A section hardly share thematic material or tonal centers, but there is a sense of balance between them, especially in the beginning four measures of each part (mm. 1-4, 8-11). The newly stated, four measure thematic material in mm. 8-11 feels in symmetry to that of mm. 1-4, resembling and suggestive of the rhyming of the attached poetic sonnet, although they might not be the same materials. There is however, a brief, but similar component among them. The first part's antecedent phrase's rhythmic figuration from the left hand to the right hand in

Example 4-1. Persichetti, "Whose thin fraud I wink at privily," a: mm. 1-3 and b: mm. 5-7



mm. 3-4, is used in mm. 10-11. This time, the rhythmic figuration remains in the right hand, with mostly different notes and higher register. Thus, the two parts may sound different, but they feel balanced and not completely foreign from each other.

The B section (mm. 14-29) abruptly and amusingly springs forth with different thematic material, but it seems to have adapted the sixteenth note motive of m. 11 of the second part of the A section. It is a sixteenth note rhythmic figuration in descending motion, which is arpeggiated in the A section (m. 11). It then transforms into a step-wise motion in the B section (mm. 14-26) and expands in the opposite direction while maintaining the similar rhythmic figuration from the A section.

Therefore, the sudden entrance of the B section does not sound uncomfortable, perhaps also because of the first chord in the right hand melody in the new section is a similar major sixth (G-flat - E-flat), just a minor third above the last right hand chord of the A section (major sixth, E-flat - C and similar to many other 6^{ths} in the A section). Furthermore, the accompaniment in the new section starts with a bass note B-flat, the same note as the last note of the previous section.

The B section's thematic material contains sixteenth notes rolling in descending and/or ascending motion, sometimes mimicking each other in exact same tones (m. 14 and m. 24, see example 4-2). This similarly happens in the right hand (mm. 14-20) and in the left hand (mm. 24-26). It breezes through several scale segments. First, Octatonic scale segments appear in m. 14 (E-flat - D-flat - C - B-flat - A) and in m. 24 (B-flat - A - G - F# - E). Persichetti calls this a "Symmetrical" scale.[3] A segment of Locrian appears in m. 16 (D-flat - C - B-flat - A-flat - G), followed by chromatic segments in m. 18 (C - C# - D - E-flat) and 18-19 (G - G-flat - F - E). Lastly, a segment of Lydian mode appears in mm. 25-26 (G - F# - E - D - C). Many different modes and their fast changing sounds and notes seem to enhance the poetic imagery.

The accompanimental material in this section recalls the A section's short hopping thirds, but in mixture with sevenths (mm. 14-17), and then in a legato setting (mm. 18-20). The thirds rather sound subdued or hidden in the new section, against the right hand's actively chirping thematic material. The consecutive sixths from the A section's second thematic part return as an accompanimental material this time (mm.

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[3]Ibid.

24-26), but in a much longer half-note value that makes the sound resonance disappear into the background. They seem to hint at another possible poetic imagery.

The A section's first thematic material briefly returns at the end of the B section as the transitional passage leading back to A. The tones and contours are different this time, without any accompaniment. This very thin-sounding passage unsuspectingly builds to an effective sectional climax with a crashing E-flat^7 (with an added flat-sixth) chord at the end (m. 29).

The C section (mm. 37-53) strolls in with what sounds like brand new thematic material. But the first of its three parts (mm. 37 to 41, first beat) adapts some ideas from the A section's first thematic part, such as its characteristic dotted-rhythm. Still, everything else is different, especially the much higher register and the octave-double monophony. It sounds intentionally and fraudulently imitative, which amusingly hints at another poetic character. In addition, this part might audibly serve as an introduction to the following part with the descending notes F# - E - D - C# (first beats in mm. 37-39, 41) leading into it. Also, the same set of notes immediately precede and arrive in m. 41 (from m. 40), the first measure of the second part. Thus, an audibly leading introduction may have been made in the first part to the second part, despite the different sounding thematic materials.

The second part of C (mm. 41 to 46, first beat) contains new material hinting at B Lydian. This part appears to abruptly finish at the end of m. 45, but its last thematic note G# seems to long for a resolution when played on the piano. The dominant to tonic-like resolution (just in the top line) is delivered with the next note, C# (first beat in m. 46), which is also the first note of the next part. Therefore, the last note of the

second part and the first note of the third part seem to overlap and elide on the first beat of m. 46.[4] This also seems to make another instance of smooth transition from one part to the next, despite the quite different materials. Then the third part (mm. 46-53) borrows some of its ideas from the A section's second part. This time though, the passage builds up to an effective climax (mm. 50-53) with some newly added elements in faster rhythm and the loudest dynamic of the piece.

In the first and second parts of the C section (mm. 39-45), a lighthearted, jocund burst of hemiola measures suddenly appear. Until m. 38, a steady duple 2/4 meter pulsates rhythmically, except for one brief measure 11, where a single beat 1/4 meter appears. However, from m. 39 a triple rhythm measure keep popping up unexpectedly and alternates with the previous, original duple 2/4 meter at times, resulting in hemiola-like effect: 2/4 in m. 38 - 3/8 in m. 39 - 2/4 in mm. 40-42 - 3/4 in m. 43 - 3/8 in m. 44 - 2/4 in mm. 45-61. From m. 45 until the end of the piece, the original duple 2/4 meter returns and remains unchanged, producing the sense of recurrence.

The hemiola measures' jerky, jocular rhythms effectively reflect the humorous essence of the associated poem. Furthermore, the original and returning duple 2/4 meter feels like the "truest self," cavorting with his multiple personalities, possibly represented by the playful and mischievous appearances of the triple meters in the hemiola passage. Persichetti again keeps the hemiola passage from sounding incongruous and unrelated. He achieves a charming and agreeable impression by putting the recurring left hand rhythm identical, against the hemiola effects in the

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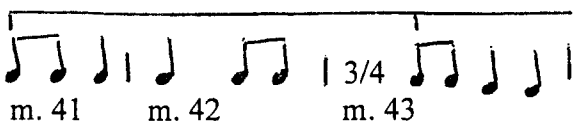
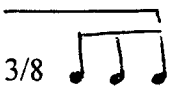
[4]William Rothstein, "Techniques of Phrase Linkage," *Phrase Rhythm in Tonal Music* (New York: Schirmer Books., 1989), 43-63.

right hand, and changing meters (2/4  3/4
L. H.: m. 41 m. 42 m. 43


3/8).
m. 44

The A material returns for the last time (mm. 54-61) with just its first phrase, and with a brief codetta. This time, the passage descends into the lowest register of the piece, and finishes it with a surprising comical effect.

The poetry seems to chuckle at human relationships, particularly friendship, or lack thereof, as in the line "Few friends are mine, though many wights there / be." From the very beginning of the piece until the very end, the comical spirit never really leaves. Further discussion of the humor in each musical metaphor follows.

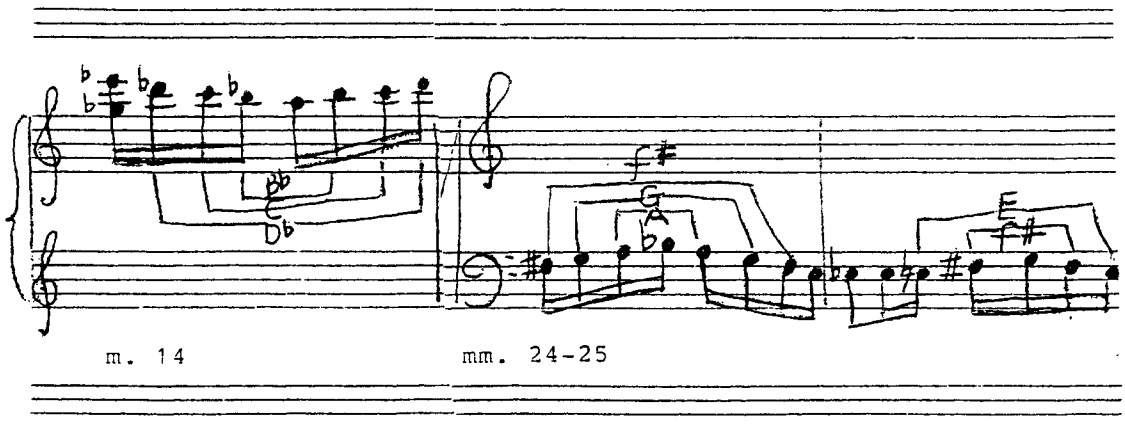
The dotted-rhythms in the A section (mm. 1-7) represent the protagonist's truest self and his endearingly strange humor. This recurs elsewhere with little variation, as if not to confuse itself with its other multiple personality friends. The accompanimental thirds act as a silly and illusive shadow, perhaps representing the protagonist's "phantasm." The thirds usually serve as the third and fifth (or seventh) of a chord, while the thematic line serves as the root, the origin of the chord, like its suggested character "truest self."

The first possible appearance of one form of the multiple personality is in the A section's second thematic part (mm. 8-13). The poetry's "thin fraud" seems to be represented here by the crisp and bouncy textured passage in the high register, with its characteristically thin sound, corresponding to its poetic imagery. When those sixths return later in the song (mm. 24-26), they are disguised, as if the protagonist is

winking at the "thin fraud . . . privily." The suggested "thin fraud's" passage's accompaniment's intervals (mm. 8-10, mm. 12-13) also return in a hardly recognizable manner (mm. 52-53).

The next multiple personality to be suggested by the musical metaphor is the poetry's "gibbering mime." The A section's left hand, "truest self" theme figure in m. 1 reappears in a melodic inversion of the opposite direction in m. 27, resulting in a mirroring, miming effect (m. 1: ↑ m2 ↑ m3 ↓ m2, and m. 27: ↓ m2 ↓ m3 ↑ M2). Similarly, the B section's quickly descending and then ascending (sometimes in opposite directions) theme (mm. 14-20, mm. 24-26, and mm. 52-53) seems to represent that image. The mimicking part of the "mime" is suggested when the theme rolls back in the contrary, retroverse motion, and mirrors each other's notes, sometimes identically (m. 14, 24-25, see example 4-2). In mm. 52-53, the suggested

Example 4-2. Persichetti, "Whose thin fraud I wink at privily," m. 14, mm. 24-25



"gibbering mime," with its added fast chromatic cluster-ending, appears to depict the "mime" getting frantically thrown off and away from the protagonist, like the poetry's line; "And spurns the gibbering mime into the night." The accompanimental material for the metaphorically suggested "gibbering mime," which recalls the thirds from the A section, seems to evoke still another instance of the piece's title, where the protagonist is winking at his shadowy friend "privily," in only knowing himself for sure, that the shadow is tailing the "gibbering mime" like a silly prankster.

In the retransition phrase (mm. 27-29), the suggested "true self's" line monodically sings along by himself (in different tones, but in the same characteristic dotted-rhythm) without any of his multiple personalities' motives being present. But like a comically shocking surprise, a large E-flat dominant seventh chord (plus C-flat) jumps out of nowhere at the end of the passage (m. 29). This surprising event seems reminiscent of the characteristic thirds from the shadowy "phantasm" motive from the A section. However, it appears to be stacked up distortedly in a comical disguise, perhaps to joke around with his "truest self" buddy.

The last multiple personality to be reflected through the music is the "light impostor." The suggestive metaphor (mm. 37-41's first beat) contains the "truest self's" characteristic dotted-rhythms, but not the same tones nor the melodic contours nor the accompanimental material. Thus, it effectively gives an impression of an "impostor," trying to imitate the "truest self," as in the poem's line: "Account this light impostor very me." Moreover, the poetic "light" subject seems to be reflected through music by the "light" textured, nonchordal monodic line shared by the two hands, two octaves apart, in the high register.

In mm. 41-46, the relaxed lyrical *cantando* line seems to capture the protagonist in a leisurely way, enjoying and grinning at himself and his multiple personalities. The subsequent climactic passage (mm. 46-53) leads to the explosive awakening. This passage feels like the protagonist is nervously snapping out of his fantasies and opening his eyes to reality, like the poetry's line: "And yet anon leaps suddenly awake." As previously mentioned, he comes to his senses and throws his multiple personalities aside (mm. 52-53). At the end, the multiple personality disappears "into the night." In the codetta (mm. 58-61), the staccato in "thin" textured monodic line descends to the lowest register of the piece. However, it does not completely disappear without a fight. At the very end of the quiet descending line, a sharply accented chord made up of an octave and major third jabs out--like the characteristic thirds from the shadowy "phantasm" motive--resistantly flaring out, before finally fading away into the fantasy night.

NOTE TO USERS

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accompaniment. Persichetti also employs a few scales listed in his Synthetic scale chart.[2]

The opening A section (mm. 1-19) contains three subsections (mm. 1-6, 7-11, 12-19), with the last one containing a short, codetta-like part toward the end (mm. 18-19). This codetta-like section is reminiscent of mm. 7-8 of the second subsection by resembling the similar rhythm, but containing different notes. The first subsection consists of an antecedent phrase and its consequent (mm. 1-3, 4-6). The consequent phrase starts a whole step higher than the antecedent phrase and appears in a higher

Figure 5-1. Formal structure of "And warm winds spilled fragrance into her solitudes"

A (6/8)	B (6/8)	A^1 (6/8)
mm. 1 ----------	19, 20 ----------	33, 34 ---------- 46.

register. The highest note of the two phrases (G# in m. 6) arrives at the end, but this is anti-climactic because of the diminuendo starting in m. 5 and continuing in the subsequent subsection. There are hints of tonal centers in the repeated B's in m. 1 and

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and multifarious interpretations of the piece. Persichetti said "each of them was a different story, and each exactly right for the piece." Thus, as previously discussed in the Introduction, the writer would like to make clear that this chapter's and other chapter's poetic interpretations are not put forth as universal, but instead they are written as personal interpretations of the writer that might differ from other's views (Rudy Shackelford, "Conversation with Vincent Persichetti," *Perspectives of New Music* 20/1-2 (Fall/Winter 1981-Spring/Summer 1982): 104-34., and Robert Schumann, "Schubert's Symphony in C," *Schumann on Music,* trans. and ed. Henry Pleasants (New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1988), 165.

[2]See example 2-1, p. 32.

C#'s in m. 4. The latter tones suggest a sense of arrival form, or resolution of, the melodic notes at the end of the previous measure.

Most of the left hand chords contain three tones that form two perfect fourths, except in m. 2 where the fourths are perfect and augmented.[3] Also, with the right hand melody added, an additional fourth is sometimes formed (G# - C# - F# - B in m. 1, A - D - G - C# in m. 6).[4] However, the melody more typically forms thirds and/or sixths with the left hand's top notes. These consonances provide an effective contrast with the hollowness of the left hand alone. Persichetti describes the sound of these particular compound chords as quite "lush." I find these chords to be strangely seductive; they seem to evoke the atmosphere of the title of the piece "And Warm Winds Spilled Fragrance into Her Solitudes."[5]

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[3]Stefan Kostka, "The Vertical Dimension: Chords and Simultaneities," *Materials and Techniques of Twentieth-Century Music,* 2nd ed. (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1999), 56-60. Persichetti (Persichetti, "Chords by Fourths," *Twentieth-Century Harmony,* 93, 95-96, 98) also offers some of his thoughts on quartal harmony: "Quartal materials stem from ornamentation of the triad . . . and from the techniques of medieval polyphony . . . . " On the "three-note chords by fourth"--as they appear much throughout the A sections' left hand--Persichetti notes that "the perfect-perfect chord is seldom used as a dissonant structure. The absence of a sharp interval, the equality of the perfect fourths, and the mildness of the minor seventh create a texture that is consonant in a quartal context." And on a case like the A sections' antecedent and consequent-like melodic phrases with the "three-note chords by fourths" in the left hand, Persichetti says that "when a florid voice is added to three note chords by fourths, greater harmonic freedom is possible."

[4]Persichetti, "Chords by Fourths," *Twentieth-Century Harmony,* 101. Persichetti considers that "a quartal structure more resonant than a three-note chord by fourths is made by adding another fourth to the chord. The new tone forms a consonant interval (tenth) with the bass tone and adds color and variety to quartal harmony."

[5]Ibid., 102-103. Persichetti says of such chords: "Compound construction (thirds and fourths) brings fresh color to quartal harmony. A third may be added above or

The linear treatment of these left hand chords (mm. 1-6) seems quite unusual, as they continuously glide down from the first chord at the beginning (m. 1) to the last chord in the second, consequent phrase. Its voice line is mostly chromatic in nature with the first two notes mirroring the last two notes (mm. 1-6 and 34-39 bass line: A - G# - F - E - D# - D natural - C# - C natural - B - A# - A natural - G#). Strangely, in this passage where there is no tonal center, the same two starting and ending notes feel like a tonic, a starting and an ending point in a scale mode.

The second subsection begins at the upbeat to m. 7 with a sudden shift to a monophonic texture. After a short phrase, the texture changes again at the end of m. 8, where the right hand initiates a moment of strict canonic imitation. The lines at first suggest the "Hungarian minor" scale from Persichetti's chart, although this is quickly abandoned.[6] The strict imitation dissolves into general contrapuntal layering and another anti-climax with the "*rit e dim*" in m. 11.

The third subsection (mm. 12-19) is a return of the first one, thus embedding a small ternary structure within the larger one. While the antecedent phrase (mm. 12-14) is exactly the same as before, the returning consequent phrase is slightly different starting in m. 16. Then, as a kind of codetta, the monophonic texture also briefly returns in mm. 18-19, as previously mentioned. It is rhythmically similar to mm. 7-8, but does not bear a strong melodic relationship otherwise.

The B section sounds eerily different from what came before. The left hand now

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below a three-note chord by fourths. If the added third is major the chord sounds consonant; if the third is minor the chord sounds less consonant."

[6]See example 2-1, p. 32.

consists of successive perfect fifths that are often dissonant with the melody. The pedal indication (*tre corde*) again helps to accentuate the ringing effect of the fifths. The melody is *poco animato* and more angular than the earlier section. It also contains drier articulation and nervously rushed, faster rhythms. These faster figurations build up a continuous and fierce sweep that accumulates to the climax of the piece (mm. 28-33). And yet, the climactic point (mm. 31-32) is lightly textured, stating only a compound minor third, forte, in m. 31. The energy dissipates with octatonic segments at the end of m. 32: G# - A - B - C (Persichetti, "Symmetrical" scale).[7]

½ 1 ½

The A section returns in m. 34 with a pedal point C added to the first part (mm. 34-39). Then the previous monophonic line is treated contrapuntally (m. 40), and a codetta features a hint of the B section (m. 43). This piece ends quietly on yet another quartal harmony.

The poem "Change" starts out romantically and in a joyous, sensual tone. However, it soon subtly evokes that the admirer's courting is one-sided, like that of an unrequited lover who lacks the courage to woo his idealized love in a more conventional way, but who learns about her without her knowledge. But his sad endeavor comes to a halt. She disappears completely, and the speaker's world devastatingly changes. Then he regrets not having the emotional strength to approach her in a civilized way, so that maybe they could have had a happier ending.

At the beginning of the piece, the melody (mm. 1-6) is delicate and beautiful, as if reflecting the poetry's "silver music," gently falling down from the starry night sky.

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[7]Ibid.

The chords, however, have a different character. They continuously echo and slide down for quite some time (mm. 1-6). Especially with the damper pedal on, these chords ring out like bells, with an odd and hollow resonance. They suggest two different poetic images. Their descending direction within each phrase suggests the "silver music," shining down from the night sky. Their hollow, bell-like effects suggest the beloved lady's "solitudes," in the echoing "wide halls" of her home.

In the middle subsection of the A section, and in the return of that material in m. 18, the monophony evokes the admirer's shell-like solitude. The indicated *senza* pedal effect (the second time, *una corda* is also added), in the mezzo piano setting makes the sound resonate in a timid and closed up way. It does not feel terribly sad, but rather tranquil and a bit weird and lonely, as though reflecting the admirer. The weird feeling seems to be evoked from some of the intervals contained in its first setting, which consists of many linear tritone leaps and chromaticism. The second setting of the motive feels more shy with *una corda* and less weird with no linear tritone leaps.

The imitative passage in the middle subsection (mm. 8-11), by contrast, makes me think of a conversation shared by the admirer and his beloved. The friendly duet-like passage seems to lessen the loneliness, although this could sadly exist only in the admirer's illusion and wishes. But of course the sense of connection dissipates with the *"rit e dim"* in m. 11. This sudden change at the climactic point in the passage brings the admirer back to reality and pierces his anguished heart.

In the return of A in the third subsection (mm. 12-17), Persichetti again celebrates the pleasant, but strange nocturnal times when the reclusive admirer

enjoyed being outside his beloved's home secretly, without driving himself to pain and heartache. Once again the music suggests a strange kind of loving warmth, shrouded by solitude. This appears to go deeper than just depicting the poetry's images, as it seems to explore the admirer's intentions beneath his rather disturbing approach.

The B section (mm. 20-33) however, represents the jolt of the cruel reality that the admirer tastes in the poem's second stanza. His beloved has vanished now, and he realizes that he is never going to see her again, let alone have her. This is expressed throughout the section with its nervously agitated and jagged right hand line, and the changed harmony. The open fifths reflect the admirer's harrowing longing for the earlier time when his beloved was near. Kostka notes the effectiveness of fifths to accomplish this purpose when he says that open fifths are typically used "to create an impression of the Orient or of the distant past."[8] The harsh dissonances formed by the fifths and the melody convey the harsher "solitudes" of the admirer's new despair. The darkly changed musical essence also reflects the poem's title.

Another prominent evocation in the B section concerns the "chill winds," which are reflected through the sudden and sporadically fast sweeping movements in the right-hand line. In the climactic part of the piece (mm. 29-31), this motive sweeps up and around through perfect fourths, tritones, blowing hard and freezing the admirer's heart.

The most desolate and loneliest part of the piece is the peak at m. 31. While

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[8]Kostka, "The Vertical Dimension: Chords and Simultaneities," *Materials and Techniques of Twentieth-Century Music,* 58.

containing the most intensity and the loudest dynamic, it consists of a solitary dyad, more than four octaves apart, without any notes right before or after it. It feels altogether bleak, the way the admirer might have felt in the latter part of the poem.

Perhaps, reminiscent of his beloved one, the piece returns to the A section for the last time and finishes quietly, vanishing (mm. 45-46, pianissimo with *molto largamente*) like her traceless disappearance.

Chapter 6

"SLEEP, WEARY MIND; DREAM, HEART'S DESIRE"

THERE ARE NO ISLANDS ANY MORE

May 1940

(Lines Written in Passion and in Deep
Concern for England, France, and My
Country)

DEAR Isolationist, you are
So very, very insular!
Surely you do not take offense?---
The word's well used in such a sense.
'Tis you, not I, sir, who insist
You are an Isolationist.

And oh, how sweet a thing to be
Safe on an island, not at sea!
(Though someone said, some months ago---
I heard him, and he seemed to know;
Was it the German Chancellor?
"There are no islands any more.")

Dear Islander, I envy you:
I'm very fond of islands, too;
And few the pleasures I have known
Which equalled being left alone.
Yet matters from without intrude
At times upon my solitude:

A forest fire, a dog run mad,
A neighbour stripped of all he had
By swindlers, or the shrieking plea
For help, of stabbed Democracy.

Startled, I rise, run from the room,
Join the brigade of spade and broom;
Help to surround the sickened beast;
Hear the account of farmers fleeced

By dapper men, condole, and give
Something to help them hope and live;
Or, if Democracy's at stake,
Give more, give more than I can make;
And notice, with a rueful grin,
What was without, is now within.

(The tidal wave devours the shore:
There are no islands any more)

With sobbing breath, with blistered hands,
Men fight the forest fire in bands;
With kitchen broom, with branch of pine,
Beat at the blackened, treacherous line;
Before the veering wind falls back,
With eyebrows burnt and faces black;
While breasts in blackened streams perspire,
Watch how the wind runs with the fire
Like a broad banner up the hill---
and can no more . . . yet more must still.

New life!---to hear across the field
Voices of neighbours, forms concealed
By smoke, but loud the nearing shout:
"Hold on! We're coming! Here it's out!"

(The tidal wave devours the shore:
There are no islands any more)

This little life, from here to there---
Who lives it safely anywhere?
Not you, my insulated friend:
What calm composure will defend
Your rock, when tides you've never seen
Assault the sands of What-has-been,
And from your island's tallest tree,
You watch advance What-is-to-be?

(The tidal wave devours the shore:
There are no islands any more)

Sweet, sweet, to see the tide approach,
Assured that it cannot encroach
Upon the beach-peas, often wet
With spray, never uprooted yet.
The moon said---did she not speak true?---

"The waves will not awaken you.
At my command the waves retire.
Sleep, weary mind; dream, heart's desire."
And yet, there was a Danish King
Assured he governed everything.
He bade the ocean not to rise.
It did. And great was the surprise.

No man, no nation, is made free
By stating it intends to be.
Jostled and elbowed is the clown
Who thinks to walk alone in town.

We live upon a shrinking sphere---
Like it or not, our home is here;
Brave heart, uncompromising brain
Could make it seem like home again.

(There are no islands any more.
The tide that mounts our drowsy shore
Is boats and men, ---there is no place
For waves in such a crowded space.)

Oh, let us give, before too late,
To those who hold our country's fate
Along with theirs---be sure of this---
In grimy hands, that will not miss
The target, if we stand beside
Loading the guns (resentment, pride,
Debts torn across with insolent word---
All this forgotten, or deferred
At least until there's time for strife
Concerning things less dear than Life;
Then let, if must be, in the brain
Resentment rankle once again,
Quibbling and Squabbling take the floor,
Cool Judgment go to sleep once more.)

On English soil, on French terrain,
Democracy's at grips again
With forces forged to stamp it out.
This time no quarter! ---since no doubt.

Not France, nor England's what's involved,
Not we, ---there's something to be solved
Of grave concerns to free men all:

Can Freedom stand? ---Must Freedom fall?

(Meantime, the tide devours the shore:
There are no islands any more)

Oh, build, assemble, transport, give,
That England, France and we may live,
Before tonight, before too late,
To those who hold our country's fate
In desperate fingers, reaching out
For weapons we confer about,

All that we can, and more, and now!
Oh, God, let not the lovely brow
Of Freedom in the trampled mud
Grow cold! Have we no brains, no blood,
No enterprise---no any thing
Of which we proudly talk and sing,
Which we like men can bring to bear
For Freedom, and against Despair?

Lest French and British fighters, deep
In battle, needing guns and sleep,
For lack of aid be overthrown,
And we be left to fight alone.[1]

Edna St. Vincent Millay.

Responding to the brewing horrors of World War II, this tortured lullaby soulfully plays on as if it is trying to forget all about war and escape to peaceful sleep. Even though the piece is much shorter than the long poem, it nonetheless effectively conveys the fundamental essence of the poem. Its three sections, as shown in figure 6-1, hint at a tonic - dominant structure with the open fifths that begin each section: G – D in mm. 1 and 17, D - A in m. 10. These intervals are often surrounded by fifth -

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relations, while voice - leading within the sections is often stepwise (whole-step or half step) or disjunct. The piece also ends on the G - D fifth (m. 23). The thematic

Figure 6-1. Formal structure of "Sleep, weary mind; dream, heart's desire"

A (3/4)	B (3/4)	A^1 (3/4)	
mm. 1 ---------- 9, 10 ---------- 16, 17 ---------- 23.			
Theme starts on D with its fifth chord G-D, as I.	Theme starts on A with its fifth chord D-A, as V.	Theme restarts on D with G-D chord, as I.	G-D as I.

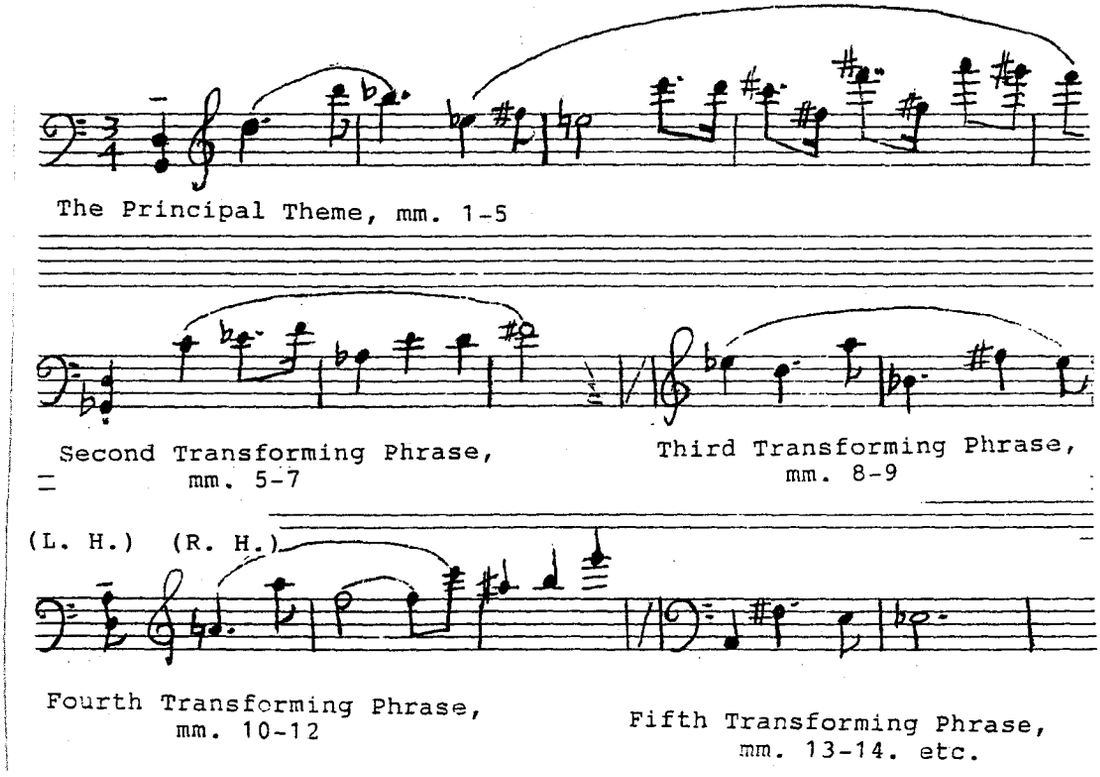
material includes a principle theme and an accompanimental motive which go through distinctive transformations throughout the thickly textured piece.

The starting A section contains three presentations of its principal theme (first: mm. 1-5 in the right hand; second: mm. 5-7 in the left hand; and third: mm. 8-9 in the right hand). The presentations, however, seem to focus more toward the programmatic evocation with their unconfined and transformative characters. Perhaps, Persichetti did this intentionally to associate them to the poem's subject "dream" and its possible sequences. This may be like the distorted and unsettling dream sequences of the poem's battle "weary" soldiers desperately needing more "guns and sleep." If all of the presentations fit too imitatively and closely to the principal theme, their poetic associations might not have been conveyed as clearly. Therefore, it seems more natural to see the following analysis of the presentations from the programmatic point of view, rather than from the strict theoretic point of view.

The principal theme, thus, becomes transformed in each section through various

note substitutions, hand exchanges, registal shifts, contour variations, rhythmic alterations, and phrase length (see example 6-1). For example, the second presentation slips in rather unrecognizably from the first presentation, as if the original dream

Example 6-1. The principal theme and its transforming phrases



sequence is becoming blurred in a random fashion. Although sharing a similar ascending melodic direction, the second presentation begins wistfully transfigured with a different quality fifth chord and articulation. The second presentation in m. 5

starts with the staccato, augmented fifth chord G-flat - D, while the first presentation in m. 1 starts with the tenuto, perfect fifth chord G - D, but in the same bass register as the second presentation. Also, the length of the second presentation is shorter by one measure and one beat, and most of the notes, rhythmic figuration, slurs and dynamic indication are different than before. In the second presentation, a single slur, the dynamic (mezzo piano) and the performance indications (expressive) all start on the second beat (m. 5), while the principal theme's dynamic (piano) and the performance indications (expressive) start on the first beat. The reason why they start on the second beat may be that the second presentation's first beat chord in the bass (G-flat - D in m. 5) overlaps as an accompanimental material with the principal theme's last melodic note in the top voice.

Furthermore, ranges of these presentations are also quite different. While the second presentation reaches just over an octave in the left hand bass (mm. 5-7) with a single slurred phrase, the first presentation extensively covers almost four octaves (mm. 1-5) with two separate phrases. The first slur starts on the second beat of m. 1 and stops at the first beat of the next measure (m. 2). The second slur starts in the middle of m. 2 and expansively reaches over on to the last note of the presentation (m. 5, first beat). Unlike the antecedent and consequent phrases, these two phrases have a continuous feeling to them as the thematic line soars so unrestrictively.

Thus, from the normal analytic point of view, the much transformed second presentation might not even be considered related to the principal theme. From the programmatic point of view, however, the obscured version of the principal theme seems to convey the unsettling dream sequence effectively.

A similar process also applies to the third presentation, which wanders to the upper register. Besides sharing exactly the same rhythm as mm. 1-2, it hardly shares anything else from before. It even starts two octaves higher than the previous two presentations, with mostly different notes. Its two measure length is also much shorter than the principal theme (over four measures), and its octave range remains within one octave while the principal theme reaches almost four octaves. Furthermore, a single slur phrase covers the third presentation, while the principal theme contains two slurred phrases as discussed before.

The principal theme's character itself is also quite free, like that of a fantasy. It starts out in the bass, from below the left hand passage and continues on, leaping up two octaves, and then still another octave, chimerically covering three octaves in just one measure (m. 1). It rises even higher and reaches almost four octaves from where it started, when it arrives at the highest points in its first presentation (A6 and G#6 in m. 4). It then ends by drastically overlapping over three octaves with the beginning of the second presentation in the bass (m. 5). The last measure (m. 4) of the first presentation also contains large leaps in successions of opposite directions, as they seem to freely float around (C#6 ↓ F#5 ↑ F#6 ↓ G#5 ↑ A6). The characteristically free nature of the theme itself also seems to carry a significant poetic impact, as I shall discuss presently in regards to other poetic images.

The accompanimental motive, starting in the left hand in m. 1, glides through some transformations itself. It begins as legato, ascending parallel thirds that suggests a Dorian mode on A. The left hand part in its entirely appears to be A Dorian, but combined the G - D right hand on the first beat, it implies G major as well. Audibly,

though, the passage leans more toward G major, especially when the pitch F#, appearing later in the left hand (in beat 2 of m. 1). Then the thirds are inverted to sixths in m. 3, followed by fourths and thirds in m. 4. Subsequent accompaniment figures continue with similar intervallic relations, except when reduced to single lines without parallel movement (e.g., mm. 8-9).

The character of the accompanimental motive by itself feels mostly at ease and peaceful, with just a few dissonances (mm. 1-3). In mm. 4-6, however, that feeling changes with more disjunct motion, dissonances and tritones. The previously felt peacefulness now appears dismembered, suggesting the sad irony of the reality in the piece's title. Furthermore, when the accompanimental motive is combined with the other lines, the effect is more rich and dissonant. When hints of triads occur, added notes above make reference to a thickly textured jazz harmony. Perhaps the most obvious instance of this is the parallel chords in m. 19.

In the B section, which is based on the A section's motives, there are two additional transforming presentations of the principal theme (fourth in mm. 10-12, fifth in mm. 13-14). The fourth transformation starts out as a transposition of the first presentation, but a perfect fifth higher, further supporting the hint of a dominant at this point. The thematic similarities end after one measure, however. The accompanimental motive also resembles the opening. The fourth thematic presentation's last and the highest note (G6 in m. 12) falls almost four octaves down into the bass to start the fifth presentation. This one hardly shares any aspect from the principal theme, except for the similar thematic rhythm (m. 1), which does not continue.

The returning A section only hints at what came before. The accompanimental motive is placed in the opposite hand in a different register. It is packed also with a suggestive double thematic presentation, as the accompanimental motive's top voice imitates the starting thematic rhythm (m. 17), but with different tones and contour. It then continues on in parallel thirds. At the climax of the piece, the parallel chords in m. 19 lead to a single tone C appearing in m. 20 with the loudest dynamic of the piece, mezzo forte. In the closing passage (mm. 21-23) there is an intervallic dialogue between the hands: the right hand's major sixth (B-flat - G) - major seventh (B-flat - A) - minor sixth (B - G) is answered one beat later, by the left hand's minor sixth (F# - D) - major 7^{th} (E-flat - D) - minor sixth (F - D-flat).

The poem is so provocative and sobering that it emulates the piano piece to attempt to fly away from the reality of war and reach the "dream" in the "'heart's desire." Sometimes it seems to succeed at it, and sometimes it seems to have a difficult time leaving reality.

The immediate connection between the literary poem and the musical piece is the reflection of the "sleep" from the title. It is seemingly set by music with a slow Lento tempo within the overall soft dynamic shades. The loudest dynamic of the piece is mezzo forte, which appears on just one quarter beat at the climax (m. 20).

Another noticeable musical conveyance of the poetic imagery is the subject of "dream" from the title. As already mentioned, the transforming thematic presentations held dream-like qualities in its continuously variable registers, phrase lengths, contours and rhythms. Furthermore, the first, fourth, and sixth presentations of the theme each contains prominent octaves at their beginnings (D in m. 1, A in m. 10, D in

m. 17), but very soon these melodies freely float up and around without being oriented around a certain pitch center, contributing to the dreamy imagery. Even when the themes are examined by themselves, their uninhibitedness--such as ascending three octaves in just one measure (m. 1), covering two octaves in another (m. 10), and containing extreme leaps in contrary motion--suggests a dreamlike freedom to wander around anywhere it wants, in any way it wants.

The pervasive dissonance and disjunct motion help establish an atmosphere of struggle and conflict. The dissonance intensifies like an escalating nightmare in the climactic m. 19. But then the air suddenly clears and everything slows down in m. 20. This suggests a moment when the soldiers' hearts almost stop. The music then whithers away and resolves down to the perfect fourth (B - E) and then to the major sixth (B-flat - G in m. 21). This resolution feels grippingly relieving, as if we could finally breath easier and close our eyes in safety, and perhaps, "dream, what heart's desire."

NOTE TO USERS

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the piece, and the performer is directed to play "expressively" at the beginning of the middle section (m. 16). At the climax (mm. 24-25), "*passionato*" is indicated along with "fortissimo" to affirm the strength of passion shared by the two lovers. When the secondary melody is restated (m. 28), "*tenerament*" is directed to bring out the tenderness gently. Finally, the piece subsides with "*velato*" (m. 35) in quiet "pianissimo"; it creates a veiled and subdued atmosphere.

"And hung like those top jewels of the night" is composed of three main parts: A in 4/4 meter (mm. 1-15, Lento. ♩ = 60), B in 9/8 meter (mm. 16-23, *Poco piu mosso.* ♩. = 66), and, after a retransition (mm. 24-25, 4/4 over 12/8, 2/4 over 6/8 meters), A^1 in 4/4 over 12/8 meter and 4/4 meter (mm. 26-41, Tempo I. ♩ = 60).

Figure 7-1. Formal structure of "And hung like those top jewels of the night"

4/4

A (4/4 meter) B (9/8, 12/8, 12/8) A^1 (4/4)

mm. 1 ---------- 15, 16 ---------- 23, 24 ---------- 41.

Within the A sections, a principal melody and secondary melody alternate. The principal melody (mm. 1-3, mm. 10-12, mm. 26-27 [incomplete], mm. 34-36) uses only the first four notes of the E minor scale. These simple four notes are strongly identifiable and closely associated throughout the piece. When the principal melody recurs in the A section (mm. 10-12), it is almost identical to its first appearance, but placed one octave higher. It feels natural to associate the high register of the music with the poem's references to stars, sky, heaven and high spaces. Musically, according

to Persichetti, the wider spaces produced by the high placement of the melody create richer, stronger, and more brilliant effects:

> If intervals are spaced more than an octave apart, the soft consonances (thirds and sixths) become richer; open consonances (octaves and fifths) and the consonant perfect fourth become stronger: Dissonances (seconds and sevenths) become less biting, yet more brilliant.[1]

Even when the principal melody is first presented, the vertical intervals are more than an octave apart (more than two octaves apart on the dissonant intervals). The dissonances (major seconds) on the strong beats (first and third beats) of the 4/4 meter (mm. 1-2), demonstrate the "less biting" but "more brilliant" effect. The second time the principal melody comes in, the same dissonant vertical intervals span more than three octaves, lending even more brilliance, like those top jewels of the night. The consonant major third on the third beat of measure two and eleven becomes emotionally richer, like the engaging line from the poem, "And these rich-bodied hours of our delight."

After the climactic fortissimo, transition (mm. 24-25), a portion of the principal melody takes over in high-register octaves with different accompanimental figures (mm. 26-27). The melody and accompaniment present opposing metric subdivisions of a 4/4 meter for the right hand and a 12/8 meter for the left hand. It is reminiscent of mm. 16-18 where Persichetti used duple eighth notes against the triple eighth notes in opposing hands, while remaining within the same meter. Persichetti extends this idea further here. The vast range covered by the strong octaves in the right hand and

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[1]Persichetti, *Twentieth-Century Harmony,* 17-18.

pianistically jumping chordal accompaniments in the left hand, produce an intensively passionate drama; it reflects the passion of the two "fast hearts," along with a "crevice wide" abyss that opens between them.

For its last appearance (mm. 34-36), the principal melody is repeated almost exactly. The minor difference here is that the starting dynamic--mezzo piano--diminishes to a very hushed pianissimo, while the performance indication requires a more veiled, subdued ending. Thus, the connotations of the *velato* marking at measure thirty-five--defeated, subjugated and vanquished--are directly connected with the unfortunate lovers at the end of the poem: "So space can pierce the crevice wide between / Fast hearts, skies deep-descended intervene."

The secondary melody (mm. 4-9, mm. 13-15, mm. 28-33, mm. 37-41) begins with the same, distinctive three notes--c, b, c. The alternation and mixture of the long notes and dotted rhythms from the principal melody are retained throughout the secondary melody, which, however, is much more ornamented and extensive. The first appearance of the secondary melody is almost like a cadenza with brilliant elaboration of the technical ornaments that seems to reflect the one "lapt in singling light." The melody is not distinguished by a specific scale or a key center. When it returns for the second time, the secondary melody is only three measures long. It does not have the technical swirls as before, but retains much of the similar long notes and dotted-eighth note figurations.

When the secondary melody reappears for the third time (mm. 28-33), it is almost exactly the same as its first statement, except that it is one octave lower, with an added performance indication (*teneramente*), and a louder, dynamic mezzo forte.

The tender feeling here echoes the lovers' longing for "those top jewels of the night . . . too high for love to win." The treasured love is unable to overcome intervening obstacles.

The high register of the last secondary melody is exactly at the same place as it was in its first statement. It closes the piece in widely gapped arpeggiation, covering the vast range of the piano--from the low bass to a very high register. This soft arpeggio reveals one of the "fast hearts" of the poem, reaching out to the "Hesperus" star from the "nether space":

> In nether space so drenched in goblin blue,
> I could touch Hesperus as soon as you.

The arpeggio consists of seven notes, E, B, G, A, D, B, B; thus, the melancholy E minor triad can be traced (m. 41). The arpeggio expresses the sad longing of the person who tries to reach out from beneath the earth's surface to the intangible star of the beloved one.

The accompaniment figure for both the principal and secondary melodies is the same in the A and A^1 sections. The consistent figure seems to mirror the "blue unending night." The figure changes for the transition section from the B section into the A^1 section (mm. 24-27), and for the last three measures of the piece. The accompaniment figure in the A and A^1 sections, consists of dotted eighth notes and sixteenth notes. They are triadic figures that contain different harmonies within each half-note value. The range of the register remains similar within the bass clef, which could represent the "nether space." The aforementioned jumping chordal accompaniment figure in the transition section covers a very wide range of register. The lowest bass notes from m. 22 into the first bass note of m. 28, traces a

descending combined scale of E major and A melodic minor (E - E-flat (D#) - C# - B - A - G# - F# - E - D - C - B - A). This descending linear scale provides a clear preparation for the A minor of the beginning of the A^1 section.

Section B (mm. 16-23) begins with two independent voices, in 9/8 meter. Both voices present important melodies. The right hand melody (mm. 16-18) mostly contains groups of triple sounding eighth notes while the left hand melody contains more groups of duple sounding eighth notes. This duple rhythm against the triple rhythm often creates a hemiola when they are played together. The hemiola expresses the difficulty of being together, which is also reflected throughout the poem.

The two independent melodies of the right and left hands (mm. 19-21) rush ahead individually and chromatically, which produces plenty of semitones. The two chromatic lines in a faster tempo create a restless agitation and generate increasing intensity. This seems to mirror the poem's revelation of the intensity of a fated separation.

Persichetti's recurring play with the hidden tonal center around E, from mm. 22-26, is an intriguing factor. M. 22 only consists of the Lydian scale notes, starting on E (E, F#, G#, A#, B, C#). Although D#, the seventh degree, is missing from the scale, presence of the rest of the notes of the scale does establish the Lydian mode for one short measure. The Lydian mode measure seems to be isolated. It does not have an harmonic preparation from the previous measure, and the mode changes immediately in the following measure. However, a descending linear E major scale is found in the lowest bass octaves of the left hand (mm. 22-26); E, E-flat (enharmonically equals the D# of the E major scale), C#, B, A, G#, F#, E. Thus, Persichetti's tonal center around

E is fairly consistent throughout the piece, although it may not sound very obvious sometimes.

The atmosphere created in the B section is different from that of the A sections. The B section's beginning right hand melody and the A sections' principal melody both involve the E natural minor scale, but the characters of the melodies are different. Whereas the A section's principal melody projects the love and the serene sadness shared by the poem's lovers, the B section's melody reveals a troubling conflict that tears the lovers apart. The B section's agitated and unsettling characters build up to an effective climax.

The harmonic framework in the fifteenth *Poems for Piano* is partly atonal and partly tonal, thus possibly expressing the "half sunk, and half to brighten." As mentioned before, the central tone around E anchors the piece from the beginning to the end. Different scales are built on E, which create a sense that is somewhat traditionally tonal. However, the traditional tonality strays away in the A sections' secondary melodies and in the B section's vertical intervals. The harmony does not become absolute atonality, either. In his book *Twentieth-Century Harmony*, Persichetti writes:

> Tonality does not exist as an absolute . . . Music may hold its tonality loosely, elements of atonality being inherent from the onset. There are many degrees of key-center gravity or of keylessness in the general area of tonality or atonality. At one extreme of the concept of key is tonality, the other extreme is atonality, and the point at which one ends and the other begins is indefinite.[2]

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[2]Ibid., 248, 251.

Persichetti also seems to employ a peculiar use of the octave intervals throughout the piece (mostly in the two A sections). Some of them are placed in extremely high register with their vertical intervals spaced widely up to five octaves apart. This creates a fragile and sad mood, particularly by the absence of notes between the vertically placed octaves. As such, it seems to hint at the poetic story, as will be discussed presently. Those octaves appear in various places as shown in Table 7-1.

Table 7-1. The appearances of the peculiar use of the octave intervals

note	measure and beat		number of octaves apart
F#	m. 2	4	1
G	m. 3	2	2
Cs	m. 4	2 and 4	2
F	m. 4	last note beat	3
B	m. 9	1st beat's 16th note	3
F#	m. 11	4	2
G	m. 12	2nd beat's 16th note	3
C	m. 13	2	3
E	m. 14	1st beat's 16th note	4
E	m. 15	1	5
Cs	m. 28	2 and 4	1
F	m. 28	last note beat	2
B	m. 33	1st beat's 16th note	2

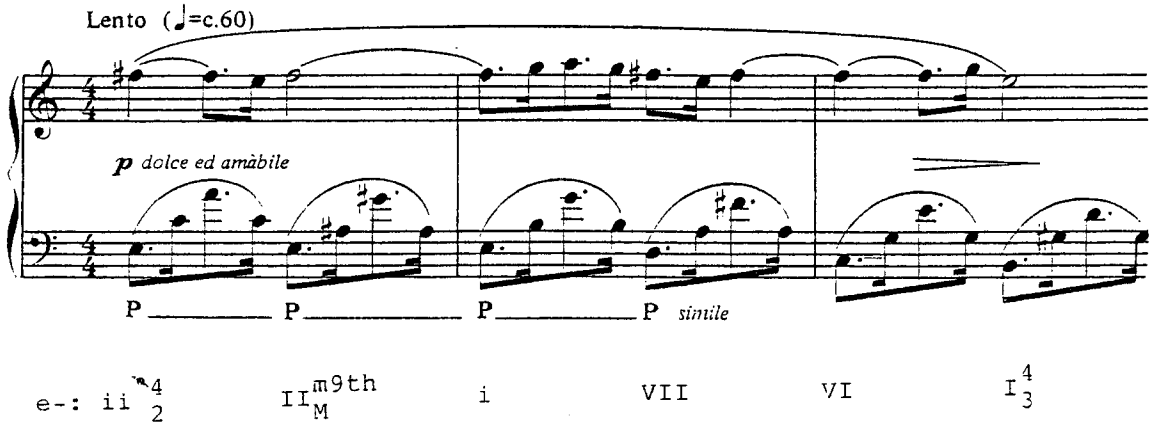
note	measure and beat		number of octaves apart
F#	m. 35	4	1
G	m. 36	2nd beat's 16th note	2
Cs	m. 37	2 and 4	2
E-flats	m. 38	1st and 2nd beats' 16th notes	3

The harmonic progression is the same for the first (mm. 1-3), second (mm. 10-12), and fourth (mm. 34-36) statements of the principal melody in the A sections. The third (mm. 26-27) statement of that melody is slightly different; the first measure is missing, but the two measures do contain the same harmonic progression as the rest of the A sections' principal melodies' last two measures. The traditional tonality is "almost" established by the first four notes of the E minor scale in the right hand melody of mm. 1-3. The harmonic progression for these three measures is also geared toward traditional tonality, although not completely (see example 7-1), since the essential dominant to tonic relationship is missing. The harmonic rhythm moves in half-note value for all three measures. If Persichetti followed the strict rules of traditional tonality, the last chord would be an E minor triad, or a picardy E major triad; it seems however, that Persichetti took the traditional picardy E major triad and added a seventh to it. His little twist to the seemingly traditional tonal harmony, adds a specific flavor to the music. In the foreward to his text, he writes:

> Following a predetermined path of strict axiom is avoided, for harmonic creativity depends upon the

relation of chord to chord in a particular context.[3]

Example 7-1. Persichetti, "And hung like those top jewels of the night," mm. 1-3



Persichetti's musical "metaphor" seems to be hiding in the bass of measures two and three. If his exquisitely haunting melody reflects the story of the poem's longing for lost love, the horizontal interval of the perfect fifths in the accompaniment could represent the infinite setting of the poem. In his book, Persichetti quotes the fifth as "Emotionally immense, vague, and distant, or bare and dominating."[4] In the poem, there are several settings, such as "'heaven's descent, the sky, heaven's seat, Hesperus, whole planets, top jewels of the night, star, space, skies deep--descended." All of the

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[3]Ibid., 11.

[4]Ibid., 201.

above define immensity and distance. Musically, Persichetti inserts three perfect fifths--E to B, D to A, C to G--all in upward motion: in the first and third beats of measure two, and in the first beat of measure three. He thus represents the vastness and the far distances mentioned in the poem. The exact duplicates in the bass of measures eleven to twelve, and in measures thirty-five to thirty-six produce the same profound effect.

The tonality seems to weaken in the secondary melodies. There is no uniting common key center for the first and third presentations (mm. 4-9, mm. 28-33). Each broken chord of the half-note harmonic rhythm still contains a tonal triad, a seventh or a ninth chord, but they are not related to each other in a tonal style. However, toward the end of the secondary melody's first statement, the repeated note B falls on a long note value, in measures eight and nine. Thus, the insistent note B as the dominant of the following E minor recurring principal melody, prepares its return aurally, if not harmonically.

The second statement of the secondary melody (mm. 13-15) presents different harmonic and melodic passages, although it starts out exactly the same as the other statements of the melody. The fascinating aspect about this statement is that while the harmony wanders without a uniting key center, the right hand melody itself briefly passes through the Phrygian mode (right hand only in mm. 14-15's first beat), starting on E as a tonic. The combination of tonal and atonal qualities is simultaneously presented from mm. 13-15. Perhaps Persichetti is emphasizing the poem's beloved one as "half sunk, and half to brighten."

The middle B section is much more agitated and produces a more unsettling

atmosphere than the A sections; this is due to a faster tempo indication, a faster harmonic rhythm and the use of many tritones. The right hand melody (mm. 16-18) establishes an E natural minor scale, with all the notes of the scale. However, the left hand passage is not in E minor. It does not form a key center of its own either; therefore, the two melodies cannot be identified as bitonal. But, the last chord (a, b, g) and its prior three notes (e, d#, f#) are from the E harmonic minor scale, thus sharing and strengthening the key center of the right hand melody. The restless faster harmonic rhythm with its unsettling harmonies seem to express the conflict that eventually "intervenes between the two fast hearts," which leads to the explosive climax in measures twenty-four to twenty six.

As quoted before, Persichetti refers to perfect fifths as " . . . immense, vague, and distant, or bare and dominating."[5] Fifths are heard in many places in the B section and in the A sections. In the B section, the perfect fifths appear in several places as shown in Table 7-2. Also, the perfect fifth's inversion perfect fourth is pervasive throughout the piece, as shown in Table 7-3.

Table 7-2. The appearances of the perfect fifths in the B section

notes	measure and beat		vertical / horizontal
A - E	m. 16	2	vertical
A# - E#	m. 17	2	horizontal (l. h.)

[5]Ibid., 201.

notes	measure and beat		vertical / horizontal
A - E	m. 18	2	vertical
G - D	m. 19	1	horizontal (r. h.)
E - B and G - D	m. 19	3	vertical
B - F#	m. 20	1	vertical (r. h.)
C - G and E-flat - B-flat	m. 20	2	vertical
A - E	m. 21	last beat	vertical
E-flats - B-flats	m. 23	1	vertical
B-flat - F	m. 23	1st beat's 3rd 8th note	vertical (l. h.)
C# - G#	m. 23	4	vertical (l. h.)
As - Es	m. 24	1 and 2	vertical (l. h.)
G#s - D#s	m. 24	3 and 4	vertical (l. h.)
F# - C#	m. 24	2nd to 3rd beat	horizontal (r. h.)

Table 7-3. The appearances of the perfect fifth's inversion perfect fourth

notes	measure	beat	vertical / horizontal
B - E	m. 3	3	vertical
B-flat - E-flat and A - D	mm. 5 and 29	2 and 4	vertical
E - A - E	mm. 5 and 29	3rd to 4th beat	horizontal (l. h.)
C - F	mm. 8 and 32	1	vertical
B - E	mm. 9 and 33	4	horizontal (r. h.)

notes	measure	beat	vertical / horizontal
B - E	mm. 12 and 36	3	vertical
E - A - E	m. 14	1st to 2nd beat	horizontal (l. h.)
E - A	m. 15	1	horizontal (l. h.)
A - D and B - E	m. 16	2 and 3	vertical
C# - F# and E - A	m. 17	1 and 3	vertical
F#s - Bs	m. 25	1	vertical
E - A	m. 26	1	vertical
B - E	m. 27	3	vertical
A - D	m. 41	arpeggio	horizontal

If there is a common musical device that reflects the immense settings of the poem, it could possibly be the perfect fifth and its inversion perfect fourth. They also seem to represent the far distance that "mournfully" separates the "two fast hearts." The "vast distance" is defined as "A mournful gold *too high* for love to win."

Another musical device that contributes to the similar poetic sentiments is the previously mentioned octaves, peculiarly appearing throughout the piece. They often resonate quite vulnerably due to their widely spaced vertical intervals in quite high register, with no other notes between them. The octave's two same notes feel like the poem's couple as one, but unfairly torn apart so much, as they could only long for each other.

Persichetti's remarkable use of musical devices, of melodic placement in the

high register, performance indications, different harmonies and the exquisite melodies, all describe his interpretations of love, the settings and the story of the poem. I am deeply moved by Persichetti's artistic ability to give musical expression to this poetic creation.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This exploratory study of the *Poems for Piano* is intended to shed light on and enhance one's appreciation of the brilliance of Persichetti's work. This interpretative analyses of his pieces display Persichetti's musical metaphors and devices which splendidly convey the full poetic essence of the poetry that inspired his piano compositions. Through the examinations illustrated in each chapter, the study finds that Persichetti far exceeds mere imitations and has an uncanny ability to capture the very core and spirit of the poetic works. Through effective programmatic skills, Persichetti creatively imparts the feel of the poems, their characters, occurrences, settings, emotions, and images. Upon close and thorough analyses, and through the playing of Persichetti's compositions, a wealth of rich, luminous musical depictions reveal themselves.

The works musically present such intriguing poetic evocations; the blending of "soft" and "dark" melodies, the musical depiction of the endless night sky above the "fountains," the color of the "collied night," diverse, musical reflections of the night sky and the earth, the "wind about the garden pool," and an amusing musical jest of the goldfish, stars and nenuphars merrily swimming together (Chapter 2).

In *Gather for Festival Bright Weed and Purple Shell*, the associated poem's carefree feeling, joyful excitement and jubilant celebration ebulliently burst forth; the abundant variety of the dazzling colors of nature, including the variegated hues of the roses, the evocative phrase, a "'pattern' as one might make," footprints in the sand, the weaving of "the citron flower," and a wisp of a fond memory are also delightfully revealed (Chapter 3).

The odd humor of *The Mock Self* in *Whose Thin Fraud I Wink at Privily* conveys the truest self of the depicted protagonist and his mischievous multiple personalities, including a shadowy "phantasm," the "thin fraud," a "gibbering mime," and a "light impostor." Furthermore, the poem and the musical composition present such wonderful images as the "privily" winks, the poetic "light" and "thin" subjects, and one sees the alarming awakening of the truest self, and the banishment of the resistant multiple personalities (Chapter 4).

In *And Warm Winds Spilled Fragrance into Her Solitudes*, the study finds sweet, descending "silver music." The musical piece also poetically reveals the "lush" and strangely enticing atmosphere, the beloved's "solitude" in the echoing "wide halls" of her home, and the admirer's shell-like solitude. Moreover, the piece envisions an imaginary conversation, the sad "change," a bitter loneliness, the painful longing for the vanished beloved, a hopeless desolation, and the wistful reminiscence of the evanescent beloved and her traceless disappearance (Chapter 5).

In *Sleep, Weary Mind; Dream, Heart's Desire,* the Millay poem's subjects of "sleep," and various kinds of "dreams," are found, including an agonizing dream, and, perhaps, metaphorically, recurring distorted dream sequences. The works also show struggle, anger and suffering. Furthermore, the musical piece conveys a sense of peace and tranquility, and then Persichetti brilliantly dismembers and disrupts that sense. One is presented with an escalating nightmare, and the long awaited, comforting relief of being able to finally "dream, what heart's desire" (Chapter 6).

In *And Hung Like those Top Jewels of the Night*, the study discovers the two "fast hearts," lovingly longing for one another. There is a forlorn, fragile, poetic

atmosphere. Furthermore, there are portrayals of the immense and lofty setting of the sky, heaven and stars, the "nether space" and the "blue unending night." One sees the beloved as "half sunk and half to brighten . . . ," and the beloved ". . . lapt in singling light." The poignant revelation of the bright, sparkling "top jewels of the night," a treasured time of love, the boundless distance that separates the lovers, and the suggested heart wrenching, destined dissidence are also found.

The *Poems for Piano* persuasively and with great warmth and conviviality usher one into a world of poetic enchantment. These pieces transcendentally entice one into a sublime journey into distinct poetic realms. One has a sense of magically losing oneself into their worlds, lingering, living, and freely breathing among them, a sense that is attained through the pieces' exquisite programmatic potency and richness.

Program music, however, does have a negative aspect to it, which is that it might limit the performers' and the music's creative possibilities and qualities, when it is solely dependent upon the attached program. Persichetti warned against this limiting aspect of program music, when he commented that ". . . if a [programmatic] piece is written and uses a program as a crutch, it's likely not to be a good piece."[1] As mentioned previously, Debussy displayed an awareness, and a unique solution to this problem. He ingeniously resolved the issue in his piano Preludes by purposely writing the programmatic titles at the end of each piece, in order to give the performers some

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[1]James Litton, "Vincent Persichetti, an interview," *Journal of Church Music* vol. 13, no. 5 (May 1971), 2-4.

creative freedom away from exclusively depending on the programmatic associations.[2] This kind of unrestrained application and solution to the program music's limiting dimension should be employed more frequently. This could lead to performances that are more creative and provide a better quality of music, allowing performers to soar imaginatively, while their efforts are being heightened and enhanced by the pieces' programmatic associations.

As a piano teacher, I have witnessed how programmatic music can be a strong spark of inspiration for students. Some uninterested students can become suddenly engaged when asked to write a story in their minds before and during their playing, even for non-programmatic pieces. After all, such tactics are already familiar with some of Beethoven's non-programmatic sonatas (Op. 27, No. 2 "*Moonlight*" and Op. 57 "*Appassionata*"). One of my student, for example, used this technique for Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 21 in C major and gave the work a whole new character. It was as if the canvas was very empty at first, but then became packed full of beautiful images and expression.

I believe that this approach should be used more often. In writing this dissertation, I hope to have increased awareness of programmatic elements and possibilities, in addition to giving greater exposure to some of the most interesting programmatic piano music of the twentieth century.

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[2]Kirby, "The Twentieth Century to Midcentury: France and Germany," 282., and Gillespie, "Debussy and Ravel," 335-36.

APPENDIX

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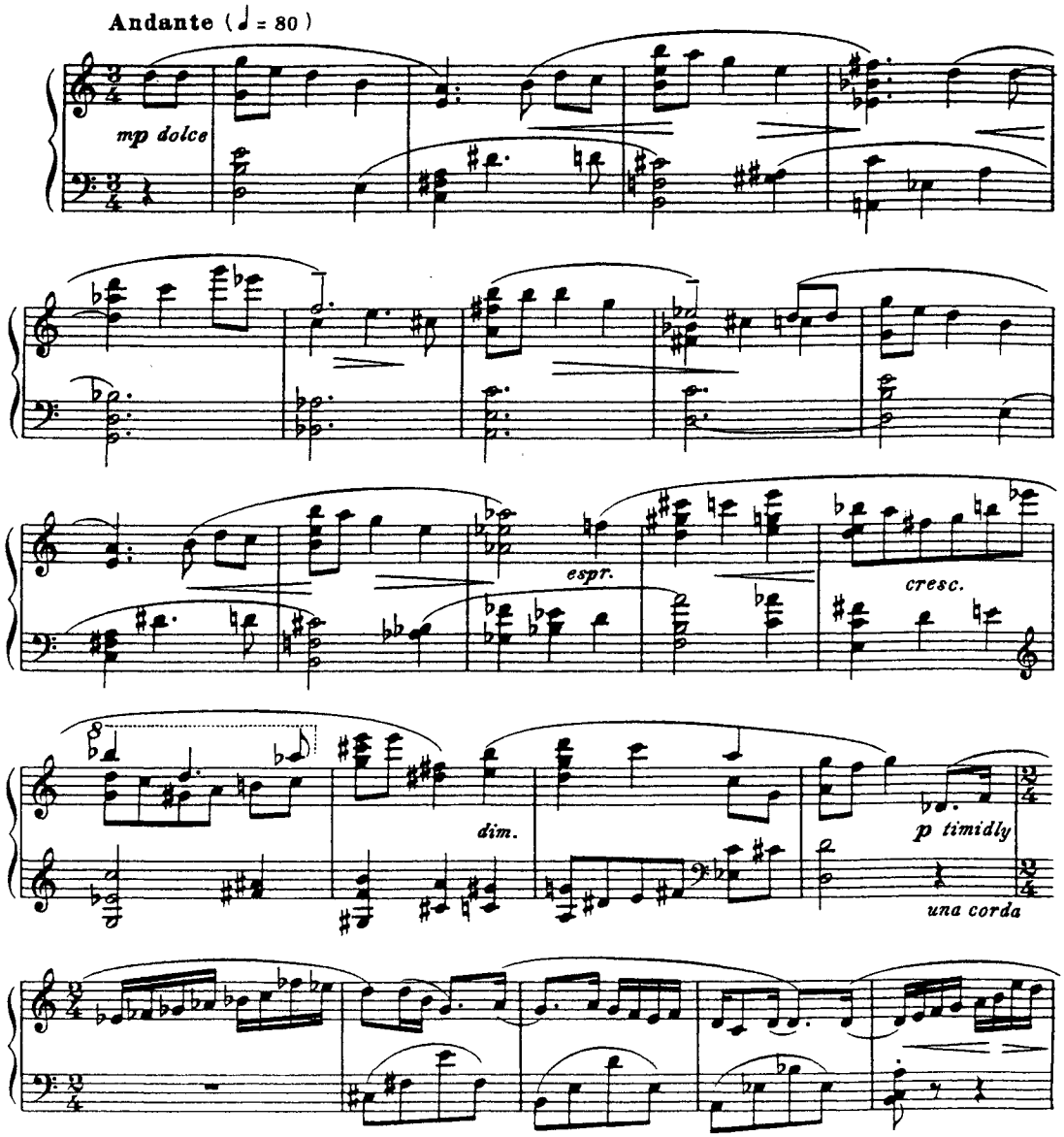
James Elroy Flecker 2

Soft is the collied night

VINCENT PERSICHETTI



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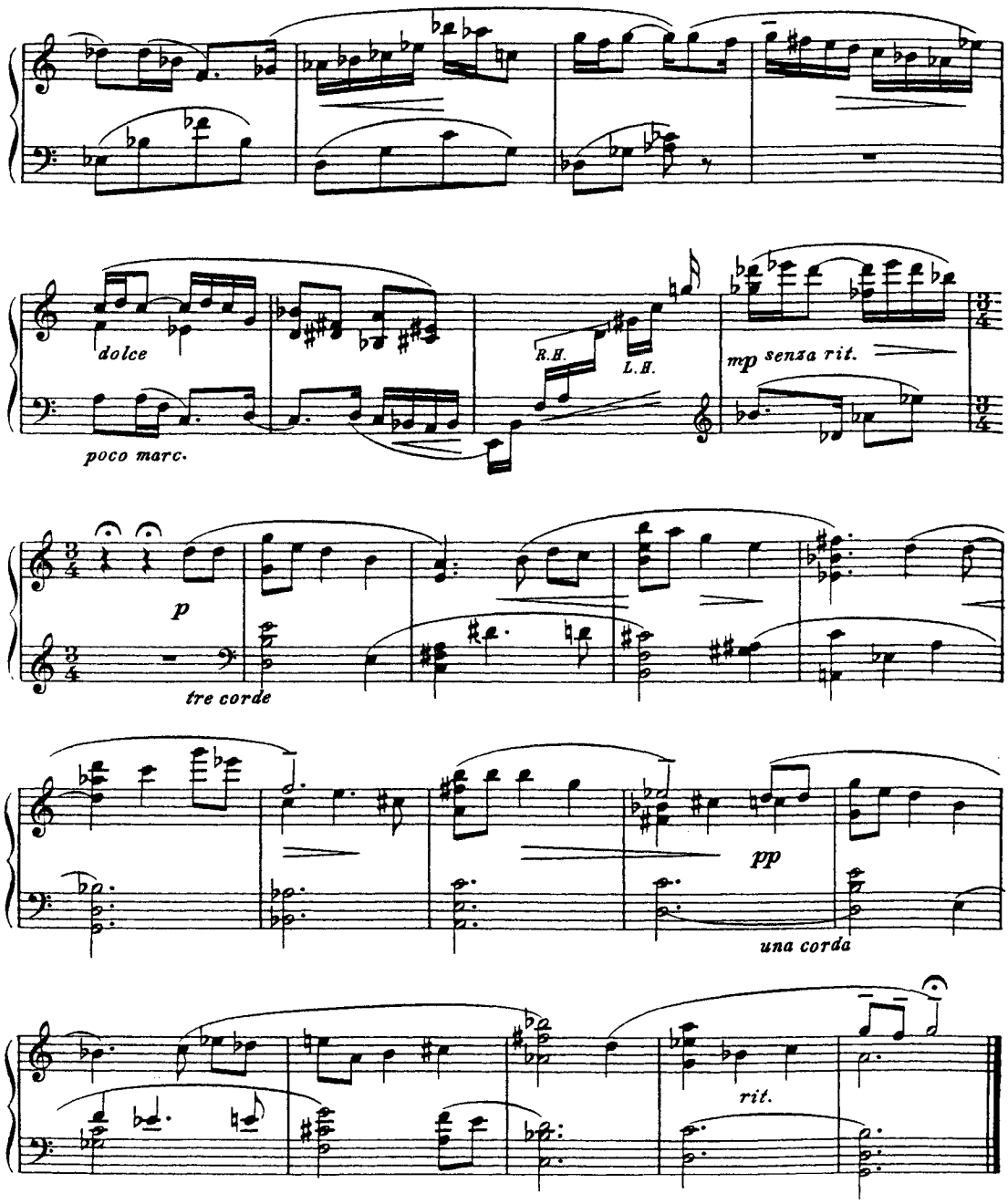
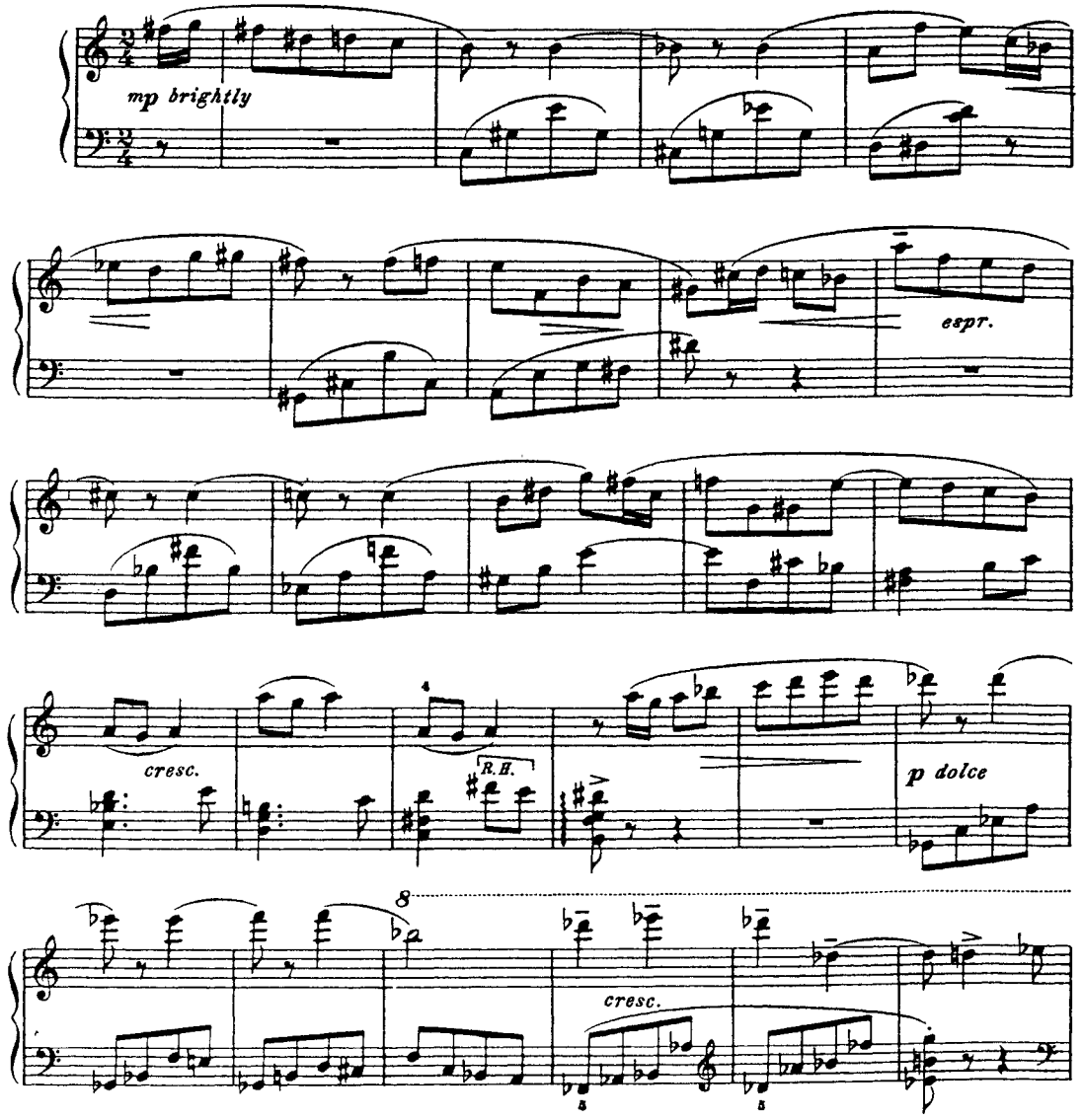


H. D. 3

Gather for festival bright weed and purple shell

Allegretto(♩ = 144)

VINCENT PERSICHETTI



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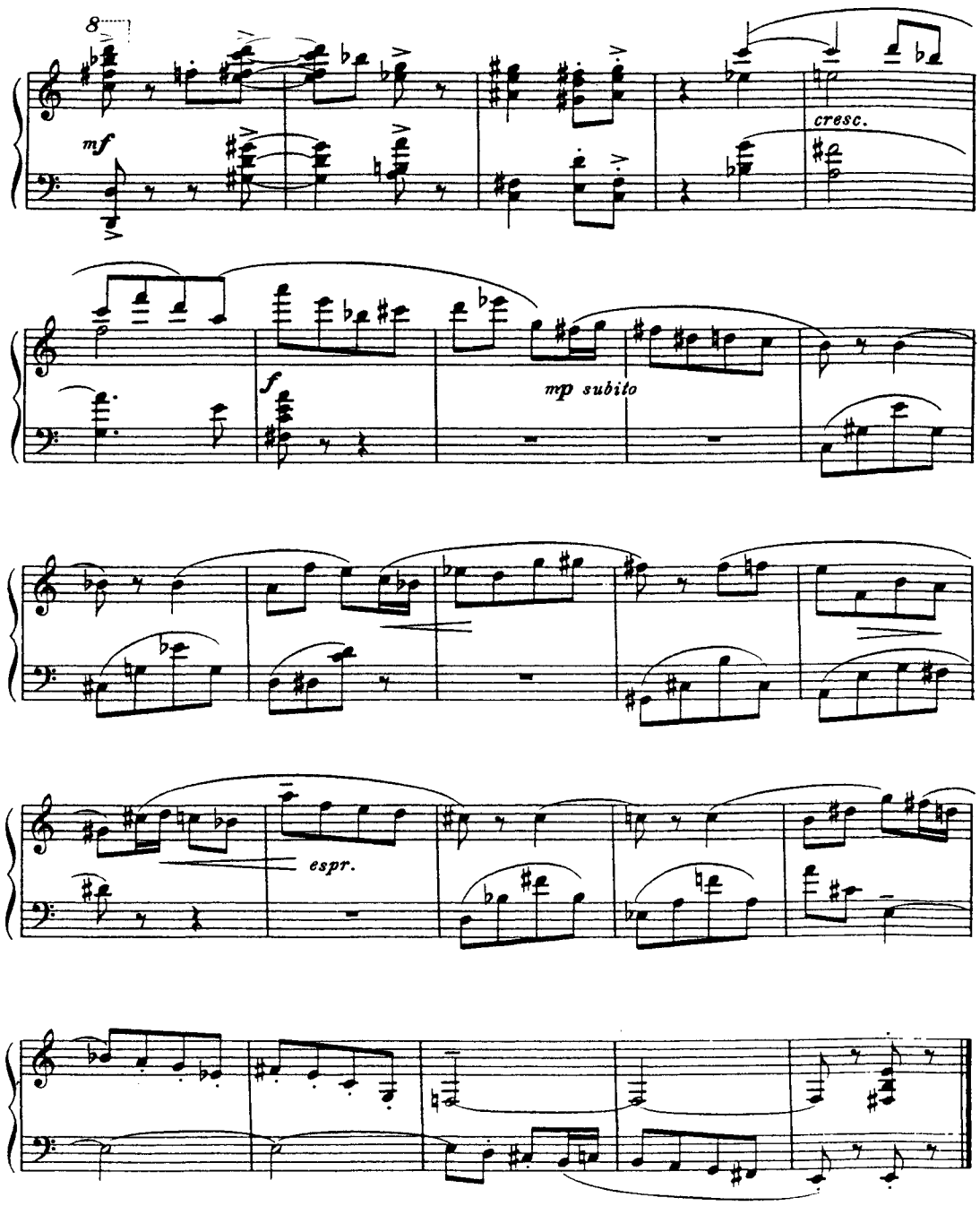
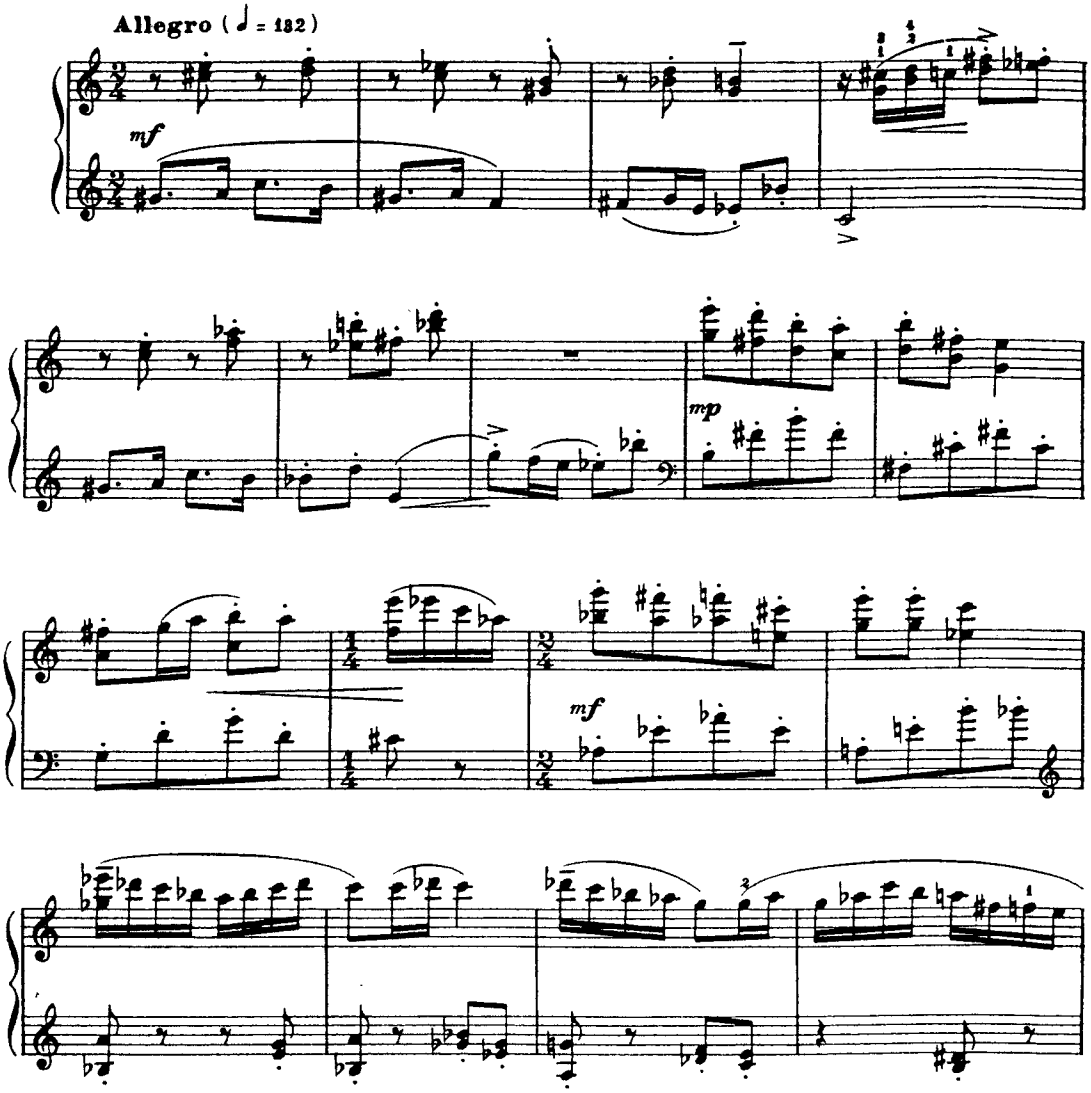


William Watson **6**

Whose thin fraud I wink at privily

VINCENT PERSICHETTI



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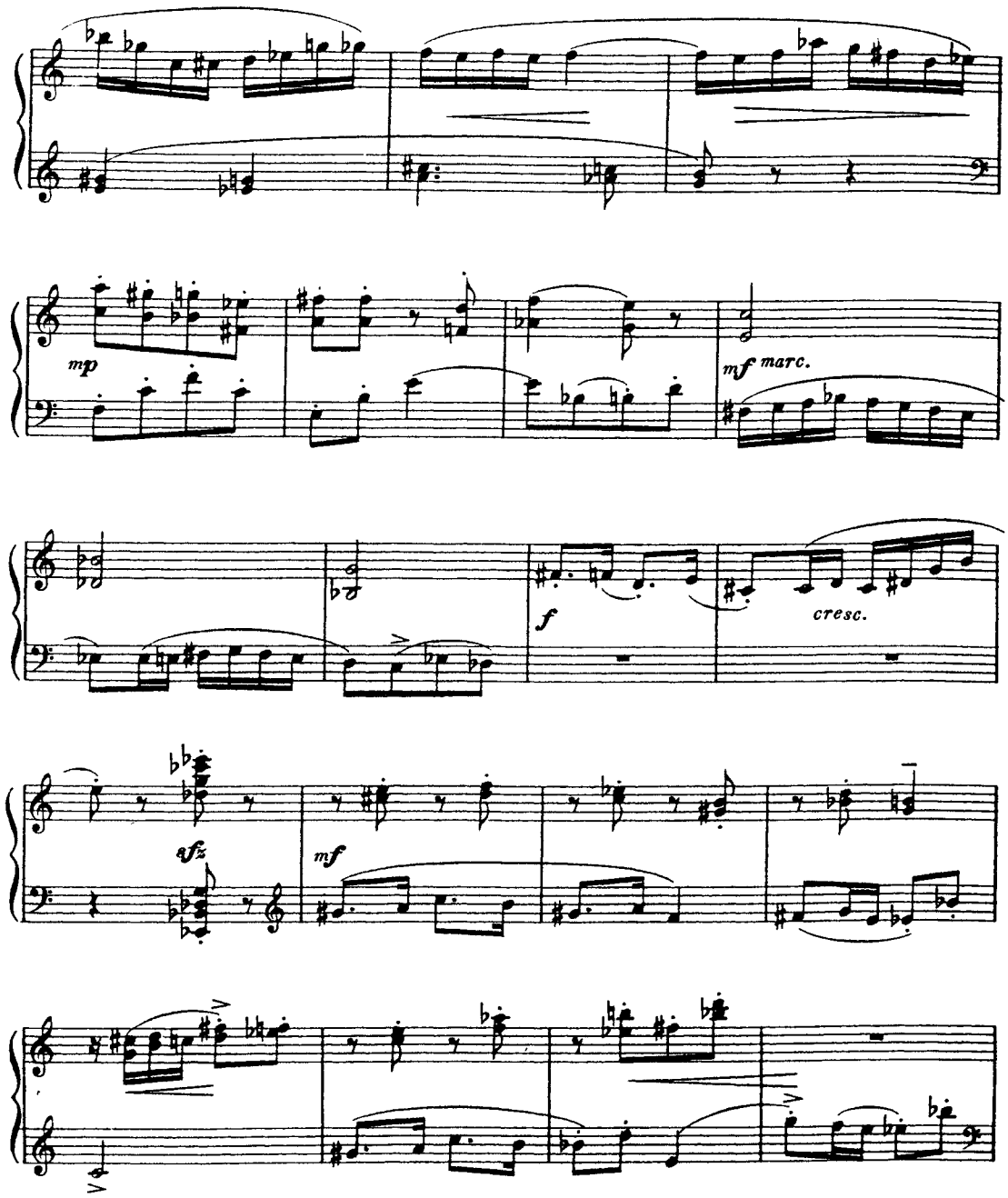
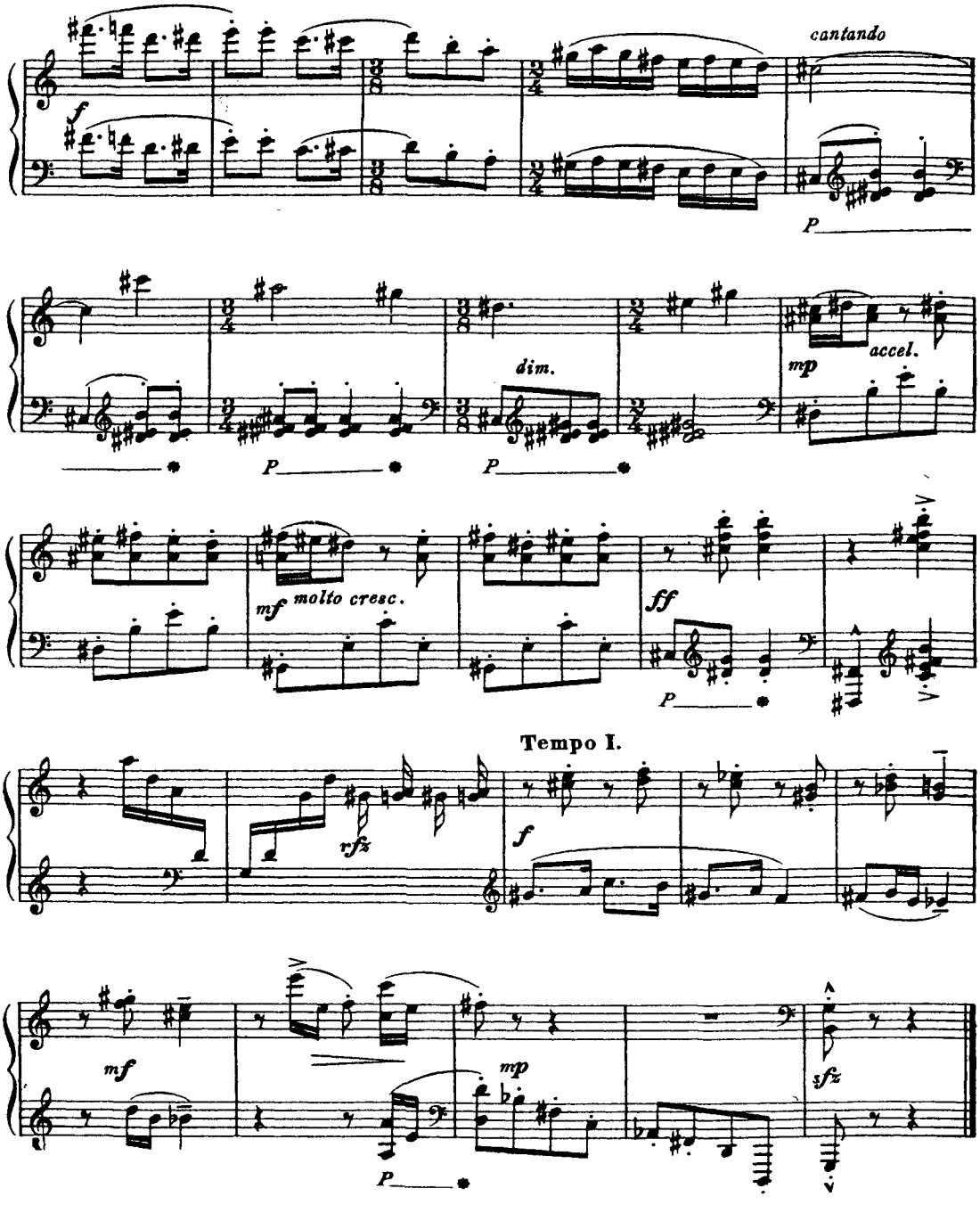


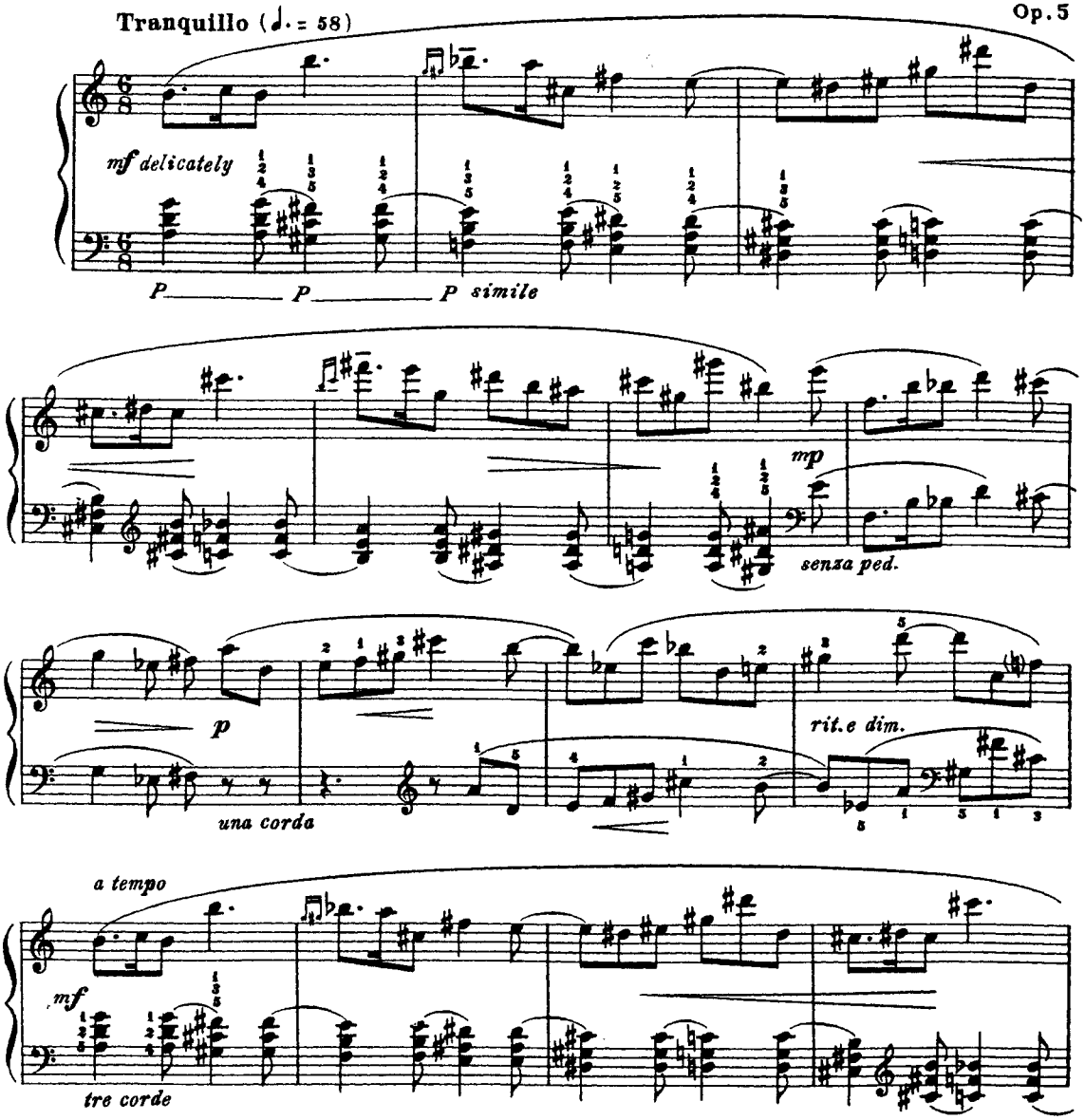


Edmond Kowalewski 7

And warm winds spilled fragrance into her solitudes

VINCENT PERSICHETTI

Op. 5



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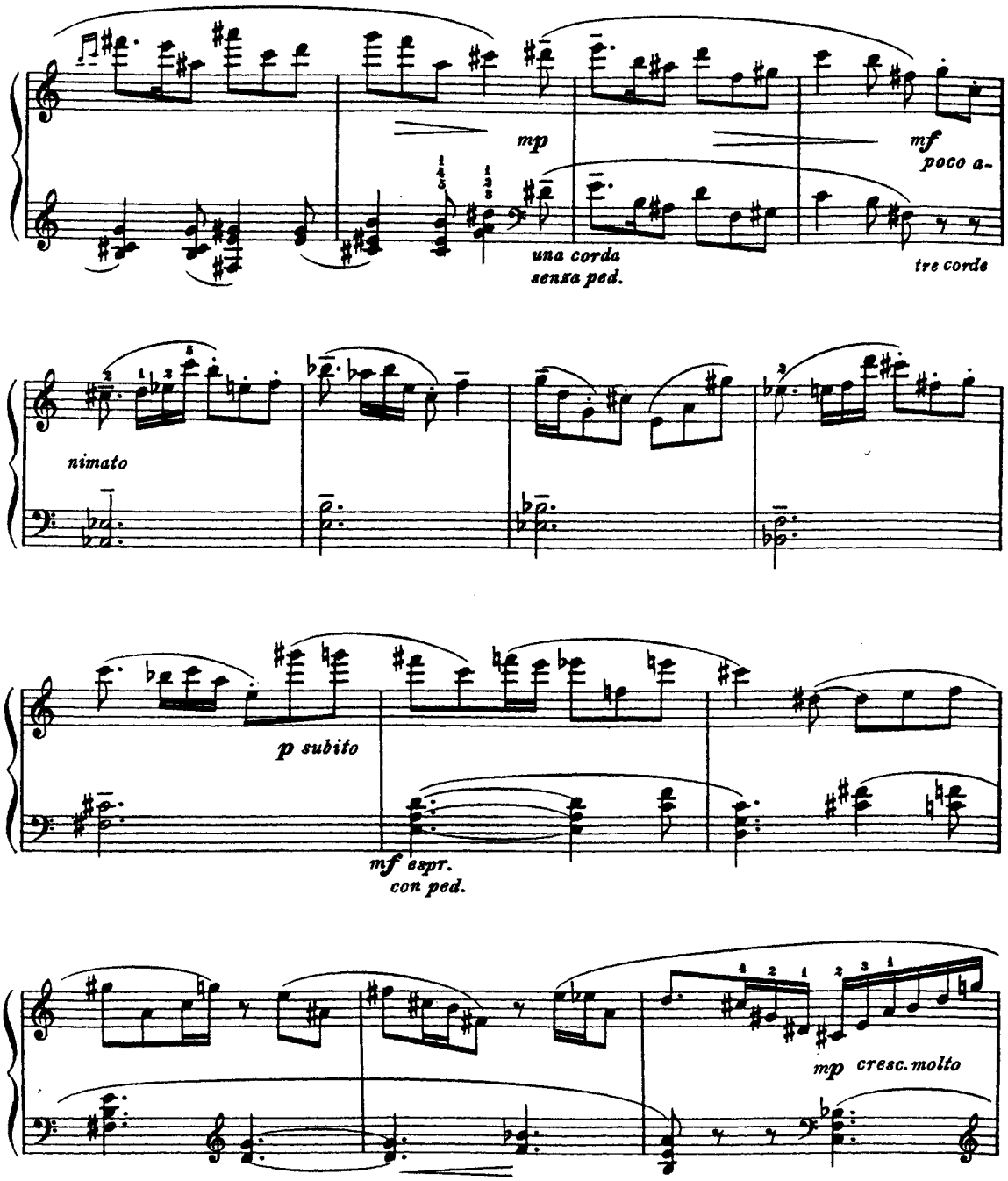
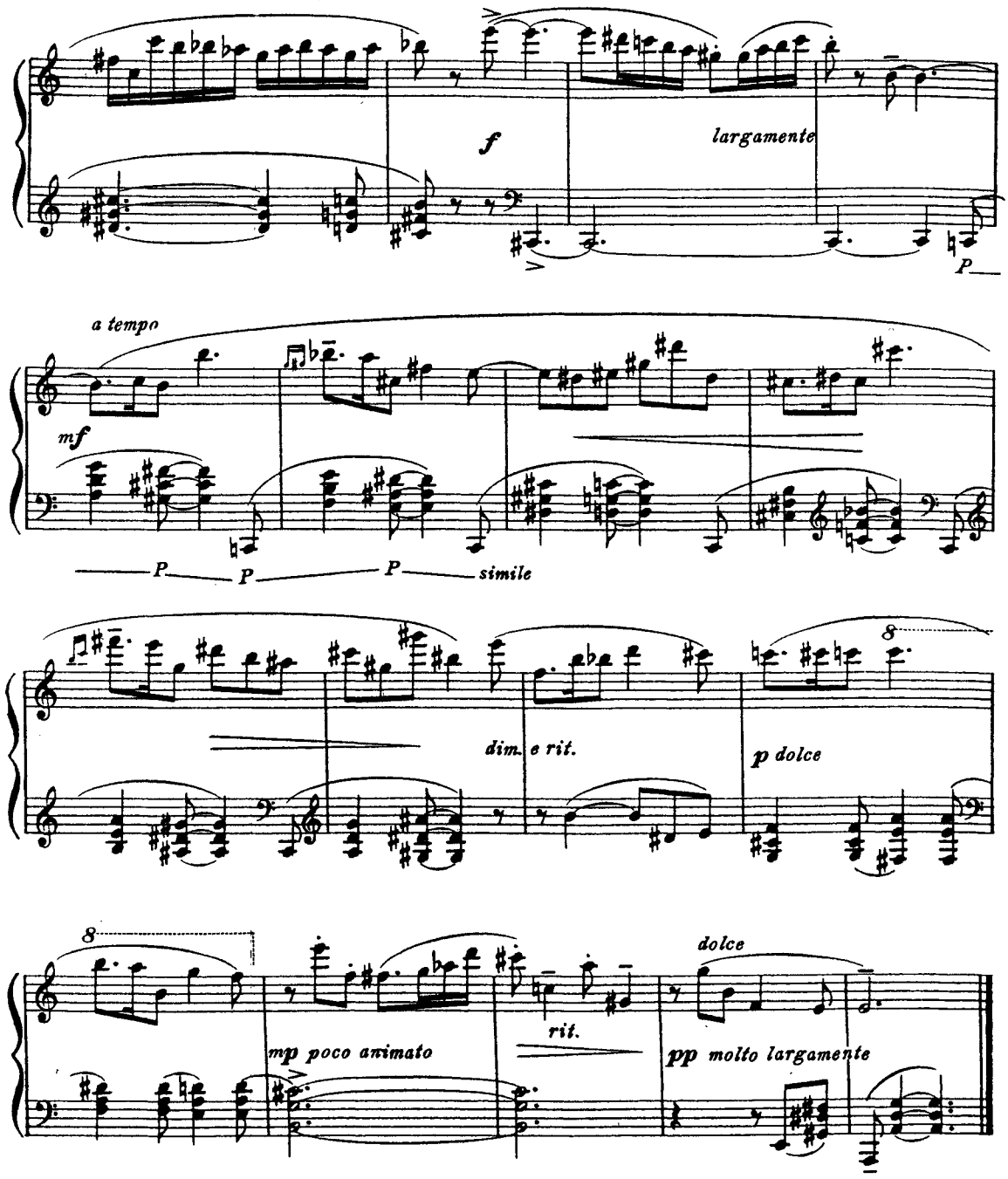
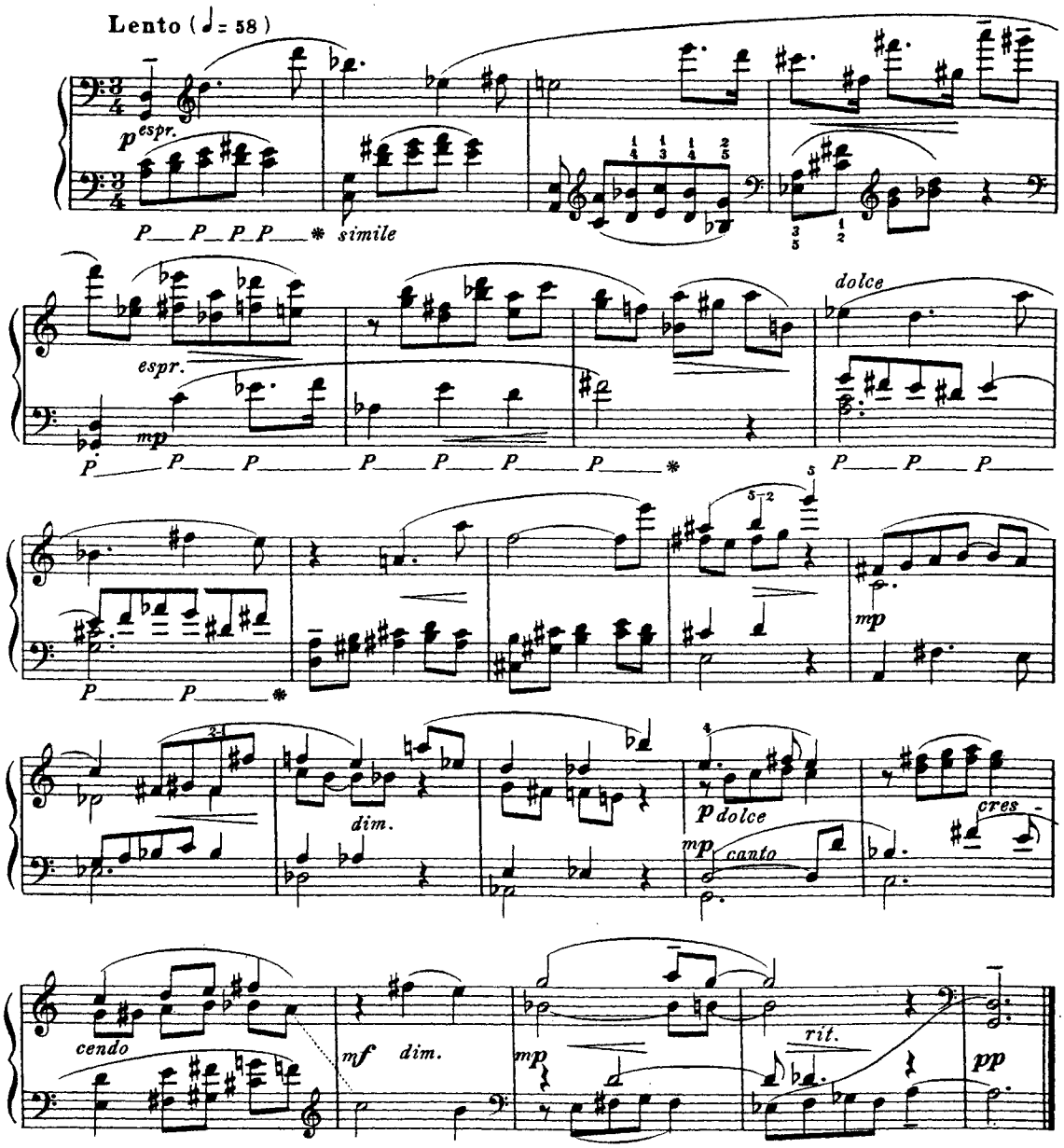




Edna St. Vincent Millay **9**

Sleep, weary mind; dream, heart's desire

VINCENT PERSICHETTI



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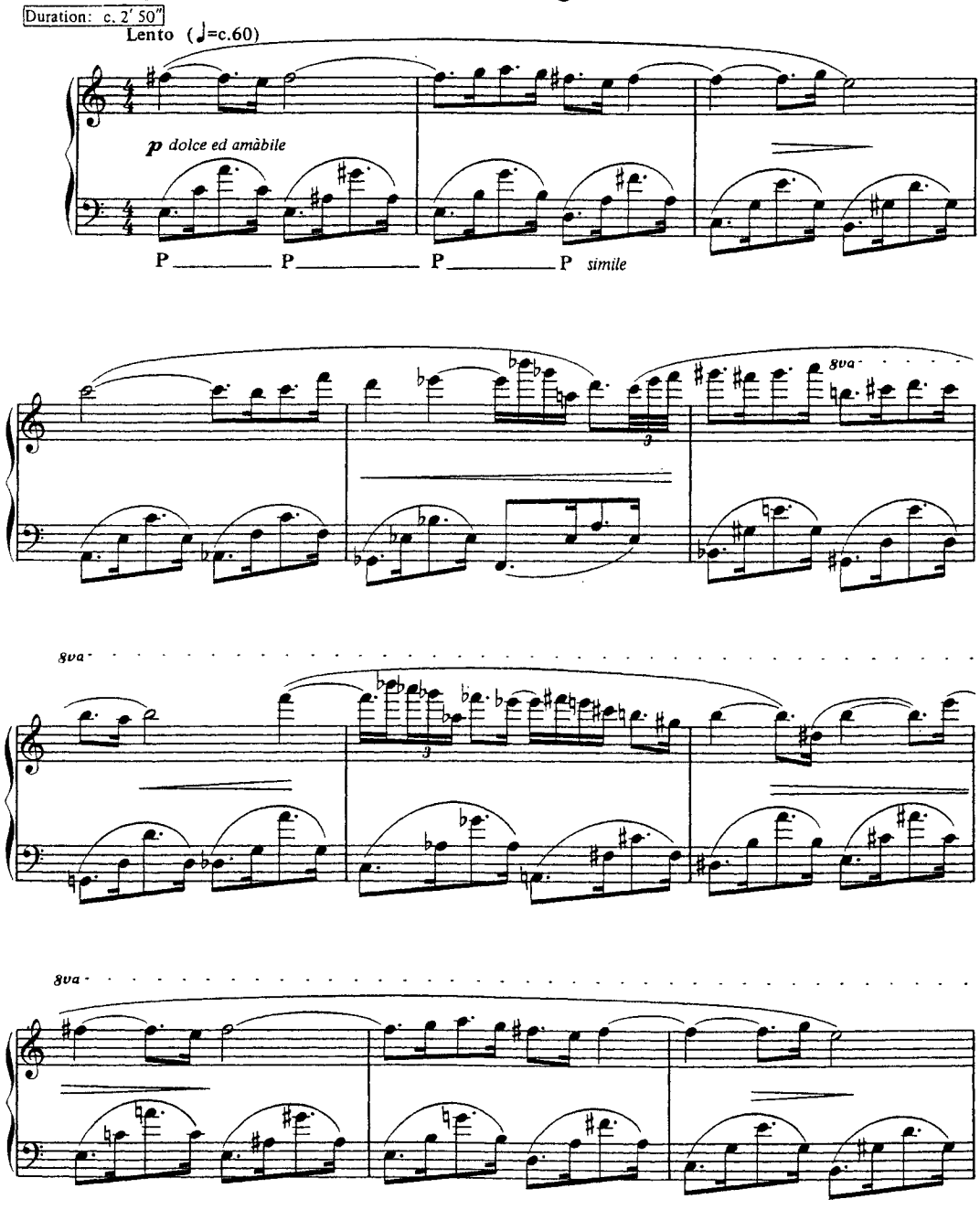
Léonie Adams 15

And hung like those top jewels of the night

Duration: c. 2' 50"



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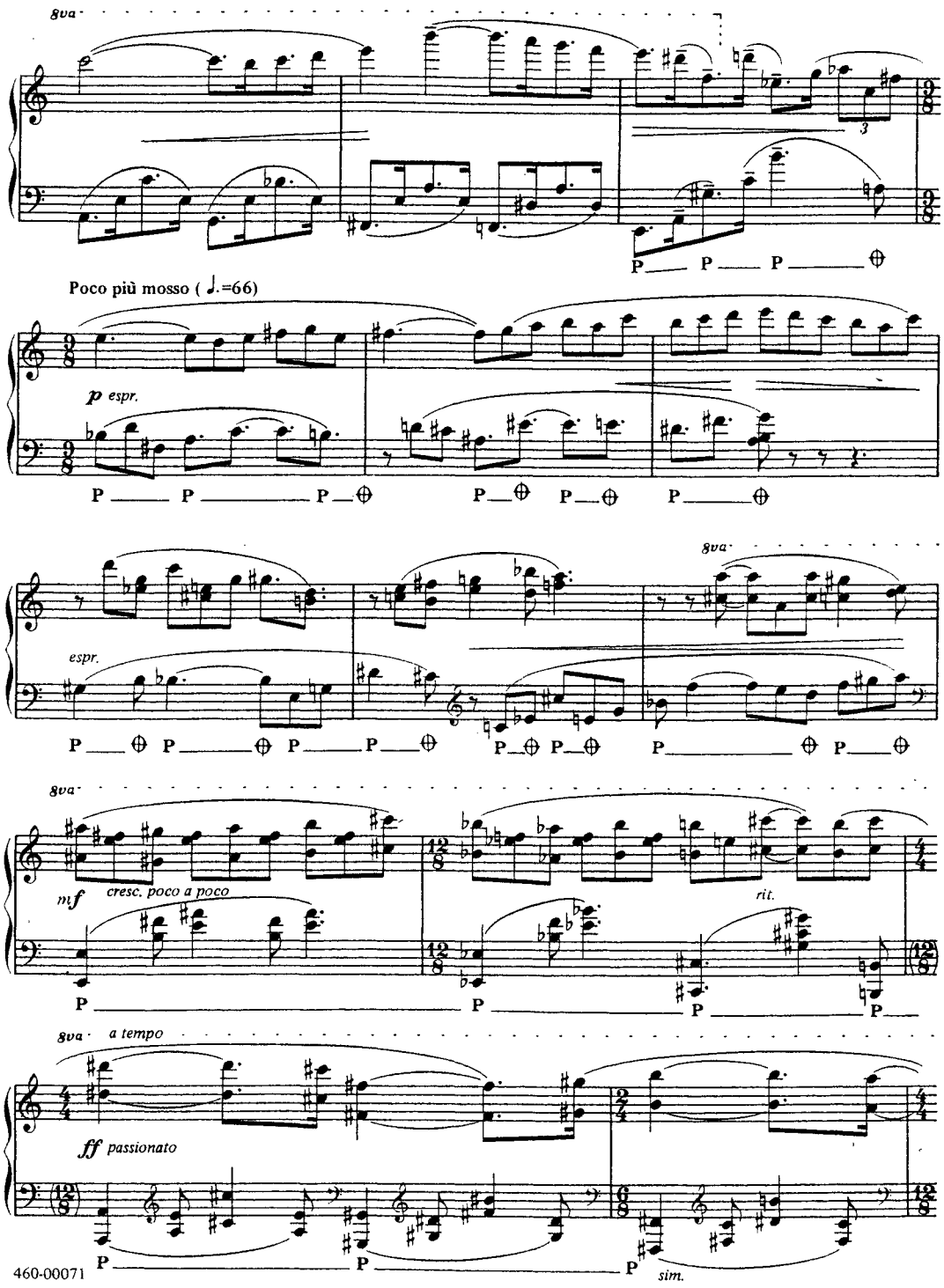

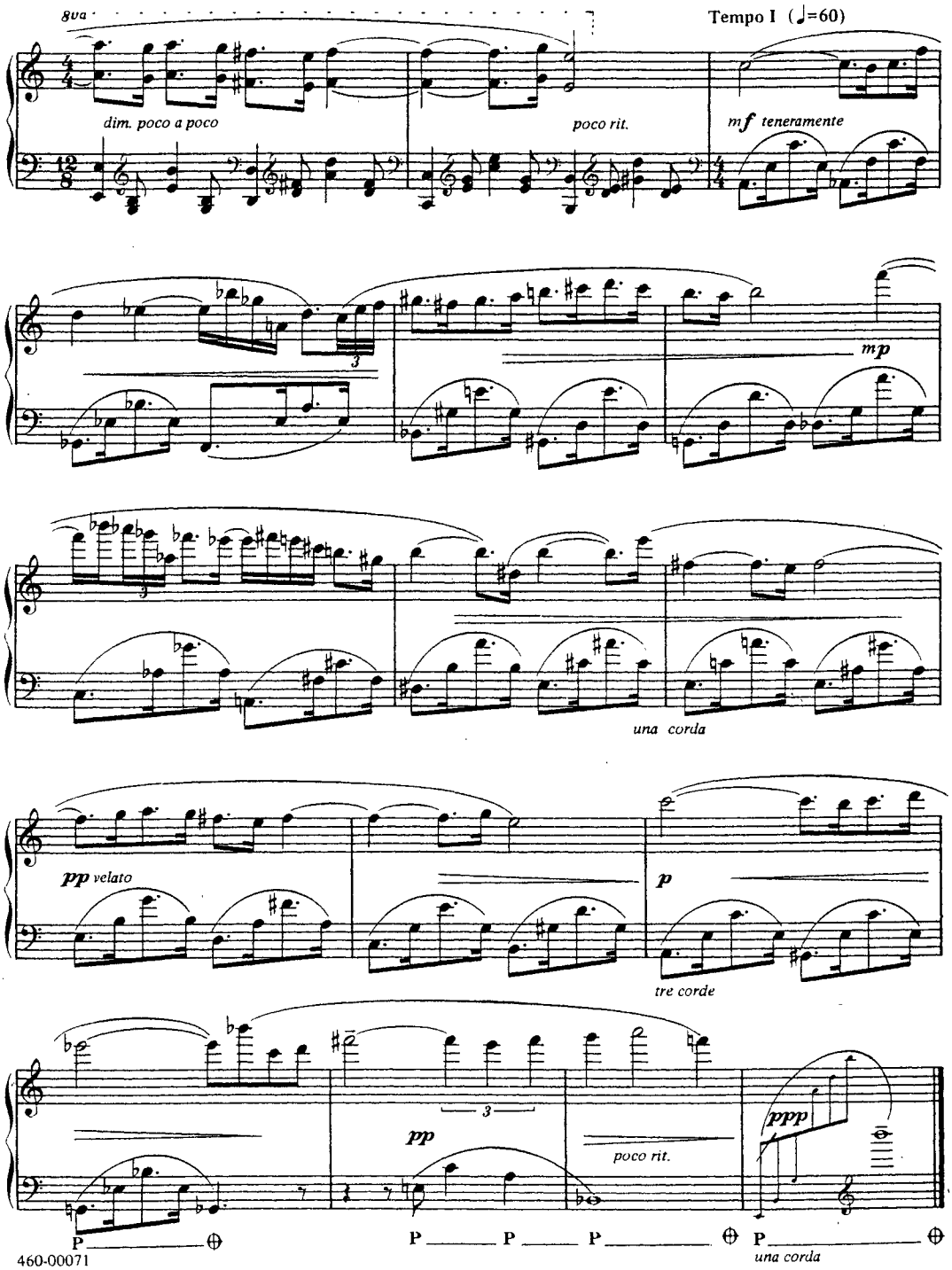

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