Stories in Song

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STORIES IN SONG

By: Lauren N. Kowal
Preface

I would first like to acknowledge that while this paper and the recital program that accompanies it cover a broad spectrum of composition styles, eras in music history, and musical styles, it does not cover a diverse group of composers. While many of them were influential in bringing African American musical styles to the forefront of the classical scene, such as Vaughn-Williams and Gershwin, they are all white male composers. It was not my intent to exclude female composers, or composers of color in this paper or program. There is always more work to be done to bring marginalized composers to the forefront of the classical music scene and have plans in my future to commission works by composers in these categories that will available and accessible to music students across several ages and years of study to perform. In my writing and performing of this program, I also intend to bring more notice to the underrepresented characters of these pieces, where, and if possible. It is important to me that I use the many privileges I have been given in my own life to aid those who may not have been granted those privileges or opportunities in theirs. I hope to make all feel as if they are represented in my writing and performance so that they feel they can achieve their own goals, whether musically or in other forms of art, such as writing.

Secondly, I would like to acknowledge that these pieces that I have selected for the recital are not the only works written for featured oboe and English horn that tell a story. Many composers throughout time have put their own stories into their music for these instruments. However, the ones I have chosen to highlight pinpoint certain written stories in a literary context. Their physical copies can be found in written or visual form and have thus made it better to analyze for the purpose of this paper. Many programmatic works and other pieces of music written may have stories attached, but they are not stories or poetry that are recognized by literary scholars for analyzation. Stories that are not attached to written word are typically left up to the interpretation of those who study the music and are solely up to the opinions of the performer or analyst. I hope more works such as the ones I have chosen will appear in the oboe repertoire over time, but I believe the ones I have chosen are the best representation of works with a strong foot in both literary and musical fields and have been thoroughly analyzed by many scholars in the past. I have chosen to connect these with my own interpretation in how I think the story changes the performance of the work.

Lastly, I would like to thank everyone who has supported me in the creation of the idea for this concert, and those who have supported me in small or large ways in the leading up to the culmination of this project. I would like to thank my parents and grandparents, especially Marilyn Kowal and Donald Rosecrans who have passed since I began my time at WMU, for their continued support of not only me, but the arts. Your generosity and support, even through times you didn’t understand what I was so excited about, has brought me to where I am now, and where I hope to go from here. To my teachers, both past and present, including Catie Waligora, Ian McEwan, Dr. Matthew Daniels, Dr. Alex Hayashi, Liz Spector-Callahan, Dr. Wendy Rose, Dr. Scott Boerma, and Brad Smith: although I only got to take a few wisdoms from each of you in our short times together, you each inspired me in your own way to continue my music path, showing me the possibilities for my future and what being a musician looks like from so many perspectives. I can’t thank you enough for all that you’ve done, and all that you’ve inspired in just one student. Thank you. And finally, to all who have supported my growth in any way, whether in my education or in life, thank you. It is all these people who have shaped my beliefs and my growth, and I can’t even begin to thank you enough for all you’ve done, no matter how small you may think it is. Thank you.

~Lauren N. Kowal
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Abstract

Accompanying her senior recital performance, *Stories in Song*, Kowal writes a form of extended program notes and analysis in which she relates each piece of music to their original storytelling form. She compares the intention of the composer in their retelling of these famous stories, or how the stories were adapted to music, and to how best portray the stories in their performance.

Introduction

“Where words fail, music speaks.”

-Hans Christian Anderson

Music is relatable, sometimes more than the written word. Every culture around the world began with music in their communication and rituals. Those sounds eventually turned into languages which were orally passed down until the development of written characters. Many stories were passed down orally first and then transcribed later. However, these stories still hold great significance in cultures around the world, and connect cultures on different continents in their similarities.

Most of these stories, in their oral descent, were told through song. Some societies around the world, have placed a great separation between music and literature, but their connections can still be seen. While books and music don’t have a means of connection, poetry has been turned into song lyrics, plays have been set to music and have even created a whole new genre of theatre known as the musical. Film, the most recent and popular form of storytelling has been set to music since it’s beginning in the silent film era, where an accompanying track was played either live or by a recording alongside the film. As technology developed, music was scored for specific films rather than using pre-existing compositions.

Music has always been known as a storytelling form, which can sometimes be lost in preparation of a piece. In this paper, I intend to draw the connection between music and story. I specifically chose pieces of music which were based on specific stories, poems, myths, plays, or films. This made drawing the connections more tangible as the stories being told are written down in accessible text, or can be viewed in the case of a film. In each section, I give some brief background on the story, the author, and composer. I analyze each piece in reference to the story they are telling, citing specific versions of the text I took the stories from. I hope to achieve a better understanding of each work, and how the story can be conveyed through performance of the piece through this analyzation.
Section 1: Greek Myths and 20\textsuperscript{th} Century Composition
The Myths and Ovid

Over 1,900 years apart in their composition, Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* and Britten’s *Six Metamorphoses After Ovid, Op. 49* are two works that feel as if they are on the opposite spectrum of time. However, both compilers in nature, Britten and Ovid share their love of storytelling through non-traditional means. Their works remain the basis of teaching in their respective fields, Ovid in literature and Britten in music, and also found a spot for Britten in the oboe repertoire.

A. Ovid and *Metamorphoses*

Publius Ovidius Naso, known as Ovid, was born on March 20th in the year 43 B.C.E. into a prosperous family about 90 miles East of Rome. He and his older brother were educated in rhetoric and grammar in hopes that they would one day become lawyers or politicians. Before his brother even had the chance at a career, he passed away, leaving Ovid to live out their family’s expectations. He began studying law, and was quite good at it, but after a year, turned to writing. He authored several novels and short stories about “raunchy” topics such as sex, love, and women. For reasons unknown, even though he had highly praised him in *Metamorphoses*, Augustus sentenced Ovid into exile in Tomis where he died in 17 C.E.¹

*Metamorphoses* is considered Ovid’s greatest work, consisting of 250 stories, beginning with Chaos being transformed into the ordered universe and ending with the death of Julius Caesar. Some stories receive full narrative treatment by Ovid, while others are summarized. *Metamorphoses* was first translated into English in 1480 and has been translated several times since then. While Ovid was one of the best writers from his time and he put his own words to the previously oral tales, Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* made him considered a compiler rather than a primary source. However, some of the stories in *Metamorphoses* are the earliest appearances of the stories in recorded history. All the stories in *Metamorphoses* are connected by the theme of transformation, which becomes important in analyzing them in relation to Britten’s musical translation of six of these stories.²

B. Britten and *Six Metamorphoses After Ovid, Op. 49*

Edward Benjamin Britten, Baron Britten of Aldeburgh was born on November 22, 1913, in Lowestoft, Suffolk, England. Britten is considered the

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leading British composer of the mid-20th century, best known for his vocal works, especially operas and song cycles. He also wrote some instrumental works for strings and piano.

At the height of his career, Britten was commissioned by Rutland Boughton, a fellow composer, to write a piece for his daughter, Joy Boughton, an oboist who had studied at the Royal College of Music. In 1951, Joy premiered Britten’s work, *Six Metamorphoses After Ovid, Op. 49* at the Aldeburgh Festival, where Britten had previously premiered many of his works. The piece is composed of six miniatures written for solo oboe without accompaniment based on the stories from Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*. Benjamin Britten died on December 4th, 1976, in Aldeburgh, Suffolk.3

**C. “I. Pan who played upon the reed pipe which was Syrinx, his beloved.”**

Pan, the son of Hermes, is typically depicted with the torso of a man, but the legs and horns of a goat. The Greek god of pastures, shepherds, and flocks, Pan was known for his shepherd qualities, including being a piper, and being able to make herds, and humans, stampede. He is both chaotic and peaceful to the Greeks. While insignificant in literature, Pan frequently appeared in Greek art.4

In Ovid’s story, Pan fell in love with Syrinx, a woodland Nymph who was daughter of the river god, Ladon. Syrinx, however, was not interested in Pan, and fled from his intentions. Syrinx begged Zeus to save her, and just as Pan tried to capture her by a river, Zeus transformed her into reeds. In rage, Pan smashed the reeds, but remembered they were Syrinx, so he began to kiss the broken reeds in remorse. Pan discovered that his breath from his kisses created musical notes. Pan fashioned Syrinx then into a what is now known as a panpipe and carried her with him wherever he went.5

Britten’s interpretation of Ovid’s tale is marked “Senza misura,” giving the player free reign over tempo. However, he is extremely specific with dynamics and rhythm, so while the tempo is free, the relation of length of notes must correlate with each other appropriately. The miniature can be divided into three sections, the first being an introduction, the second a development, and

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the third being a synthesis of the ideas presented in the first two sections and ending with a concluding coda.

The first section represents Pan, the god of shepherds and pastures. A shepherd himself, he is strong and confident to protect his flock, except for when he spots Syrinx, whom he instantly falls in love with. The second section represents Syrinx, which begins pianissimo in opposition to Pan’s forte, who is sneaking away from Pan’s love. As the development section continues, it becomes louder and faster as Pan nears closer and closer to Syrinx. At the end of the development, Pan is slowed by Syrinx’s transformation into river reeds, which occurs on the pianissimo thirty-second notes tied into a quarter note with a fermata. At first, Pan is upset by Syrinx’s instantaneous vanishing. He realizes in the mezzo-forte sixteenth notes leading into “Lento ma subito accel,” what has happened. This section, marked pianissimo with a crescendo, should begin slowly and quietly, much like Pan’s rage, as Britten marked in the score. The speed, volume, and intensity of this section should gradually increase through the eight-tuplet tied into a half note trill. This fortissimo trill is tied into a staccatissimo eighth note with a grace note. The abrupt ending of this section represents Pan’s anger boiling over, and him breaking the reeds, which are Syrinx. The pianissimo sixteenth note sextuplet following the fermata over a rest are Pan’s kisses in apology to Syrinx, marking the beginning of the coda. Realizing he can play music on the fragments, he transforms them into his reed pipe, which is indicated by the fortissimo run ending on a low D. Pan plays his first notes on Syrinx in the concluding pianissimo phrase in her character, quiet, quick, and witty.6

D. “III. Niobe who, lamenting the death of her fourteen children, was turned into a mountain.”

Niobe was a mortal who was close with the gods, best known to the Greeks as the true mother of humankind. Much like Leto, the human mother of the gods Artemis and Apollo, Niobe was a human mother of children whose fathers were gods. While the exact number of her children varies in different retellings, she and Leto were held in high regard and lived among the gods. In Greek tradition, Niobe was considered the mother of the first human, but in Asia Minor, Niobe was worshipped as a goddess. The story of Niobe, aside from paintings, was not allowed to be told in Ancient Greece by the great playwrights in the festival of Dionysus. Socrates forbade that her story be reenacted, but Aeschylus, who was a well-respected playwright of the time, started writing a play about Niobe, wherein her fall was an exemplification of the human condition rather than a punishment from the gods.

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The story of Niobe as depicted in Britten’s *Six Metamorphoses* focuses on the aftermath of her tragedy. The story begins with Niobe and Leto, who were discussing who had given birth to the most children, and Niobe having fourteen against Leto’s two, was clearly the winner. In anger, Leto sent her children, Artemis and Apollo, to kill Niobe’s children, with Artemis being tasked to kill the seven girls and Apollo the seven boys. Niobe, who was helpless in comparison to the power of Artemis and Apollo, was left to watch her children die. Her children were left to lay in their own blood for nine days during which Niobe was in great mourning. On the tenth day, the gods turned Niobe’s children into stone, and their statues were used to decorate the temple of Zeus. Zeus sent Hermes to Niobe, hoping to end her grief and mourning. Her great sadness did not end, and she was turned into a mountain by the gods in an act of mercy. That mountain can still be found today in Asia Minor, and when the snow caps melt, it is said that it is Niobe crying at the loss of her children.

Marked Andante and in “(4/4)”, Britten again utilizes the freedom of time as he did in “Pan.” Much like “Pan,” “Niobe” can be divided into three sections with an ABA’ format. While the first few measures of the movement are in 4/4, without written indication, Britten cuts measure five short and elongates measure 9, also shortening the last four measures of the first section. Instead of being free with time like “Pan,” Britten indicates a time signature, but places breath marks between phrases, indicating to the performer they should pause, and while he does not give a specific length for each pause, the breath mark would indicate that it shouldn’t be very long. The story of Niobe is of her mourning the loss and processing the death of her fourteen children, so the breath marks should be used like pauses, as if the player were trying to stop their tears from flowing freely while telling a sad story. When a person who is upset by a tragic situation retells that story, they may begin steady and giving inflection in the right places, as marked by the strict time Britten keeps and dynamic markings in the first phrase. Britten begins the second phrase identically to the first, but then strays from the key signature and length of the second end of the phrase but keeps the dynamic and rhythms controlled. In the third phrase, again beginning the same as the first two, the rhythm and dynamics become more intense as the story becomes more impassioned in Niobe’s retelling. The last four measures of the first section are shortened, and much quieter in dynamic marking, with a pause between the two small phrases, as if Niobe is trying to hold back uncontrollable tears.

Throughout the first two sections, the key center is not easy to locate, representing Niobe’s unstable condition. The second section is the release of Niobe’s emotions, her tears and the story flowing freely in arpeggiated triplets with the loudest dynamic marking in the movement. Marked “espressivo e rubato,” the player must show control with large intervallic leaps, but has freedom with speed, and with Britten’s phrase markings, gives the player freedom to express Niobe’s deep sadness. As the triplets continue, the intervals
begin to shrink, and the volume begins diminishing. As Niobe regains control of her emotions, she pauses, and the opening phrase returns to begin her transformation. When the second iteration of the opening phrase returns in the last section of the movement, it is marked “pianissimo senza espressivo.” Britten marks this iteration of the theme without expression to represent Niobe’s transformation into a mountain, finally becoming still in her sadness. Britten transforms the original motive into D-flat major, to represent Niobe finally able to be at peace.⁷

E. “IV. Bacchus at whose feasts is heard the noise of gaggling women’s tattling tongues and shouting out of boys.”

Bacchus, who is also referred to as Dionysus, is the son of Zeus and a Theban Princess named Semele, and was the last god to be accepted by Zeus at Mt. Olympus. Zeus was so in love with Semele that he made her a promise on the river Styx, an unbreakable promise even for the gods, which killed Semele while she was pregnant with Bacchus. Zeus was able to preserve Bacchus by allowing him to grow in his thigh and was eventually born of fire and nursed by rain, representative of the heat that ripens grapes and the water that keeps the grape vine alive. Bacchus became known as the god of wine.

In his travels on earth, Bacchus was known to be kind and beneficent, or drive men to do frightful deeds because of the Greek viewpoint of wine. The Greeks saw both sides of wine: as something that could bring merriment, but also something that could bring about drunkenness. Bacchantes, which was the name for the followers of Dionysus, when frenzied with wine would rush through the mountains and the woods in fierce ecstasy with nothing that could stop them. They would even tear apart wild animals and eat their flesh and blood.

The story of Bacchus centers around his journey to Thebes, the land of his mother. In his travels, Bacchus taught mortals the culture of the vine. Mortals that encountered Bacchus fell under his spell, worshipped him, and accepted him as a god among them. However, as Bacchus grew closer to Thebes, he began to run into trouble. Bacchus brought a train of mad women dressed in fawn skins and waving ivy-wreathed wands and hoped to convert the people of Thebes to his worship. However, Pentheus, the King of Thebes and Bacchus’ cousin, did not like the crazed women, and wanted to seize Bacchus’ followers. The blind soothsayer, Teiresias, warned Pentheus against it, but Pentheus did not believe Teiresias because Teiresias had become one of Bacchus’ followers. Pentheus sent Teiresias away and sent the women to prison. Bacchus willingly came before Pentheus, and as he did, the women were miraculously set free. Bacchus warned Pentheus that he could just as

easily escape by will of the gods, but Pentheus decided to lock him away. Bacchus escaped and tried to show Pentheus reason, but again, Pentheus would not listen. Pentheus had heard that his own mother and sister had joined the Bacchante women in the hills. Pentheus sought the Theban women out in hopes to return them home, but because of his unwillingness to listen to the gods, Bacchus used his worst aspect and made the women mad, causing them to tear Pentheus limb from limb.

The worship of Bacchus was unique for two reasons. First, the Greek gods typically liked order in their sacrifices, and preferred their worship to happen in grand temples. The sacrifices to Bacchus were wild and sporadic, based on the movement of the people. Second, the worship of Bacchus was centered on two opposing ideals: freedom and ecstatic joy and savage brutality. As said in Edith Hamilton’s *Mythology*, “All this merry freedom and confidence passed away, of course, as they grew sober or got drunk, but while it lasted it was like being possessed by a power greater than themselves. So people felt about Dionysus as about no other god. He was not only outside of them, he was within them too...” Later in the worship of Bacchus, the people of Greece created a festival, which took place in the spring, which is when the grape vines began to put forth branches. The festival of Bacchus lasted five days, and no business was to be held, and prisoners were set free to participate in the festival. People gathered in outdoor theaters, and the ceremony of the festival was the performance of plays. Some of the best Greek poetry was written about Bacchus, and those who wrote and performed plays in dedication to Bacchus were considered his most esteemed servants. The priests of Bacchus sat in the seats of honor during the festival. Bacchus’ festival lives on, even in modern-day American culture, in the Mardi-Gras celebrations in New Orleans, Louisiana.

Britten takes Bacchus’s characteristics to heart in his rendition of Ovid’s story. Britten utilizes an ABAC format with a coda to represent all the different ways Bacchus can appear to humans. Britten opens the movement with repeating dotted eighth and sixteenth note patterns and ends each phrase with ascending sixteenth notes in sets of three that get quieter as they ascend. This pattern creates a swung feel, like someone who is walking along the street drunk, and ending with a hiccup. Each phrase begins with a forte marking, much like the tendency to lose control of volume when someone is drunk. Much like Pan and Niobe, the space between each phrase can be changed, with the longest being at the fermata at the end of measure five and at the end of the A section, which ends at the “Piu vivo” marking. The dotted eighth and sixteenth note patterns can be played at different speeds, with more time and

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emphasis on the dotted eighth note, but the length can vary in different ways to emphasize the drunkenness of the character of Bacchus.

At the “Piu vivo” marking, which is also marked forte, the speed should be lively, and the rhythms played more in time to represent the “gagging women’s tattling tongues.” The second section focuses on the quick and crisp movement of the Bacchantes when driven to madness by his power. The melody of the section is repeated three times and ends slightly different each time. However, the overall tone of the B section is dark compared to the lighthearted F major key of the A section.

At “Tempo I,” the piece returns to the A section melody and moving like a drunken oaf. At “Con moto,” the movement transitions to the C section. This section is long phrases of tied sixteenth notes in the key of C major. The C section begins an extended V chord which stretches to the end of the movement. “Con moto” is marked mezzo forte, which is a change from the loud A and B sections that came before it. “Con moto,” meaning “with motion,” implies that the notes should move, much like the quick-moving Bacchantes when driven with madness, which again differs from the happy drunkenness they can also feel when under his influence. The B and C section interrupt these happy sections quickly, much like how the moods of Bacchus can change at any moment. The two phrases in the C section both end with long crescendos through the last few sets of sixteenths notes, implying that the people are trying to keep themselves under control, but at the end of the second phrase, let loose on their prey.

The coda begins at the first low C fermata. There are three fermatas followed by varying number of notes arpeggiated. The focus is still on C major even though the arpeggios are in varying keys. The lows C’s can represent the followers of Bacchus being halted by belches, and the arpeggios reaching higher and higher in the range are hiccups. It quickly cuts off the “Con moto” C section of the piece, as if the wine was affecting them in a sudden way. Different amounts of length can be given to each fermata to represent different length burps, with different time taken between each one. Once the high arpeggios are over, Britten returns to the dotted eighth and sixteenth note with three ascending sixteenth notes at the end back in varying volumes. These phrases gradually get louder and louder, ending on a third octave E. One last low C fermata with the loudest dynamic marking in the movement gives one last recognition of the dominant of the key. Finally, the movement ends on an F major arpeggio, ending on a third octave F with a piano decrescendo as the arpeggio ascends. Bacchus ends in a merry mood, with an intense build-up in
the V chord to reflect Bacchus’s two different mannerisms, all while still encompassing his character as the god of the vine.⁹

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Section 2: Finnish Myth and Romantic Composition
Program Music and Sibelius

Sibelius was born in 1865, during the time of program music’s rise in popularity in the music world. Program music is “instrumental music that carries some extramusical meaning, some ‘program’ of a literary idea, legend, scenic description, or personal drama.”¹⁰ Program music’s origins were in the 1820s and 1830s with the works of Carl Maria von Weber and Hector Berlioz, who published written material with the stories that were being told in their works. However, program music existed before this, most notably in Beethoven’s Pastoral Symphony. European composers’ music contained elements such as bird calls and other natural sounds in an attempt to convey their stories. Sibelius’ Swan of Tuonela was written at the end of the popular era for program music, as part of a song cycle called The Lemminkäinen Suite.¹¹

A. Finnish Myth – The Kalevala

The Swan of Tuonela is based on stories from the book of Finnish myth called The Kalevala. The Kalevala is written in the form of an epic poem and follows the stories of Lemminkäinen and Väinämöinen. In the story of Lemminkäinen, he journeys throughout the world, and arrives in Pohjola where he falls in love with the daughter of Louhi. However, Louhi tasks Lemminkäinen with bridling the demon-horse known as Big Brown. Lemminkäinen bridles the demon horse and brings it back to show Louhi. Louhi then sends him out to shoot the Swan that protects the land of Tuonela with only one arrow. Lemminkäinen goes “to where the swan was singing, /Hunting for the long-necked bird/From the lower depths of Mana, /Through the caverns of the dead.”¹²

Lemminkäinen went to the river and takes aim at the bird. However, he accidentally shoots himself with his poisoned arrow, although in some accounts, a water dragon appeared and thrust himself through Lemminkäinen’s heart, filling him with poison and killing him. The story of Lemminkäinen does not end with his death. In later stories, he is resurrected, which Sibelius details in the rest of his song cycle.


¹²George C. Schoolfield, Björn Landström, and Eino Friberg, 1988, The Kalevala: Epic of the Finnish People / Translated by Eino Friberg; Editing and Introduction by George C. Schoolfield; Illustrated by Björn Landström, Otava; Finnish North American Literature Society, 125.
B. The Song and Sibelius

Johan Julius Christian Sibelius was born on December 8, 1965, in Hameenlinna, Finland. Sibelius spent his first years of study at the Finnish Normal School. Here, he was introduced to the *Kalevala*. Although his family wished for him to enter a career in law, Sibelius decided to fully devote his life to music in hopes of becoming a violinist. He began study under Martin Wegelius, but soon left Finland to study in Berlin and Vienna. During this time, he adopted the name Jean to use in his music career. In Europe, Sibelius studied under composition teachers Robert Fuchs and Karl Goldmark. At the end of his studies, Sibelius returned to Finland to premier his first works, many of which were symphonic tone poems based off Finnish myth from the *Kalevala*. These premiers made Sibelius the leading composer of Finland, leading him to later compose symphonies and a violin concerto. Although there were talks of an eighth and ninth symphony, Sibelius lived an extremely quiet and reclusive life in his old age, and no manuscripts were recovered after his death.\(^\text{13}\)

The Swan is only briefly mentioned in the *Kalevala*, yet Sibelius was able to transform those few lines about the bird into one of the most extended English horn solos in the orchestral repertoire. Sibelius was extremely particular with his dynamic markings and phrase markings. However, it is easy to lose track of the high and low points of each phrase because of the long slur markings Sibelius uses, and they do not necessarily outline the phrase for the player.

In this work, the orchestra represents the location of Tuonela. Tuonela was the Finnish mythological version of what could be most easily related to the Greek underworld. Tuonela was where the dead went and could never return, and was guarded by the Swan, which sang haunting songs. The orchestra opens the piece, slowly building to the Swan’s forte entrance, as the English horn represents the Swan. After the first entrance of the Swan, the orchestra again takes over, with a prominent solo in the cello. The Swan responds to the building orchestra by repeating the first phrase a whole step up. After establishing its presence on the river, the orchestra again builds into a statement by the Swan, this time in a major key, representing the beauty and goodness that there can be in laying one to rest in Tuonela, such as the end of suffering.

In measure 31, or five measures before rehearsal D, the mood changes, with a descending tritone leap in the English horn, which is repeated by the orchestra. Known as the devil’s tone, the tri-tone creates an eerie sound, and

with the English horn marked at piano and the orchestra changing to a tremolo, the English horn should also change vibrato to a duple feel to match the orchestra, and better convey the change in tone. Starting at rehearsal D, or measure 36, the Swan’s song begins to develop, repeating phrases and developing their endings, Sibelius indicates through dynamic marking a general phrase peak and valley, however, does not give the specifics, leaving that up to the performer.

In measure 43, much like the beginning, the Swan enters forte after a diminuendo in the last phrase. In this measure, there is a decrescendo followed by an immediate crescendo. In measure forty-five, Sibelius marks “poco a poco meno moderato,” indicating a slow build in tempo, as the musical line reaches higher and higher into the English horn’s range. The tension being built in this passage represents the Swan bracing itself for Lemminkäinen’s arrow as he sees him drawing it back in the bow. The Swan relaxes when Lemminkäinen accidentally shoots himself, returning to a semblance of its theme before the orchestra takes over again as Tuonela envelops Lemminkäinen now in death. At “Meno moderato,” the tone changes again, as the Swan prepares to take flight, with the orchestra sending the Swan off at “Poco allargando.” Five measures later, the Swan returns with its sad song, and Tuonela follows suit with a new melody. When the Swan returns, its song continually returns to the concert E, which is the fifth of the chord, until finally there is no hope left in the Swan’s song, and the solo ends on the tonic A, giving the Swan’s song finality. At the end, Tuonela takes over again to finish out the piece, on an almost never-ending melody in the cello as a reminder that Tuonela is always there for the dead.14

Section 3: Poetry in Meaning and Sound
Poetry in a Musical Context

Just as there are several ways to analyze music, there are several ways to analyze poetry that can work together and separately in conveying the meaning of a poem. William Blake was known for his extensive collections of poetry, which are still studied today. Many composers work with poets or write their own lyrics for the works they compose with words. However, some choose to utilize poetry that has already been written, like in the case of Ralph Vaughan-Williams and Jacob ter Veldhuis, composers who both set their music to the words of Blake’s poems. Each composer used a different technique to analyze Blake’s poetry in their compositions for oboe and voice.

A. William Blake

William Blake was born on November 28, 1757, to a middle-class family in London, England. Blake did not receive traditional schooling, rather, his artistic talent was fostered through an apprenticeship with engraver James Basire. When he was old enough, Blake left Basire’s apprenticeship and enrolled for a time at the Royal Academy. Blake earned a living by engraving popular stories and magazines. Blake met his wife, Catherine Boucher, in 1781, and they married the next year. Catherine was unable to read or write when the couple married, but Blake taught her, and she eventually became his partner in the execution of his designs. Blake began writing poems and sharing them at parties, and eventually had his first collection published in 1783. Blake’s most popular collections, Songs of Innocence and Songs of Experience, were engraved himself, with beautiful artwork printed behind his poetry. The poet takes different sides in each collection while still connecting them with similar words and themes. Blake was inspired by the historic events he lived through and the great changes made in England during his lifetime. Blake himself held radical political views which made him fear death by execution. Blake was able to avoid execution and worked comfortably until his death on August 12, 1827.¹⁵

B. Ralph Vaughan-Williams and Ten Blake Songs

1. Ralph Vaughan-Williams

Ralph Vaughan-Williams was born on October 12, 1872, in the Cotswold Village of Down Ampney. Vaughan-Williams received his education at Charterhouse School, The Royal College of Music, and Trinity College, Cambridge. He studied under Charles Stanford and Hubert Parry in England, Max Bruch in Berlin, and Maurice Ravel in Paris, France. Vaughan-Williams

was one of the first to travel the English countryside, gather folk songs, and transcribe them for future generations to enjoy. He also composed several hymn tunes for The English Hymnal. From 1914-1918, Vaughan-Williams served in the English army, and was sent to France in 1916, where he served in the Medical Corps. He later served in the Royal Garrison artillery. The effects of war, especially the loss of his friends, had a significant impact on his composing after the war. Vaughan-Williams was a known atheist turned agnostic who wrote widely about the topic and is well-known for his philosophical works as well as his compositions. He was also widely influenced by English poets such as Shakespeare and William Blake. Vaughan-Williams wrote music in every genre, including symphonies, concertos, operas, chamber compositions, song cycles, ballets, film music, and choral works with and without orchestral accompaniment. Vaughan-Williams died on August 26, 1958.16

One of the last works written before his death, Ten Blake Songs, was written for tenor or soprano and oboe for Guy Brenton’s film, The Vision of William Blake. Taking from Blake’s most well-known collections of poetry, Songs of Innocence and Songs of Experience, as well as Blake’s last works from a collection entitled Eternity, Vaughan-Williams set Blake’s words to music, sung by the singer, with effects and accompaniment performed by a solo oboe. Each movement fits the tone of each poem and the tone of the anthology of poems they are derived from, with implications of the lyrics for the singer. Vaughan-Williams implements some elements of standard tonal harmony, as well as influence with impressionism and jazz.

2. “The Lamb”17

The Lamb (from Songs of Innocence)18

By: William Blake

Little Lamb who made thee
Dost thou know who made thee
Gave thee life & bid thee feed,
By the stream & o'er the mead;
Gave thee clothing of delight,
Softest clothing woolly bright;


17 Ralph Vaughan-Williams, Ten Blake Songs, (London, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 1958), 8-9

Gave thee such a tender voice,
Making all the vales rejoice:
Little Lamb who made thee
Dost thou know who made thee

Little Lamb I'll tell thee,
Little Lamb I'll tell thee;
He is called by thy name,
For he calls himself a Lamb:
He is meek & he is mild,
He became a little child:
I a child & thou a lamb,
We are called by his name.
Little Lamb God bless thee,
Little Lamb God bless thee.

Vaughan-Williams interprets the pastoral tone Blake sets in this poem in his musical lines of his movement by the same title as the poem. Pastoral refers to sheep pastures, the peaceful lives of shepherds, and rolling hills. The use of the words “Lamb,” “stream,” “softest clothing,” “tender,” “meek,” “mild,” and “child,” all give the reader a sense of a peaceful, innocent setting. Vaughan-Williams also interprets the questioning of the poet with the ambiguity between major and minor throughout the movement. Vaughan-Williams expertly creates two different melodies and has them perfectly intertwine between the oboe and the solo voice. The flowing lines create the pastoral tone that Blake sets in the poem with their legato phrases and scalar pattern with small leaps. Nothing jumps out at the listener as there are no drastic intervallic leaps in either part, and each melody is gentle and quiet. Although there are no specific articulation markings for this movement, a legato tonguing on any new slurred phrases would be the most appropriate to capture the tone of the text.
3. “Cruelty Has A Human Heart”

A Divine Image (from *Songs of Experience*)

By: William Blake

Cruelty has a Human Heart

And Jealousy a Human Face

Terror, the Human Form Divine

And Secrecy, the Human Dress

The Human Dress, is forged Iron

The Human Form, a fiery Forge

The Human Face, a Furnace seal’d

The Human Heart, its hungry Gorge.

“Cruelty Has A Human Heart” is derived from *Songs of Experience*, which gives the text a darker tone. Blake focuses on the human emotions of cruelty, jealousy, terror, and secrecy, all of which come to readers who have experienced life outside of childhood. Vaughan-Williams, in his musical setting of the poem, draws out these feelings in the musical line of the singer, giving these emotions emphasis in the musical text. They are also in the upper range of the singer, which draws the attention of the listener. The oboe line begins the piece harshly, with repeated off-beat syncopated rhythms and melodies that do not seem to resolve as they fade into the vocal line. The oboe melody is also based around a descending half-step, which to the ear sounds eerie and harsh, especially in the range of the oboe Vaughan-Williams wrote the theme. The combination of the off-kilter rhythm and melody give a sense of unease to the listener. The oboe and the vocalist rarely have melodies at the same time, rather, the two are in dialogue with each other. However, in this movement, Vaughan-Williams gives more dynamic and phrasing instruction to the performers. Most of the time, both the oboist and singer are marked forte, making the movement that much more jarring to the listener. Vaughan-Williams and Blake are trying to grab the attention of their audience, Blake in his words, and Vaughan-Williams in his musical realm by emphasizing the

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truth in the text. At the end of the movement, the vocal line is marked to crescendo through the last note, while the oboe line is marked piano with a decrescendo on the same off-beat half-step phrase that is not written down the octave to match the singer’s range. Vaughan-Williams has the oboe line and vocal line agree to disagree at the end of the movement. The vocalist holds an E, and while the oboe plays an E, the note length is shorter than the F, causing a half step clash between the vocalist and the oboe until the vocalist ends, and the oboe holds the E until the end of the movement. Vaughan-Williams wanted to have the listener feel the unease all the way to the end, showing that because these emotions that Blake has described are a part of the human condition, they typically go unresolved.

4. “The Piper”21

Introduction (from Songs of Innocence)22

By: William Blake

Piping down the valleys wild
Piping songs of pleasant glee
On a cloud I saw a child.
And he laughing said to me.

Pipe a song about a Lamb:
So I piped with merry cheer,
Piper pipe that song again—
So I piped, he wept to hear.

Drop thy pipe thy happy pipe
Sing thy songs of happy chear,
So I sung the same again

21 Ralph Vaughan-Williams, Ten Blake Songs, (London, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 1958), 4-6
While he wept with joy to hear.

Piper sit thee down and write
In a book that all may read—
So he vanish’d from my sight,
And I pluck’d a hollow reed.

And I made a rural pen,
And I stain’d the water clear,
And I wrote my happy songs,
Every child may joy to hear

The first poem in *Songs of Experience*, “Introduction” sets the stage for the rest of the collection. In Sir Geoffrey Keynes commentary on the poem, he explains the poems meaning:

In this preliminary poem Blake sets the scene for his *Songs*, imagining himself, the poet, as a shepherd wandering in an Arcadian valley and piping to his sheep. With the vision of the child on a cloud he sees himself being directed by the innocent spirit of poetry and is bidden to pipe a song about a lamb, itself the symbol of innocence. Both child and lamb are symbols, too, of religion in the person of Jesus. The poet is then told to drop his pipe and sing his songs, and finally to write them in a book, using the materials ready to his hand—coloured water with a reed as pen. The last line points to children as his audience, though it is the innocent in heart, whether child or adult, that he means.23

Vaughan-Williams interprets the oboe as the pipe from the poem and the vocalist as the poet, using a pleasant and lilting melody to best fit the text. The text, when read, is also heard with a lilt because of the emphasis on the first syllable and every other after in each line. Vaughan-Williams changes the lilted feel to a steady 2/4 feel in measure 25 for the oboe and the singer, noting the change in the text, which in the first two stanzas began with the syllable “pipe.” The oboe part returns briefly to a 6/8 feel, while the voice part stays in a 2/4 feel until measure 35 where if briefly switches back to 6/8. The two parts stay

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in a 2/4 feel until the key change. While the oboe is in 2/4, the voice has a pick-up in 6/8, making the parts slightly off-kilter for a moment, until they both return to 6/8, and finally the oboe part finishes with the same piping opening statement.

The oboe and vocal melody are bright and cheerful, again in scalar patterns with short intervallic leaps as to not disturb the listener. In the middle 2/4 section, Vaughan-Williams changes the melody to a warmer, darker sound. He brings back the lilting melodies in both parts where the text returns to the first melody that the poet sang or at mention of the pipe in the case of the oboe part. Before the “Largamente,” which occurs before the key change, Vaughan-Williams changes the melody to a minor, blues or jazz feel, until he returns to the lilting melody from before as the poet begins to write down the songs he sang at the beginning of the poem.

5. “Eternity”\textsuperscript{24}

Eternity (from \textit{Several Questions Answered})\textsuperscript{25}

By: William Blake

He who binds to himself a Joy

Doth the winged life destroy;

But he who kisses the Joy as it flies

Lives in Eternity’s sunrise.

The look of love alarms,

Because it’s fill’d with fire;

But the look of soft deceit

Shall win the lover’s hire.


Soft deceit and idleness,
These are Beauty’s sweetest dress.

The poem “Eternity” by William Blake is typically only credited with the first stanza of the text Vaughan-Williams utilized for this movement. However, some scholars believe that even though the following two stanzas were on the following two pages of his journal, because they were untitled, that Blake intended them to be a part of the poem. This poem and many others in this anthology of poems that Blake wrote at the end of his life are his own answers to the question of life and what happens after death. Vaughan-Williams captures the meaning and tone of this poem in his movement of the same title at the end of the Ten Blake Songs. The only poem in this piece not taken from Songs of Innocence or Songs of Experience, Vaughan-Williams sets this movement apart in his use of the melodic lines. The movement is in the same key as “The Lamb,” yet Vaughan-Williams uses it differently, creating an ethereal feeling to the melody. The oboe melody uses ascending half steps to create this feeling to the listener, tied together to give the movement the flowing, almost ghostly quality. The player should utilize both non-vibrato and vibrato playing in this movement to encompass the otherworldly tone of the movement. For example, during the opening statement, the player could play without vibrato, but as the line continues, begin to use vibrato on longer held notes to match the quality of the vocalist, but then return to straight playing when playing without the singer to recenter the audience in that haunting mood. The vocal line sits over top, starting in F minor, but focusing mostly on the V chord, C major. This glimmer gives the movement an uplifting feeling as well, which conveys the “Joy,” Blake writes about in the first stanza, and how those who are tied to it shall live in its warmth forever. The phrase ends back in F minor to tie the listener to the next stanza of text, which begins again in F minor and moves to C major. The oboe line also repeats its half-step melody before developing again while the singer spins their melody again down to what becomes the parallel major of the key, F major.

The oboe line insinuates the key change by outlining an F major chord against the singer’s tonic note the measure before they key change occurs, again separating the stanzas of Blake’s poem. However, the oboe line goes back to the ethereal opening of the first two stanzas, ignoring the key signature change, while the singer begins the last stanza in the new key. Each iteration of the opening phrase, even if similar notes and rhythms are repeated, should be different. Changes in dynamic, when vibrato begins, or even tone quality can change each time the opening theme returns. The singer repeats the descending half-steps of the oboe at the beginning of the last line of the poem, before ending on the third of the F major chord. The oboe works its way down in the original key before ending by outlining the tonic and third of the F major chord but ending on the third to leave the audience unresolved. Although
Blake ends his poem with finality, Vaughan-Williams leaves it open to the listener’s interpretation of eternity. Vaughan-Williams adapts this text to the ambiguity left by Blake in his words and their separation of them. Whether they are together or apart, each stanza seems to speak to a different aspect of life: such as finding the meaning of life and what eternity shall look like, or what the realities of life truly are, and Vaughan-Williams leaves the question of how the listener views their joy and love in life, and what it means for their eternity.

C. Jacob TV and *The Garden of Love*

Born on November 14, 1951, Jacob ter Veldhuis (more commonly known as Jacob TV) is a Dutch “avant-garde” composer, best known for his works for live instruments and pre-recorded electronics. TV began his music career as a rock musician, and later studied electronic music and composition with Luctor Ponse and Willem Frederick Bon at the Groningen Conservatoire. His electronic tracks are known for their use of the human voice and their integration with pitch and rhythm that drive the piece forward. TV’s music has been widespread, and he is one of the most performed European composers today.26

Written for Bart Schneemann, *The Garden of Love* is a song for oboe, flute, or soprano saxophone and boombox. TV writes, “speech is the ready-made source of inspiration: melody and rhythm of the spoken word was analyzed and written down after that I composed the soundtrack. The solo instrument plays the same musical lines along with the soundtrack, like a dialogue.”27 The text, taken from William Blake’s *Songs of Experience*, is where the song takes its own title “The Garden of Love.” The piece opens with a reading of the poem, followed by an introduction by the oboe, with the text becoming integrated and sampled as the piece progresses. TV employs the use of harpsichord, strings, a second oboe, and bird calls in his accompaniment track to create an other-worldly dialogue, which is intentional to match the theme of the original poem.

The Garden of Love (from *Songs of Experience*)28

By: William Blake

I went to the Garden of Love.

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And saw what I never had seen:

A Chapel was built in the midst,

Where I used to play on the green.

And the gates of this Chapel were shut,
And Thou shalt not, writ over the door;

So I turn’d to the Garden of Love,
That so many sweet flowers bore,

And I saw it was filled with graves,
And tomb-stones where flowers should be:

And Priests in black gowns, were walking their rounds,
And binding with briars, my joys & desires.

In this poem, Blake turns to a garden to find love, which in innocence is where love should be found. However, once he sees the Chapel and the repression of love by those in organized religion, he realizes that joy and desire can no longer be found there. The tone of this poem begins light and pastoral, but quickly turns dark and shadowy. Aside from the analysis of the words and the original engraving that the piece was printed on, Blake uses the English language to his advantage in setting the tone to this poem. Hard articulation sounds such as found in the words “chapel,” “gates,” “shut,” “Thou shalt not,” and “tomb-stones,” all convey a sense of angularity, and that something is not right. He does the same by using softer consonant sounds when referring to his memory of the Garden of Love, as words and phrases like “garden,” “love,” “green,” and “so many sweet flowers bore,” all have softer impact when spoken.

Jacob TV utilizes this angularity in the construction of his piece. TV, who is known for the use of pre-recorded voice samples in his music, masterfully uses the text from “The Garden of Love” is his construction of the overall tone and flow of his piece. After the reading of the poem, the track begins with a wind swoosh up to high bird calls, and then the oboe begins its angular melody, which has large intervallic leaps and pitches that on the instrument also sound like bird calls, such as the third octave C-sharp that breaks up each phrase and is paired with bird chirps from the accompaniment track. TV
uses these types of notes on the oboe several times in the first section of the piece, including the third octave G, and tied notes in measures 11 and 12. TV then creates a sense of driving forward and development by using repeated sixteenth notes in different chordal harmonies that change typically by one note at a time until measure 46 when he changes the pattern completely by adding triplets and introduces the vocal sample into the accompaniment track along with the bird calls, second oboe, and harpsichord that have gradually been added throughout the first section of the piece.

The second section begins in at the pick-up to measure 47, and the text takes focus over the oboe part. The sample repeats “I went to the Garden of Love,” in a descending pattern to match the inflection of the reader while the oboe accompanies with a sixteenth pattern. The oboe once again takes over with a leaping, mostly descending pattern from the top of the range to the lower spectrum of the oboe range while in contrast the voice leaps up and repeats “and saw.” At the end of the phrase the voice completes the statement and says, “and saw what I never had seen,” while the oboe begins a new melodic and rhythmic pattern leading into a sixteenth note ascending scale in measure 62. During the ascending scale, the voice sample repeats “and saw what I never had.” TV then utilizes the rhythmic quality of the “s” sound while the oboe repeats material from the first section. A second vocal sample uses a descending slide on the word “seen,” in measures 62 and 63 to complete the broken poetic line. In measure 68, TV switches the tone of the percussion vocal sample by using the “a” sound at the beginning of the “I,” along with the sixteenth notes in the oboe line and using the full words “where I,” to establish the down and off beats. The more percussive “a” sound at the beginning of the word ‘I” creates a driving percussion sound that fits the angular quality of the sixteenth notes being played simultaneously in the oboe line. After the oboe plays more repeated material from the first section, the vocal sample rejoins when new material is presented, again repeating “I went to the garden of love.” The second time it is said, it is slowed down while the oboe part feels as if it is slowing down because of the octave leaps, leading into a triplet ascending semi-arpeggio. The arpeggio leads to a third octave C-sharp in the oboe part to match the bird calls while the voice hits its lowest register on the word “love” which TV holds out for most of the duration of measure 81. The ascending arpeggio is an A major triad with an added major seventh to give it a heavenly ethereal effect when paired with the bird call and the word “love.” Emphasizing the word “love” is also significant as it is one of the words in the poem that has a liquid consonant sound, which makes it more gentle and pleasing to the ear.

The third section begins with TV fragmenting the opening motif and adding a descending line between the fragments while still repeating the phrase “I went to the garden of love,” during those descending lines to match the descending inflection in the voice. TV repeats the “a” sound percussion in a
similar sixteenth note pattern as was used against the one in the second section with that percussive sound, now just with a different tonal center. TV emphasizes the word “love” again at the end of this quick passage, this time by jumping up to a third octave B, and then an ascending chromatic line to drive into the next section with another new rhythmic pattern and repeating the words “I went” in a sixteenth note pattern to hold the rhythm steady for the oboist. TV drives again to another repetition of “I went to the garden of love,” while the oboe line pushes and then stops in measure 100 on what sounds like an incomplete phrase. Suddenly in measure 101, TV marks “dolce,” or “sweetly” and repeats the word love over a beautiful flowing line in the solo oboe part. The oboe part again quickly returns to the angular leaps while the voice repeats “and saw” to reset the pulse. TV again repeats material in the oboe part over the “s” sound percussion leading into the phrase “and saw what I never had seen,” this time with the emphasis on the word “seen.” There is a downward slide placed on the word in the voice sample, and the oboe part follows suit by slowing down rhythmically into a descending thirty-second note chromatic scale. The descending scale leads to a jumpy pattern of notes which outlines the rhythm of the next phrase “a chapel,” which leads to “a chapel was built in the midst.” TV then has the oboe ascend in another short phrase marked “dolce,” while the word “midst” is held out in the vocal sample.

There is a short pause before the oboe and voice re-enter in the same rhythm and ascending pattern on the repeated phrase “a chapel,” which is broken into all its syllables by an eighth-note pattern, each time restarting on the lowest note to match the inflection of the voice sample. TV marks these eighth notes as staccato to ensure the player matches the harsh quality of the “ch” sound in the word “chapel.” TV also changes the first note of each phrase in the oboe line by a half-step up each time to make it feel as if it were still progressing forward, even while the same phrase is being repeated. He juxtaposes this harsh section with the word “midst,” from before because of all the soft consonants in the word. These eighth notes lead into a quick sixteenth note leap measure, which leads into a bouncy fifth tied leap upwards in the oboe part, helping the voice sample ask the question “No?” Much like how the pitch of the voice goes up at the end of a question, TV reflects this in the oboe part, even though this question is not included in the original text of the poem. A brief repetition of the “a chapel” audio sample and the staccato eighth note pattern reappears before another tied, legato section repeating the same musical phrase in the oboe part over the word “midst.” TV juxtaposes this smoother section with another angular sixteenth note phrase over the words “where I,” repeated in a sixteenth note pattern as well. This leads to the completion of the phrase “where I used to play on the green,” settling on the word green, as the oboe line once again becomes smooth and legato. The oboe then takes over in measure 151, marked dolcissimo, with tied leaps from lower spectrum of the range to the higher spectrum of the range. Vibrato and tone
are important in this section, as the oboe is mostly alone, without the accompaniment of the vocal sample. Finally landing on a third octave F-sharp in measure 158, there is a brief pause for bird chirps, which leads into another transposed section of repeated material. The voice rejoins the oboe in the pick-up to measure 163 on the phrase “and the gates.” TV utilizes a similar pattern to his “a chapel” phrase, breaking the text into a two sixteenth and eighth note pattern based off the speed of how the words are said, this time changing the top note by descending a half-step in each iteration to drive the piece forward. This pattern ends on TV slowing down the audio sample to complete the phrase “and the gates of this chapel were shut,” mimicking this in the oboe part. In measure 167 begins a repeated pattern of leaps and rhythm in the oboe part to contrast the voices repeated “writ writ writ over.” The staccato, angular quality of the leaps reflect the harshness of the “t” sound in the word “writ.” TV repeats the same pattern as before with the phrase “and the gates,” and still ending the same with the completion of the phrase “and the gates of this chapel were shut.” TV takes the next line of text, “and thou shalt not,” and rhythmically in time with the oboe part, breaks it up and slows it down to make it declarative, like how the reader said that phrase during the reading at the beginning of the piece. He also follows the same descending pitch pattern in the oboe part as in the voice inflection. TV ends this section with a V to I resolution in the oboe and voice part, just in different tonal centers. The section ends with the text “writ over the door,” with the word “door” being held out and in measure 178.

Measure 179 begins the next section, where TV shows off his prowess in vocal audio samples by breaking up different nonsense sounds to help set the rhythm for the oboe part. In the pick-up to measure 184, he samples different segments of sounds from the reading to establish a pattern, and then a call and response with the solo oboe part. This then leads into the pick-up to measure 190, where the oboe repeats a descending triplet pattern, and the voice repeats “So I turned to the.” This resolves in a slowing down of rhythm in the oboe part and the completion of the line “So I turned to the garden of love that so many sweet flowers bore.” Another legato section begins in the solo oboe part with the slow repetition of the phrase “sweet flowers.” As before, TV draws out the more comforting sounding sounds in the text with the warmth of the oboe line. TV then lines the solo oboe pitches and rhythms with the bird calls. He then inserts some high reaching and descending legato phrases and works back up into the matching bird calls. The strings sustain a high note with a similar pitch to the last bird tweet in the oboe line, leading into the voice saying the line “and I saw it was filled with graves.” On the word “graves,” TV uses another downward slide in the voice pitch and begins a sixteenth note run in the oboe part of leaping intervals all the way from the bottom range of the instrument to the top, with the overall tone being dark and manic. In measure 220, the disjunct intervals stop, and an ascending and descending G-major seven chord arpeggio begins with the occasional A natural, leading to third
octave F-sharps. The voice underneath this is repeating “and tombstones” in a triplet pattern. When the oboe reaches the top of the arpeggio, the voice completes the phrase in a sixteenth note rhythm for the words “where flowers should be.” The second time the oboe starts the arpeggiated phrase, the second oboe joins down a major third, and the text changes to “and priests.” Instead of ending on a third octave F-sharp, the second phrase leads into repeated ascending fourth leaps that descend over the course of each measure. The spoken phrase ends on “an priests in black gowns,” with a downward pitch slide on the word “gowns.” The fourth leaps are in odd rhythms in the oboe part, and do not seem to have a tonal pattern, which leaves the listener on edge, just as the priests seem to leave the narrator of the poem disturbed. The G-major seven chord arpeggio repeats again, this time ending on a third octave F-sharp, with the text “were walking,” underneath in a triplet pattern. In measure 232, the spoken line is completed, “were walking their rounds,” and the oboe descends in leaps to another legato section. During these half notes, repeats the phrase “and binding with briars,” in a slower rhythm to match the rest of the accompaniment, but also to begin to show finality in the poem. He continues to slow down the spoken line in the completion of the phrase “and binding with briars my joys and desires.” “Desires,” is repeated several times, while the oboe holds longer notes in what feels like an ambiguous amount of time. There is a brief pause, where the oboe and the bird calls once again interact, leading to an upwards “swoosh” effect in the bird calls, leaving the piece seemingly unfinished.

TV masterfully coordinates the sound of the text with the music, making it angular and beautifully peaceful where dictated. His use of the text also lends to the overall tone of the piece, which mimics the tone of the poem: unsettling. There is a loss of innocence in both cases, giving the question “where did the love go?” an ambiguous answer. Both Blake and TV leave it unanswered and up to the interpretation of the listener.
Section 4: Music for the Stage
Bright Lights in the Quiet City

Aaron Copland was one of the first well-known “classical” composers to branch out into the new forms of music: music written for various forms of media, such as silent films or regular films, including incidental music, or music that accompanies spoken dialogue and action in a film or play. Although not a new concept in theatre, incidental music was not commonly composed by composers who were as popular as Copland during his time. The only other more famous work of incidental music was written by Felix Mendelssohn for Shakespeare’s play, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, but the two works were not written simultaneously by the composer and playwright. Shaw’s play, *Quiet City*, was a unique situation for the modern era, but after this became more common among composers who followed Copland’s example.

A. Aaron Copland and Irwin Shaw

Aaron Copland was born in Brooklyn, New York in 1900 to Russian-Jewish immigrants. He attended public school, and his older sister taught him how to play piano. He fell in love with music, and by fifteen years old, knew he wanted to become a composer, however, he struggled to learn harmony on his own. In 1921, Copland went to Fontainebleau, where he studied with Nadia Boulanger, a teacher who shaped the musical outlook of American composers for generations. Copland, who was Boulanger’s first American composition student, studied with her in France for three years, and eventually returned home with the task of writing Boulanger an organ concerto for her U.S. premier at Carnegie Hall with the New York Symphony. Copland was influenced by different trends throughout his compositional career. First finding inspiration from jazz, then Stravinsky’s Neoclassicism. Copland began to see a trend in which composers were writing in a “vacuum,” and decided to branch out into radio, phonograph, and film scoring. Copland’s best-known works are written in an “Americana” style, influenced heavily by events and tales in American history. After this period, Copland ventured into Schoenberg’s twelve-tone style. Copland, although best known for his symphonic works, is also known for his ballets, operas, symphonic band, chamber music, choral music, and film scores. Although he stopped composing during the 1970s, he continued to conduct and lecture up until his death in 1990.29

Irwin Gilbert Shamforoff was born on February 27, 1913, in New York City. He later changed his last name to Shaw. Shaw received his Bachelor of Arts degree from Brooklyn College in 1934, and immediately began his career writing scripts for the *Andy Gump* and *Dick Tracy* radio shows. Shaw wrote

twelve plays, the first losing a contest, but then being produced on Broadway the next year. During the 1930’s, he began writing the rest of his plays, his first screenplay, and short stories that were published in popular magazines. Shaw served in the United States Army in Europe during World War II which inspired his first novel, *The Young Lions*. After much acclaim and success from this first novel, Shaw dedicated the rest of his career to writing novels, many of which were turned into films or television miniseries. Shaw died in Davos, Switzerland on May 16, 1984.\(^{30}\)

**B. Incidental to Intentional**

*Quiet City* was originally staged by the Group Theatre in New York and played for two weekends starting on April 16, 1939 and ending on April 25, 1939. The play centered around Gabriel Mellon, the son of immigrants who was able, through marriage, to rise through the ranks of society and assume a spot in a higher financial class, unlike his brother, David, who was a poor jazz trumpeter. However, Gabriel sees in his brother all the things he gave up in assuming his new economic status. The play was full of subplots, a plethora of minor characters, and a difficult grasp on reality with frequent flashbacks with accompanying scene and set changes, which caused problems for the cast and crew of the play, causing Shaw to give up on his work.

Aaron Copland was hired to write the incidental music for *Quiet City*, which was given ample description in the stage directions. The main character, Gabriel, frequently imagines he hears a trumpet play at times when he feels “equivocal about his past and present decisions.”\(^{31}\) It also plays a key role in assisting the audience at interpreting Gabriel’s mental state as well. Copland originally scored the play for two clarinets who doubled on bass clarinet and saxophone, trumpet, and piano. In 1940, he rearranged some of the themes from his score for trumpet, English horn, and strings. Copland was able to keep some of the main themes of the play in his reorchestrated version of the work, saying “The script was about a young trumpet player who imagined the night thoughts of many different people in a great city and played trumpet to express his emotions and arouse the consciences of the other characters and

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the audience...My trumpet player was simply an attempt to mirror the troubled main character...”

Copland begins the piece quietly and in the low voices of the strings with no indication of a tonal center. The English horn enters in measure 5 in a phrase that starts on C, and grows and leads back to C. When the English horn phrase ends, the trumpet enters on a repeated sixteenth note phrase that switches between C and B flat. The first trumpet phrase leads to a cadenza that has an emphasis on G and returns to C. Marked “nervously, mysterious,” the line should be played as if distant from the rest of the piece. Although the strings follow and the English horn repeats the pattern immediately after, this trumpet line identifies the feelings of the main character, Gabriel, and his life in a higher and more stable economic class. The English horn repeats the sixteenth note phrase, this time ending on an F. The trumpet repeats the sixteenth notes again, this time developing the phrase by leading into the second section of the piece.

![Figure 1: The sixteenth note figure that repeats at different intervals throughout the piece first appears at Rehearsal 1 in the trumpet part from Copland’s “Quiet City.”](image)

The second section of the piece begins at measure 33, with the English horn taking over from the trumpet’s descending line and begins a new melody. Marked “freely, espressivo,” this section takes on a different feel than the first, this one having a more nostalgic and laid-back feeling than the first section of

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repeated sixteenth notes. Again, Copland makes the tonal center ambiguous. After the English horn introduces the new tempo and melody, the trumpet repeats it. This melody begins with an emphasis on B-natural, switches to an emphasis on G, and then repeats the line with an emphasis on B-natural. After the trumpet repeats the English horn phrase, the tonal center shifts again, this time establishing the hint of an emphasis on G through G major chord outlines and an F-sharp that appears in the trumpet melody and the English horn triplet cadenza in measure 58. The trumpet then has its own triplet cadenza-figure in measure 64, but Copland again changes the tonal center, this time establishing a new key. With a B-flat already in the key signature, and an added A-flat and E-flat, the center switches to E-flat, which leads to the key change in measure 73 and marks the end of the second section. According to Kepplinger, the piece contains two collections of pitches that govern the piece: [G-A-B-D-E] and [B-flat-C-D-F-G]. The second is the collection the rules the entirety of the piece, whereas the first only has prominence in the second section of the “nostalgia” sections of the work. Kepplinger analyzes Copland’s “tentative turn towards E-flat – and away from the overriding pentatonic concerns of the rest of the section of the work – [as Gabriel’s] early contemplation of giving up the status of a middle-class executive and newly-appointed ambassador to return to his former identity as a poet and romantic.”

Figure 2: The 4-3-1 pattern that repeats throughout the work is first found in the English horn part, beginning at Rehearsal 3 from Copland’s “Quiet City.”

The third section begins at the key change to E-flat, which was established at the end of the previous section, but Copland uses that as a device to divert to the relative minor of E-flat, C minor. The strings begin this section by establishing tempo and the new focus in minor. The English horn begins in measure 74, and the trumpet joins again in measure 77. Copland utilizes the brighter tone of the trumpet and creates a glimmering moment of E-flat major in measures 77 and 78, but in measure 81, the English horn and strings return to the minor mode. The minor mode continues in the English horn line until the trumpet is again reintroduced in measure 84 and brings the line back to the relative major of E-flat. The English horn remains in the minor

mode, while the trumpet sweeps the melody away into major again in its own triplet cadenza. The second triplet cadenza beginning in measure 91 acts as a transition out of the E-flat major and C-minor battle and into the next section, marked by the key change in measure 94.\textsuperscript{35} The English horn is acting as Gabriel’s reality, the life he has created for himself, with a sad, controlled melody in the minor key. The trumpet interjections in E-flat major are the bright and shining calls of the artistic life that Gabriel left behind in pursuit of wealth. The trumpet line wins out at the end of this section, but decrescendos into the next section, which indicates that although Gabriel knows this is the life he wants, there must be more change and development first.

The fourth section of the piece begins at measure 96, with an emphasis on D in the strings. When the English horn enters eleven bars later, Copland transposes the opening string line to have an emphasis on E while the string line continues to hint at D-major as the center with F-sharps and C-sharps frequently recurring, as well as the note D in the bass strings. By measure 116, D major is again the center. Two bars later, the English horn and trumpet are in unison on an A, and the trumpet continues to outline chords that are the dominant V chord of D major, and the English horn and piano also outline D major chord tones. The trumpet however then leads into a Bb, high in the range of the trumpet, that cuts through and pushes the piece into its climax, which begins the next section. This section acts as a building into not only the climax of the piece, but the climax of the play, where Gabriel must decide between his own wealth and elevating the lower classes in his managerial role. Both the play and the piece have been leading to this moment, and Copland reintroduces the sixteenth note patterns from the opening to remind Gabriel of his life in the upper class but changes them by the end of this section to show how his lifestyle can be transformed by his hopes and dreams.\textsuperscript{36}

The fifth section of the piece is the climax, and Copland alludes to several different tonal centers, all using the black keys of the piano. He also combines several patterns that he has used before, including the triplet-cadenza figure in the strings and a 4-3-1 progression in the melodic line which appears in the piano, the trumpet, and the English horn line. The section ends with melodic imitation between the strings, English horn, and trumpet with a focus on B-flat and E-flat, ending with a soaring B-flat in the trumpet and the strings and English horn cutting out abruptly to give the trumpet space to glimmer. The use of the flat note collection, according to Kepplinger represents Gabriel’s hopes and dreams which is a representation of Gabriel’s former self. By combining the patterns from before with the new note collection of flats, it

\textsuperscript{35} Aaron Copland, \textit{Quiet City}, (London, United Kingdom: Boosey & Hawkes, 1941), 7, 94.

shows that although Gabriel is deeply connected to his aspirations, he cannot leave the self he has created. By ending the climax on the B-flat, Copland also connects the new collection of pitches with those from the beginning of the piece, showing Gabriel's revoking of his dreams for his current life.\textsuperscript{37}

In the sixth section, the strings return to the nostalgic music from the second section of the piece. This time, the melody is introduced in the strings, and then repeated by the English horn, much more quietly than the fortissimo climax section from just before it. The English horn ends on an unfinished phrase, representing Gabriel's exhaustion and finality of giving up on his dreams. The trumpet repeats this phrase after the fermata, still unfinished, and then plays octaves emphasizing F, which is the fifth of B-flat. The English horn repeats this to end the section, marked dynamically quieter than the trumpet. By returning to the original pitch collection, Copland emphasizes Gabriel's decision, and then leads into a restatement of the opening in the strings.

The final seventeen measures begin with the same music in the strings as in the very beginning, and then restates the trumpet sixteenth note calls, this time muted. Copland is showing Gabriel’s repression by using the mute, dampening the brilliant sound of the trumpet. This time, the English horn begins on C, and goes down to G instead of up to an F. The emphasis this time is on the V of C rather than the IV. The piece ends with the English horn holding out the C, and the low strings playing staccato Cs to emphasize the tonal center and finality of the section and the piece, just like the finality of Gabriel's decision. Copland’s piece perfectly captures the essence of Shaw’s original story. Although the play did not last long in performance because of its complexity, Copland’s story carries the legend forward and sets the scene for what Shaw intended to show on stage.

Section 5: Study Abroad
Jazz Program Music

During the jazz age, classical composers began to experiment with including jazz in their compositions. Gershwin was a leader in this movement, composing music with jazz influence because of his extensive experience playing jazz tunes in Tin Pan Alley. His most notable composition for orchestra, *Rhapsody in Blue* was one of the first classical pieces with heavy jazz influence. Gershwin was able to include jazz in programmatic music based off his own experiences abroad.

A. Gershwin and the Original Symphonic Work

George Gershwin was born on September 26, 1898, and like Aaron Copland, was the son of Russian-Jewish immigrants. Born Jacob Gershwin in Brooklyn, New York, Gershwin grew up hearing popular and classical music in school and in penny arcades. While his older brother, Ira, was the one meant to be the musician in the family, George's impressive talents and musical ear earned him notice from his family and his first teacher, Charles Hambitzer. At fifteen years old, George dropped out of school, worked making piano rolls for player pianos, playing in nightclubs, and plugging music in Tin Pan Alley for the Jerome Remick music company. His time in Tin Pan Alley helped Gershwin improve his dexterity and improvisation, landing him gigs accompanying famous singers and as a rehearsal pianist on Broadway. In his teens, he wrote his first song, “When You Want ‘Em, You Can’t Get ‘Em (When You’ve Got ‘Em You Don’t Want ‘Em),” and “Rialto Ripples,” for solo piano.

During his time on Broadway, Gershwin learned more about jazz and popular music. He was highly influenced by Irving Berlin and Jerome Kern. Gershwin became an overnight celebrity after Al Jolson performed one of his songs in the musical *Sinbad*. Gershwin wrote his first jazz-influenced orchestral work, “Rhapsody in Blue,” for a concert at New York’s Aeolian music theater. Although unfinished at the premier, with Gershwin giving nods to the conductor to cue the orchestra at the end of his mostly improvised piano solo, the piece was a hit, and brought Gershwin worldwide fame. Gershwin continued to write music for Broadway and orchestras. His lyricist for his Broadway contributions was his brother, Ira Gershwin, who received as much acclaim for his writing as George did for his compositions. Gershwin was commissioned to write symphonic works, even though he never wrote specifically for orchestra before. He then wrote his opera, *Porgy and Bess*, which was controversial at the time, but is now considered one of the most important musical works in American history.

George suddenly began to experience severe headaches and memory loss, but according to all medical tests, he was considered healthy. In July of 1937,
his issues progressed rapidly, including loss of motor skills, drastic weight loss, and an inability to walk without help from others. His issues reached their peak on July 9th, when Gershwin fell into a coma. Doctors performed a spinal tap, in which they found he had a malignant brain tumor. They performed surgery in an attempt to save Gershwin’s life, but unfortunately, he passed during surgery on July 11th.

In the 1920’s George and his brother, Ira, made several trips to Paris, France. Inspired by his visits, Gershwin wrote the score for An American in Paris, in which he tried to embody what it was like to be an American walking the streets of Paris, listening to the various street noises, and absorbing the French atmosphere. To really portray this, Gershwin included real French taxi horns in the original score, as well as elements of Stravinsky’s compositions, which were popular studies in French conservatories at the time of Gershwin’s visits. Gershwin includes many jazz elements, as well, including pitch bends, slide, growls, and other effects to embody the feel of being a jazz musician in the 1920s. The piece was popular from the time of its initial premier, and even over a decade after Gershwin’s death, when it inspired a film starring Gene Kelly, in which Kelly choreographed a dance sequence over the twenty minutes of music.

In 2014, Calefax Reed Quintet’s Saxophonist, Raaf Hekkema, transcribed the entire work down to five parts without losing many of the elements Gershwin added to the original score. From percussion parts to the jazz elements and big band sound, Hekkema’s adaptation of An American in Paris has become a popular work in a new chamber genre.38

B. The Story Turned Symphony Turned Movie Turned Musical

An American in Paris, considered a tone poem, is programmatic in nature. Gershwin’s aim was to tell his story through his music and including the elements he did in the piece added to the effect and made the work as successful and significant as it has become since its initial premier. After Gershwin’s death, his brother Ira sold the rights to his songs to continue sharing his brother’s popular works and earning a living. In the 1950s, producer Arthur Freed had the idea of telling the story of an American artist living in Paris using Gershwin’s music, and once the rights were secured, the project quickly began to take shape, including writing the rest of the story and incorporating more of Gershwin’s music intermittently throughout the film with choreography by lead Gene Kelly. Later, the movie musical was turned into a

Broadway musical. This is a more modern take on musical adaptations, as many movie musicals were adapted from Broadway shows, and still are today, rather than the other way around.\(^{39}\)

The film was produced by Arthur Freed and directed by Vincente Minelli, who Gene Kelly was wary of working with at first. However, Minelli and Kelly had one of “the most intense professional associations,” according to Minelli.\(^{40}\) After reading the first script, Minelli envisioned scenes designed after famous paintings by French artists. The film holds lyrical, musical elements, such as the opening scene where Kelly’s character is first scene dancing around his small studio apartment without actually dancing or singing. The artistic characters in the film aren’t even all considered to be “professionals” in their respective areas. However, the city of Paris comes alive with the artists’ ambitions, becoming a city of art and love for those who are residing there. Most notably, the film is known for the seventeen-minute ballet at the end of the film to Gershwin’s *An American in Paris*, which is danced by Kelly and his love interest in the film, played by Leslie Caron. The dance number takes place in Kelly’s character’s head and retells and summarizes the story told in the film up until that point, including a bluesy, sexual scene that was cut in many countries. The film won six Oscars, which was controversial because of the other films nominated against it being considered serious stories.\(^{41}\)

Themes from Gershwin’s original tone poem are used throughout the film alongside other works he wrote and his brother, Ira, wrote lyrics for. The opening theme of the piece, which is found in the first ten measures, is used frequently throughout the film and throughout the original tone poem as the “walking theme.” Marked “Allegretto grazioso,” the theme sits nicely as a quick walking pace, which Kelly’s character frequently seen strutting to in the streets of Paris. Throughout the tone poem, Gershwin uses bits and pieces of this theme throughout, especially using the four repeated sixteenth notes at the end of the walking theme on its own as means of driving the development of the piece or extending the “walking” theme (Theme A). While walking, the French car horns make their first appearance in measure 30 in the saxophone and bassoon, which disrupt and act as part of the “conversation” melody in the saxophone line. Once the smooth flowing melody is interrupted by the car horns, it is repeated and then again interrupted by running sixteenth notes in the oboe line in the same intervals as the walking theme. Gershwin moves these melodies up a half step after the second repeat leading into a quickening of the tempo from measure 60 until the ritardando in measure 70, where the bass clarinet utilizes the repeated sixteenth notes at the end of the walking theme.

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theme to leave the first development of the melody on a harmonic cliff-hanger leading to a fermata in measure 72.42

In measure seventy-three, the sixteenth note phrase (Theme B) is passed between the oboe, clarinet, and saxophone part, leading into the first jazz effect in the clarinet line: a large glissando in measure 77. The oboe picks up the walking melody again with a new descending half step line in the clarinet. The bassoon then picks up Theme B, and this time Gershwin extends it and passes it to the bass clarinet. While the bassoon and oboe lead the melody line forward, the clarinet, saxophone, and bass clarinet utilize a swing-feel off-beat three eighth note rhythm with jazz-sounding chords leading into the Theme A again, this time in the bass clarinet. The clarinet then takes over with glissando-sounding runs, until the bassoon and bass clarinet lead into the variation of the sixteenth note phrase from the walking theme in the oboe part in measure 118. Gershwin then takes the four sixteenth note and three eighth note chromatic ascending phrase (Theme C) at the end of that line and extends it to develop into the next section where that phrase is passed between parts. Gershwin drives this forward by repeating the French car horns building into measure 135 where the saxophone takes over the variation of Theme B (Theme D), adding effectual growls while all the other parts fill out the space with quick rhythms that drive the piece forward.

The bass clarinet takes over Theme C, which leads to Theme D being repeated in the oboe part in measure 151. In measure 157, the bass clarinet begins by using the extension of Theme B, which leads into a segment of Theme A in the oboe part, and finally Theme A being repeated, this time at “Molto meno mosso” and “dolce.” Following a triplet, swung feeling lead from the slower tempo, the saxophone and oboe pass Theme D back and forth in varying pitches and tempos, slowly rising in pitch until the saxophone and bass clarinet slow the theme down at the ritardando in measure 200. This quick section with these four repeating themes, which are all derived from each other, serve as the lighthearted and jovial mood of Paris. Fast or slow, these themes represent all that can be seen and experienced while walking the streets of Paris: leisure, excitement, taxi horns, traffic, vendors, and artists. In the film, Kelly utilizes this section to visualize what it feels like to be an American in Paris. Kelly and Minnelli begin the dance scene with Kelly running through the streets of Paris, meeting all kinds of characters, from police officers, to socially elite, to other artists. The set is painted like the city with a fountain in the middle, with blues and whites being the prominent colors. The ensemble is dressed in red, white, and blue in blocks, the colors of both the French and American flags, however, giving more resemblance to the French flag. Kelly runs from group to group dancing with different women until there seems to be some kind of alarm in which the city goes dark and lights begin to flash red. Caron runs out and into the fountain in a glittery white top and flowing skirt, where Kelly spots her and tries to follow her out of the city.\footnote{An American in Paris, United States: MGM, 1951, 1:35:55 – 1:38:35.}

The music then slows down here and the scene changes to a more pastoral, countryside view on a market with flowers, which is represented by measures 203-218 in the Reed Quintet score.\footnote{George Gershwin, An American in Paris, arr. Raaf Hekkema (Amsterdam: Calefax Edition, 1928/2013), 11.} Sudden peace and tranquility in the music opens on this colorful scene, where Kelly picks a single red rose to give to Caron. Caron and Kelly begin a pointe ballet duet, where Kelly spins Caron until he is left back in the city holding a bundle of flowers. This short scene represents the first time Kelly’s character
saw Caron, and how out of reach she felt to him at their first meetings. The film also includes measures 355-387 at this point to make the scene a little bit longer while still giving the same nostalgic, romantic feeling from before. ⁴⁵

Measure 203 begins a short bassoon solo, which is immediately followed by an oboe solo in the same intervals, but different pitches. This longer break from the quick tempo that has taken up a majority of the piece up until this point shows the softer side of Paris, and the wonder of looking at the beauty of the city, whether it be the architecture, a monument, or a piece of artwork. After the oboe solo, Gershwin uses the oboe to lead back into a variation on Theme B, which changes from light to heavy in a matter of nineteen measures. In measure 238, Gershwin again utilizes the offbeat three eighth note pattern in the oboe and clarinet lines and syncopated offbeats in the saxophone part for a short shift in mood as the oboe and saxophone ascend, and clarinet descends chromatically to build jazz sounding, swung-feeling chords. After a ritardando and fermata in the “tranquilo” section, Gershwin takes a sudden shift, and in measure 248 marks the section “con brio.” With low hits on the downbeats in the bass voices and high off-kilter effectual high-notes in the oboe and clarinet, Gershwin creates an effect like Starinsky’s Rite of Spring ballet, with dissonant notes in extreme registers of the ensemble. In the middle of this, the saxophone introduces a new theme in measure 250 (Theme E), which ends in measure 255.

![Figure 5: Theme E, measure 307-315, an extension of Theme B from Raaf Hekkema's arrangement of Gershwin's "An American in Paris."

The clarinet responds to the Theme E with Theme B, and is repeated, but this time with the oboe calling Theme E, and the clarinet responding with Theme B. An augmentation and variation of Theme B appears in measure 269, which is diminished by the oboe and clarinet immediately following. A triplet pattern follows in the oboe, clarinet, and saxophone voices, which sways the duple

⁴⁵ *An American in Paris*, United States: MGM, 1951, 1:38:35 – 1:41
rhythm preceding it. A variation of measure 250 occurs at measure 282, but this time the clarinet’s response is the triplets from measure 278. The oboe, clarinet, and saxophone pass the variation of Theme B until measure three hundred and twenty-four, marked “Deciso.” There is a variation of Theme E, with the second half augmented, leading into measure 335, where the oboe has a slower variation on Theme A, which is sexier than the initial brisk walking tune. In measure 343, the saxophone and bass clarinet share the first measure of Theme E, which moves downward in pitch, until the bass clarinet has running sixteenth notes that lead to a repeat of Theme A in a ritardando into measure 355, marked “Calmato.” In the film, this second half of the opening section is taken out of order and placed after the second section of the piece. This portion takes place after the fountain ballet scene, which will be discussed with the second section of the piece. The second half of the first section, beginning in measure 248 and ending in measure 328, is placed in a city scene, much like the café Caron and Kelly’s character frequently met for their dates. They drink with the people at the café and dance through the town, symbolizing their running around Paris in their courtship. The section ends when Kelly and Caron turn a man in costume around to reveal a painting. Kelly mimics the painting, much like how his character paints the places and people around that he sees, and then is transformed into the main character in the painting, which leads into the third section of the piece. 

In measure 359, Gershwin introduces a new theme (Theme F), which is comprised of a light melody in both melodic material and articulation and rhythm. The clarinet introduces the theme, and is repeated later by the English horn, and then again by the clarinet and English horn, before the saxophone and bassoon take over the three eighth note off-beat pattern, while the English horn plays an ascending syncopated chromatic scale until the bassoon ends the transition section with Theme E.

![Figure 6: Theme F, measures 370-373 of the English horn part in Raaf Hakkema's arrangement of Gershwin's "An American in Paris."](image)

Measure 387 begins the second section of the piece, marked “Andante ma con ritmo deciso.” The bassoon begins on the downbeats with the clarinet, bass clarinet, and saxophone play on the offbeats, setting the slower, sexier feel of this section. The English horn enters four measures later with a new theme, which can be seen as a variation on Theme F because of Gershwin’s augmentation of the rhythms, making them all equal, and having different and more definitive leading points at the end of the phrase (Theme G).

![Figure 7: Theme G, measures 392-402, from the English horn part of Raaf Hekkema's arrangement of Gershwin's "An American in Paris."](image)

Although written as beginning on a glissando, it is not written that way in the original orchestral score, in which the melody is given to the trumpet, and in common performance practice of the Reed Quintet arrangement, the player typically begins on the second note of the measure because of where the pitches sit in the range of the English horn. The elongated rhythm of Theme E gives the melody a sexier feel, especially when Gershwin throws the D-flat into the line, which adds some tension and release in the resolution of the phrase, especially the second time when the melody returns to tonic of B-flat as indicated in the key signature and by the progression from F, which is the V of B-flat, to I. At “Poco rubato,” in measure 400, the melody takes a different turn, with a G-flat added to the line, which makes a large major seventh leap on a syncopated quarter note causing a burning tension and draws out the resolution to F major, making it that much more satisfying. The bassoon takes over the melody in measure 405, with an augmented rhythm of a similar melody as Theme E. The English horn repeats Theme G again at measure 410 with a new counter melody appearing in the bass clarinet which is passed to the bassoon in the second iteration of the theme. Gershwin adds F-sharp and C-sharp to the countermelody, putting the countermelody in a different key as Theme G, but also giving some movement to the stagnant melody. The saxophone takes over the melody again, this time adding glissandi that aren’t possible in the English horn line, increasing the sexiness of the feel. At

rehearsal 50, the clarinet briefly takes over the melody until the oboe re-enters, where both the oboe and the clarinet have a downward glissando into the restatement of Theme G, this time in a new, brighter key, the parallel major to the relative minor of B-flat, G major. This time, the melody feels freer, with more chromaticism and freedom of rhythm added to the accompanying parts. The melody also feels lighter and leads to another building of tension at measure 439. Gershwin uses quicker syncopated rhythms with more close chromatic lines to build this tension, which almost resolves in the bass clarinet line in measure 447, where the bass clarinet has a variation of Theme F, this time with the rhythm diminunized and leading into a ritardando. However, Gershwin tricks the listener and starts the build again with a new tonal center, this time into the full ensemble staccato sixteenth notes at measure 455, marked “Agitato.” There is a brief pause, and at measure 457, marked “Grandioso,” the oboe plays Theme G in a steady eighth note rhythm, which is turned into a sixteenth note rhythm two bars later and slowed down until the fake resolution at measure 461, where the clarinet and oboe play the triplet-sixteenth note with an eighth note rhythm from Theme F in opposition, gradually reaching higher and higher in their range, until Gershwin resolves it into the Theme G melody. While the saxophone begins a descending to ascending chromatic pattern with syncopated rhythms, the bassoon, bass clarinet, clarinet, and oboe take turns playing major versions of leaps that have appeared in the last phrase of Theme G. There is a brief pause, and then the oboe and clarinet pick up fragments of the end of the second phrase of Theme G, until it finally resolves except for a descending line in the bass clarinet, which leads into the third section of the piece. This section, especially measures 355-437, have a sexy feeling, very characteristic of some of the slow jazz of the 1920’s. In the film version of An American in Paris, Gene Kelly’s character and his love interest dance an intimate ballet during this section of the piece, with close, flowing movements. Many countries found that scene to be too erotic and cut it from the film entirely. However, Kelly’s choreography shows the intimate love the two share and their deep sexual attraction for each other. Kelly spends much of this section of the dance carrying or underneath Caron, while she moves with extreme flexibility and fluid motion. The costuming, lighting, and set design for this section also reflect the sexual nature of the melody, with Kelly and Caron dancing most of it in shadow or darker lighting. Caron’s costume reveals much of her neckline and emphasizes it by putting her in a corset, and her skirt is free flowing, to allow her legs lots of movement, and leaving little to the imagination. Kelly’s character is meant to be background, just wearing a simple polo shirt and pants. He is meant to be


50 An American in Paris, United States: MGM, 1951, 1:45:40 – 1:48)
dominated by her, as Kelly’s character has been since he laid eyes on her in the film, bending to her every will and desire. The dance also takes place in a fountain, and even without water in it, Kelly and Caron can be seen as figures carved into the marble of the fountain. Figures like these were typically naked, which gives their time in the shadows more meaning to the sexual nature of the story being told in this short segment of the dance.

The pick-up into measure 478 begins the third section of the piece, and Gershwin introduces another theme (Theme H). This theme is a pure jazz melody, with lots of third upward leaps and fifth downward leaps, all tied with accents on downbeats of the running eighth notes to keep the pulse, and then in the next measure on the off beats to throw off the rhythm. The hemiola is truly felt in measure 483-484, where the melody is given a dotted quarter eighth rhythm offset by a quarter rest each time, which makes it feel like it is in 6/8 rather than 4/4. The melody repeats, but ends the second time with a shorter syncopated rhythm that doesn’t lead to any sort of resolution, even though it ends on the tonic note, D. Rather, it seems to lead into the next phrase, which Gershwin utilizes to create a sense of moving forward by overlapping the next phrases with the ending of Theme H. The oboe and clarinet repeat Theme H in unison rather than just the solo saxophone, with a new syncopated rhythm in the bass clarinet which is outlined rhythmically by the bassoon and saxophone.

That syncopated melody in the bass clarinet ties the next melody line, which only appears once in the piece to the next section, is led into by a staccato rendition of Theme H passed between the bassoon and bass clarinet before measure 512. The bass clarinet takes over the melody at measure 512 with a chromatic variation on Theme F, while the oboe and bassoon provide a more percussive role and the clarinet and saxophone capitalize on their ability to glissando. In measure 520, the clarinet continues the glissando while the oboe
and saxophone provide percussive elements, pitched fragmentally by the descending fifth leaps from Theme H. In measure 527, the bassoon takes over the variation melody from the bass clarinet from measure 512, and the bass clarinet takes over the percussive role. The saxophone takes over the melody again in measure 527 with Theme H. The melody this time leads to varying fragmentations of Theme H which are played in unison pitches by the entire ensemble, with different accents that pay little attention to the bar lines dictated by the 4/4-time signature. The melody line becomes shorter and shorter until the ensemble breaks into a unison syncopated rhythm with quick chord changes, until the oboe begins descending from a high F while the rest of the ensemble ascends into measure 560, marked “Grandioso.” At this point, the saxophone again takes over the melodic line, but instead plays Theme G, which Gershwin stretches over 7 bars. However, the rhythm of the melody is the same, while the oboe plays scalar and arpeggiated sets of six-tuplets, and the rest of the ensemble plays bursts of descending thirty-second notes that make the melody feel as if it has been augmented because of the increase of notes between each note of the melody line. Measure 568 is what this section has been leading up to, but Gershwin leaves it unfinished because he doesn’t finish the Theme G melody, rather repeats the last two sets of eighth notes staggered in different parts. He also creates a false sense of finality by introducing Theme D in the oboe part in measure 569. In measure 574, he combines the end of the Theme G melody with the opening Theme A intervals in the bassoon solo. Gershwin then passes Theme D between voices, until the bass clarinet plays a combination of two themes, beginning with Theme F and ending it with Theme E, and introducing a new key, E-major, by ending on the V of E. The saxophone begins again with Theme A, which is passed to the clarinet and finished by the oboe. The oboe continues with a quick reference to Theme F, and then quickly returning to Theme D. Sixteenth notes are passed around the ensemble in a round style, driving the motion forward until the saxophone plays a fragment of Theme A. The bass clarinet and clarinet begin to trill while the oboe plays sixteenth note leaps and the saxophone and bassoon create the car horn effect over and over until leading into runs that lead into a fragment of Theme D. This phrase repeats until the oboe, clarinet, and saxophone play running sixteenth notes that outline ascending key signatures, starting with C, then D-flat (or C-sharp), D-major, E-flat major, and finally into F. The resolution in F major occurs at measure 638, and the clarinet picks up the Theme A melody. The oboe and saxophone pass Theme D back and forth, until the oboe takes a fragment of the Theme A melody, and gradually speeds up because of Gershwin’s use of smaller and smaller rhythmic lengths and running all the notes together. The clarinet and saxophone repeat the Theme D fragment rhythm on repeated descending notes that outline a I-V-I progression in F, until they play a C major scale. All five parts stop abruptly, and then ascend or descend chromatically in a flourish of notes, leading into the saxophone playing Theme D, and all of the parts joining on Theme G, slowing
the tempo down to a stop until measure 672, where the ensemble passes the descending sixteenth notes around until the oboe and bass clarinet move in opposition and end together to end that small quick section of the piece. Finally, the saxophone plays the last rendition of Theme G, and all the parts begin their movement towards the final F major chord.  

The third section of the piece, swung in the original score and the film, features Kelly alone for a bit of the beginning. Coming from his standstill pose as the main character in the painting from the previous section, he moves amongst two-dimensional figures and dances alone. The camera pans to his left, and on a stage is Caron, dancing with other ladies in a show. Earlier in the film, Caron’s character was said to be a dancer. This scene shows Kelly’s painting profession and Caron’s dancing profession colliding, and they dance back into the previous scene. They are then turned back to the original setting at the fountain in a Parisian city-center where the whole cast dances again to Theme A and the opening of the piece, which transitions finally to the end of the piece. Suddenly, Caron and the rest of the cast disappear, leaving Kelly alone in the last thirteen bars of the piece, where he runs back to the fence he drew for Caron before she left. He picks up a single rose, which has traveled through all the different scenes in the dance sequence, and then Kelly drifts back to reality.  

In the last moments of the dance, Kelly realizes that he is again alone, and returns to the reality in which Caron is leaving him to be married in America. As his fantasy ends, however, Caron gets out of the car and runs up the stairs to meet Kelly, and they leave the celebration together, and the film ends.  

Gershwin’s music, although used intermittently throughout the film and parts of it rewritten, still can tell the story of his own journey in Paris with his brother. Walking the streets of Paris, seeing French women and fashion, hearing the new sounds from the French conservatoire, and bringing his own American influence to all of that is all still embodied in the film in the various characters. Freed and Minelli tell a story different to Gershwin’s, yet they still embody the music’s original character in Kelly and Caron, who bring the music to life with their storytelling form: dancing. The Reed Quintet arrangement of An American in Paris is also incredibly fitting to Gershwin’s original concept. Hekkema utilizes the extended technique of the saxophone, a major influence in jazz music and created in France, alongside the colors of the oboe, clarinet, bass clarinet, and bassoon that pay homage to Gershwin’s writing in a modern way, a way Gershwin of which himself would most likely approve.


Works Cited


Vaughan-Williams, Ralph. *Ten Blake Songs*. (London, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 1958), 4-6, 8-9, 12, 14.